

# A Semiotic Investigation of RedBull: Culture, Controversy, and Connection

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## Introduction

This paper is made to understand the brand RedBull deeper through the semiotic perspective. Considering RedBull is the main source of energy for kids my age in college it was very interesting to dive into the behind the scenes of the symbols used. Each section will go into detail about which semiotic idea is used and why.

The second section of this paper, titled "RedBull Domination", will go on to explain how much of a marvel Red Bull is in the market of energy drinks. Including the history and background to give an insight for why *RedBull* is so popular and iconic is also very important to seeing the semiotic strategies used. Along with explaining Red Bulls target audience, which can be identified as young urban adolescent teens, sets the scene to the rest of the essay on the marketing strategies.

The third section of this paper, titled "RedBull: The Culture", dives into the marketing strategies of the brand, while giving a history of the founders of the company and why they were able to be so successful throughout all of these years. Talking about things like Mateschitz, the creator, carefully retaining the iconography of the brand, deciding to use its charging bulls untouched. He recognized that a sense of the 'foreign', the exotic, and the quirky would be positive associations for a new energy drink brand.

The fourth section of this paper, titled "The Bulls real target", exposes the deep secret of RedBulls obvious neglect of their own customers wellbeing. In 2015, an advertisement at the University of Michigan stated "**Nobody ever wishes they'd slept more in college.**" RedBull does a lot of research when it comes to their target audiences and college students seem to be the victims of their capitalist feast fest. With their work-load and draining days college students have become the lambs to the slaughter with poor sleep habits affecting their physical health in several ways. This section of my paper will show how it's very successful.

The fifth section of this paper, titled "Evolution of the Bulls", brings on the details about the RedBull logo and how it has evolved over time. The semiotics of this brand is probably the most important piece since it's one of the first things people see. The careful choosing of the colors and images of a brand is not a choice made overnight and is made with extreme careful consideration. This section will give a better understanding behind the reasoning of *RedBulls* marketing and how semiotics were used in order to make it more known.

The sixth section of this paper, titled "Branding the Bull", focuses on how it's been marketed over the years. Taking a stab at one of the most iconic slogans that are seen over billboards and magazines "Redbull gives you wings" is really interesting to see through a semiotic perspective. Referencing the design and logo of the brand show semiotics can be used to give the consumer energy and excitement when either viewing or drinking the product. I will also explain how semiotics are generally used throughout branding and how it applies to RedBull as a whole.

The seventh section of this paper, titled "Redbull give you wings?", is more about the fact that this is an energy drink company. The correlations between Redbull and other energizing brands and even batteries in general is another to be touched on. This section of my paper will discuss how RedBull has marketed its products with the idea that it will "charge" its consumers and provide lasting energy to get yourself through the day with tons of energy.

The eighth section of this paper, titled "Color the Bulls", touches upon how semiotics are used within different colors. It's a well known fact that marketers use a certain type of colors to spark something in it's consumers, Redbull is no exception to this ploy. It's effects on the customers and why they like these certain colors is also discussed.

The ninth section of this paper, titled "Who made that drink?", discusses a brief look into the history of energy drinks in general and why they are so desired world-wide. Giving a broader look into why people like energy drinks and it's certain brands with their rise to popularity. Noting the history of these popular drinks brings up the conversation on how previously they were substitutes for things such as amphetamines.

The tenth section of this paper, titled "Semiotics of advertising and their effects on the energy drink market", addresses how semiotics are used throughout advertising. The tricks and traits are thoroughly described on how they twist and influence the consumer mind. RedBull has used these tricks to their favor and it's positively affected them so that they are able to market their products successfully and grow their business, profits, and influence over consumers as time goes on.

The eleventh section of this paper, titled "The History of Energy Drinks", provides specific dates and times to construct a timeline of the popular energy drinks throughout the world. Not only exclusive to Redbull but a look at the industry of energy drinks. It'll also go into detail about the distinguishing characteristics between the different brands and drinks and how these differences appeal to different consumers and markets.

The conclusion of this paper summarizes the semiotic ideas which are featured in the consideration of the popular energy drink "RedBull" throughout the paper.

