

The future of vending

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Forget selling stuff, the future of vending machines is selling ideas



Dr Paul Marsden is a consumer psychologist working with innovation agency Brand Genetics



mission to James Bond wannabes along with cola.

And Coke is far from alone in using vending machines to sell ideas rather than products. **Moët & Chandon** is using vending machines to sell the idea that its champagne is not just for rarified occasions; their latest stunt showcases the world's first champagne vending machine for gasping shoppers at Selfridges.

Several years ago, a small gumball vending machine appeared in New York selling inspirational ideas in plastic balls for 50 cents each. It was an exciting idea, and today a trillion dollar industry has been inspired by the idea. The advertising world now believes the Next Big Thing in advertising formats might just be the vending machine.

And if you ever doubted that low-cost airlines could deliver great service, check out the YouTube hit from Canadian operator Westjet that stars a departure lounge vending machine collecting Christmas wishes and granting them on the conveyer belt in the arrivals hall.

It works like this. Step One: Come up with an advertising idea for your brand – say **Coca-Cola** bringing people together on Valentine's Day. Step Two: Now 'vending-machine-ise' your idea – how about a vending machine with sensors that light up only when a couple passes by? Step Three: Build it, video it, and then upload it to YouTube. The result? Next-generation advertising

– AKA 'content marketing' – which is all about brands 'winning' eyeballs with entertaining YouTube stunts rather than 'paying' for them through traditional media.

Sounds crazy? Well Coca-Cola is doing it. The Coke Valentine vending machine clip exists, as does a Coke Hug Machine – hug it for a free Coke – that sells the idea of a friendly brand to a YouTube audience.

Meanwhile a Diet Coke vending machine stunt sells its size zero credentials to YouTubers with a 'slender vender' machine that slots into narrow spaces. And the Coke Friendship machine features a two-for-one button so high up on the machine that you need to lift a friend to reach it.

Meanwhile, Coke Zero scored a recent YouTube hit with its 007 Coke machine that delivers a

Or how about selling the wake-up-and-smell-the-

Brands are turning to vending machines to sell their messages



Coke's invisible Valentine's Day vending machine



Coke's Hug Me vending machine

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The Coke friendship machine

coffee credentials of **Douwe Egbert**? A YouTube stunt features their vending machine delivering free coffee if you yawn at it.

Alternatively, why not pause in front of the Amstel beer vending machine for three minutes and get a free beer? (Amstel is about enjoying the pause, get it?). All this while **Pepsi** has been playing catch-up with Coke with a 'social vending machine' that showcases Facebook Likes being taken as payment for pop.

As Star Trek's Dr. Spock might say: "It's vending machines Jim, but not as we know it." Nothing to do with selling stuff, and everything to do with selling ideas. It's vending machines put to the service of advertising. Of course, it's not hard to see why vending machines are the new heroes in advertising today; they are interactive, connected, and a whole lot less expensive than celebrities. And vending machines are cool again because new technology



The Diet Coke slender vendor

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The future of the vending machine industry lies not in selling products, but in selling ideas

technology that lies behind 3D printing. So it's no wonder brands are turning to vending machines to sell their messages and showcase how innovative they are in helping and entertaining us in our brave new multiscreen worlds.

places them in the eye of a perfect storm of cool technology – the Internet of Things, touch-screen tech and new 'Maker'

So perhaps if you could track down that gumball idea vending machine in New York, it'd sell you the idea that the future of the vending machine industry lies not in selling products, but in selling ideas. ■



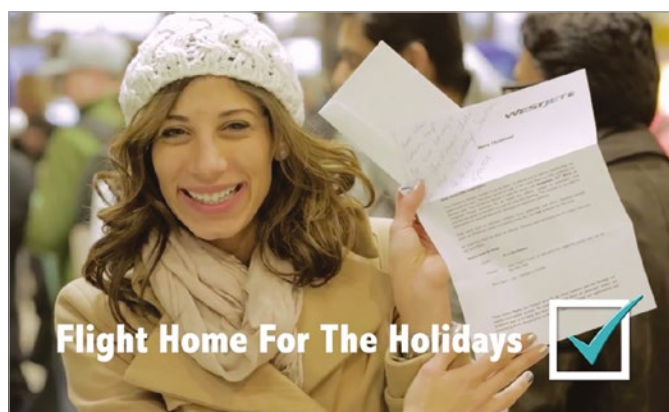
Moët & Chandon's champagne vending machine



Pepsi's social media machine accepts Facebook likes



Amstel's vending machine rewarded consumers for doing nothing



Westjet delivered Christmas wishes via a vending machine



Douwe Egberts' coffee machine in South Africa only served coffee to people who yawned



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