

GRASSROOTS MARKETING

ASPIRE Beverages Lesson Plan



TIME REQUIRED

3 - 50 Minute Classes (PowerPoint/Preparing Project)

1- 50 Minute class (Presentations)

OBJECTIVES

Performance Indicators

- Explain types of advertising media
- Describe word-of-mouth channels used to communicate with targeted audiences
- Explain the nature of direct marketing channels

ACTIVITIES + ASSESSMENT

Bell Ringer

- What types of traditional advertising do companies use?

Classroom Activity

- Grassroots Marketing Plan for ASPIRE Beverages: Planning, Pitch and Implementation

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

SLIDE 1: Traditional Advertising

Have students brainstorm different ways that companies currently advertise- what are advantages and disadvantages to these types of advertising?

Potential Student Answers:

- Billboards
- Television Commercials
- Radio Commercials
- Social Media

SLIDE 2: ASPIRE Beverages Overview

See what students know about ASPIRE Beverages. Read “Building the ASPIRE Brand” (page 3 of ASPIRE Beverage Company Brand Identity Guidelines). Give an overview of ASPIRE Beverages and the health advantages over other sports drinks. Use table comparison from ASPIRE Beverages.

KEY POINTS:

- A brand is a promise and an experience.
- No branding, no differentiation. No differentiation, no long-term profitability.
- Building a new sports drink brand will require a highly creative, strategic, and cost effective approach.
- Build the ASPIRE brand with an inspirational sense of purpose that people can get behind.
- Strive to connect and compel.
- Primary objectives in building the ASPIRE brand

**This also could be an opportunity to do a blind taste test of sports drink.

SLIDE 3: Grassroots Definition

Talk about the definition of grassroots marketing and how it differs from traditional/mass media marketing. Read “Marketing and Communication Philosophy” (page 5 of ASPIRE Beverage Company Brand Identity Guidelines).

Grassroots Definition: *For a developing business, the goal of grassroots marketing is to put the new product on top of the consumer’s mind. This is a cost effective way to involve themselves into the community. ASPIRE Beverages does this by using affinities.*

Grassroots Marketing differs from Traditional Marketing in that it enables getting “bottles in-hand” and product sampling which is critical for a new food or beverage product.

All forms of marketing focus on “impressions” – the number of times the consumer is exposed to the product and/or brand. Grassroots marketing tends to have a higher quality but lower quantity of “impressions” when compared to traditional marketing.

KEY POINTS:

- Most people have 3 common affinities (a natural liking of something)
 - **Community:** Where they live
 - **Craft:** What they do
 - **Cause:** What organizations and initiatives do they care about? Where do they volunteer?
- Partnerships with like-minded organizations and events with a strong sense of community is a key driver of grass roots marketing
- By associating the brand with potential customer’s affinities ASPIRE improves opportunities to gain interest, trial, and purchase.
- ASPIRE must also use social media to expand their geographical reach
- To build the brand they must communicate:
 - Constantly
 - Clearly
 - Consistently

SLIDE 4: 3 C’s of Consumer Affinity

Discuss the 3 C’s - Community, Craft, and Cause (page 5 of ASPIRE Beverage Company Brand Identity Guidelines).

Question prompts: Why are these things so important to the ASPIRE Business Model? What are connections we can make within our local community that would develop these 3 C’s?

Possible Responses: City (Community); Youth Baseball, Local Theater, Art Programs (Craft); Boys and Girls Club, Food Pantry (Cause)

SLIDE 5: Article Response

Have students read the article: ASPIRE Beverage Co. Fuels Growth with Unique Grassroots Marketing that Taps Student Athletes. <http://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/content/view/print/1199898>

On the bottom of the article have students respond to the questions posted in the PowerPoint (slide 5).

SLIDE 6: Activity

In groups of 3-4, students should develop a presentation pitch to bring ASPIRE into their school/community. (Refer to Presentation Rubric for content.)

RESOURCES/MATERIALS

1. PowerPoint
2. Article: <http://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/content/view/print/1199898>
3. Aspire Beverage Company Brand Identity Guidelines (Pages 3-5)
4. Student Presentation Rubric

GRASSROOTS MARKETING

ASPIRE Beverages Presentation Rubric

CONTENT	EXCELLENT	PARTIALLY COMPLETE	MISSING
Community Affinity	A description of the local community and explanation behind your descriptions	A description of the local community but lacks explanation	No description of local community
Craft Affinity	A description of activities within the community that are important and explanation of choices	A description of activities within the community	No activities described that are important to the community
Cause Affinity	Organizations that are important within the community and initiatives of these organizations	Organizations that are important within the community are listed	No organizations or fundraisers are explained
GRASSROOTS PLAN			
Timeline of Activities	Specific dates are considered for suggested events and promotional activities included	Dates of community activities suggested but did not consider promotional timeline	No dates suggested for activities
Promotional Activities	Created 3 examples of promotional materials to use for community outreach	Created 1-2 examples of promotional materials to use for community outreach	No promotional activities created
Community Outreach Activities	Explained 2 community outreach activities that can be completed (1 in school and 1 in the community)	Explained 1 community outreach activity within the community or school	No community outreach activities provided
PRESENTATION			
Visuals	PowerPoint is created using bullet points, pictures and theme	PowerPoint is created but uses paragraphs; missing pictures	No visual is created for the presentation
Professional Appearance	Business professional attire for presentation	Business Casual attire for presentation	No professional attire for presentation
Preparation	Members of the group are prepared to present and know their material; rarely reference notes	Members of the group have to reference notes for their presentation	Students are unprepared, presentation does not flow.



ASPIRE BEVERAGE COMPANY

2015 Brand Identity Guidelines

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Building the ASPIRE Brand

Today, brands are more important than at any time in history. They are not simply created, they are built and *earned*. A brand is comprised of much more than simply an iconic logo and clever tag line. A brand is a promise and an experience. It's more about the walk than the talk. Branding is essential. It's quite simple... No branding, no differentiation. No differentiation, no long-term profitability. Ultimately, our brand will become the most valuable asset of our business.

The world has changed. We are now living in the age of innovation, disruption, uprisings, consumer “buzz” and cultural “movements.” With two dominant sports drink brands and a host of new entrants fighting for attention, building a strong brand will be a challenge that requires a highly creative, strategic and cost-effective approach. To build the ASPIRE brand in our ultra-competitive market, we will require a strategy that ignites a mission-driven cultural movement to set us apart. We'll need a breakthrough.

Brands can rally people for or against something. Brands can activate a passionate group of people to do something like changing a well-established behavior or industry. With our strategy to build a cultural movement, we will build the ASPIRE brand with an inspirational sense of purpose that people can get behind. The “why” of our brand will connect with and compel millions of people to join our mission. Our grass-roots, cultural movement strategy will drive kinetic growth for our brand.