## 3.2 RedBull Domination

I want to write about the influence that RedBull has over the energy drink market and how it has dominated the market over the last decade. I plan to focus on the marketing of RedBull and how it has advertised its products over the years in order to become a giant and “dominate” the market. I would like my reader to better understand why RedBull is such an influential brand and how it has used advertising and marketing in order to subconsciously communicate to consumers.

¶.I will write about target audience of RedBull

¶.I will write about the advertising strategies of RedBull

¶.I will write about the environmental concerns of the brand

¶.I will write about the longevity of the brand and how its marketing strategies give the brand a good public image so it is able to continue selling to consumers and making a profit

## 3.3 RedBull: The Culture

I want to write about the advertising of RedBull towards certain audiences and cultures. Throughout its history, RedBull has had a lot of success in marketing and the reason for this is because of their targeting. RedBull has done their research and has decided to use more eco-friendly means to produce and promote their products which have had an effect on their sales and profits. From the looks of it, they have researched modern day culture in general as well as today's social setting and have successfully appealed to many of today's millennials and progressives. They have also created a culture of “adrenaline-junkies” and athletes who use their social media platforms to advertise the product to further spread the name.

¶.I will write about the athletes who represent the brand RedBull and RedBull endorsements

¶.I will write about economic concerns of the brand and what they have done in order to benefit the environment and promote their product

¶.I will talk some about the culture surrounding the brand RedBull and why people associate the brand with “living on the edge” and just generally having fun in life

## 3.4 The Bulls Real Target

I want to write about how RedBull has specifically targeted college students throughout this section. As previously mentioned, RedBull does a lot of research when it comes to their target audiences and college students are the perfect target audience. This is because of the work-load and draining days that college students face. This section of my paper will dive into why college students are targeted and why it is so successful.

¶.I will discuss why college students are a good target audience for RedBull

¶.I will discuss the marketing that goes towards college students

¶.I will discuss why college students are more susceptible to RedBull advertising when compared with other audiences

¶.I will discuss the habits that college students tend to have that lead to a stronger desire for energy drinks and specifically RedBull

### 3.5 Evolution of the Bulls

I want to write about the RedBull logo and how it has evolved and changed over time. This is an important factor to consider when researching the semiotics of this brand because the logo is one of the first things that people can identify when thinking about RedBull. I plan to discuss the meaning of the logo as well as how it has subconsciously influenced consumers over the years.

¶.I want to discuss the actual components of the logo

¶.I plan on discussing the changes that the logo has seen over the years

¶.I want to discuss the meaning of the logo and why it was chosen

¶.I want to briefly dive into the history behind the logo

### 3.6 Branding the Bull

I want to discuss how Redbull has been branded and marketed over the years. One of my sources will be extremely useful for this portion of the project because it will directly explain how RedBull has been branded and how semiotics are used when branding a product. I will also explain how semiotics are generally used throughout branding and how it applies to RedBull as a whole.

¶.Discuss how Redbull is branded and how semiotics are present throughout its branding

¶.Discuss how Redbull has created a culture rather than responding to a pre-existing culture

¶.Discussing the color, language, and shapes that have have been used throughout RedBulls branding and how they have helped it to become such a successful brand

¶.Discuss the layers of the brand. This means that I will not only look at the surface layer of the brand, but I will also speak about the meanings of its semiotic traits.

### 3.7 RedBull Gives you Wings?

I want to write about the marketing aspects of Redbull that relate to it being an energy drink. There are many correlations between Redbull and other energizing brands and even batteries in general. This section of my paper will discuss how RedBull has marketed its products with the idea that it will “charge” its consumers and provide lasting energy to get yourself through the day with tons of energy.

¶.Introduce and discuss the tagline “RedBull gives you Wings”

¶.Discuss the concept of transferable energy between the can and the consumer

¶.Discuss the relationship between energy and power

¶.Discuss the design of the can and how it correlates with energizing its consumers

¶.Discuss the relationship between RedBull and other companies such as Duracell to show how it is marketed in order to subconsciously convince consumers that it will energize them

### 3.8 Color the Bulls

I want to write about the colors that are involved with marketing RedBull. There are links to semiotics and colors, so this portion of the paper will discuss the colors involved with the branding RedBull and its effects on consumers when choosing an energy drink.

