

CONTACTING US

NEWSROOM: (541) 346-5511
E-MAIL: ode@oregon.uoregon.edu
ONLINE EDITION: www.uoregon.edu/~ode

ADDRESS: Oregon Daily Emerald
 P.O. BOX 3159
 Eugene, Oregon 97403

PERSPECTIVES

EDITOR IN CHIEF
 Sarah Kickler
EDITORIAL EDITOR
 Mike Schmierbach
NIGHT EDITOR
 Holly Sanders

Coca-Cola COLONIALISM

Only a corporation could view Africa as a prime market for sugary soft drinks

OPINION



Kameron Cole

I imagine that you are a corporation. You can give yourself a name, design a logo, and produce an annual report if you like — whatever gets you in the mood. Now consider the following conundrum: You've glutted most available markets, and while you're not doing bad, you could be doing better.

What do you do? Well, if you're a good corporation with any kind of business savvy, you will do the logical thing. You will hire a consultant to tell you what to do and then you do it.

This is because, as difficult as it is for some of us to believe, business is a pretty logical enterprise. Of course, it doesn't use the same logic that most of us mere mortals accept. No, corporate logic is an entirely different beast.

Take, for example, the strange practices of the Coca-Cola Co. The soft drink behemoth hasn't exactly been hurting in the revenue department, but it has recently been inspired by that good ol' corporate logic. See, Coke does out quite a bit of money every year to keep tabs on how much, where and to whom its product is being sold. The results of this research has alerted Coke to the fact that they have been letting an enormous opportunity slip away, that there are millions of potential consumers just aching for their product.

That's right — Africa!

Coke's research has shown that Africans drink more water and fruit juice than Coca-Cola. This, of course, makes perfect sense when you consider that these beverages are relatively abundant, inexpensive and healthy. Coke, however, has managed to ignore these facts. The way they see it, Africa's population is exploding, so the number of loyal Coke drinkers should be rising as well.

Coke's new chairman and CEO, M. Douglas Ivester, has drawn deeply from the well of corporate logic to

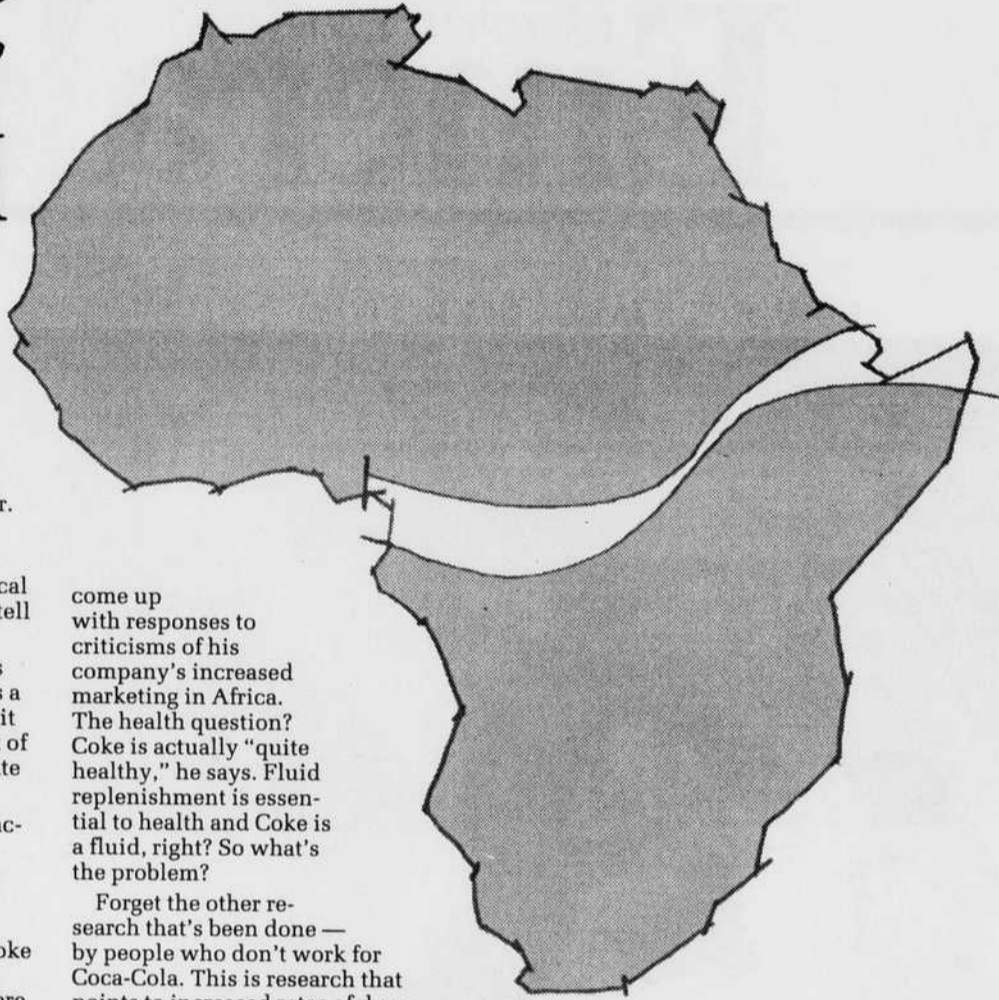
come up with responses to criticisms of his company's increased marketing in Africa. The health question? Coke is actually "quite healthy," he says. Fluid replenishment is essential to health and Coke is a fluid, right? So what's the problem?