We must always strive to *connect* and *compel*. To effectively connect with consumers and compel them to purchase our products, we will *connect* our brand with the most common affinities of consumers, such as where they live (i.e. Edina) and what they do (i.e. youth hockey), in an effort to *compel* their interest and loyalty. With connections to communities, interests and causes, we will win the hearts and minds of consumers. Our brand will be built in a manner that enables a personal, passionate connection with consumers. Our marketing communications will be delivered constantly, clearly and consistently.

The primary objectives in building the ASPIRE brand are:

- Tell our story constantly and consistently
- Communicate our key messages clearly
- Earn and maintain credibility
- Connect with consumers on an emotional level (affinity)
- Compel purchase decisions
- Encourage and reward consumer loyalty

To achieve greatness, we must constantly listen and learn to understand the wants and needs of consumers. We will integrate our core brand strategies throughout every point of our company, externally and internally. Our brand is an experience – and a promise that is made and delivered.

The ASPIRE brand resides within the hearts and minds of our customers, clients, and prospects. It is the sum total of their experiences and perceptions, some that we can shape and influence, and some that we can't. Brands are not launched overnight, they are built in time with continuous effort.

We will invest time, capital and resources to research, refine and build our brand. It will serve as the foundation and ultimately be the greatest asset of our business.

Our Vision

Our vision is to become the sports drink of choice for all athletes. We will be widely known by consumers as a premium, healthy alternative to the existing brands. We will lead a movement to remove junk food and drinks from sports. We will be admired and respected as a leader in the sports and beverage industries – and in the communities where we work and live.

Our Values

We are committed to encouraging and enabling the unique aspirations of all people. We regard our employees and A Team members as family, and our customers and partners as friends. We believe that greatness is born of aspiration rather than achievement. We will build our business with unrelenting passion, purpose and integrity.

Our Mission

We make products that are designed to improve the health and performance of athletes. We conduct research and development as a means, not an end. We dare to go where others have failed. We innovate with the humility to see things as they are and the audacity to imagine how they could be. We are warriors, driven to serve the public good. We are students of history and agents of change. We reject complacency, break through barriers, and challenge the status quo. We do what's right, not what's easy.

Our Strategy

We aspire to greatness. We will work harder and smarter than our competition. We will develop and grow our business by maintaining a constant focus on the needs and interests of our core consumers and customers. We will work in partnership with like-minded businesses and organizations that share our commitment to improving the health and performance of athletes. Our success will be the result of sound planning and preparation, diligent execution, ethical leadership and a commitment to greatness.

Marketing and Communications Philosophy (the three Cs of consumer affinity)

It is our belief that the best way to connect our company and brands with the hearts and minds of consumers is to associate our brand with their affinities. One simple method to determine the affinities of a consumer, particularly students, is to look at the names, logos and images that are prominent on their clothing, such as Edina Hockey, Littleton Soccer, Plano Football and Howard County Lacrosse. We believe that most people have three common affinities:

- 1) **Community** – Where do they live? Where do they go to school?
- 2) **Craft** – What do they do? What are their favorite activities?
- 3) **Cause** – What organizations and initiatives do they care about? Where do they volunteer?

For this reason, we seek to create partnerships and participate at events where there is a strong sense of community, craft and/or cause. Organizations and events that combine all three elements of these elements provide ideal partnerships and positioning for our brand. By associating our brand with the affinities of consumers, we are significantly improving our opportunities to gain their interest, trial, purchase and loyalty.

A great example of the type of organization and event that is ideal for partnership is the annual Quinn's Cup outdoor hockey tournament at Centennial Lakes in Edina, MN. This event is hosted each year in a closely-knit community to remember a boy that passed away at a young age and raise money to fund research that will help prevent deaths from this disease in the future. It is an outdoor hockey tournament, so the vast majority of attendees have an affinity for hockey. Given the strong affinities for the community (Edina), craft (hockey) and cause (Quinn) associated with this event, it is an exceptional platform to build our brand and utilize our products as a currency to support something worthwhile.

Localized "grass roots" field marketing will be the primary thrust of our marketing and brand building but these bottoms-up efforts must eventually be accompanied by mass-communications (PR, advertising, etc.) tactics when our retail expansion demands broader, more cost-effective reach. Field marketing will deliver the highest quality, one-to-one impressions but we must constantly strive to utilize traditional and social media, email and other one-to-many mass-communication platforms to increase our geographic reach and quantity of impressions.

In our world of ever-present interactive and social media, people are exposed to an endless stream of communications on a daily basis. It has never been easier to communicate one-to-one or one-to-many, therefore, it has become increasingly difficult to stand-out, rise-above and break-through the "noise" and clutter. To effectively build our brand, we must communicate:

- 1) **Constantly** – Our marketing communications must be frequent to remain top-of-mind and connect with people in a timely, relevant and continuous manner.
- 2) **Clearly** – Our marketing communications must be very coherent, distinct and authentic to help minimize doubt and misperceptions. Keep it simple. Short and sweet.
- 3) **Consistently** – Our marketing communications must repeat the same key messages over extended periods of time to become memorable and encourage dissemination.

ASPIRE Logos

Preferred Logo:

ASPIRE SPORTS DRINKS

The ASPIRE SPORTS DRINKS logo should be generally applied to all communication materials. When full-color is not available, the ASPIRE logo should be used in grayscale, black or white (see page 7).



Alternate Logos:

ASPIRE BEVERAGE COMPANY

The ASPIRE BEVERAGE COMPANY logo should be used in cases when the formal company name is being represented such as corporate documents and communications.



ASPIRE BEVERAGES

The ASPIRE BEVERAGES logo may be applied in the future if our product portfolio expands beyond sports drinks. This may also be used in special situations where our product category is not relevant or beneficial.



ASPIRE to Greatness

The ASPIRE TO GREATNESS logo should be used to represent the programs that carry this title. It can also be used in cases where the “to greatness” message and spirit is appropriate or desired.



The most important element of our logo, which should always be prominently represented, is our icon. There will be a day when our icon is able to stand alone based upon our established brand awareness and equity.



ASPIRE Color Palette

Maintaining consistent colors and visual presentation will be essential to building the ASPIRE brand. Different printers may require different color specifications. When Pantone colors may be specified, use Pantone® 3015. When Pantone® colors are not able to be specified, then use the color equivalents shown below.



Pantone: 3015
CMYK: C100, M35, Y3, K21
RGB: R0, G98, B155
Hex: 004F71

Pantone: Cool Grey 9
CMYK: C70, M0, Y0, K0
RGB: R109, G109, B109
Hex: 6d6d6d

If full-color is not available, then the ASPIRE logo may be reproduced in solid black or reversed-out to white as shown below. Care must be taken when using the ASPIRE logo on color and photographic backgrounds. We must ensure there is sufficient contrast between the logo and background.



