

Step 1 - Competitor Scan

Category Chosen : F&B - 'Zero Sugar Carbonated Beverages'

Brand Chosen :

Diet Coke

Category Overview

The Zero sugar beverage category in India, in spite of its rapid growth remains under-communicated from a branding perspective. While more and more customers are making the switch to zero sugar variants, most brands continue to treat their zero sugar options as silent alternatives to their regular, well promoted, products.

As a result the communication around these beverages feel strictly functional, sporadic and underdeveloped with very few brands actively building a unique personality for their products.

This scan focuses on popular products in this category that are being promoted actively, either through standalone identities or through the master brand narratives.

Brand Analysis

Diet Coke

Diet Coke has established a distinct personality and a visual identity that is different from its master brand CocaCola. Its communication leans towards a design forward, lifestyle led aesthetic that positions itself as modern and relevant to target the youth. However, in spite of leading the category Diet Coke's communication feels restrained leaving it's relevance untapped.

The brand engages very little with real time cultural moments, local youth subcultures and participatory content. As a result, in spite of being aspirational and relevant it does not fully leverage its potential cultural relevance and integration.

Pepsi Black

Pepsi communicates its zero sugar variant interchangeably with its regular product presenting Zero sugar as an equal alternative rather than distinct proposition. The

messaging emphasizes preference without making the consumer change his relationship with the brand.

While this approach normalizes the consumption of zero sugar, it limits the variant's ability to have its own identity and emotional connect with the consumers.

As a result choosing the Black variant mostly becomes a functional choice and not one driven by brand preference.

7UP Zero

7UP Zero is talked about sporadically within the master brand's social spaces. The Zero sugar variant is positioned as a guilt free variant of the familiar product, relying on health based choices instead of emotional storytelling. Due to its irregular visibility the product lacks a core narrative and relies solely on its benefits and its main brand personality.

Paper Boat Zero

Paper Boat has developed standalone communication for its zero sugar range. Its storytelling places the product in familial, nostalgic and socially grounded settings such as friends and family gatherings. The tone is calm, inclusive and warm targeting a slightly older demography.

This positions the product as a taste and familiarity based choice rather than an aspirational or culturally relevant one in the youth psyche.

Key Observations

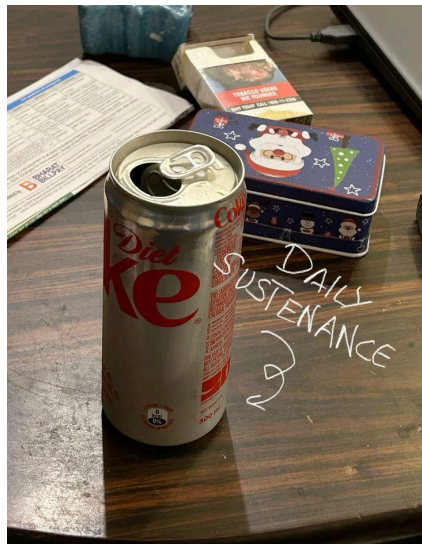
- The zero sugar carbonated beverage category is a largely undercommunicated category in India, with most brands treating zero sugar variants as a secondary feature.
- Zero sugar beverages are being positioned with more functional terms instead of cultural ones.
- Most brands integrate zero sugar communication within their master brand messaging, resulting in low distinctiveness and limited emotional recall.
- In spite of the youth having the largest market contribution, there is minimal investment in participatory content and youth culture across the category.
- Diet Coke stands out as the only brand attempting to build a distinct and youth centric identity for its product. However its communication remains largely

aesthetic driven and curated instead of engaging more wholeheartedly with youth culture and behaviour.

Communication Gap Identified

Despite growing awareness and popularity of zero sugar beverages, the category lacks a brand that confidently positions zero sugar as an integral part of modern youth culture and daily self expression. Zero sugar continues to be positioned as a functional alternative and a healthier choice rather than a confident lifestyle statement.

While Diet Coke has taken initial steps towards building a distinct and youth-oriented identity, there remains a clear opportunity to claim deeper cultural relevance by embedding the product into real, everyday moments, behaviours and events that define contemporary youth in India. The conversations exist - but are untapped.



Step 2 - One month Communication Strategy

Campaign Idea

“ JUST THIS / & Diet Coke ”

This campaign is designed from the insight that most meaningful moments in people’s lives aren’t dramatic or aspirational. They’re mundane, fleeting and personal. Often they’re simply “Just this.”

The campaign aims to position Diet Coke as a cultural companion to the varied everyday realities of the Indian youth. The phrase “Just This” serves as the emotional connect that encourages participatory behaviour from the consumers while “& Diet CoKe” gives the brand a quiet entry into the personal moments to form a lasting association.

Also the ampersand helps the brand to visually coexist with the moment while being aesthetically modern and minimal to avoid appearing overstated and forced - which elicits immediate rejection from the youth.

Key Message

“Some moments aren’t special on the surface - They’re “**Just This**” - Mundane but personal.

