
Coca Cola As One Of The Most Powerful Corporations In The World

The Coca-Cola Company, an American corporation founded in 1892 and today engaged primarily in the manufacture and sale of syrup and concentrate for Coca-Cola, a sweetened carbonated beverage that is a cultural institution in the United States and a global symbol of American tastes. The company also produces and sells other soft drinks and citrus beverages. With more than 2,800 products available in more than 200 countries, Coca-Cola is the largest beverage manufacturer and distributor in the world and one of the largest corporations in the United States.

Since the early 2000s, the criticisms over the use of Coca-Cola products as well as the company itself, escalated with concerns over health effects, environmental issues, animal testing, economic business practices and employee issues. The Coca-Cola Company has been faced with multiple lawsuits concerning these various criticisms. Due to their name and popularity, I wanted to dive into how despite that, they often face backlash due to questionable practices.

From the early 2000's to the present time Coca-Cola has housed over five CEO's. Could this have any effect on how the company was managed and why many of their practices landed them in hot water? It would be safe to assume those were contributing factors. If I have learned anything throughout my professional career is that leadership accounts for a large amount of an organization's direction. Change in leadership has both positive and negative effects. It can provide new ideas, direction, and leadership style while also giving the public a sense of unstableness, uncertainty and lack of knowledge. Since the CEO is often considered the face of an organization that leads it to the best of its potential, the constant change of that can also provide for unfavorable views. When such a large corporation goes through CEO's in a manner of short years it does not install confidence in many, especially shareholders and investors. Those people want to be certain of the direction their investments will be headed towards. The constant change in leadership certainly does not promote stableness or an appealing company to invest in. As change within an organization often takes time, change in leadership surely has its effects as well. Getting the public accustomed to the changes, as well as employees, shareholders, investors etc. Going through new leadership stops and starts this process on a continuous basis where any direction discussed by the new leaders is often not followed through because the new person in succession has plans of their own to execute, thus creating unfinished goals for the company. Strong, loyal leadership is crucial to any organization, especially a multinational corporation that operates all around the world and is one of the the most recognizable brands.

They have been linked to numerous production of contaminated products in various countries. One of the reported cases caused illness in children in Belgium. They have also been accused of antitrust laws in the European markets, against their competitors PepsiCo, for "using rebate and discounts in the strategies to increase its sales" (The Coca-Cola Company Struggles with Ethical Crisis). In Colombia, Coca-Cola was blamed for discriminatory practices against minority employees. The employees complained that advancement systems placed to hinder them such as performance, payment and promotion evaluations. Those who belong to labor unions are

especially exposed to the mistreatment by Coca-cola, leading as far as death threats.

All of these cases are significant because they draw light to the company's ethical practices, and the length they would go to retain their global superstar status and remain one of the largest corporations in the world. This, however, comes at the risk of their very consumers and employees. Contaminated products can lead to severe health conditions or loss of lives, discrimination within the company is not only unlawful but can result in legal penalties against them and high turnover rates due to unsatisfied employees. It is ethically required that any business organization give its true and fair financial position to the public. However, Coca-Cola compelled bottlers to buy more stock than they required thus inflating their sales and reporting higher profits than the company actually made. This misrepresentation can misguide investors to invest in the company on the hopes that the company is stable in the long run. The company should have made sure that equality was also upheld. Regardless of status, background, sex etc. they have a duty to ensure all employees are being treated fairly, but also open to all the same opportunities regardless of what country they work in. Environmental safe practices should be part of any organization's priorities. Making sure that their products and production of it is never linked to environmental pollution or any shoddy work should be priority.

If Coca-Cola were committed to transparency, I would suggest in the contamination cases they invoke serious quality control measures over their products. This means that no products should leave their production plant if they do not meet the required quality of standards. They should ensure that all laws and regulations of any country in which it has activities, are followed to avoid being sued or accused of malpractice. For this to be effective, they should have international legal advisors in those countries that will ensure all goes according to the law. Coca-Cola needs to join in on initiatives based on Human Rights so working together they can develop and implement corporate responses to human rights issues that affect the business world (Shaw, 2010). They should also be timely to respond to the allegations placed against them to avoid more negative backlash. The company should make public statements within a more gracious time period so they could have had a better handle on media coverage. Coca-Cola thought the issue of contaminated products in Belgium was minor and did not act immediately. This was a very wrong move. Human lives are important whether it's one person involved or the whole community. It makes no difference whether it is children involved or adults. Being such an internationally recognizable brand, Coca Cola needs to make sure that these scandals do not continue to tarnish their image, which in turn effects their revenue (being boycotted). With Universities, towns, regions, and other establishments coming in defense of injustice and unethical practices they must consider how not only is their image effected, their sales, revenue and future opportunities can be hindered due to this. As a large corporate organization they have a duty to themselves, consumers, employees etc. to provide the best products by ethical means.

Lastly, Coca-Cola is one of the most powerful corporations in the world. Its business practices have to be questioned by the consumer to ensure that labor violations are not being committed. It is also their duty to answer any and all questions on unethical practices if they are accused of them. Benefitting off the demise of others should not be apart of their practices. Learning to be more transparent about their functions would be the first step in cleaning their image.