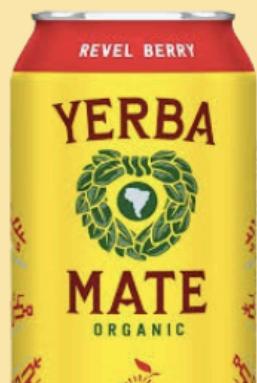


# Yerba Madre

## Marketing Plan

Submitted by  
Yerba Mates  
May 2025

Harvey Kapnick Center for Business Institutions  
Bus\_Inst 302: Marketing Management  
Northwestern University



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# Team Introduction

Below are the **Yerba Mates**, four business institutions students working to create a comprehensive marketing plan for Yerba Madre. We combine science and analytical writing with creativity to deliver a specific marketing plan for the needs of our client and their mission.



## **Mia Schmitt – Analytical Writing Specialist**

Mia is a sophomore studying Journalism and minoring in Business Institutions. She has worked for The Daily Northwestern as an advertising representative and has a lot of experience with reading and creating formal writing. For the team, Mia provides improvements to our analytical writing and revises with the use of impactful word choices to convey marketing strategies.



## **Julia Schaffner – Data Visualization Strategist**

Julia is a junior majoring in Data Science and minoring in Business Institutions. She has worked as a data acquisition intern and has experience interpreting large data sets. Julia specializes in presenting data in an effective way and helps the team by formulating graphs and charts to emphasize the importance of a marketing decision.



## **Aditi Gautham – Scientific Research Analyst**

Aditi is a junior majoring in Biology and minoring in Business Institutions. She is concentrating in molecular neurobiology and knows a wide breadth of information about the scientific makeup of consumer products. Aditi helps the team by offering insight to the biological health benefits of Yerba Madre and how these characteristics can be leveraged to sell the product.



## **Meredith Bacine – Creative Strategy Director**

Meredith is a sophomore studying Chemical Engineering and minoring in Business Institutions. She is a member of Students Consulting for Nonprofit Organizations and has experience in creating innovative solutions for low budget organizations. Meredith helps the team refine brand positioning and its new product lines.

# Executive Summary

Yerba Madre is a rising innovator in the functional beverage space, known for its clean ingredients, sustainable values, and the energizing power of the yerba mate plant, giving the drink a unique boost. Since its founding in 1996, Yerba Madre has carved out a distinct niche among health-conscious consumers by offering mindful alternatives to the traditionally unhealthy energy drink market. With a growing presence in retail, the brand has expanded rapidly across wellness-focused channels. In 2016, they launched their own self-distribution company, which helped to bring their products into retail stores outside the natural category.<sup>1</sup>

This marketing plan details strategies to drive growth for Yerba Madre in the energy drink market while staying true to their core values of eco-friendly and sustainably sourced clean energy. The industry is extremely competitive, with many big players outcompeting Yerba Madre on several fronts. To facilitate this growth, we recommend a strategy that prioritizes innovation and encourages trial in key target markets, in order to establish Yerba Madre's brand as a leader in clean/healthy energy.

One essential part of our strategy is to focus on key target markets to create new customers and grow loyalty among existing customers. Specifically, we want to target groups whose values align with the brands, and who are seeking energy products to meet specific needs. We will use marketing tactics to target these two groups:

## New/Young Mothers (25–32 years)

- Eco-conscious
- Healthy lifestyle
- Middle or Upper-Middle Class
- Seeking energy to keep up with responsibilities of parenthood
- Some pregnant/breastfeeding

## Women in College (18–22 years)

- Eco-conscious
- Health and Wellness Trends
- Trendy and Social
- Seeking energy as a means of keeping up with school/work
- Some seeking non-alcoholic alternative for nightlife

### Key initiatives:

- Retail expansion into healthy fast-casual dining and vending machines
- Launch new product lines such as powdered packet format
- Promote peer-based initiatives on college campuses and suburban areas
- Collaborate with influencers in the health and wellness spaces

### Our goals include:

- Increase social media following by 50%, including 10,000 new followers across platforms by next fiscal year
- Launch two digital campaigns that promote new products and communicate our missions and achieve 3:1 ROI
- Grow brand awareness on college campuses by 30%
- Increase market share in the energy drink sector

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<sup>1</sup> Guayaki Yerba Mate. (n.d.). *Vision & Impact*.

# Company Analysis

## Background and Key Information:



Yerba Madre was founded in 1996 when Alex Pryor left his native Argentina to study food science at Cal Poly University. He met his co-founder David Karr and in 1997 they began selling their product. They began with loose leaf tea and then began selling the iced yerba mate blend later in 2005.<sup>2</sup> The company strives to cultivate a cultural regeneration through connecting through the plant yerba mate. In 2025, the brand was renamed from Guayaki Yerba Mate to Yerba Madre, to honor mother nature.<sup>3</sup>

Yerba Madre sources organic, shade-grown yerba mate in partnership with 255 family farmers and indigenous communities across Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay. The brand honors a Market Driven Regeneration™ model to allow for every purchase to send money to reforest the Atlantic Forest, support fair trade initiatives, and build economic resilience for growing communities.

In 2025, Yerba Madre became the first yerba mate brand to achieve a Regenerative Organic Certified™ Gold status. This sets a new global standard for ecological integrity and environmental focus of corporations.

## Vision Statement:

To create a net positive impact in the world throughout our operations and supply web.<sup>4</sup>

## Mission Statement:

To provide a smooth energy boost using naturally caffeinated yerba mate leaves from the Atlantic Rainforest in South America through sustainable packaging and regenerative initiatives.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Our Story – Yerba Madre. (n.d.), available from [Yerba Mate](#), retrieved May 16, 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Watman, A. (2025, May 1), "Guayaki Yerba Mate Rebrands As Yerba Madre, Pushing Towards A Stronger Regenerative Future In The Rainforest," *Forbes*, Retrieved May 16, 2025

<sup>4</sup> LinkedIn. (n.d.). *Search results for "Yerba Madre"*. LinkedIn. Retrieved May 22, 2025.

<sup>5</sup> LinkedIn. (n.d.). *Search results for "Yerba Madre"*. LinkedIn. Retrieved May 22, 2025.

## Product Lines:

Yerba Madre provides a diverse range of yerba mate based beverages products using sustainable packaging and delivery. They offer ready to drink beverages as well as traditional loose leaf and tea bag formats.<sup>6</sup>

### Ready to Drink Beverages:

- Sparking Line: Yerba Madre offers Bravo Mango and Sparkling Cherry Jubilation flavors which combine organic yerba mate with real fruit juices. These beverages range from 80 mg to 150 mg of natural caffeine per serving.
- Brewed Line: The brewed beverages are more traditional and feature unique flavor profiles like mint, berry, lemon, and chocolate. The brewed line is what makes Yerba Madre unique in the yerba mate space as most yerba mate drinks are only sold in loose leaf form. This packaging line also allows Yerba Madre to compete with energy drink brands.



### Traditional Formats:

- Loose Leaf: made from shade-grown, organic yerba mate leaves and packaged in sustainable bags to distribute the tea.
- Mate Bags: pre-made tea bags which use sustainable materials to create waste minimizing tea bags filled with fresh, organic yerba mate leaves.

Yerba Madre is committed to environmental stewardship and ethical sourcing. The company has many certifications on their products including:

- USDA Organic
- B Corporation Certification
- Kosher Certification
- Regenerative Organic Certification
- Fair Trade Certification

All products are packaged in recyclable materials and sources from local farms in South America.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Yerba Madre. (n.d.). *Loose leaf mate bags*. Yerba Madre. Retrieved May 22, 2025

<sup>7</sup> Our Story – Yerba Madre. (n.d.). Yerba Mate. Retrieved May 16, 2025, from <https://yerbamadre.com/pages/our-story>

## Sustainability & Social Impact:



Yerba Madre practices Market Driven Regeneration™ to create a “net of positive impact in the world”.<sup>1</sup> The organization focuses on climate, water, forests, and biodiversity in the regions which they harvest yerba mate from. The company supports the communities they source from by improving equity, diversity, health, and nutrition in the remote areas.

Yerba Madre publicly posts their social and environmental performance every year to remain transparent with their consumers. They hope to give back to the communities in which they conduct the harvesting of yerba mate.

## Distribution:

Yerba Madre’s recent shift to a predominantly third-party distribution mode increases accessibility for our primary and secondary target market. The company has partnered with more than 130 distributorships, and the diversion from exclusively selling in natural grocery stores to over 3500 7-Eleven locations, over 200 Costco locations, Target and Walmart exhibits strong brand growth. According to the company, natural store sales were once 70% of the business and are now around 17%, with convenience stores currently representing more than 40%<sup>8</sup>.

Other distribution channels include DTC sales through the Guayaki Website and online retailers like Amazon. The website provides information about the makeup of beverages and allows customers to choose a product that suits their specific preferences. However, this is not as accessible as buying it in person, since online retailers do not satisfy the immediate need that convenience stores address,

## Financials:

Since Yerba Madre is a privately held company, there is no current data regarding their financials. The most recent financial data that Yerba Madre has posted is as of 2022. Over the three years prior to 2022, Yerba Madre witnessed a steady revenue growth with a three year compound annual growth rate of 4.8%. In 2022, Yerba Madre’s net income was \$3.95 million, however its valuation declined from \$73.5 million in 2021 to \$56.5 million in 2022. This was due to investor concerns about scalability and market saturation.<sup>9</sup>

Given the evaluations, we conclude that Yerba Madre needs a new marketing strategy, and potentially new product lines to convince investors that this brand is still growing and is worth its initial valuation.

<sup>8</sup>Caballero, Martín. "Guayaki's C-Store Surge Continues With 7-Eleven, QuikTrip." Yerba Madre, June 24, 2024. Accessed May 10.

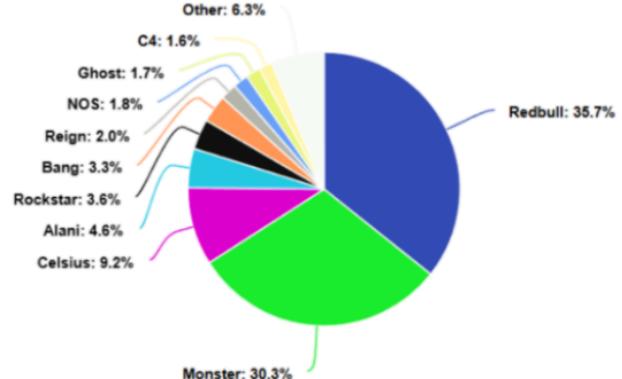
<sup>9</sup> PrivCo Media Inc. (2025, June 7). *Guayaki Sustainable Rainforest Products | Company profile summary*. PrivCo.

# Market Analysis

## Competitors

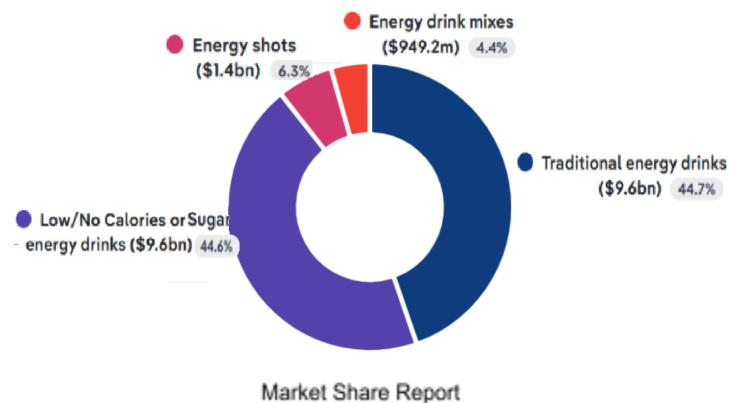
The energy drink industry is currently highly competitive, with major players dominating the market. In 2024, the market size was \$23.9 billion, with 6.4% growth.<sup>10</sup> Higher disposable income leading to increased impulse purchases, while the artisanal variety of energy drinks justifies a high price point. While growing health concerns have decreased the demand for conventional energy drinks, the expansion into new product formats has helped continue the growth. The consumer loyalty and repeat purchases has made the energy drink market highly competitive.<sup>11</sup> Yerba Madre competes with established and innovative multinational brands. Their most direct competitors are brands that also offer on-the-go energy in single serve containers and target Millennials and Generation Z. Expanding the scope, Yerba Madre also competes with other single-serve beverages that provide ready energy, such as coffees and teas. For example, the nitro tea trend has found popularity on TikTok.

**2023 National Energy Drink Market Share Distribution**



"Top Single-Serve Energy Drink Brands, 2023." *Market Share Reporter*, edited by Virgil L. Burton, III, 35th ed., Gale, 2025.

**2025 Energy Drink Market Share**



<sup>10</sup> Market Share Reporter

<sup>11</sup> Rose, A., "Energy Drink Production in the US (OD4295) [US Industry (NAICS) Report], Apr. 2025, available from *IBISWorld*, accessed May 5, 2025.

## Red Bull

Red Bull is the leading player in the energy drink market with 35.7% market share.<sup>12</sup> One of the first players in the industry, the brand has become synonymous with energy drinks. From 2023–2024 revenue grew 6.4% to \$11.7 billion—their largest year yet.<sup>13</sup> Red Bull redefined customer-brand interactions with high budget experiential marketing and emotional storytelling. Over the past 40 years, Red Bull has successfully pivoted itself as a lifestyle brand correlated with extreme sports and cultural events.<sup>14</sup> Their target market is active risk-tolerant males 18–35 years of age.<sup>15</sup>



Red Bull created a live broadcast of a skydiver jumping from the edge of space, becoming the first human without a vehicle to break the sound barrier. This costly marketing stunt set a record as the most viewed live stream with 9.5 million concurrent viewers. This moment and other large stunts connect Red Bull with extreme athleticism, which builds the authenticity of its products.<sup>16</sup> Its famous motto, “Red Bull gives you wings”, has become common knowledge due to the company’s continued high-cost marketing efforts. The company has a large following with 27 million Instagram followers and 52 million Facebook followers.<sup>1718</sup>

Red Bull can be found in most convenience and grocery stores, along with on Amazon. Consumers have little trouble finding a Red Bull for quick energy.



However, changes to the energy drink climate has put pressure on Red Bull’s back. The growth of better-for-you energy drinks opens a new demographic in the market—one

<sup>12</sup> Rose, “Energy Drink Production.”

<sup>13</sup> Eder, Marton, “Red Bull Touts Record Profit in 2024 With Growth Slowing,” January 2025, available from *Bloomberg*, accessed May 22, 2025.

<sup>14</sup> Pereira, Daniel, “Red Bull Marketing Strategy,” August 2024, available from *Businessmodelanalyst*, accessed May 21, 2025.

<sup>15</sup> Pereira, Daniel, “Red Bull Marketing Strategy,”

<sup>16</sup> “Beyond Limits: The Advertising Genius Behind Red Bull Stratos,” July 2024, available from *Brandvertising*, accessed May 22, 2025.

<sup>17</sup> “Red Bull,” available from *Instagram*, accessed May 23, 2025.

<sup>18</sup> “Red Bull,” available from *Facebook*, accessed May 23, 2025.

Red Bull fails to adequately meet. Though Red Bull has a longstanding line of zero sugar energy drinks under Red Bull Zero, they are targeted towards their preexisting customer base of calorie conscious men rather than the wellness demographic.<sup>19</sup> They also have The ORGANICS, which are made of natural ingredients, but they do not have caffeine and are thus not energy drinks.<sup>20</sup> Health-conscious consumers wanting an energy boost will have a tough time finding a product that resonates with them at Red Bull.

To encourage growth amongst this industry change, Red Bull has plans to increase its sustainability factors to appeal to environmentally conscious and wellness consumers.<sup>21</sup> However, at the moment the only tangible action they have taken is using sustainable aluminum cans for beverages, which most competitors do. This inability to adapt could lead to slowed growth.<sup>22</sup>

## Monster Energy

Monster Energy Drink is the second largest global energy drink brand worldwide with 30% market share.<sup>23</sup> They had approximately \$7.5 billion in revenue in 2024, growing 5% from the previous year.<sup>24</sup> Unlike Red Bull, their longtime rival, their iconic neon green and black branding intentionally gives the customer the edge of sensation of danger and risk when consuming the product. Originally targeting aged 18–30 risk-taking men, the company continuously sponsors athletes of extreme sports spanning from the X Games to Skateboarding.<sup>25</sup> These collaborations have garnered Monster Energy over nine million Instagram followers and 24 million Facebook followers.<sup>26 27</sup>

The company partnered with The Coca-Cola Company in 2014. The Coca-Cola Company acquired all Monster non-energy drink products, allowing Monster Energy to focus on energy drinks while receiving publicity from The Coca-Cola Company.<sup>28</sup>



Monster MMA Endorser Kamaru Usman with  
Monster Energy Zero Sugar

<sup>19</sup> "Monster, Red Bull on the Run With Energy Drinks Going Sugar-Free," Dec 2024, available from *livemint*, accessed May 22, 2025.

<sup>20</sup> "Q&A The ORGANICS by Red Bull," available from *Red Bull*, access May 22, 2025.

<sup>21</sup> "Red Bull Achieves Record Revenue and Profit in 2024 Amidst Growth Slowdown," January 2025, available from *finsworld*, accessed May 22, 2025.

