

Hydracoach: the intelligent water bottle essay sample

[Environment](#), [Water](#)



In the hectic pace of modern life there is a tendency to forget significant things. In the world of email, text messages, and countless reminders coming from sticky notes to beeping alarms, 21st century people are still forgetful beings. The mind is so preoccupied with urgent and important things to do that sometimes the really crucial matters are left behind in the subconscious. The results are often catastrophic.

In the case of proper hydration a man or woman relies on that subtle feeling of discomfort that is usually felt in the mouth and throat a signal that is interpreted as thirst and therefore the need to rehydrate. But what if in the heat of competition or plain busyness - the person so focused on the task at hand - the person simply forgets to take a drink?

Last December of 2006 two inventors came up with the ultimate solution. They created HydraCoach, a gizmo that will remind, inform, and update a person regarding his hydration requirements. In simpler terms this bottle is equipped with a computer device that tells the user that he needed to take that much needed sip.

This paper will examine closely the merits of such a device and the kind of help it provides for the people from all walks of life: a) the one with a more sedentary lifestyle; b) to another who is more active and loves to exercise; and finally c) someone who is into professional sports. The main source of information would be from the company's website. Secondary sources will be coming from online consumer sites that provides free commentary on new gadgets that are out in the market.

Background

Approximately ten years before the product launch, inventors Craig and Kelly Perkins were attempting to conquer the peak of Half Dome in Yosemite Park. The goal was amazing because ten months before this event, Kelly underwent heart transplant. The climb was to prove to himself that the surgery was successful and that life did not end in the operating table.

Unfortunately, something went terribly wrong and Kelly had to go back to the hospital. The problem is not in his donated heart but his body was adversely affected by severe dehydration. The irony is difficult to take. A person who survived critical surgery was about to die from a minor error. The preparation for the heart surgery, the extreme physical and mental effort to go through such a harrowing sacrifice was rendered insignificant by the simple mistake of forgetting to take in water.

Many have said that life and death situations allow the person to have a radical perspective about life. In this case Craig and Kelly realized the importance of hydration; it has left a deep impression in their psyche that perhaps no other educational or advertising campaign could ever hoped to produce. To make the long story short they invented the HydraCoach – a revolutionary water bottle that according to their website has some sort of an artificial intelligence.

HydraCoach

The “ intelligent bottle” is not your ordinary water carrier. It can still be lodged within the clamping embrace of bottle holders found in most mountain bikes, it can still be inserted in the pockets of backpacks or even could be left hanging in a small carrying case. The only difference is that the *HydraCoach* is part bottle and part electronic gadget. The ads says that the electronic device, “... is a revolutionary interactive fluid measurement device that automatically calculates, monitors and provides instant feedback on fluid consumption for athletes, medical professionals and other health conscious individuals” (www. hydracoach. com).

In recent times portable devices that were able to monitor heart rate and pulse rate were successfully marketed to help sports enthusiasts and even casual users able to get the much needed update concerning their physiological state. This new invention is a step further into that direction, the quest for a healthier America.

Technology

The said hydration monitor functions by means of “ Generated Electronic Pulse” technology. This is a magnetized impeller which according to the official website is floating within a sealed cartridge and is placed in-line with the path of fluid, in close proximity to a sensor located within the unit (www. hydracoach. com). Since the sensing mechanism is connected to a computer/display module the user can see how much fluid was consumed (see figure below).

For gadget crazy Americans there can be skepticism on the reliability and true functionality of the device. One wonders how a small microchip no matter how sophisticated it is in terms of crunching numbers and doing blinding speed computations can truly tell the state of a person's physiology by simply sensing the tilting bottle when someone is taking a drink.

This was not made very clear in the ads that was released in the launching of the product – maybe it is part of the patent – but one can infer through the terms used like “ Hydration Calculator” and “ Personal Hydration Goal” that there are already values programmed within the system that provides estimates on how much a person should consume when the person inputs personal data such as weight and type of activity.

Benefits

Aside from helping prevent life-threatening experiences, there are obvious benefits to carrying an “ intelligent water bottle”. The constant and accurate reminder on the level of hydration required can ensure not only a healthy body but also one that can endure tough competition in a sporting event.

According to medical professionals, “ Water is the medium in which all reactions in cells take place ... Nevertheless, adults tend to drink only about 3 cups a day, less than half the water they need” (Haber, p. 172).

Haber is only talking about the need of the average person for proper hydration. When it comes to sports and high caliber athletes the situation is

more critical. Dan Benardot in his book, *Advanced Sports Nutrition*, “Maintenance of normal hydration is difficult” (p. 276).

The last two statements underscore the need for a device like the *HydraCoach*. But there are others who question the importance of another gadget that at first glance promises so much but delivers little.

Feedbacks

Critics are calling the *HydraCoach*, one of the most impractical gadget ever and degrades it further by saying that it is a merely a device that annoys people into submission by constantly telling them what to do. Alice Hill, pointed out that there is no sense in purchasing a *HydraCoach* and she asserted that, “Let’s face it, sometimes you do not need technology to solve your problems. Case in point: remembering to drink water” (see RealTechNews).

After being mesmerized by yet another high-tech device that certainly appeals to modern day consumers, one begins to develop serious doubts about the wisdom of spending \$29.95 in order to have an electronic version of Mommy telling the little children to take at least 8 glasses of water a day. The need for hydration and the general perception that not everybody is getting the daily requirement is actually a simple problem to solve – get a cheap water bottle and place it where it can be seen and make a conscious effort to finish the equivalent of 8 glasses a day before going to bed.

Another problem with the high-tech gizmo is that it does not provide any feature with regards to the use of Gatorade or similar sports drink. This is important because in the world of professional athletes there is a case called *hyponatremia* – low blood-sodium level resulting from drinking water containing no electrolytes.

Conclusion

There is no need to emphasize the need to drink water. The problem that the inventors of *HydraCoach* wanted to solve was the need to maintain proper hydration to eliminate the sometimes subtle negative impact low water consumption or simply dehydration. In essence it is nice to have but frankly a little self-discipline can easily solve the problem of dehydration.

The realization of the low significance of the device is reinforced by the price tag which is at \$ 29. 95. There is also no assurance that the instrument will function for a long time since nowhere in the website can one find a long term guarantee. This led many to label it as impractical. The gadget – as far as the website and promotional materials released through the internet is concerned – does not have provisions for the use of sports drinks. If this is the case then the “ intelligent bottle” is simply for the not so intelligent, like maybe someone who attempts to scale a mountains after undergoing a heart transplant a mere ten months before.

Works Cited

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