¶ I will discuss the colors of the RedBull logo

¶ I will discuss the semiotics of colors in general

¶ I will discuss why the colors of the logo and brand were chosen in semiotic terms

¶ I will discuss what the brand would be like if the colors were different

¶ I will discuss the genius of why the colors of Redbull were chosen and why it convinces consumers to purchase it over other energy drinks

### 3.9 Who Made that Drink?

This section of the paper will discuss different energy drinks and their producers. It will not only be a present description of today's popular energy drinks, but it will also discuss the history of these drinks. This section will also have content describing the origin of energy drinks and how previous substitutes such as amphetamines were replaced with caffeine and energy drinks.

¶ I will discuss the origin of energy drinks

¶ I will discuss previous substitutes for energy drinks

¶ I will discuss why energy drinks and caffeine were originally used

¶ I will discuss the history of energy drinks

### 3.10 Semiotics of advertising and their effects on the energy drink market

I will discuss how semiotics are used in advertising in all kinds of markets across the world. I will then use this information to discuss how semiotics are used within the energy drink market and how red bull fits in. I will also discuss the semiotics of other energy drinks and their branding and compare it with the advertising and branding of RedBull.

¶ I Will discuss the semiotics of advertising

¶ I Will discuss how semiotics are used within the energy drinks market

¶ I will look into the advertising and semiotics of other energy drinks

¶ I will compare other brands advertising and semiotics with RedBull

¶ I will explain how RedBull has become so successful with their advertising and marketing

### 3.11 The History of Energy Drinks

In this section of the paper I will discuss the history of energy drinks as a whole. This will not only be about RedBull, but it will also include other brands and energy drinks. It will almost be like a timeline of energy drinks and how they have evolved and changed over time.

¶ I will discuss the history of RedBull

¶ I will discuss the history of energy drinks in general

¶ I will talk about how energy drinks used to be made and how they are made today

¶ I will talk about the significance of energy drinks in todays life

¶ I will talk about why RedBull is such a prominent brand and a major competitor in the energy drink market

### 3.12 Conclusion

In this paper, I did my best to relate some ideas of significance from the realm of semiotics to a relatively small number of phenomena that are associated with the popular energy drink RedBull. The particular semiotic concepts appropriated for the purpose of marketing and success in business can be seen in the following list, which summarizes the discussions featured in the various sections:

- Targeting audiences and certain markets with advertising and branding. Advertisements were often used to appeal to today's modern generations and progressives. For example, certain strategies such as more eco-friendly products were used and ended up raising public approval of the brand which led to more sales and more profits.
- Culture. The culture surrounding RedBull is very unique and distinguishable from other products and cultures. Red Bull appeals to people who want to "live on the edge" or people like college students who need energy throughout the day to complete their many assignments. RedBull is basically a remedy to these problems for college students and appeals to "adrenaline-junkies" through the extreme advertising and presence on the internet and social media.

- The colors involved with marketing RedBull. Bright colors like red and yellow are used in Red Bulls branding. These colors are scientifically proven to make people more energetic and excited about the things that they are doing, and because they are used in the branding of RedBull, it is used to associate the brand with energy and excitement.
- The RedBull logo. The bulls are used to represent power and strength which subconsciously makes the consumer feel like RedBull will give them strength and make them more powerful. Strength and power are also correlated with energy which is what the drink provides for its consumers.
- The evolution of RedBull. Over the years you can see how the logo and brand changes with the times, and as time goes on, the brand becomes more progressive and the culture surrounding it grows. As the brand grows over time, you can see the semiotic characteristics develop and grow.
- One of the strongest forms of advertising for RedBull are their sponsors and athletes. There are so many athletes around the world who place the RedBull logo on their equipment or drink RedBull in order to spread the word that they are being “powered” or “fueled” by it, which influences consumers to buy it because celebrities, athletes, and talented people from all around the world are drinking it.