



# SUSAN GAMBARDELLA

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For many consumers, the experience of drinking a Coke is so much more than satisfying a simple thirst – Coke is an emotional experience, evident through the success of Coke’s 2010 World Cup campaign orchestrated by Susan Gambardella. Gambardella is truly a champion for integration, coordinating all agency relationships and various media platforms. The 2010 World Cup campaign reset the standard for how Coke engages consumers with captivating media and Gambardella discussed this innovative campaign with the 2011 Brandworks University audience.

According to Susan, Coke’s brand strategy is simple. It is emotional and optimistic. Coke aims to deliver this unified message throughout all marketing platforms, but recognizes that marketers no longer fully control the presence of a brand – they share this control with consumers.

### **Campaign strategy: Liquid & Linked**

Once a brand has established its single-minded identity, the next step is integration. Gambardella’s philosophy baked into Coke’s World Cup strategy is that all content must be liquid and linked to the essence of the brand. Content must deliver layers of consumer experience that helps tell the story of the brand. The main objective of content that is liquid and linked is to deliver business results in the here and now and develop long-term brand equity.

In order to integrate, align and optimize Coke’s campaign, the team recognized the core ties that exist between Coke and futbol. The ties are authentic and long-standing, as Coke has been a FIFA World Cup sponsor since 1978. Coke also recognized, however, that futbol itself holds a worldwide popularity that runs deep. It is estimated 40 million people play this sport on some level. For Coke, the depth of this fan passion stood out. This intensity of fan passion gave Coke the inspiration for their 2010 sponsorship.

### **Open Happiness**

Coke’s objectives for the 2010 World Cup sponsorship focused on quality recruitment and retention among their most loyal consumers—older teens and young adults. Coke wanted to build affinity for the brand through a passion for futbol and drive incremental volume in a sustainable way. With these objectives in mind and a spontaneous moment of joy expressed by an African futbol player that served as inspiration, the global campaign titled “Open Happiness” was born.

Coke invited fans to join them in celebrating the spontaneous moment of joy while building an authentic visual identity and engraining a catchy tune. The campaign launched with a celebration tour that took the World Cup trophy to every

country in Africa to build life-long ambassadors of the brand. Coke also introduced a song that would serve as a centerpiece for not only the campaign, but that would also be the pulse of the World Cup excitement and experience as a whole. Coke approached K’NAAN to create a World Cup adaptation of his song “Wavin’ Flag” that centered on Coke’s core creative idea of spontaneous celebration. This song received national attention and gained over 80 million views on YouTube. The integration continued to build with African-inspired packaging, in-store and TV advertising, video game integration, an African book of happiness and much more.

### **From a campaign to a global movement**

The 2010 World Cup campaign generated 4.5 percent volume gain worldwide, which was Coke’s highest growth in 10 years. The campaign transformed into a pop culture success when “Wavin’ Flag” became known as the FIFA World Cup anthem and inspired consumers to create over 5,300 videos. But the campaign transformed into a global movement when the World Cup and the Coke brand became inextricably linked together.



*Susan Gambardella is the SVP of Integrated Marketing Operations at Coca-Cola, where she is responsible for all agency relationships, media and interactive, digital platforms, sports and entertainment, national programs, regional assets and more.*

Dedicated widgets such as the longest celebration widget and Coke World Cup News widgets with the latest statistics allowed Coke to build a wide-reaching platform and led “Wavin’ Flag” and the trophy tour to spread like wildfire. The widgets generated over 43 million visits and, in terms of social media engagement, Coke exceeded every other sponsor of the World Cup.

### **Coca-Cola as a student**

After celebrating the brand’s successes with the campaign, Gambardella looked back at the campaign from the eyes of a student. What did Coke learn from this large scale integrated marketing campaign?



- The sheer quantity of content: Learned value of open expression that invites others in to co-create and co-own content with the brand. The more a brand can shape it, the more engaged people will be.
- Leverage your successes: Recognized potential of conserving one out of every five dollars so you can apply resources at the end to what's really working.
- Certain things to do differently: Recognized potential for more mobile interaction.

The integrated success of Coke's 2010 World Cup campaign was built on a strong foundation of a brand recognizing their core identity and creating a genuine connection. Coke understands the meaning of its brand—the archetypal happiness and a return to innocence—and leveraged a liquid and linked strategy that integrated mental assets in order to wildly surpass their goals.