Corporate and Product Colors

COLORS: CORPORATE



Aspire Blue
PMS 3015
c100,m35,y3,k21
r0,g98,b155
HTML 004F71



Aspire Grey
PMS Cool Gry 9
c70,m0,y0,k0
r109,g109,b109
HTML 6d6d6d

COLORS: FLAVORS



Fire Red
PMS 1805
c100,m35,y3,k21
r0,g98,b155
HTML 004F71



Storm Purple
PMS 2602
c100,m35,y3,k21
r0,g98,b155
HTML 004F71



Ice Green
PMS 349
c100,m35,y3,k21
r0,g98,b155
HTML 004F71



Rise Orange
PMS 165
c0,m70,y100,k0
r255,g103,b31
HTML FF671F



Aspire Blue
PMS 3015
c100,m35,y3,k21
r0,g98,b155
HTML 004F71

ASPIRE Corporate Description (About Us)

The ASPIRE corporate description was primarily designed for usage with press releases and other print applications where a company description is required or requested:

About ASPIRE Beverage Company

Founded in 2012 by two Minnesota hockey dads that were concerned about the prevalence of sugary drinks being consumed in the name of sports, ASPIRE Beverage Company makes innovative sports drinks with natural ingredients that are designed to improve the health and performance of all athletes. The great-tasting ASPIRE FIRE (cherry-berry), ICE (lemon-lime), STORM (grape), RUSH (blue raspberry) and RISE (orange) sports drinks contain beneficial electrolytes, vitamins and minerals without the artificial colors, flavors, sweeteners and preservatives found in other brands. ASPIRE sports drinks are sold at schools, sports facilities and retailers throughout the United States including Target, Whole Foods, Costco, Kroger, Hy-Vee, Safeway, Life Time Fitness and Amazon.com. More information is available at www.ASPIREbeverages.com.

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/AspireBeverageCompany>

Twitter: [@ASPIREbeverages](https://twitter.com/ASPIREbeverages)

ASPIRE Tag Lines

The ASPIRE tag lines are designed to provide additional brand awareness and positioning for various applications. There are no guidelines for how and when to apply these tag lines but they should always be utilized constantly, consistently and clearly.

ASPIRE SPORTS DRINKS: THE CLEAR CHOICE FOR HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE

ASPIRE SPORTS DRINKS: AWESOMENESS FOR ANY ATHLETE, ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

ASPIRE TO GREATNESS: LOWER SUGAR, HIGHER PERFORMANCE

ASPIRE TO GREATNESS: PURE PERFORMANCE, NO JUNK

ASPIRE Typeface

Use the BERTHOLD AKZIDENZ GROTESK typeface for all national identification media. The BERTHOLD AKZIDENZ GROTESK font family is to be used on the company's letterhead, envelopes, business cards, labels and other forms of marketing collateral and communications. All sell sheets and materials that are distributed externally to customers, consumers or other individuals and organizations should strictly follow our brand guidelines and styles sheets to maintain a consistent look that is more memorable and builds long-term brand equity. The BERTHOLD AKZIDENZ GROTESK typeface is not a standard electronic font, so the similar sans-serif Arial font will be used for Web, email and other forms of electronic copy.

Samples:

Akzidenz Grotesk Regular
Akzidenz Grotesk Extended
Akzidenz Grotesk Bold Extended

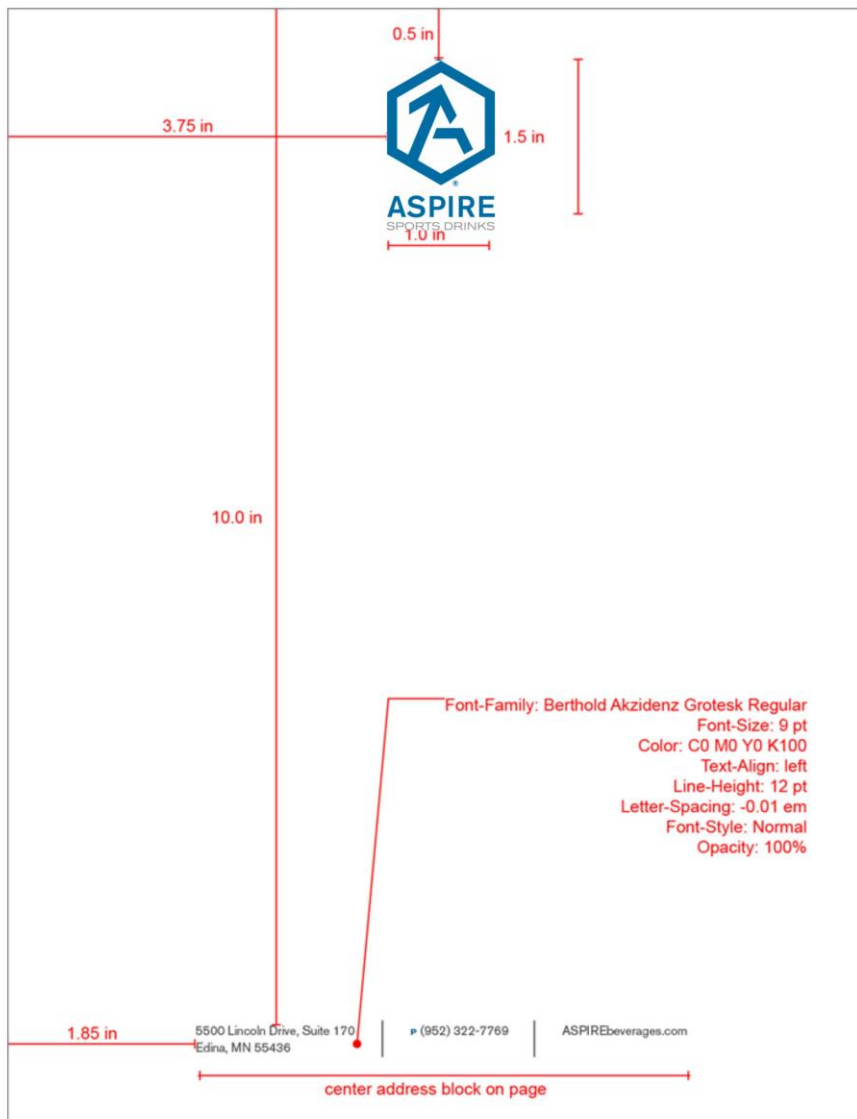
[This font is available for download from the ASPIRE Marketing folders in Dropbox]

ASPIRE Templates

Letterhead:

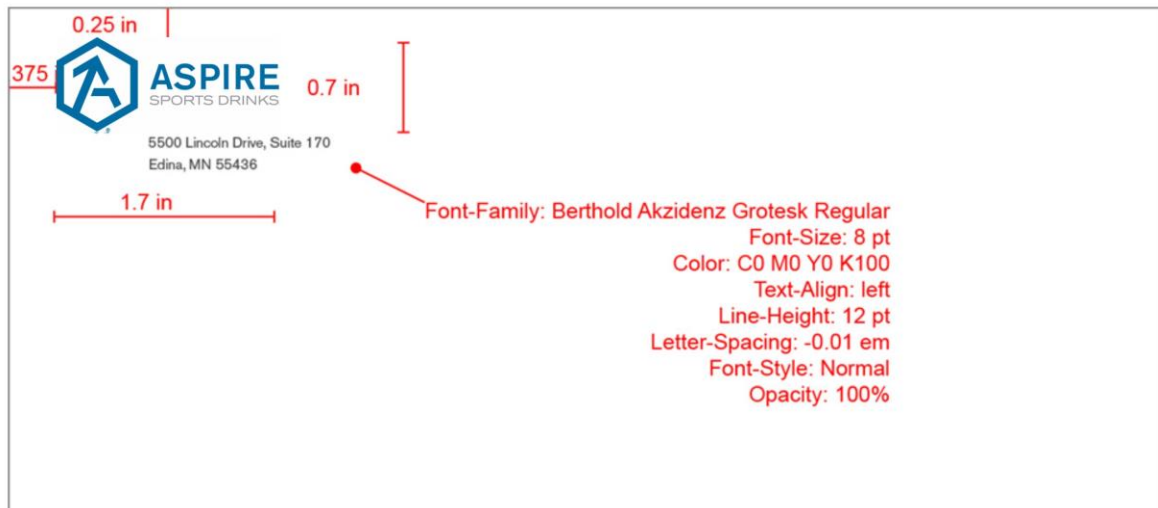
Please use the following specifications when creating standard 8.5" x 11" letterhead.

Use the ASPIRE SPORTS DRINKS or ASPIRE BEVERAGE COMPANY logo in vector EPS file at 65 percent. The logo should be centered on the top of the page and .5" from the top, as shown. The address line should align with the left of the margin. Set the address line in Berthold Akzidenz Grotesk font, 9 pt, in Black, with the baseline of the letters .5" from the bottom edge. A white, 24# text weight paper stock such as Classic Crest Avon brilliant white is recommended for letterhead.



Envelopes:

Please use the following specifications when creating standard envelopes.



Business Cards:

Please use the following specifications when creating business cards.



Note: The graphic files for these templates are available in Dropbox. All field offices are welcome to establish relationships with local printers and other services providers if it provides a more cost-effective, timely solution but these guidelines should be strictly followed by all third parties. Our nationwide supplier of branded gear and marketing materials will also provide a centralized solution for these items. In most cases, this centralized approach will be best.

Email signatures:

Please use the following specifications when creating standard email signatures. No images have been included in this signature due to the spam filter settings on many email clients that block emails with images attached. Please include the social media prompts with active links. Make sure to test the links. We will refrain from using images in our email signatures. There are three signature options:

Font: Arial, 12pt and 9pt, black

FName LName
Title
ASPIRE Beverage Company
e: fname.lname@ASPIREbeverages.com
c: (123) 456-7890

ASPIRE Sports Drinks – The Clear Choice for Health and Performance

[Like](#) [Follow](#) [Subscribe](#) [Aspire](#) [Join](#) [Watch](#)

FName LName
Title
ASPIRE Beverage Company
e: fname.lname@ASPIREbeverages.com
c: (123) 456-7890

ASPIRE Sports Drinks – ASPIRE to Greatness

[Like](#) [Follow](#) [Subscribe](#) [Aspire](#) [Join](#) [Watch](#)

FName LName
Title
ASPIRE Beverage Company
e: fname.lname@ASPIREbeverages.com
c: (123) 456-7890

ASPIRE Sports Drinks – Lower Sugar, Higher Performance

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ASPIRE Field Marketing Communications Guide

Just as we strive to represent our brand in all marketing materials in the most consistent manner possible, we must also recognize that when our employees and A Team members attend events they are actively representing our brand. In all field marketing settings, we must consistently communicate and present our brand. Before all field marketing events, the attending employees and A Team members should be provided with key objectives and messages.

ASPIRE Key Messages

Our story: “ASPIRE Beverage Company was founded in 2012 by two Minnesota hockey dads that were concerned about the prevalence of sugary, caloric, neon-colored drinks being consumed in the name of sports. We make innovative sports drinks with natural ingredients that are designed to improve the health and performance of athletes. Our great-tasting sports drinks contain beneficial electrolytes, vitamins and minerals without the artificial colors, flavors, sweeteners and preservatives found in other brands. ASPIRE sports drinks are sold at schools, sports facilities and retailers throughout the United States including [insert the names of your local retailers].”

Our value proposition: “ASPIRE sports drinks contain much less sugar, carbs and calories than found in the leading brand sports drinks. Made with natural ingredients designed to improve the health and performance of athletes, our sports drinks also don’t contain the artificial colors, flavors, sweeteners and preservatives found in the leading brand sports drinks. Pure performance, no junk.”

Calls to action (CONNECT):

- “Have you tried the new ASPIRE sports drinks made with natural ingredients?”
- “Have you tried the new ASPIRE sports drink with lower sugar and no artificial ingredients?”
- “Are you interested in trying a new, better-for-you ASPIRE sports drink?”

Key points (COMPEL):

- “Only 8 grams of sugar in a 12-ounce serving compared to 21 to 27 grams of sugar in a 12-ounce serving of the leading brands.”
- “Only 35 calories in a 12-ounce serving compared to 80 to 100 calories in a 12-ounce serving of the leading brands.”
- “Made with natural ingredients that are designed to improve the health and performance of athletes. No artificial colors, flavors, sweeteners or preservatives.”

- “Meets the new USDA guidelines for schools. Currently sold in high schools nationwide.”
- “Sweetened with pure cane sugar, monk fruit, and stevia leaf extract.”
- “A sports drink for *any athlete, anytime, anywhere*. Great for before, during and after activities.”
- “Created to provide a healthy alternative to the neon-colored sports drinks that we believe have too much sugar, carbs, calories and unnecessary, artificial ingredients.”
- “Excessive amounts of sugar have been linked to obesity, diabetes and a host of related health issues. And, artificial colors have been linked to a various neurological, behavioral and other concerns.”
- “The low osmolality makes our drinks easier to digest as an efficient source hydration, electrolytes and energy.”
- “The replacement of electrolytes during and after activities help to reduce fatigue, cramping and other challenges while assisting with energy levels and recovery. The primary electrolytes in ASPIRE sports drinks are sodium (salt) and potassium.”
- “Includes B vitamins for a sustained source of energy and minerals to provide the body with additional support before, during and after activities.”
- “We believe the amount of sugar, calories and carbs in the leading brand sports drinks are excessive. ASPIRE sports drinks provide a cleaner and lighter source of hydration that still tastes great.”
- “We regularly hear that ASPIRE doesn’t have the aftertaste, heaviness/stickiness, gut rot and sugar crash of the other sports drinks.”
- “ASPIRE costs more than the neon-colored sports drinks because its ingredients are more expensive.”
- “ASPIRE was designed and formulated to be a better option for youth and amateur athletes but it has also proven to be the sports drink of choice for many elite adult and professional athletes.”
- “All of the good stuff, none of the bad stuff.”
- “An evidence-based approach was used to design and formulate ASPIRE sports drinks. If there was evidence something was good for you, we put it in the drink. If there was evidence something was bad for you, we took it out.”

