

INFLAMMATORY VIDEO FLAYS SUGARY DRINKS: COCA COLA EXECUTIVES CHOOSE TO IGNORE IT



Mr. Alex Bogusky has turned a full circle. From advertising for soft-drink companies and Burger Kings he has now turned his ire on them, telling the world that fast-food was unhealthy and that the soft-drink industry was raking in profits at the expense of the health of today's generation. His latest video ad, created for the Science in the Public Interest, an advocacy group based in Washington features an endearing polar bear family, that look like the bears that are associated with the Coca-Cola brand. The bears are seen gulping down soft drinks, with devastating after effects. The bears become obese and their teeth rot. At a rather blatant and undisguised take on Coca Cola's "Open Happiness" ad campaign and vending machines, the bears are shown patronizing "Be Happy Please" machines. The bears are shown morose and down in the dumps, when realization dawns that the soft drinks have caused this upheaval in their lives. The video then takes viewers to a website where they are encouraged to spread the video as much as they can. It cajoles, "Facebook it. Tweet it. Pin it. Google+ it. Email the link to your friends and relatives. Show it at school. Sit down and watch it with your whole family." However, much more provocative than the video is that it highlights quotes made by senior Coca Cola executives and presents them as falsehood, whilst exposing the truth. It takes a quote by Ms Katie Bayne president-sparkling beverages, North America, when she said, "there is no scientific evidence that connects sugary beverages to obesity." The statement is accompanied by the word "lie" in bold letters. The video goes on to refute the statement saying that the truth is "Drinking one or two sugary drinks per day increases your risk for Type 2 diabetes by 25%" and "Diabetes can lead to erectile dysfunction." Analyst believes that the video was released to coincide with the ANA's Masters of Marketing conference where top Coca Cola executives were scheduled to speak. However, Alison Lewis, senior VP-Coca-Cola North America marketing during her presentation did not talk about the video. She did acknowledge that there were unique challenges facing the industry: "The important thing about Coca-Cola is that the brand Coca-Cola is the company and the company is the brand. That's challenging at times, but it is our reality." In an email, Coke spokeswoman Susan Stribling called the video "irresponsible and the usual grandstanding from CSPI." Jeff Cronin, head of communications for CSPI, said that their ad was not meant to target Coca Cola alone but the entire soft drink industry and want to ensure that the people think twice before drinking the sugary sodas. He said that the people should understand that the people in the soda industry are not health-experts. When reminded that Mr. Bogusky was being hypocritical as he had profited from working with Coca Cola earlier, Mr. Cronin said, that it was a courageous effort. "I think for Alex, and for the other people on the creative team who come from the commercial advertising world, making 'The Real Bears' reflects their courageous commitment to happier, healthier communities."