

Media, Sports, Athletes, and the Health of Children

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"Image is nothing, thirst is everything." This is a slogan used by the soft drink Sprite. It tells a consumer not to buy a product because of the labeling, packaging, or the way it is presented, but to instead buy it because it tastes good. This seems to be an honest and open statement, not what you would expect to hear in an advertisement. Ironically though, just before this slogan flashes on the screen, [Kobe Bryant](#) and Grant Hill, two of the NBA's rising stars, are shown talking about how wonderful Sprite is. This slogan contradicts what the rest of the advertisement says, and it contradicts what the advertisement industry tries to do in general. The use of sports icons in advertisements for the food industry, especially those directed towards children, is far from uncommon. Children are led to believe that the health and abilities of the superstars in the commercials will be transferred to them if they use a certain product. This is detrimental to children.

Commercials advertising food can be seen on television all the time. The advertising industry is always trying to make one food look better than another does. Often, using professional athlete endorsements does this. At any given time there is at least two professional sports seasons in [session](#). By using current stars and heroes from those sports to promote their foods, companies try to increase their sales.

In the Sprite commercial, Bryant and Hill drink Sprite both on and off the court. After drinking the Sprite, they get a burst of energy, and are able to blow by the opponent and score. A child who is watching television will recognize the two athletes, and tend to watch the rest of the commercial. After seeing how well...

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... bad. "Milk Mustache" advertisements are one example of how professional athletes use their influence upon children in a positive way. Milk is an important part of our diet. The milk mustache really catches the eye, and makes the viewer pay attention. This kind of advertisement is beneficial to the children that see it. It promotes a drink that is an integral part of growing children as well as athletes. Unfortunately, the majority of commercials involving athletes are of the latter kind.

Children look up to the superstars of today's sports world. They are the children's heroes. What is presented to the viewer in commercials, is misleading. Sports stars need to be more conscious of what they are endorsing. To be an athlete, healthy eating is a must. The advertisements and professional athletes today, do not promote or support this.

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