ASPIRE Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Note: Many of the answers (posted below) to our most frequently asked questions likely contain more information than you care to know but it is important that all representatives of ASPIRE sports drinks are well-educated and fully prepared to answer questions when they are raised by interested consumers. That said, it is very important that all ASPIRE employees and A Team members recognize that “I don’t know” is an acceptable answer followed by “let me inquire and get back to you.” If someone doesn’t know the answer to a question, then we’d prefer that they postpone providing a response. We do not want anyone to answer questions in a manner that is not entirely accurate, truthful and educated. Much of the information shared in this section will also be posted on our Web site, so our representatives can direct consumers to our site for more information. When in doubt, please be comfortable with the answer “I don’t know. Let me get back to you.”

Q: Is ASPIRE a natural drink?

A: Yes, ASPIRE is made with natural ingredients and doesn’t contain the artificial colors, flavors, sweeteners and preservatives found in the leading brand sports drinks. We refrain from labeling our product as “natural” because the USDA and FDA has not established clear standards for natural products. This lack of clarity has given rise to law suits and other liabilities.

Q: What is gluten? And, is ASPIRE gluten free?

A: Yes, ASPIRE is a gluten-free product. Gluten is a general name for the proteins found in wheat, rye, barley and triticale. Gluten helps foods maintain their shape, acting as a glue that holds food together. Gluten is found in many types of foods, even ones that would not be expected. Wheat is commonly found in breads, baked goods, soups, pasta, cereals and sauces. Barley is commonly found in malt, food coloring, soups, malt vinegar and beer. Rye is commonly found in rye bread, beer and alcohol and cereals. Triticale is a newer grain, specifically grown to have a similar quality as wheat, while being tolerant to a variety of growing conditions like rye. It can potentially be found in breads, pasta and cereals. Originally, gluten-free diets were designed to combat celiac disease, which a serious autoimmune disorder that virtually destroys the intestinal tract. Celiac affects about 1% of the population and is reversed by removing gluten from the diet. In recent years, consumers have also used gluten-free diets in response to feeling tired, bloated or depressed based upon the premise that reducing gluten correlates with feeling better or losing weight. Most researchers and physicians agree that this health outcome is most likely a result of decreasing or eliminating the excessive calories found in many flour-based snack foods, not simply the absence of gluten. Nonetheless, many non-celiac consumers have adopted gluten-free diets and ASPIRE sports drinks are a gluten-free option.

Q: What are electrolytes? And, how much electrolytes are in ASPIRE?

A: Electrolytes are minerals in our blood and other body fluids that carry an electric charge. Electrolytes affect the amount of water in our bodies, the acidity of our blood (pH), muscle and brain functions, and

other important processes. We lose electrolytes when we sweat and they can be replaced by drinking fluids that contain electrolytes. Pure water does not contain any electrolytes. The common electrolytes are Calcium, Chloride, Magnesium, Phosphorous, Potassium and Sodium. Electrolytes can be acids, bases, and salts. The most prevalent electrolyte found in sports drinks is Sodium (salt). A 12-ounce serving of ASPIRE sports drinks contains 95mg of Sodium and 30mg of Potassium that have been formulated to meet the needs of *any athlete, anytime, anywhere*. The leading brand sports drinks contain 150-160mg of Sodium per 12-ounce serving which, like their sugar contents, we believe is excessive. Sweat contains mainly water. It also contains minerals, lactate and urea. The mineral composition varies with the individual but the general contents (in order of magnitude) are Sodium, Potassium, Calcium and Magnesium with trace elements of Zinc, Iron and other minerals.

Q: How does a sports drink help enhance athletic performance?

A: First and foremost, it is important for athletes to simply remain hydrated during physical activities. Whether you're a serious athlete or a recreational exerciser, it's important to make sure you get the right amount of hydration before, during, and after exercise to help regulate body temperature and lubricate joints. It also helps transport nutrients to give you energy and keep you healthy. If you're not properly hydrated, then you may experience fatigue, muscle cramps, dizziness, or more serious symptoms. For activities longer than 45-60 minutes, a sports drink provides calories (energy), electrolytes and other nutrients that help athletes perform at a higher level for a longer period of time. Sports drinks should be chosen wisely. Some contain high levels of sugar and sodium. It is important to check the serving size. Often, one bottle contains multiple servings.

Q: What are the vitamins in ASPIRE and why are they beneficial for athletic performance?

A: ASPIRE sports drinks contain vitamins B₃, B₅, B₆ and B₁₂. This should not be referred to as the "B vitamin complex" as that title is generally used for products that contain all eight of the B vitamins. B vitamins are a class of water-soluble vitamins that play an important role in cell metabolism. More specifically, B₃ (Niacin) plays an important role in energy transfer reactions in the metabolism of glucose, fat and alcohol. B₅ (Pantothenic Acid) is involved in the oxidation of fatty acids and carbohydrates, and the synthesis of amino acids, fatty acids, ketones, cholesterol, phospholipids, steroid hormones, neurotransmitters, and antibodies. B₆ serves as a cofactor in many enzyme reactions mainly in amino acid metabolism including biosynthesis of neurotransmitters. Vitamin B₁₂ is involved in the cellular metabolism of carbohydrates, proteins and lipids. It is essential in the production of blood cells and for nerve sheaths and proteins. Simply put, athletes with adequate levels of B vitamins have been proven by numerous studies to perform better due to an increased ability to metabolize (burn) energy, and repair and build muscle. These micronutrients are necessary during the body's process for converting proteins and sugars into energy, and are used during the production and repair of cells, including red blood cells. Adequate intake of B vitamins is important to ensure optimum energy production and the building and repair of muscle tissue. B vitamins have two major functions directly related to exercise. B₃, B₅ and B₆ are involved in energy production during exercise and vitamin B₁₂ assists the production of red blood cells, for protein synthesis, and in tissue repair and maintenance including the central nervous system.

The micronutrients in ASPIRE sports drinks play an important role in energy production, hemoglobin synthesis, maintenance of bone health, adequate immune function, and protection of body against oxidative damage. They assist with synthesis and repair of muscle tissue during recovery from exercise and injury. Strenuous athletic activities stress many of the metabolic pathways where micronutrients are required and may result in muscle biochemical adaptations that increase micronutrient needs. Routine physical exercise may also increase the turnover and loss of these micronutrients from the body. As a result, greater intakes of micronutrients may be required to cover increased needs for building, repair, and maintenance of lean body mass in athletes.

Q: What are the minerals in ASPIRE and why are they beneficial for athletic performance?