“**& Diet Coke**” witnesses these as a constant companion.

Primary Platform

Instagram

Platform wise Execution

1. Instagram

a. Instagram Filter

An instagram filter sits at the core of the campaign establishing the visual aesthetic and the tone for the larger campaign. People will click pictures with their Diet Coke cans with a mundane activity in the background with the filter on.

Filter Design

- A greyscale tone with filmgrains to bring a cinematic quality & sharpness.
- Selective retention of the red hues to highlight Diet Coke's visual identity.
- Minimal Typography Overlay

Text Format

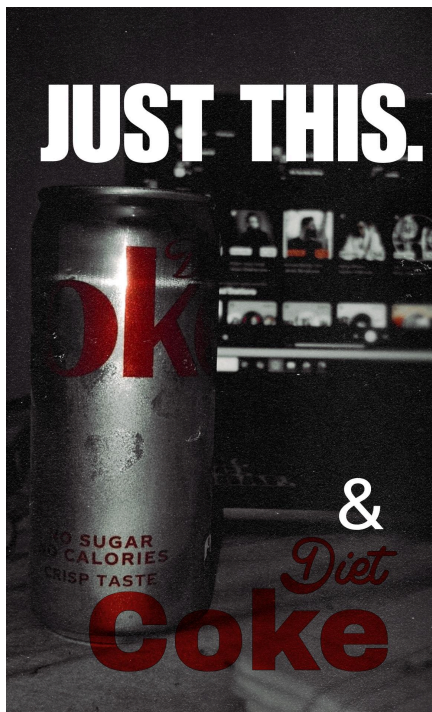
“Just this _____”

“ & Diet Coke”

Examples

- “Just this (image of a late dinner) - & Diet Coke”
- “Just this (image of a recording studio) - & Diet Coke”
- “Just this (image of a football turf) - & Diet Coke”
- “Just this (image of a college hostel gathering) - & Diet Coke”
- “Just this (image of an excel sheet) - & Diet Coke”

Sample :



b. **Collaborations** (Chronologically preceding a.)

To soft launch the campaign, the brand collaborates with select cultural contributors that won't be the biggest in terms of numbers but have huge respect in the scenes they are part of.

Execution style

- No in your face endorsement language or important announcements via the post
- People share unpolished moments from their real environments
- The campaign phrase is subtly used in the caption

Examples

- Khalid Walid uploads a picture of a streetwear fit holding a can of diet coke with the caption "Just this fit & Diet Coke"
- Yungsta uploads a picture of his mic in a recording studio with his mic with a diet coke can in the background with the caption "Just this unreleased music & my Diet Coke."
- Kartik Kher shares a cellphone picture of his photography gear with a can in the background "Just this gear check with Diet Coke".

c. **Brand Page Content**

Diet Coke India's official Instagram page

- Reposting select user generated content with the filter
- Post aesthetic and relatable video reels with the filter
- Minimal captions - no explanations

2. **X (Twitter)**

A version of the campaign that speaks through the passionate users engaging with their respective fandoms

Execution

- Fans showing engagement with their particular fandoms with Diet Coke
- For example : a) People sharing a picture of the television with an Indian Cricket match going on with a diet coke can in their hands. Text : Just this & Diet Coke.

3. Linkedin

A version of the campaign which positions the product in corporate spaces

Execution

- People share raw and spontaneous pictures of their office laptops, Zoom meetings, clocks showing late working hours, lunch tiffins or recreational rooms with a can of diet coke in the foreground with the text : “Just this & Diet Coke”
- These posts will be slightly more text heavy to suit the platform
- People will talk about how diet cokes accompany their corporate lives and how they look forward to it.

Campaign Duration

The campaign is designed to unfold over 1 month following a logic flow to emulate an organic spread across social media.

Week 1

The campaign is soft launched through seemingly **unconnected & unpolished posts by different young cultural contributors** posting pictures with Diet Coke cans. The campaign isn't formally announced yet.

Objective :

To organically seed the language within the culture before amplifying it.

Week 2

The instagram filter is launched facilitating the participation of a wider audience. Users are encouraged to share their personal moments and the brand starts reposting some UGC.

Objective :

Democratize the campaign and encourage low effort participation

Week 3

The campaign cascades into **other social media** to capture even more varied settings and situations. Here the campaign explains itself better.

Objective :

Demonstrate the adaptability of the campaign and through it the positioning of the product across different life contexts

Week 4

Rather than introducing new elements the last week is used for continuity and consolidation. The brand starts **curating and reposting select content** from across the month and across the platforms.

Objective :

Allowing the campaign to settle naturally and positioning it as an ongoing cultural expression instead of a time bound campaign.

Conclusion

“ Just This / & Diet Coke “ - Positions the brand as a quiet and aesthetic companion within everyday life. By allowing moments to lead & brand to follow, the campaign strengthens Diet Coke’s cultural relevance while remaining minimal, authentic & contemporary.
