September 20, 2010

Happy Birthday, Coke Zero!

The Coca-Cola Company's Biggest Hit Since Diet Coke Celebrates Five Years of Success

ATLANTA--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- The Coca-Cola Company's most successful new sparkling beverage in a generation, Coke Zero, turns five this year, and its run as the only soft drink on the market to post double-digit sales gains for five straight years is showing no signs of slowing.

Among more than 350 sparkling beverage brands launched since 2001, Coke Zero is one of only six to surpass one percent market share, and the only one to maintain it. The brand is available in more than 130 countries and continues to experience strong growth both in the U.S. and around the world - making it the best-selling addition to The Coca-Cola Company's sparkling beverage portfolio since Diet Coke debuted in 1982.

Coke Zero was created in 2005 to meet consumer demand for real Coke taste with zero calories -- joining Coca-Cola and Diet Coke to form a perfect trio of brands offering a choice to anyone seeking great cola taste. A half-decade later, Coke Zero is poised to break into the top 10 most popular U.S. sparkling beverages - an unprecedented feat for such a young brand.

Coke Zero also has broken new ground with its innovative marketing campaigns. By using irreverent, humorous communication, the brand has established a strong connection with young adult males, a previously untapped market for diet soft drinks.

"Introducing a new product, especially one carrying the name of one the world's most recognizable and loved brands, is both exciting and challenging," said Katie Bayne, President and General Manager, Sparkling Beverages, Coca-Cola North America. "Coke Zero has proven to be an innovation that continues to grow five years after its launch. The brand is successful because it filled a need for an underserved consumer - young adults, especially males, who were looking for great Coca-Cola taste with zero calories. In a world where new products rise and fall all the time, great taste, relevant marketing, strong distribution and loyal consumers have helped Coke Zero to thrive."

Coke Zero advertising began to catch people's attention with a series of 2006 TV spots. In the ads, imposter Coca-Cola "brand managers" attempted to recruit real lawyers to sue Coke Zero for "taste infringement" - using an unexpected approach to reinforce the fact that Coke Zero tastes so much like Coke. The brand also made a big impression during the 2009 telecast of Super Bowl XLIII with a new commercial featuring Pittsburgh Steelers safety Troy Polamalu playing the lead role in "Mean Troy," which featured a surprising twist on the iconic 1979 "Mean Joe" Coca-Cola commercial starring Steelers legend "Mean Joe" Greene.

Coke Zero's marketing also has tapped into popular properties such as the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament and NASCAR, where the brand sponsors the Coke Zero 400 Powered by Coca-Cola at Daytona International Speedway. The brand also has leveraged sponsorships with blockbuster movies such as James Cameron's "Avatar" and "James Bond: Quantum of Solace."

More recently, Coke Zero has engaged target consumers with social media marketing, such as the Coke Zero Facial Profiler, a Facebook-based application that allows users to find their lookalikes around the world using the face-detection industry's most advanced technology.

About The Coca-Cola Company

The Coca-Cola Company is the world's largest beverage company, refreshing consumers with nearly 500 sparkling and still brands. Along with Coca-Cola, recognized as the world's most valuable brand, the Company's portfolio includes 12 other billion dollar brands, including Diet Coke, Fanta, Sprite, Coca-Cola Zero, vitaminwater, POWERADE, Minute Maid and Georgia Coffee. Globally, we are the No. 1 provider of sparkling beverages, juices and juice drinks and ready-to-drink teas and coffees. Through the world's largest beverage distribution system, consumers in more than 200 countries enjoy the Company's beverages at a rate of nearly 1.6 billion servings a day. With an enduring commitment to building sustainable communities, our Company is focused on initiatives that protect the environment, conserve resources and enhance the economic development of the communities where we operate. For more information about our Company, please visit our Web site at www.thecoca-colacompany.com.

Source: The Coca-Cola Company