A: ASPIRE sports drinks contain essential minerals including Zinc, Calcium and Potassium.

Zinc is found in every cell of the body. It serves a vital role every time cells divide and therefore optimal zinc levels are beneficial to improve athletic performance as research has demonstrated that Zinc helps improve strength and increase lean muscle mass. Studies have shown that zinc plays a role in raising the levels of three important anabolic hormones in the body: testosterone, insulin-like growth factor (IGF-1), and growth hormone (GH). Low levels of zinc correlate with lower levels of serum testosterone, which can greatly affect many aspects of performance such as strength, body fat percentage, and recovery. In addition, Zinc boosts the immune functions to help athletes stay healthy and improve their recovery times from exercise. Research studies examining the correlation between zinc and immune functions have concluded that diminished zinc levels are strongly correlated with impaired immune function. Zinc plays an important role in T-cell function which is crucial for mounting an immune response against infections. As strenuous activities result in a short-term decrease in immune functions, athletes can decrease their risk of illness by ensuring their zinc levels are optimal. Zinc plays an important role in growth, building and repair of muscle tissue, energy production, and immune status.

Calcium is especially important for growth, maintenance and repair of bone tissue, maintenance of blood calcium levels, regulation of muscle contraction, nerve conduction, and normal blood clotting. It is one of the most important minerals for athletes to consume on a regular basis. It serves several essential functions in the body, including building healthy, strong bones and teeth but it also plays a vital role in muscle contraction and relaxation. Without it, muscles don't function properly. Each time a muscle contracts, calcium is pumped into the muscle fiber, enabling it to shorten. When the muscle relaxes, calcium is pumped out of the fiber, which then returns it to a resting state. This process occurs repeatedly during athletic activities, so having sufficient calcium is critically important. Calcium deficiency can cause muscles to suffer from unexpected twitching, cramps and fatigue, all of which decrease athletic performance.

Potassium, a mineral that is present in intracellular fluid, is responsible for regulating total body water and stabilizing controlled and automatic muscle contractions. It is lost through sweat and urine. Cells release potassium into the bloodstream and serum levels rise with exercise, which can cause fatigue. Potassium supplementation before, during and after athletic events is recommended by many sports nutritionist and trainers. The consumption of Potassium during training increases markers of recovery, primarily serum lactate and muscle hydration. Potassium is important for fluid and electrolyte balance,

nerve transmission, and active transport mechanisms. During intense exercise, plasma potassium concentrations tend to decline to a lesser degree than sodium.

Q: Should ASPIRE sports drinks be consumed before, during or after activities? And, how much?

A: ASPIRE is formulated to provide clean, pure and easy-to-consume hydration before during and after activities. The recommended amount to be consumed depends upon the size of the athlete. It also varies based upon the duration and intensity of the activity. Generally, athletes should consume 12 to 24 ounces of fluid a couple hours before the activity, then another 6 to 12 ounces of fluid 30 minutes before the activity. During the activity, athletes should drink 6 to 12 ounces every 20 to 30 minutes. Immediately upon completion of the activity, an athlete should consume 6 to 12 ounces followed by 16 to 24 ounces an hour after activity.

Q: What is ASPIRE sweetened with?

A: ASPIRE is naturally sweetened by pure cane sugar with monk fruit, erythritol and stevia leaf extract. A small amount of these robust, high-quality, low-calorie sweeteners deliver a big taste. These healthy low-carbohydrate, low-calorie sweeteners have a negligible effect on blood glucose, helping combat diabetes and obesity. Each of the sweeteners has unique benefits and taste attributes. In the research and development process of ASPIRE sports drinks, our team found there is both an art and science to formulating a great beverage. The combination of various natural sweeteners and flavors to arrive at the optimal taste profile required numerous rounds of blending and balancing the ingredients. The different sweeteners in ASPIRE ultimately play various roles in the flavor and sweetness of the beverage from the initial taste to the finish. These natural sweeteners have become increasingly used in a variety of foods and beverages.

Q: What is Erythritol?

A: Erythritol is a sugar alcohol that occurs naturally in fruits. It is 60–70% as sweet as table sugar yet it is low-caloric and it does not affect blood sugar or cause tooth decay. The caloric value of erythritol is 0.2 kilocalories per gram which is 95% less than sugar and other carbohydrates. The governing bodies recently ruled that if erythritol is used in small quantities, such as the amount in the ASPIRE formulation, then it can be referred to as a “natural flavor” on nutrition label. Table sugar has 4 calories per gram but erythritol only has 0.24 calories per gram. With only 6% of the calories of sugar, it still has 70% of the sweetness. Due to its unique chemical structure, our bodies don’t break it down so it moves unchanged through our system without causing the harmful metabolic effects of excess sugar or the digestive issues associated with other sugar alcohols. Erythritol doesn’t spike blood sugar or insulin. People don’t have the enzymes to break down erythritol, so it gets absorbed into the bloodstream and is then excreted unchanged in the urine. Erythritol does not feed bacteria in the mouth, helping to prevent poor dental health, cavities and tooth decay.

Q: What is monk fruit?

A: Monk fruit, known as Buddha fruit or longevity fruit, can be 300 to 500 times sweeter than sugar and has been used as a natural low-calorie sweetener in China for many years. Traditional Chinese medicine has also used monk fruit to treat diabetes and obesity. Monk fruit is native to the forests of southern China. The fruit itself looks like a melon but is actually a gourd. It grows on vines and is about the size of a lemon. Hundreds of years ago, Buddhist monks cultivated monk fruit for medicinal purposes. Even today, the Chinese use monk fruit extract to treat sore throats, colds, and intestinal ailments. It's only grown in the southern regions of China and is expensive to grow. Monk fruit extract is comprised of substances called mogrosides which have antioxidant properties. And along with being an antioxidant, many researchers believe monk fruit has anti-cancer properties and may help prevent diabetes complications. In a published study, monk fruit lowered oxidative stress, improved blood glucose, and lowered lipid (blood fat) levels.

Q: What is stevia leaf?

A: Leaves of the stevia plant, also known as sweet leaf, have a long history of use as a sweetener in South America. This natural sweetener includes a highly purified extract of stevia called Rebaudioside A (a.k.a. Rebiana or Reb A) that is 200 times sweeter than sugar and does not raise blood sugar. Stevia is unique because it doesn't add calories. Unlike other sugar substitutes, stevia is derived from a plant. The stevia plant is part of the Asteraceae family, related to the daisy and ragweed. Several stevia species called "candyleaf" are native to New Mexico, Arizona and Texas but the prized species, *Stevia rebaudiana* (Bertoni), grows in Paraguay and Brazil, where people have used leaves from the stevia bush to sweeten food for hundreds of years.

Q: Why is ASPIRE sweetened with a combination of pure cane sugar, erythritol, monk fruit and stevia?

A: The key to our use of sweeteners is balance and moderation. Erythritol is a low-calorie sweetener known as a sugar alcohol. We use this sweetener in combination with pure cane sugar, monk fruit and stevia leaf extract to provide a balanced sweetness for our ASPIRE sports drinks. Erythritol is derived from several different plant-based sources, including sugar beets and corn cobs. Stevia can be up to 300 times as sweet as table sugar (sucrose). And, monk fruit, also known as Buddha fruit and longevity fruit, can be up to 500 times as sweet as sugar. The receptors on people's tongues cannot process this amount of sweetness at once, which is why stevia and monk fruit are used in small amounts and can sometimes have a bitter taste. In addition to a small base of pure cane sugar, ASPIRE contains erythritol (less sweet) in combination with stevia and monk fruit to minimize the bitterness and provide a more balanced taste profile. Erythritol's description as a sugar "alcohol" should not be confused with an alcohol in the commonly understood sense. Erythritol doesn't contain ethanol which is the ingredient in alcoholic beverages that actually gets you drunk. Erythritol is also a low Glycemic Index (GI) sweetener, which is an important measure of how certain foods affect blood-glucose levels. Unlike other sugar alcohols (such as xylitol), most erythritol is primarily absorbed into the bloodstream and ultimately excreted in the urine unchanged. This accounts for its low-calorie impact. As with most ingredients, there are some reported side effects associated with the over-consumption of erythritol and other

sweeteners - which is why we use low amounts of each. The quantity of erythritol in ASPIRE sports drinks is considerably less than the quantities of consumption that have shown such results in studies. ASPIRE sports drinks have been extensively researched and tested. Made with quality ingredients, we are confident in the efficacy and integrity of our beverages.

Q: Why is the sugar-to-carbs/calories ratio different in ASPIRE than in some other drinks?

A: Generally, there are 4 calories in every 1 gram of sugar. With only 8 grams of sugar, 32 of the 35 calories in a 12-ounce serving of ASPIRE sports drinks are derived from the sugar. The additional 3 calories result from other natural sweeteners including erythritol which has a caloric value of only 0.2 kilocalories per gram. There are 12 grams of total carbs in a 12-ounce serving of ASPIRE with 8 grams of carbs derived from sugar and the additional 4 grams derived from the low-calorie sweeteners. See above for further explanation of the various sweeteners contained in ASPIRE sports drinks with information regarding why multiple sweeteners are used in combination.

Q: Is ASPIRE a low-glycemic drink that is good for diabetics?

A: Yes, with only 8 grams of sugar per 12-ounce serving ASPIRE sports drinks provide a good option for consumers that are looking for a sweet beverage that has a lower glycemic value. Most diabetics don't just pay attention to sugar, which is a simple carb that breaks down into blood glucose right away. They also watch their total carb intake with a focus on starches that slowly break down into sugar. Diabetics that are counting calories measure a "one carb" serving as 15 carbohydrates. With 8 grams of carbs from sugar and a total of 12 grams of carbs in a 12-ounce serving of ASPIRE, the sports drink provides less than a one carb serving. For comparison, there are 12 grams of carbs in a glass of milk and 45 grams in one cup of cooked rice. All carbs affect blood sugar in the same way. Standard carb limits for diabetics are 30-60 grams per meal for women and 45-75 grams per meal for men. The limits for snacks are 15-30 grams for both men and women.

Q: What is osmolality? Is ASPIRE a high or low osmolarity drink?

A: ASPIRE is a low osmolarity sports drink, also known as hypotonic. Osmolarity is a term that refers to the total concentration of dissolved particles in a liquid. Drinks with lower osmolarity provide faster hydration with less stomach discomfort or what is often referred to by athletes as "gut rot." Water travels through the human body via osmosis: Water molecules squeeze through cell membranes, moving from areas of low osmolarity to areas of high osmolarity. Sports drinks with a higher osmolarity than the slightly salty fluid that permeates your body (including your blood) will pull water out of your blood and into your intestines. Ingesting drinks that are concentrated, like sugary sports drinks and fruit juice, can't be easily absorbed so it stays in your stomach, sometimes leading to nausea, stomach pain and gastrointestinal distress. A low osmolarity drink, such as ASPIRE, can help provide a driving force, or osmotic pressure, so it is absorbed faster and hydrates more effectively.

Q: What is the difference between isotonic, hypotonic and hypertonic sports drinks?

A: When a beverage contains a total solute concentration that is similar to human blood it is considered isotonic. A hypotonic beverage is a solution osmolarity that is less than the body and is therefore emptied into the stomach more quickly, whereas, a hypertonic beverage is a solution with higher osmolarity than the body and emptied from the stomach more slowly.

A hypotonic drink generally contains less than 14g of sugar (carbohydrates) per 12 ounces and has low osmotic pressure (low osmolarity). This is intended as a thirst quencher. Hypotonic drinks give the athlete less energy in the form of sugars so they can be consumed in greater quantities and are taken up by the body more quickly than just water. These are ideal for non-endurance sports that are less than two hours. They are also ideal for athletes that don't want their sports drinks to be a primary source of calories and carbs.

An isotonic drink generally contains between 14g and 28g of sugar (carbohydrates) per 12 ounces and has about the same osmotic pressure as bodily fluids. An isotonic drink is taken up by the body about the same as water. They are intended to quench thirst and provide energy to the body during endurance sports but consumers need to carefully read labels and pay attention to caloric intake as these drinks are often rapidly consumed in larger volumes by thirsty athletes.

A hypertonic drink generally has more than 28g of sugar (carbohydrates) per 100ml and greater osmotic pressure than bodily fluids. It is primarily intended to supply energy. The thirst quenching effect is secondary. Hypertonic drinks are taken up more slowly than water. These are more ideal for use 30 to 60 minutes before and immediately after activities.

Most of the traditional sports drinks are isotonic and heavier beverages such as fruit juice are hypertonic. Many of today's top sports nutritionists are pushing a movement towards hypotonic sports drinks, such as ASPIRE, with an argument that they provide more efficient and effective hydration before, during and after activities.

Q: What is the small white or light grey mass (blob) that I found inside my drink?

A: ASPIRE is sweetened and flavored with natural ingredients. Just like various natural products, such as fruit juice, if the liquid is exposed to oxygen for an extended period then a form of mold (white blob) can develop inside the bottle. It will usually be settled on the bottom of the bottle. In rare instances, the caps on ASPIRE bottles can become compromised and allow air inside the bottle which fosters the growth of this small mass of mold. [This mold isn't a health hazard but we must remain hyper-sensitive that some consumers that encounter one of these "white blobs" in their drink could become very upset and emotional. We must comfort them and take immediate actions to satisfy them.]

Q: Why are the bottles so difficult to open?

A: Because our drink is made with natural ingredients, it is important that the caps are tightly secured to avoid them from becoming compromised and allowing air inside the bottle which could promote the growth of mold.

Q: What is the USDA “Smart Snacks in School” program and what are the new guidelines?

