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Writing Assignment #3 – Analyzing the Annual Report

Coca-Cola is a Fortune 500 company whose 2012 annual report is full of visual and verbal techniques that clearly and effectively describe the company, its vision, and its business. In 2009, Coca-Cola came together with their bottling partners to craft its 2020 vision – “a collaborative roadmap to double our system revenues this decade” (Coca-Cola., 2012). Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Muhtar Kent, states in the letter to shareowners, the intent of this annual report is to persuade its readers that Coca-Cola follows its vision as “everyone who touched our business should benefit – from shareowners like you to our bottling partners, customers, consumers, associates, suppliers, distributors, other stakeholders and the communities we proudly serve” (Coca-Cola., 2012). Coca-Cola uses the following persuasive strategies in its 2012 annual report: first, by using a “Click & Go” technique, Coca-Cola’s annual report dramatically increases the speed with which the average reader can access information; second, by highlighting positive statistics and awards in bright colors, Coca-Cola’s annual report enhances the readers’ positive reactions; and third, by using pie charts depicting operating groups around the world, Coca-Cola’s annual report gives readers a sense of Coca-Cola’s internationalism.

Coca-Cola’s “Click & Go” technique appears in its table of contents, which allows the average reader to find any section of the annual report with just one click of the mouse. If the reader is an average person wanting to see the achievements and awards of Coca-Cola, he or she would select “Highlights” from the table of contents and would be taken directly to that section of the annual report. If the reader is an international prospective investor or current shareowner wanting to learn about the geographic mix of countries consuming Coca-Cola products, he or she would select “Operating Groups” from the table of contents and would be taken directly to that section of the annual report. Not only does Coca-Cola’s interactive feature in its annual report make it easier than ever for the average reader to find specific information within a large document, but it also highlights positive statistics and awards in bright colors enhancing the readers’ positive reactions.

Coca-Cola’s highlighting of positive statistics in bright colors enhance the readers’ positive reactions to Coca-Cola’s success. The unique design and bright colors such as blue and green naturally draw the readers’ attention to its success in blog format. Coca-Cola uses these blogs to show the reader its success as a company. For example, ‘“Became the first brand to record 50 million “likes” on Facebook (September 2012)”’ (Coca-Cola., 2012), is portrayed in bright blue to influence the mood of the reader by feeling relaxed and refreshed. Another example from the “Highlights” section, “Added a pair of brands from Japan to our billion-dollar brands portfolio: Ayataka (green tea) and I LOHAS (water)” (Coca-Cola., 2012), is portrayed in bright green, subliminally giving the reader a feeling of comfort. Coca-Cola’s highlighting of positive statistics and awards in bright colors naturally draws the readers’ attention to its success as a company, but another method Coca-Cola uses to draw the attention of the reader to the different operating groups around the world is by utilizing pie charts.

Coca-Cola’s use of pie charts depicting operating groups around the world gives readers a sense of its internationalism. Pie charts in the report show the percentage of how much that country consumes Coca-Cola’s products and which brand of product is most popular. The pie chart of North America is split into two countries: The United States (94%) and Canada (6%), showing the percentage of each country that consumes the generic brand of Coca-Cola. The pie chart for the Pacific region, however, is split into six different countries: China (42%), Japan (19%), the Philippines (11%), Australia (6%), Thailand (6%), Other (14%), representing the international brands Ayataka and I LOHAS. By using pie charts depicting operating groups around the world, the reader can view the geographical mix of countries consuming Cola-Cola products everywhere.

Coca-Cola’s annual report persuades its readers’ by using a “Click & GO” technique increasing the speed with which the reader can access information, highlighting its positive statistics and awards in bright colors enhancing the readers’ positive reactions, and using pie charts giving readers a sense of Coca-Cola’s internationalism. Coca-Cola’s “Click & GO” technique is the most powerful communication strategy because it allows the average reader to easily navigate through the whole annual report with just a click of the mouse. Without this technique, it would be hard for the average reader to export information and navigate through different sections of the annual report. By utilizing these strategies, Coca-Cola attempts to successfully persuade its readers into buying its products, which helps Coca-Cola grow as a company, and therefore increases its consumer base as a result. Its vision of “a collaborative roadmap to double our systems revenues this decade” (Cola-Cola., 2012) helps the Coca-Cola brand to persuade readers visually in order to choose its products and increase revenue.

**References**

Coca-Cola. (2012). Annual Report. Retrieved from www.coca-colacompany.com/annual-review/2012/downloads.html.

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