

DEWMOCRACY CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW



dew•moc•ra•cy: Creating the next Mountain Dew product by harnessing the collective intelligence of the brand's passionate fans.

With one user-created beverage successfully launched in 2009 and three more to debut next spring, Mountain Dew is pioneering a unique model for marketing that leverages social media to tap into the enthusiasm of the brand's fans in product development. DEWmocracy turns the traditional brand marketing plan on its head, making it all about brand loyalty rather than customer loyalty.

Launched in late 2007, the first DEWmocracy initiative opened product development up to consumers and asked them to choose the next DEW's flavor, color, name and graphics—and as many as 1 million participated in the process. The result was Voltage, a citrus-charged beverage that came to market in January 2009.

DEWmocracy 2 launched in July 2009. The idea was to give the brand's fans another outlet to express their passion for the brand and to create a robust dialogue with DEW drinkers and to rerun the campaign with more consumer control and by using newly emerged social media tools in the process. The plan was to leverage social media platforms and innovative ideas to take the campaign to the next level.

The result: an initiative that has forged deep engagement with the brand, building up a robust online community of fans and creating more brand evangelists.

The Birth of DEWmocracy

Mountain Dew drinkers are passionate about the brand; on Facebook, for example, Mountain Dew has collected over 619,000 friends to date without advertising, contests or giveaways. So in 2007, Mountain Dew decided to tap into its fans' engagement, along with their creativity and affinity for trying new things, by asking them to become part of a unique experience: Consumers would choose the next Mountain Dew flavor, along with the product's color, name and graphics.

Three finalists were introduced to the market in May 2008: Supernova, Revolution and Voltage. Each included ginseng but had distinct fruity flavors. Voltage, which features a citrus-charged flavor and a distinct deep blue color, was announced as the DEWmocracy winner in August.

Campaign activity was focused on the micro-site, DEWmocracy.com, which created an immersive, interactive gaming experience. It also featured discussion boards, where people initially debated flavor preferences but soon started wide-ranging conversations. The boards became the site's most popular feature—and when the campaign ended and the site shut down, some members even started a message board elsewhere.

Overall engagement in DEWmocracy was incredible—more than 470,000 people cast votes, and overall 1 million people participated in some phase of the process.

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Voltage was launched to market in January, 2009 and has exceeded initial volume projections.

DEWmocracy 2: Uniting Fans Through Increased Engagement and Social Media

In July 2009, Mountain Dew launched the second wave of DEWmocracy, this time harnessing the growing power of social media. And this time social media platforms would allow even greater transparency and participation.

The first DEWmocracy initiative, launched around the same time that social media was coming to life, had discovered that DEW drinkers wanted to connect with each other and dialog with the brand, and to express their passion for the brand. DEWmocracy 2 was poised to take full advantage of the new social media landscape, using Facebook, Twitter, 12seconds.tv and YouTube.

Phase 1 focused on grassroots participation. Phase 2, which is coming to a close, has centered on product creation via online communities. Next year DEWmocracy enters a new phase, with a marketing campaign centered on the three product finalists and, ultimately, the launch of the winning beverage.

Stage 1: From Seven Flavors to Three

A grassroots tour that created more than 222,712 sampling experiences, along with home-tasting kits sent to 50 DEW fanatics, narrowed seven Mountain Dew test flavors down to three finalists in the first month of DEWmocracy.

A team of DEW Labs trucks traveled to 17 markets in 12 states, giving consumers from Chicago to Charlotte the chance to sample the seven flavors. To fit with the “laboratory” theme, each flavor was labeled with a coded number and samples were presented in test tubes. Fans came from miles away to get a taste—and a total of more than 1.5 million people attended the events.

Visitors were encouraged to document their experience in a video booth at the truck stop, describing which flavors they liked or disliked. People were also directed to YouTube, Facebook and Twitter to watch the taste-experience videos and comment on their own experience. The mobile tour drove more than 1,100 fans to the Facebook page during the four-week program.

Participants could vote on site using touch pads, or they could text in their vote later, referring to a card marked with their flavor choice. More than 3,000 tasters texted in a vote.

At the same time, 50 brand fanatics received unique DEW in a Box home-tasting kits. Recipients were selected from among hundreds of brand fans who submitted video clips of up to 12 seconds explaining why they deserved a kit. Home-tasters were asked to

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record themselves sampling the flavors and choosing their favorite, using the flip video camera that came in each kit. This footage was posted to YouTube and Facebook.

The boxes themselves were one-of-a-kind: They unfolded into works of art, each designed by an up-and-coming artist commissioned by Mountain Dew. The artwork was unveiled at a July event in Denver, and included artists such as John Fellows, Jeremy Charles Burns, Delton Demarest, Jolt, Max Kauffman, Scot LeFavor and Kelly Potter.

Three finalists emerged from the grassroots voting and the feedback from brand fanatics.

Stage 2: Online Product Creation

The next step was to create DEW Labs, an online community composed of the brand's most loyal, hard-core fans. To find these brand fanatics, invitations were extended to DEW fans online and by e-mail; a short questionnaire then screened for people who considered DEW their top beverage of choice, drank it at least a few times a week and were social media-savvy.

Each member of the DEW Labs community received samples of the three flavor finalists to prepare for the tasks ahead: forming into three Flavor Nations, then deciding on a color and a final name for their favorite flavor.

“Express Your Flavor”

DEW Labs members had the opportunity to join a Flavor Nation, aligning themselves with their favorite flavor.

The first order of business for each Flavor Nation was to collectively decide how to describe their flavor. Three DEW flavor scientists involved in creating the products provided insight into the process, explaining what went into the flavors and demonstrating how to make each one via video clips.

Based on this briefing, the Flavor Nations came up with three flavor names: No. 231 is Lime Blasted DEW, No. 509 is Punch of Tropical DEW, and No. 493 is Smooth Citrus DEW.

Stage 3: “Shoot Your Shade”

Each Flavor Nation now needed a color that corresponded to their beverage. DEW Labs members received an 18-color palette and a “color pour” video, and were asked to select the three that best matched their flavor.

Then voting was opened up to DEW fans everywhere, who were asked to “Shoot Your Shade” and choose among the nine finalists (three colors for each flavor). People voted for their favorite colors on Facebook, and those votes eventually came to life: Each one

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triggered a shot from a matching paintball gun during a live event conducted in conjunction with Ustream.tv.

The color shot the most at the event was voted the winner: Deep Green for No. 231, Cloudy Red for No. 509 and White Flash for No. 493.

Stage 4: Twitter Race

Finally, each Flavor Nation needed a name for their beverage. Community members thought about words they associated with their flavor and submitted lists of suggestions. After Mountain Dew's legal department vetted the lists, each Flavor Nation chose their three favorite names.

Nation No. 509 was weather-obsessed, coming up with Cyclone, Hurricane and Typhoon. No. 231 chose Outburst, Luminous and Distortion. And No. 493 came up with Rainstorm, Flash and WhiteOut.

Enter Twitter. The nation's DEW fans could get involved in the naming process by becoming followers of their favorite names on Twitter, each headed by Nation-selected leaders—an innovative way to engage brand advocates on this media platform. Proponents of each name were tasked with getting as many followers as possible; the names with the most followers won.

White Out garnered 46 percent of the vote, becoming the winning name for No. 493. Distortion collected a clear majority of votes (54 percent) for No. 231. And No. 509 was christened Typhoon, a narrow winner with 36 percent of the vote.

Stage 4: "Submit Your Vision"

Mountain Dew sent out a challenge to designers, art schools, artists and DEW fans to create a look for the three contending flavors. Entrants had to design a label for the base (green can) Mountain Dew—something with which DEW fans could judge their style. Voting was conducted on Facebook, where consumers narrowed the hundreds of submissions down to 10 designers.

The final decision was handed over to the three Flavor Nations. Members voted for the artist they felt had the sensibility best suited to their product: Ben Stone won for Distortion, Shanea Wisler for Typhoon and Andre Zottolo for White Out. The winners received \$10,000 in prize money along with an Apple MacBook Pro; the Top 10 designers also won MacBook Pros.

The three winners then worked closely with the Flavor Nations and DEW brand teams through conference calls, live online chats and daily feedback forums to come up with three designs unique to each product that will stand out on the shelf.

Stage 5: Creative Juices

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To find the ad wizards who will produce a TV commercial for each Flavor Nation, the process was similar to that of the design challenge. A call went out to small advertising agencies, film students and individuals: Submit a 12-second spot for the base (green can) Mountain Dew that demonstrates your skills.

Entrants uploaded their videos to 12seconds.tv, where DEW fans voted for their favorites, choosing six finalists. Voting ended Dec. 13.

The finalists will now have the opportunity to create short pitch videos for the DEW Labs community, and the Flavor Nations will each select which ad creator they would like to work with in creating a commercial.

The three winners will get a production budget and will work with the Flavor Nations, DEW fans and the DEW brand team to produce each of the three 15-second ads, which will air in the spring when the products hit the marketplace.

Stage 7: What's Next?

In 2010, Mountain Dew will use both social networking and traditional media to conduct a two-tiered product rollout. Consumers will remain involved in all aspects of this process, from advertising to product launch.

Flavor Nations will now get competitive as they prepare to fight for the allegiance of DEW fans. Once their products hit store shelves in April, each Flavor Nation will rally friends, family and the rest of the country to vote for their product. National advertising will support the rallies. The flavor with the most votes will join the permanent DEW family.

Finally, DEW's online community will come up with a launch plan for the winning product. The next permanent member of the Mountain Dew family, created entirely by DEW drinkers, will debut on Labor Day.