

SMART BOOK REVIEW***First in Thirst******How Gatorade Turned the Science of Sweat into a Cultural Phenomenon******Publisher: AMACOM******By Darren Rovell******Review by Jong-Chae (JC) Kim, the Florida State University, a Doctoral Candidate in the Sport Management Program***

First in Thirst, provides detailed information about how Gatorade was born, and includes stories and examples for assessing and evaluating Gatorade's past, present, and future. Author, Darren Rovell, covers many aspects of Gatorade's sport drink business to give readers thorough information. Each chapter is supported by well-structured stories and cases that introduce the readers to a deeper understanding of Gatorade's marketing efforts and popularity.

Two of the most significant and interesting points of the book are 1) the story of the scientifically trusted product and 2) the book's deep look at the business strategies, the sport drink wars, mergers and acquisitions, and the company's history. An overview of significant points captured in this work is highlighted in the following sections.

Ch. 1 – 3: Development & Growth

The first chapter tells about why and how Drs. Robert Cade, Dana Shires, Alex DeQuesada, and Jim Free created Gatorade. In 1965, the University of Florida's football team had serious problems: heat exhaustion and dehydration. The four doctors found a formula to solve the problems. The simple idea of the sport drink (Gatorade) was to replace fluids lost through perspiration.

After the successful test using the entire football team, Gatorade started its second year on the Gators' sideline. In addition, the University of Florida football coaches started using Gatorade throughout the state as a recruiting tool. In 1966, Gatorade was even introduced in a *Miami Herald* article as "a liquid solution that tastes like mint and works like a miracle."

Dr. Cade believed that his drink could become a very profitable success.

And in 1967 the Gatorade formula was sold to the Stokely Van-Camp company, who went on to establish the Gatorade Trust the same year. Gatorade was ready to become a revenue producer. However, Stokely Van-Camp had to figure out how to make Gatorade product tastier.

In 1967, Stokely executives negotiated a \$25,000-a-year deal for Gatorade to be called the official sport drink of the NFL. The contract stated that all NFL teams would have to put coolers on their sidelines and as a result, players used coolers and cups with the Gatorade logo on them.

Further, Stokely considered other markets to be possible revenue sources. For example, one of Gatorade's earliest advertisements appeared in *Playboy*, "Gatorade: It can take care of any kind of thirst you can work up. Any kind." However, this ad was not effective at all. After that, Gatorade was never advertised in *Playboy* again.

Ch. 4 – 6: Sport Marketing

As expected, Gatorade had turned into a blue-chip brand. However, all was not good between Dr. Cade and the University of Florida. Cade was collecting money from Stokely on the royalties from the sales, but the University of Florida was not and subsequently filed suit against the Gatorade Trust and Stokely Van-Camp in 1971. The suit continued until July 1972 when the University of Florida received a 20% percent share of Gatorade's royalties, resulting in a large fortune making its way to Gator Country.

The dumping of the Gatorade cooler on the coach has become a tradition in every state. The Gatorade dunk was born when New York Giants' Jim Burt poured a cooler on his coach, Bill Parcells. A move which has become a traditional victory celebration.

In 1983, Quaker Oats acquired Stokely Van-Camp for \$220 million. In 1984, Quaker Oats began to use the popular "Thirst Aid" campaign, explaining the spirit of Gatorade. In 1988, Quaker opened the Gatorade Sports Science Institute (GSSI). Sales continued to rise under the "Thirst Aid" campaign. By 1990, sport marketing was quickly changing. Specifically, companies were using professional athletes to help sell their products. As a result, in 1991, Michael Jordan signed a \$13.5 million deal: "Be like Mike. Drink Gatorade." Michael Jordan was used as part of Gatorade's development into the international marketplace. Signing the most popular sport athlete in the world could have helped stop the growth of other competitors (e.g., POWERade) in the sport drink market. Later, Gatorade added Peyton Manning, Yao Ming, Derek Jeter, and Mia Hamm creating a "halo effect" through transposition of feeling from an athlete or sporting event to the Gatorade brand.

Ch. 7 – 8: Sport Drink Business & Rules

The Gatorade brand has gone on to dominate the U.S. sports drink market, holding a market share of 83%. This success has flourished because 1) Gatorade had the science behind it to prove to the consumer that Gatorade worked, 2) Gatorade had become part of the athlete's work ethic, and 3) Gatorade executives mastered the strategy of when and where to advertise. For example, The scope of Gatorade expanded even further in 2001 when Quaker merged with PepsiCo.

In the Chapter 8, Rovell introduces readers to the nine Gatorade rules. These principles have helped Gatorade become a dominant brand in the sport drink market. I believe that those rules could be applied to other industries for achieving greater brand equity. The nine rules, including a notable example of each, are:

1. *Make sure your product, service, or brand is unique and know what makes it unique:* After Quaker Oats acquired the Gatorade brand from Stokely Van-Camp, the company opened the Gatorade Sports Science Institute (GSSI) to build up and research the brand.
2. *Never stop researching the marketplace:* Gatorade invests in research to identify their current and future consumers.

3. *Identify drivers of the business and take care of them.* Gatorade uses professional athletes and professional team trainers who influence the sport drink market.
4. *Never stop working to get your next consumer.* Gatorade is interested in the children's market and the Hispanic market.
5. *Packaging counts.* Quaker Oats believed that several types of bottles could influence the success of Gatorade.
6. *Learn from your mistakes.* Gatorade learned important lessons from the failed brand, Gatorade Light.
7. *Seek to connect emotion and passion to the brand.* Throughout the effective ads, Gatorade connects affinity for the brand with consumers.
8. *Stay disciplined.* There were temptations to use the successful brand name in different places and products. However, Gatorade stays firm as the sport drink.
9. *Form smart strategic alliances.* Gatorade put the ESPN logo into its bottles, which had boosted sales.

Ch. 9: Gatorade Critics & Future

Gatorade has prevailed in the sport drink battles through its storied history, its intricate marketing plan, its innovative sales team, and its scientific institute. Each of these aspects have added in a very complex way to making Gatorade one of the strongest sport brands there is. In 2005, Gatorade celebrated the 40th anniversary of its invention. Gatorade is now available in more than 30 flavors and more than 50 countries. Its gross retail sales surpass \$3 billion in the United States alone.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *First in Thirst: How Gatorade Turned the Science of Sweat into a Cultural Phenomenon* is complemented by various stories of the sport drink industry and Gatorade. Readers will get information about how Gatorade created and built a sport drink brand awhile gaining insight into the methods Gatorade used to deal with rival brands. If readers have an interest in sport, business, branding, and/or marketing—the *First in Thirst* is for them.