



Sales & Marketing It sounds like cardiac arrest But it might cure a hangover

How would you sell it?

After years of promoting products at nightclubs, Jeff Frumin, his brother Steven, and his friend Michael Sachs know better than most that dragged-down, morning-after feeling. So, they pooled their experience and developed the Code Blue Recovery Drink. It's a concoction of prickly pear juice, agave nectar, and electrolytes and antioxidants designed to replenish the body after a strenuous workout or a long night out. Code Blue is the first product offered by Halo Labs, the New York City company the trio founded last year. So far, the drink is sold in some 300 locations in New York, primarily grocery stores, drugstores, and gyms. To promote Code Blue, Halo plans to sponsor events in New York and in Boston, where it expects to start selling Code Blue this spring. How else could Halo perk up sales? We asked five entrepreneurs to weigh in. —April Joyner

PITCH NO. 1: Hit the streets

Jeremy Black, co-founder of Sambazon, a San Clemente, California, maker of açai berry drinks
"People need to experience Code Blue before they buy it. But nightclubs often charge heavy premiums to hold promotions on-site. Halo could hire rickshaw drivers to give samples to people leaving the clubs. The rickshaws could hit many venues in one night."

PITCH NO. 2: Focus on gyms

Claudia Chan, president of Shecky's Media, a New York City company that hosts events for women
"Gym patrons and clubgoers are two very different groups. With Code Blue's limited distribution, Halo Labs needs to focus on one niche. Relatively few energy drinks have penetrated the nightlife market, and doing so will take a lot of dollars. I think Halo should focus on sports clubs. Halo should bring brand ambassadors to gyms to give out samples and host events."

PITCH NO. 3: Court upscale hotels

Ada Polla, CEO of Alchimie Forever, a Washington, D.C., manufacturer of skin care products
"I would target cities renowned for their nightlife: New York, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, and New Orleans. Boston isn't an obvious choice. Securing distribution in hotels would be a great way to build the brand. Code Blue could be stocked in the minibar."

PITCH NO. 4: Expand the concept

Jason Finger, president of New York City-based SeamlessWeb, a website for restaurant delivery orders
"Rather than focusing on fitness or nightlife, Code Blue could position itself as the drink to help relieve everyday stress. That could include searching for a job or caring for a newborn. The company could run guerrilla campaigns with that message. In New York, for instance, street teams could pass out samples at subway stations."

PITCH NO. 5: Target jet setters

Sam Calagione, president of Dogfish Head Craft Brewery, a Milton, Delaware, brewer
"Marketing to the hard-partying nightclub scene can be a slippery slope. As a brewer, I respect enjoying alcohol responsibly, but that isn't something you need to recover from. Aligning your product with an unhealthy lifestyle is not worth the risk. One thing Halo could try is marketing to jet-set commuters. We all know how air travel can pummel your immune system."



FEEDBACK ON THE FEEDBACK: Halo's founders do not share concerns that Code Blue cannot reach all of its target segments. "We're a lifestyle drink that allows people to lead an active life," says Sachs. "We want to be there wherever people need us." They remain confident that Code Blue can gain a following among nightlife patrons without sending the wrong message. The founders are also contacting hotels and airlines and plan to target travelers. They note that the response to Code Blue in gyms has so far exceeded their expectations and that more health-club events are in the works. However, canvassing city streets, whether by foot or by rickshaw, is not a strategy they wish to pursue. "Our approach for the brand is premium," Sachs says. "We won't be handing samples out in the street."