ENERGY DRINKS AND ALCOHOL

A Dangerous Combination

Washington State
Liquor Control Board

Topics

- “The formula”
- Public health implications
- Targeting youth
- Viral marketing
- Tools and resources
- Questions and discussion

Formula for getting kids hooked

Start with

A Sweetened, Flavored

Malt Beverage

Add

Caffeine and

Other Stimulants

↓

Alcoholic Energy Drinks

Common additives

- Caffeine
- Guarana
- Ginseng
- Inositol
- Ephedrine
- Sugar
- Taurine
- Creatine
- Carnitine

Caffeine

- A drug
- Stimulates the central nervous system
- Gives most people a temporary energy boost
- Can cause anxiety, dizziness, headaches and the jitters

Caffeine (cont.)

- Can cause calcium loss
- Can aggravate certain heart problems
- Thought to be safe in moderate amounts
- Moderate = 200-300 mg <u>per day</u> for adults

Caffeine content

	ounces	mg	mg/oz.
Coffee, Starbucks tall latte	12	75	6.2
Coffee, brewed	8	108	13.4
Pepsi	12	38	3.2
Mountain Dew	12	55	4.6
Full Throttle	16	144	9.0
Monster	16	160	10.0
Amp Lightning Charge	16	160	10.0
AriZona Green Tea Energy	16	200	12.5
Rockstar Punched Guava	22	300	15.0

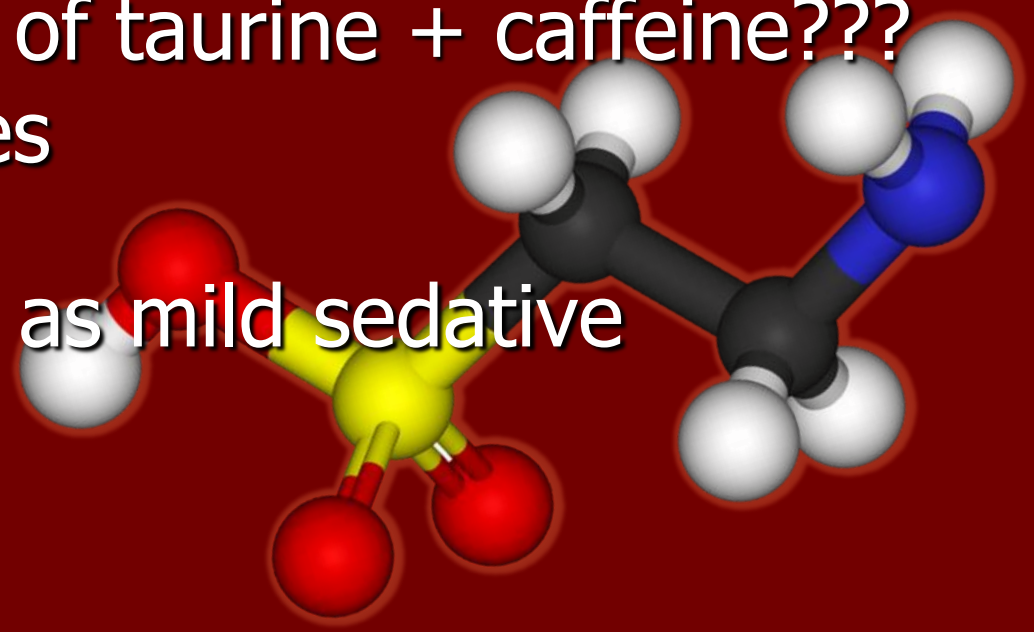
Guarana

- Climbing shrub native to So. America
- Black seeds - rich source of caffeine
- Reputed to increase mental alertness, stamina, physical endurance
- Use only under direction of MD if. . .

  heart condition, anxiety, insomnia, kidney disease, diabetes, epilepsy, high blood pressure, etc.

Taurine

- Amino acid, found in meat, fish, and breast milk
- May increase mental performance
- Long-term effects of taurine + caffeine??? Not enough studies
- In medicine, used as mild sedative to treat epilepsy



This is not "just a beer."

Plus

- **Guarana**
- **Taurine**
- **Caffeine**
- **Artificial flavors**
- **FD&C Red #40**

4.2% Alcohol by Volume
12 ounces

12% Alcohol by Volume
24 ounces

Public health implications

- Marketing + product design = youth and young adult consumption
- Alcohol + stimulants = "wide awake drunk"
- Stimulants mask alcohol's intoxicating effects and promote risk taking
- Young people most likely to take risks

The results: an example

Three-point-plan for targeting youth

1) Create brand confusion with similar, youth-friendly packaging

2) Provide a cheap alternative to mixing energy drinks with alcohol

3) Deploy youth-friendly grassroots and viral (internet and social media) marketing

Brand confusion: Which contain alcohol?

