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## This Week's News

### Coke makes big gains in China, study says

By **TRIPP MICKLE**

Staff writer

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No company made greater strides with its Olympic marketing than Coca-Cola, according to a study by marketing firm R3 and CSM Media Research.

Face-to-face interviews with 1,500 Chinese consumers in 10 cities in that country after the Beijing Games revealed that 51.8 percent of respondents mentioned the brand spontaneously, and each person recalled an average of 2.3 Coke promotions. The most recent survey was conducted from Aug. 25 to Sept. 10 and was the latest in a series of studies that began in June 2006.

"Coca-Cola leveraged all of its assets, experience and stars in the most compelling way with the greatest consistency and they have reaped not only rewards in our study but in the marketplace with increased preference and volume," R3 Principal Greg Paull said in a statement.

Between July 2007 and October 2008, Coke saw the number of people who mentioned the brand spontaneously in the study rise from 31.7 percent of respondents to 51.8 percent. Others who saw increased awareness over the same period included Chinese dairy brand Yili and computer maker Lenovo.

In the highly competitive sports apparel category, Chinese company Li-Ning pulled ahead of Nike and Adidas in awareness. Its gains were driven in part by the company's outfitting of the Chinese gymnastics team, which won both men's and women's team competitions. That helped increase awareness of the brand from 8.4 percent in a study completed before the Games to 19.1 percent afterward.

The study also analyzed which athletes attracted the most attention from Chinese



GETTY IMAGES  
**Coca-Cola and Yao Ming were tops in China.**

#### Who Hit It Big In China?

	Top 5 brands	April, 30 2007*	Sept. 10, 2008*
	Coca-Cola	31.70%	51.80%
	Yili	13.90%	29.30%
	Lenovo	11.50%	19.90%
	Li-Ning	16.30%	19.10%
	Adidas	24.10%	18.60%
	Top 5 sports stars	Before Aug. 8	After Aug. 24
	Yao Ming (basketball)	61.80%	54.20%
	Liu Xiang (track)	58.10%	48.50%
	Guo Jingjing (diving)	11.40%	40.20%
	Zhang Yining (table tennis)	13.70%	13.70%
	Michael Phelps (swimming)	0.00%	10.80%

\* Study end dates

Sources: R3, CSM Media Research

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consumers during the Games by asking the question: "Can you tell me which sports stars you paid attention to recently?"

While Yao Ming remained the most popular athlete among respondents, both he and Liu Xiang, the Chinese hurdler who withdrew from competition, suffered declines in awareness among respondents. Diver Guo Jingjing was the most popular female athlete, jumping from 11.4 percent awareness before the Games to 40.2 percent afterward.

The study also highlights how Michael Phelps' success in Beijing caught the attention of the country. After not having a single respondent name him in studies between October 2007 and Aug. 7, 2008, 10.8 percent of respondents named him this time. Kobe Bryant also was popular, with 6 percent of respondents naming him.

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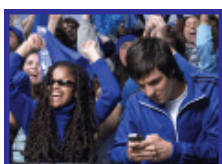
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