

Thought-leadership Piece

Client: Celsius Holdings, Inc.



Gen Z Asked for Better. We're Here to Answer.

In recent years, sugar-sweetened beverages have become a significant contributor to added sugar intake among America's younger generation. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately two-thirds of U.S. adolescents consume at least one sugar drink per day, while these beverages account for the largest portion of added sugars in their diets. Despite rising awareness of health and nutrition balance, many products marketed toward younger consumers continue to contain excessive sugar levels, often under claims of being "natural" or "enhanced". This pattern reflects a broader structural issue related to the whole beverage industry, where convenience and taste, in other words, sales and profits, are prioritized over long-term public outcomes. And yet, until today, we still allow "energy" to mean over 40 grams of sugar in a can. As the conversation around wellness intensifies and our customers begin to call out for a world better for their well-being, it is critical to recognize how beverage choices impact not only individual lifestyles but also the generational health landscape.

This is more than an isolated dietary concern. It is a public health challenge that affects the next generation disproportionately. Studies have linked excessive added sugar consumption to increased risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, which could occur in the early stage of life. While Gen Z consumers express stronger interest in health, wellness, and functional ingredients, the market could possibly fail to provide a clear and credible response. Instead, it leaves the consumers searching

through vague health claims and misleading labels and trying to find what they actually need. However, the burden of discernment should not fall on teenagers analyzing ingredient lists. It should fall on us – on the brands that shape what ends up on ourselves.

At Celsius, we recognized early that the market didn't need another typical energy drink – it needed a better one. That is why our products are formulated without sugar, artificial preservatives, or synthetic stimuli. We remain committed to ingredient integrity as a core part of our brand promise, and we built a brand around clean ingredients, functional benefits, and transparency, because we believe consumers should never have to choose between performance and wellness. Our identity has always been closely tied to fitness culture and active lifestyles, resonating what Gen Z values most in what they consume. Earlier this year, we took a step further by acquiring Alani Nu, a brand with strong resonance among health-conscious women. This move extends our commitment to the better-for-you beverage space and strengthens our ability to serve a wider community seeking function without compromise.

We don't need more labels that say “natural” while hiding 40 grams of sugar. We don't need more formulas that promise performance but ignore what people actually want – clarity, simplicity, and long-term well-being, along with great flavors. At Celsius, we are not here to wait and follow. We've built our business by challenging the way this industry operates, and we will keep doing that, because better-for-you shouldn't be the exception. It should be what consumers can expect—clearly, confidently, and consistently.

References:

Company Materials

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Online Resources:

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- Martin CB, Wambogo EA, Ahluwalia N, Ogden CL. Nonalcoholic beverage consumption among adults: United States. 2015–2018. NCHS Data Brief, no 376. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db376.htm>
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- “Gen Z: The Sober Curious Generation” *Mintel*, Feb 20, 2025. <https://www.mintel.com/insights/food-and-drink/gen-z-sober-curious-generation/>
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