Only non-alcoholic brands have nutrition facts and ingredients listed

Cost comparison

Non-Alcoholic Energy Drinks

Amp	16 oz can	$2.29
Red Bull	16 oz can	$3.69
Monster	24 oz can	$2.99
Rockstar	24 oz can	$2.79
Amp	24 oz can	$3.49

Alcoholic Energy Drinks

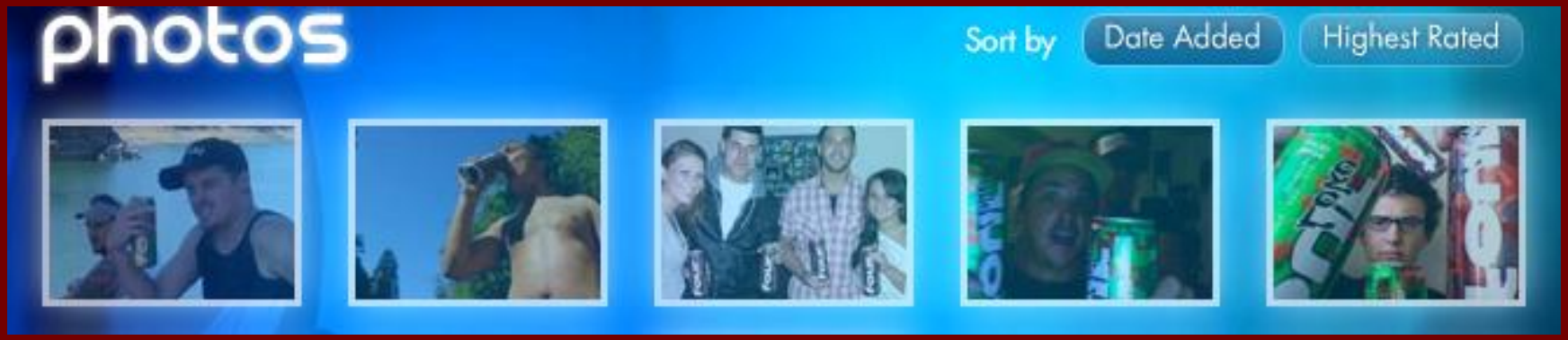
Four Loko (12%ABV)	24 oz can	$2.49 - 2.99
Joose (9.9% ABV)	24 oz can	$2.49 – 2.99

Social media marketing

- Company websites
- Fan sites
- Facebook
- MySpace
- YouTube
- Fan-developed sites

Four Loko's photo contest

"Here at Four we like it when you guys and girls flip out, get weird and go all crazy. We like it even more if you have a camera around to capture your most ridiculous, out of control, sexy, fun, cuddly, zany, spicy, demented, screwball moments while drinking Four. If you're daring enough to submit a photo so provocative, absurd, uncivilized, titillating, uninhibited or fierce that we deem it the "Photo Contest Winner," we'll send you your pick of one of our hot new T-Shirts!"



Social media marketing – Actual website postings

- "I've been nursing this 24oz can for almost an hour and I am buzzing like a crackhead locked in a evidence room. This stuff is definitely worth the $2.50 a can price."

****

- "Four Loko got its name because it sends the person who consumed it into FOUR STAGES OF CRAZY:

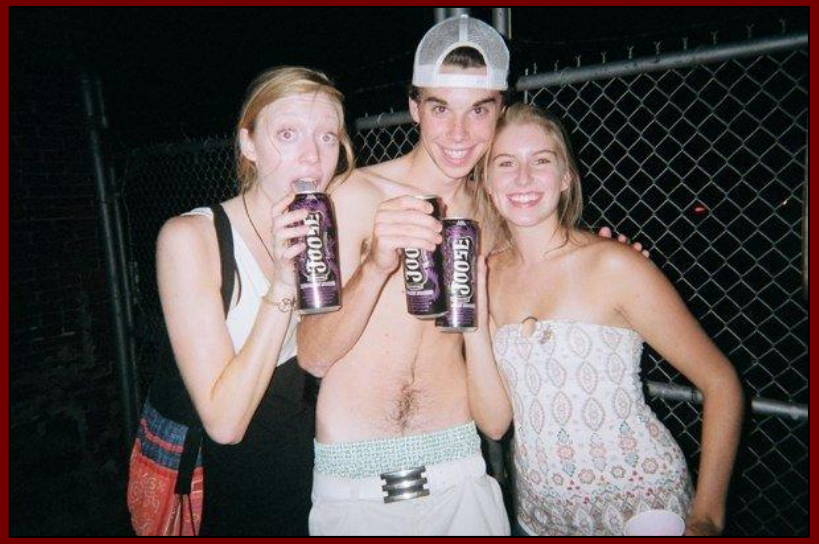
  Stage 1: Tipsy (loud, might stumble, laugh)
  Stage 2: Drunk (embarassing, stumbling, slight slur)
  Stage 3: Wasted (heavy slur, falling, ...)
  Stage 4: Black Out (no ability to speak, vomiting, ... memory loss)"

****

- "I showed your product to my friends a few months ago and they all loved it! Now, a weekend doesn't go by without seeing empty JOOSE cans all over our frat house. We even had a JOOSE night before the bars."

