

Want to help kids at St. Jude's? Drink your broccoli

Ned Hickson

As I'm sure you can imagine, being a humor columnist, I am constantly working up a sweat. In fact, I can already feel perspiration forming. By the end of this paragraph, I will be a drippy, sweatstained mess. Most people don't know it can take hours to finish a column.

The reason has nothing to do with procrastination, writer's block or even the ability to Google *History of* the Star Wars universe; many of us humor columnists simply become too sweaty to operate our keyboards without sliding off and potentially endangering ourselves and others.

Newsrooms everywhere

understand this, which is why we are often placed in special cubicles that are refrigerated.

Or at the very least equipped with a drain pan.

Yet somehow, beverage companies continue to overlook us as potential thirstquenching icons when developing trendy ad campaigns.

Chances are, you'll never see a commercial featuring a humor columnist at a keyboard with green Gatorade streaming out of every pore in his body. Or witness a humor columnist emerge from a droplet of Propel fitness water and do a back flip out of an office chair (which we often do, by the way, sometimes for no reason at all).

That's because our segment of the beverage-buying market is considered too small to worry about, even though, as analysts have shown, it is a

powerful one, at least in terms of odor.

According to the advertising people I spoke with, the key is finding a beverage product that fits the humor columnist profile; something that seamlessly combines beverage consumption and sweaty writing; something that speaks to millions of thirsty consumers and tells them:

Hey, what you really want is a beverage that tastes funny.

I had given up on finding such a beverage until I opened a package from Seattle, containing what has to be the strangest soda concept since New Coke. In this case, we're talking about quenching your thirst with the crisp, refreshing taste of "Broccoli Rice Casserole."

Or "Salmon Paté." Or my personal favorite,

"Turkey and Gravy."

Apparently, the folks at the Jones Soda Company, who produce these and other weird flavors each year as part of a limited-edition "Holiday Pack," are aggressively targeting a niche market known in the advertising world as the "gagging consumer."

This became clear during an impromptu taste test I held in our newsroom, where all 10 of my test subjects preferred drinking these sodas over, say...

The taste of bile. I knew right away I'd found my product. Who better than a humor columnist to promote a beverage that is marginally preferred over stomach juice?

I immediately contacted Diana Turner at Jones Soda Company and informed her of my availability.

I then called her back and explained I meant as an advertising icon.

After aggressive negotiations that seemed to go on forever but lasted closer to four seconds. I was told that the goal of the "Holiday Pack" was to raise \$150,000 for children's charities, and that paying for a "beverage icon" would mean less money for those charities.

I told her I was cheap. She said every dollar

I agreed to do it for free.

She asked me to please stop calling her.

As it stands, I still haven't become a beverage icon, and it doesn't look like I'll

become one anytime soon. Until then, I'll just have to quench my thirst for becoming a promotional figurehead by consuming these extra bottles of "Turkey and Gravy"

That's if I can hold onto them with these sweaty hands.

Visit www.jonessoda.com to find out more about its fundraiser for St. Jude's Children's Hospital and Toys For

Or you can write me at Siuslaw News, P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR 97439, or at nedhickson@icloud.com.

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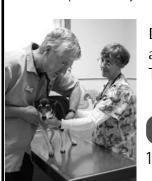


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for more Q&A with R.J.

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