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### Tapping An Unlikely Source: NYC Promotes Free Water

July 09, 2007

Look out Aquafina, you've got a new competitor: New York City tap water.

Call it "the champagne of drinking water," New York City's tap is so clean that it is one of only five U.S. cities that has a federal filtering waiver.

To spread the message that New Yorkers can drink the water from their sink for free, the city launched the new "Get your fill" ad campaign. It will spend \$700,000 in taxpayer money to promote Manhattan's water as a "clean" and "healthy" drink that is "great on the rocks."

Still, many New Yorkers are scared to go near the stuff. Focus groups reveal kids and immigrants alike don't realize tap water is indeed drinkable.

It is no wonder that they are confused as almost everyone around them is buying the bottled version. Bottled water sales continue to soar. The category was up 18.8% last year, with Aquafina and Dasani serving as the top brands, per Beverage Digest, Bedford Hills, N.Y.

To change the perception of tap water, mayor Michael Bloomberg plans to plaster subways, bus kiosks and check-cashing stations with 1,400 glossy posters of the potable liquid.

One outdoor ad features what looks like a yummy cocktail complete with a lemon-slice garnish. It is encircled by words describing the drink's contents as "zero sugar," "zero calories" and "delicious." DCF Advertising, New York, handles.

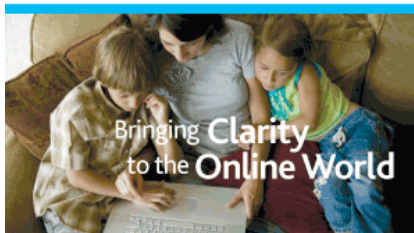
Acknowledging the ad campaign might be a magnet for mockery, Bloomberg told the New York Daily News, "You can make fun of all these things. But we have a responsibility to improve your life and we've got to try to tell you how to do it and try to convince you to do it." — Laura Shanahan

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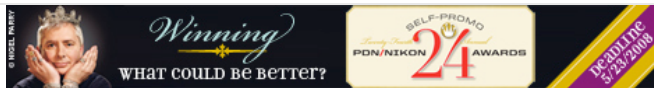
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