Social media marketing – Actual fan photos

From Four Loko's "fan photos" section of the Four Loko Facebook page



From Joose's "fan photos" section of the Joose Facebook page

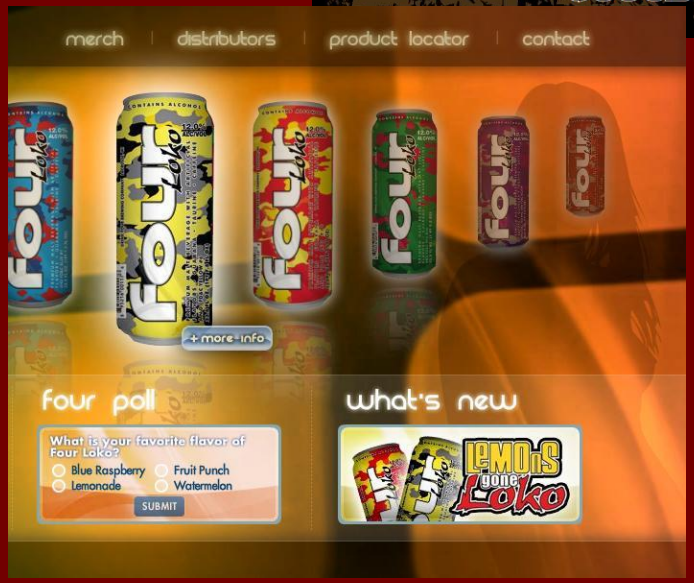
The people that posted these photos are, according to their Facebook profiles, underage.

Alcoholic energy drink marketing strategies

Themes popular with youth:

- Risk taking and rebellion
- More energy, more partying
- Sexual success
- Extreme sports

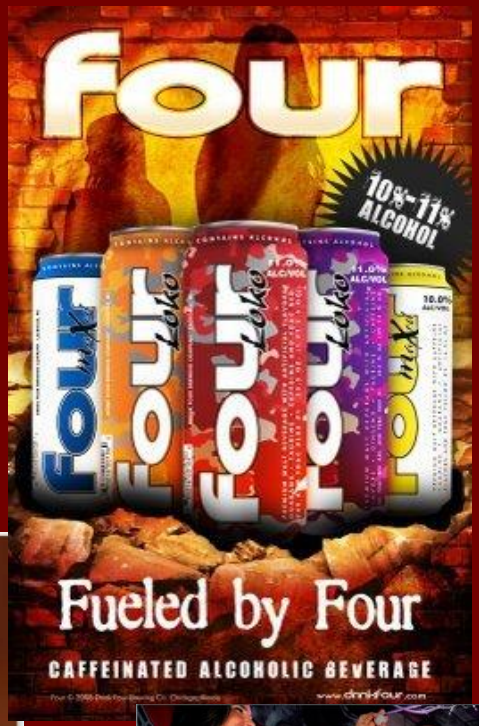
Website marketing strategies

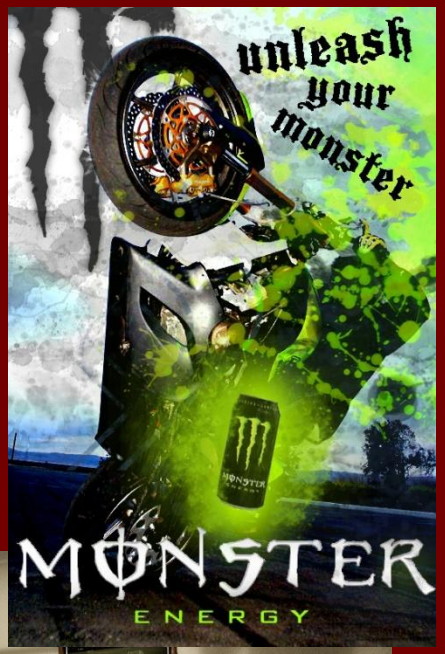


Sites offer:

- Contests
- Cell phone wallpapers
- Fan feedback
- Popular slang
- Modern designs
- Music players
- Youth-friendly graphics

Youth-friendly advertising





Tools and resources

Websites

- www.StartTalkingNow.org
  - WA State Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking
- www.TheAntiDrug.com
  - A tool for parents and other caregivers
- www.StopAlcoholAbuse.gov
  - Portal of federal resources
- www.camy.org
  - Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth