

Executive Summary

Starbucks captures people who are on the go into a slow and relaxing European lifestyle. With the potential to capture customers, Howard Schultz brought back the café late. This was gourmet coffee introduced to America. Through tradition, advancement, rhetoric of advertising, growth of demand for gourmet coffee, customers become loyal to a Starbucks Nation. Within this nation, customers are able to spend as much time as they want, either reading a paper, or surfing the web. Starbucks customers are also allowed to enjoy its natural-looking habitat. If customers have suggestions to improve Starbucks, they are able to input their own ideas on the Starbucks website.

As mentioned before, Starbucks customers try to enjoy a slow life. However, those who do not have time to attempt a European lifestyle live the American way of Dunkin Donuts: constantly on the run. America, is also a unit as it is represented in commercials showing us that we as a whole rely on Dunkin. Dunkin Donuts also mocks this European lifestyle that Starbucks attempts to imitate by ridiculing Starbucks' names for drinks such as a simple tall mocha. The Dunkin Donuts site alone promotes American activity with such activities on their website such as contests.

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Starbucks has been one of the major suppliers of coffee to the American public for several years. The store prides itself on selling the freshest coffee for the most reasonable price possible, which turns out to be some of the most expensive coffee out there.

After reading the two articles assigned for our RPW 215 class and researching Starbucks' most recent tactics, it is evident that Starbucks still employs some of the same rhetorical tactics that it did almost a decade ago when these articles were written. For example, Starbucks sells not just coffee but a "natural" atmosphere which contradicts the city setting where most of the stores are located.

Starbucks' attempts to save the environment have gone under much scrutiny and have raised several questions about the true intent of the company. However, the company still does extremely well and has several loyal customers. Even with scrutiny from several groups and individuals, Starbucks' rhetorical tactics have still made it a successful business.

Starbucks Sets the Stage

Creating an Atmosphere of Authenticity

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Starbucks has been around since 1971 in Seattle, Washington. Since then, they have grown to over 16,000 stores in over 40 countries. Their mission statement is “to establish Starbucks as the premier purveyor of the finest coffee in the world while maintaining [their] uncompromising principles as [they] grow.” Greg Dickinson argues that Starbucks’ “claim to authenticity made by the coffee itself is further reinforced by the rituals surrounding the buying and drinking of coffee.”

While Starbucks wants to sell the finest coffee in the world, Dickinson says that they are really selling an authentic experience. He says that the only reason customers believe it is an authentic experience is because of the rituals they have learned (and that Starbucks has taught them) on how to drink coffee. This question of authenticity then raises these further questions that will be addressed in this report.

1. Is every store the same?

Is there a specific way that baristas are trained to perform transactions? Is the décor the same throughout every store? Are there large or small differences?

2. How does the décor of Starbucks make it feel “authentic?”

Greg Dickinson talks about how authenticity makes customers feel like individuals. Paula Mathieu touches on this subject when she says that the wide range of beverages available make it feel like the customer is the only one who orders that specific drink. Does the natural feel of Starbucks, using the greens and browns, make it authentic?

3. How does Starbucks keep its customers coming back?

Is it the personalization that Starbucks offers with its variety of drinks? Does the décor make a difference? Does Starbucks cater to a niche market, one that Dunkin Donuts and McDonald’s cannot reach?