



Soda Politics: Taking on Big Soda (and Winning)

Dr. Marion Nestle

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Sodas are astonishing products. Little more than flavored sugar-water, these drinks cost practically nothing to produce or buy, yet have turned their makers--principally Coca-Cola and PepsiCo--into a multibillion-dollar industry with global recognition, distribution, and political power. Billed as "refreshing," "tasty," "crisp," and "the real thing," sodas also happen to be so well established to contribute to poor dental hygiene, higher calorie intake, obesity, and type-2 diabetes that the first line of defense against any of these conditions is to simply stop drinking them. Habitually drinking large volumes of soda not only harms individual health, but also burdens societies with runaway healthcare costs.

So how did products containing absurdly inexpensive ingredients become multibillion dollar industries and international brand icons, while also having a devastating impact on public health?

In *Soda Politics*, Dr. Marion Nestle answers this question by detailing all of the ways that the soft drink industry works overtime to make drinking soda as common and accepted as drinking water, for adults and children. Dr. Nestle, a renowned food and nutrition policy expert and public health advocate, shows how sodas are principally miracles of advertising; Coca-Cola and PepsiCo spend billions of dollars each year to promote their sale to children, minorities, and low-income populations, in developing as well as industrialized nations. And once they have stimulated that demand, they leave no stone unturned to protect profits. That includes lobbying to prevent any measures that would discourage soda sales, strategically donating money to health organizations and researchers who can make the science about sodas appear confusing, and engaging in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities to create goodwill and silence critics. *Soda Politics* follows the money trail wherever it leads, revealing how hard Big Soda works to sell as much of their products as possible to an increasingly obese world.

But *Soda Politics* does more than just diagnose a problem--it encourages readers to help find solutions. From Berkeley to Mexico City and beyond, advocates are successfully countering the relentless marketing, promotion, and political protection of sugary drinks. And their actions are having an impact - for all of the hardball and softball tactics the soft drink industry employs to maintain the status quo, soda consumption has been flat or falling for years. Health advocacy campaigns are now the single greatest threat to soda companies' profits. *Soda Politics* provides readers with the tools they need to keep up pressure on Big Soda in order to build healthier and more sustainable food systems.

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