A: USDA recently published practical, science-based nutrition standards for snack foods and beverages sold to students at schools during the school day. These standards, required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, have required schools to offer healthier foods and beverages to their students starting in school year 2014-15. All foods and beverages sold at schools during the school day must meet these new nutrition guidelines. This regulation applies to foods sold a la carte, in the school store, and vending machines. This program has been a challenge for many schools to successfully adopt due to their limited budgets and conditioned behavior. Many of the foods and beverages that meet the new guidelines are more expensive and don’t taste as good. Under these new regulations, schools may only sell plain water (with or without carbonation), unflavored low fat milk, unflavored or flavored fat free milk, 100% fruit or vegetable juice and 100% fruit or vegetable juice diluted with water (with or without carbonation) with no added sweeteners. Elementary schools may only sell up to 8-ounce portions, while middle schools and high schools may sell up to 12-ounce portions of milk, juice and other drinks. There is no portion size limit for plain water. Beyond this, the standards allow “no calorie” and “low calorie” beverage options for high schools. Sports drinks can have no more than 12-ounce portions with no more than 60 calories per 12 ounces. The ASPIRE sports drinks, packaged in 12-ounce bottles, with only 35 calories per bottle not only meet the guidelines but they provide schools a USDA-compliant beverage with a taste and brand that is preferred by students.

ASPIRE Beverage Company Fact Sheet

Business Summary: Founded in 2012 and based in the Twin Cities, ASPIRE Beverage Company LLC is a privately owned business that makes innovative, better-for-you sports drinks that are good for *any athlete, anytime, anywhere*. With a strong foundation established in the Midwest, the company is expanding nationwide.

Offices: The business is located at 5500 Lincoln Drive, Suite 170, Edina, MN 55436. This building serves as executive headquarters for the company's national management, finance and operations, sales and marketing teams. It also serves as the office for the Midwest field marketing team. In addition, the company has field marketing offices in Denver, Dallas, Austin and DC-Baltimore.

Management: The co-founders, Jesse Parker and John Montague, provide a strong combination of expertise in operations, product development, supply chain, manufacturing, sales, marketing and business development, gained at both large and small companies in the tech industry. Prior to ASPIRE, Parker held senior positions at Intel. Montague has started and built three software companies including a business he built in collaboration with Mayo Clinic. They've added complementary members to their team with deep experience in finance, accounting, business systems, and beverage sales and distribution. Prior to ASPIRE, Stacey Schmitt, CFO, worked in various accounting roles at PwC and served as financial consultant to small businesses. Nick Wohlers, Senior Director of Sales and Distribution, held various positions during 15+ years at Red Bull.

Consumer Problem: The sugar, calories and artificial ingredients found in the leading brand sports drinks have been deemed detrimental for both health and performance by numerous published research studies. Today's health-conscious consumers want and need a better-for-you sports drink. The national obesity and diabetes epidemic has elevated the attention being granted to this problem.

Product/Services: ASPIRE FIRE (cherry-berry), ICE (lemon-lime), STORM (grape), RUSH (blue raspberry) and RISE (orange) sports drinks contain a proprietary mix of electrolytes, vitamins and minerals that are designed to improve the health and performance of athletes. The drinks are sweetened with pure cane sugar, monk fruit and stevia leaf extract. They are flavored with real fruit extracts and other natural ingredients. ASPIRE sports drinks are available in 12oz and 20oz individual bottles, 12oz 6-packs, 20oz 4-packs, 12oz "Team Pack" assorted 18-packs and 1-gallon bottles of concentrate. The company also offers coolers, water bottles, water bottle caddies, towels and other products for sports programs.

Target Market: ASPIRE sports drinks were designed for all athletes, young and old, large and small, from novice to elite – *any athlete, anytime, anywhere*. The primary consumer focus is health-conscious, active families with youth athletes, ages 6-18. Adults, ages 19-65, that participate in sports and fitness with healthy, active lifestyles are a secondary audience.

Sales and Marketing: ASPIRE utilizes grass roots marketing that is driven by its "A Team" of brand ambassadors that consists of student-athletes that sample products at events and retailers, communicating the company's mission with consumers. Many of these student-athletes are recruited through a national partnership with DECA which is a global business education program in high schools and colleges. This field marketing focus is supported with an integrated, multi-channel marketing plan

that is directed from a national level then localized to meet the unique culture and conditions of each market. The ASPIRE sales team consists of full-time internal sales representatives that work closely with a network of external sales agents and distributors.

Customers: In 2016, ASPIRE sports drinks will be sold at several grocery and convenience chains including Target, Costco, Whole Foods, Kroger's, Safeway, Hy-Vee, H-E-B, Cub Foods and Holiday. In addition, ASPIRE is sold at schools, sports venues, health clubs and other locations, nationwide.

Partners/Awards: ASPIRE was named the "Official Sports Drink" of the Under Armour All-America Football Game and the Under Armour All-Star Challenge, Life Time Athletic Events, National Collegiate Hockey Conference (NCHC), United States Hockey League (USHL), Minnesota Football Coaches Association and many other organizations, nationwide. Men's Journal magazine named ASPIRE the "Best All-Natural Sports Drink."

Competitors: Gatorade (PepsiCo), the brand that created the category, enjoys a dominant 80% market share with Powerade (Coca-Cola) following at 19%. This is a rare instance where a large \$6 billion market has only two significant brands. There are a variety of new entrants including BodyArmor. The sports and energy categories are converging which creates both new growth opportunities and new competitors.

Competitive Advantage: ASPIRE has much less sugar (8g vs. 21-27g) and lower calories (35 vs. 80-105) in comparison with the leading brand sports drinks per 12oz serving without artificial colors, flavors and sweeteners. ASPIRE is one of the few beverages that meets the new USDA "Smart Snacks in School" guidelines for schools that were implemented in 2014.

ASPIRE Field Marketing Dress Code

Just as we strive to communicate in the most consistent manner possible, we must also recognize that the appearance of our employees and A Team members at field marketing events should also be consistent. This uniform appearance will help distinguish our representatives to make appearances more visible and memorable. In all field marketing settings, we must professionally and positively represent our brand. Before all field marketing events, the attending employees and A Team members should be provided with a dress code. Uniformity is key. Changing the grey pants and shorts (below) to black is acceptable if the change is universal for all ASPIRE representatives.

A Team Uniform (standard):



A Team Uniform (cold weather):



A Team Uniform (warm weather):



Trade Shows:



Retailer Sampling/Demo Event:



Costco Sampling/Demo Event:



Contact

Thanks for helping us build a GREAT brand and a GREAT company! Please contact John Montague, Co-Founder and Chief Aspiration Officer of ASPIRE Beverage Company, with any questions regarding the ASPIRE Brand Guidelines via mobile phone/text (612) 743-4760 or email:

john.montague@ASPIREbeverages.com.

TO GREATNESS!