Forget the other research that's been done — by people who don't work for Coca-Cola. This is research that points to increased rates of dental problems in people who, even if they could afford to get to a dentist, would be hard pressed to find one in their area.

And what about the questionable ethics that have the Coca-Cola Co. prepared to launch a large-scale marketing campaign designed to persuade the poorest people in the poorest countries to spend their money on bottles of sugary syrup with trace nutritional value?

Ivester's answer: The presence of "luxury" items like Coke in the marketplace stimulates entrepreneurship. Anyone who can raise \$7 to purchase a case of the beverage (no small feat in most parts of Africa) can sell it at a profit that he can then use to purchase more Coke.

Sure. Fine. Whatever. There's no real novelty here. You



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

can see corporate logic in action everywhere these days. It's what Nike has used for years to justify its unsavory labor practices, and it's how Disney explains the fact that they've teamed up with McDonald's to tout their Animal Kingdom.

Now return to your role as fictional CEO. These things might just start to take different dimensions. Suddenly, people in underdeveloped countries need soft drinks. Sweatshops are good. And Disney loves animals — they're delicious! If you think like a corporation, you'd be amazed at what kind of things start to make sense to you.

Kameron Cole is a columnist for the Emerald. Her work appears on alternate Wednesdays. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Heal with love

On May 21, just before school started at Thurston High School, a 15-year-old student allegedly committed an act so tragic that it will never be forgotten. His actions have and will change many lives. The unthinkable that we had all feared has become the reality that we are left with. And what are we left with? A murderer? A disaster? A tragedy? A massacre? Yes, we are left with all of these to cope with. And where do we go from here? The healing process is very painful and perhaps it will never be completed. What about the 15-year-old? He will be subjected to an Oregon law that will try him as an adult. He has destroyed many lives, and as a result, he has destroyed his own. This tragedy has consumed my every thought since I heard about the shootings. My heart goes out to all those who are victimized by what has happened at Thurston. Besides the hurt and pain, I feel defeated. I

feel as though I am guilty. I feel partly responsible for all the carnage and destruction inflicted on those students, parents, relatives, teachers and the community. I feel as though my actions will ultimately affect everyone in some manner. Negativity will always produce negative effects. This applies to all of us and that is why I feel responsible for what has happened. Somehow, some way, each of our individual actions and choices will affect all of us in the long run. I firmly believe God allows tragedy to happen so that we can learn something from it. The problem is that it is up to us to learn from what has happened. And I must ask myself, "What does this all mean?" I now know what I had learned and that is that I am not trying hard enough. I haven't given it my all. I haven't been dedicated to living a life for God. I had fallen short, but now it is apparent what I should do. I need to remember that we are all in it together and that what I do to someone may affect

someone else. There is far too much pain, anguish, resentment, hatred and death in this world; it has to end and I know it must start with me.

I hope that what I am saying isn't changing the focus of what has happened. My heart goes out to those hurt and in pain and my prayers are with you. Kip Kinkel, I may not understand what you have done, and I will never quite know why you have done what you did, but I will also be praying for you. The healing will happen; it will be slow, but with the help of God it will happen. As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:13, "And now these remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

John Skalberg
 Political Science

Support OSPiRG

OSPIRG is one of the few fundamental grassroots organizations that allow students avenues to activism on all levels. As an organization it

promotes issues ranging from environmental education to renters' rights — issues with direct relevance to all of our lives. It's a gross misconception that OSPIRG promotes its own political and environmental agendas because it is run by the students for the students. Unfortunately, after the recent elections, students do not associate OSPIRG with the good it accomplishes but with its annual budget of \$147,000. The bottom line is that it takes money to fund programs, and when broken down, each student is only paying \$2.88 a term. OSPIRG is an organization that has had profound influence on this campus since 1971. I urge you to revisit your decision regarding OSPIRG and realize that losing such an important student organization — one that promotes student activism, student involvement and student voices — would be a loss beyond any dollar sign.

Courtney Kroupa
 ASUO Programs Administrator

Thumbs



To the malfunctioning communications satellite:

There's nothing wrong with technology, but every once in a while it's nice to have a reminder that we shouldn't rely on it too heavily. The recent problems with a major satellite left millions of people in the lurch; paging services, banking transfers, even news services were delayed or lost in space as those affected scrambled to find alternatives to the inoperative satellite. Because it didn't have a permanent effect, the problem should do little more than remind people of the unstable nature of technology and ensure that organizations develop and test backup measures.



To Bob Tiernan:

The former state representative recently placed second in the primary, putting him in a fall runoff for the empty Oregon Supreme Court seat. Tiernan has repeatedly indicated he wants the judicial seat to be more political, and revelations that he received large contributions from three conservative Oregon businessmen only verified that Tiernan's "qualification" for the seat was his far-right political view, not his skill as a litigator. As we have stated before, judges should not be able to buy their seats with donations or argue their way into seats with popular but legally unsound political views. The entire purpose of the judicial branch is to create a section of government that will objectively evaluate laws without allowing political factors to come into play.