<sup>22</sup> "Sustainability at Red Bull: A can has more than one life," available from *Red Bull*, accessed May 23, 2025.

<sup>23</sup> Rose, "Energy Drink Production."

<sup>24</sup> "Form 10-K for Monster Beverage Corp filed 02/28/2025," Feb 2025, available from *Monster Beverage Corp*. accessed May 20, 2025.

<sup>25</sup> Svensson, Philip, "Unleash the Beast: The Juicy Origins of Monster Beverage," Nov 2024, available from *Quatr*, accessed May 22, 2025.

<sup>26</sup> "Monster Energy," available from *Instagram*, accessed May 23, 2025.

<sup>27</sup> "Monster Energy," available from *Facebook*, accessed May 23, 2025.

<sup>28</sup> "News Release," Aug 2014, available from *Monster Beverage Corporation*, accessed May 22, 2025.

Like Red Bull, Monster Energy can be found in most convenience and grocery stores, making it an easy impulse purchase.

Monster Energy Corporation has about 30 products at any time, including limited-edition flavors.<sup>29</sup> All drinks come in a tall, skinny aluminum can with the iconic claw branding and have 156–170 mg of caffeine per 16 oz.<sup>30</sup>

As of 2023, Monster Energy launched Monster Energy Zero Sugar—the zero-sugar equivalent of their flagship original Monster Energy Green.<sup>31</sup> Though they have produced a zero-sugar line before (Monster Energy Zero Ultra), the remodel of their iconic original flavor shows their movement towards healthier energy drinks without sacrificing the edge of the brand.<sup>32</sup>



However, the products still have one of the highest sodium and calorie counts of all energy drinks, which can fail to meet the growing wellness energy drink market. Monster Energy drinks are known for unhealthy ingredients.<sup>33</sup>

Though Monster Energy Drink boasts sustainable work through recyclable packaging, environmental donations, etc., The Good Shopping Guide places them as below average for ethical performance in the energy drink category.<sup>34 35</sup>

## Celsius Energy Drinks

Celsius has seen explosive growth in the past five years. Due to its omnichannel marketing channel, repositioning as a lifestyle brand, partnerships with established brands like Dunkin' and Jersey Mike's, and a recent \$550 million investment from Pepsico, Celsius has achieved a year-over-year 114% revenue increase in North America. Though it only holds 9.2% of the energy drink market, it has a 16.9% energy drink share on Amazon—making it the second largest Amazon energy brand.<sup>36</sup> These efforts have resulted in over \$1.3 billion in 2024 sales.<sup>37</sup>



<sup>29</sup> "Monster Energy," available from Coca-Cola Europacific Partners, accessed May 22, 2025.

<sup>30</sup> "Breaking Down the Buzz: How Much Caffeine is in Monster Energy Drinks?" Sept 5, 2024, available from Cafely, accessed May 22, 2025

<sup>31</sup> "Monster Energy Launches Monster Energy Zero Sugar," available from PR Newswire accessed May 19, 2025

<sup>32</sup> "ZERO ULTRA A.K.A. THE WHITE MONSTER," available from Monster Energy, accessed May 22, 2025.

<sup>33</sup> Corey, Rebecca, "What's the healthiest energy drink? Here's how 7 popular choices stack up," Dec 2024, available from Yahoo!life, accessed May 22, 2024.

<sup>34</sup> "Sustainability," available from Monster Energy Corporation, accessed May 22, 2025

<sup>35</sup> "Monster Ethical Performance in Category Soft Drinks," available from The Good Shopping Guide, accessed May 22, 2025

<sup>36</sup> Rose, "Energy Drink Production."

<sup>37</sup> "Celsius 10-K," Mar 2025, available from Celsius Live Fit, accessed May 22, 2025.

Celsius has positioned itself with the fitness energy drink niche. The brand collaborates with young fitness influencers and creates engaging content focused on education and audience participation.<sup>38</sup> These social media streams allow Celsius to show its unique selling proposition: specifically formulated natural ingredients that provide a consistent energy boost and quicker metabolism. With no added sugars or preservatives, Celsius appeals to health-conscious consumers who prioritize a natural, active life.<sup>39</sup> Their content and healthy formula resonates most with younger audiences aged 18–24.<sup>40</sup>

However, while Celsius prioritizes health and wellness, it has little information on its sustainability efforts. Though the company pledges 50% of its profits to projects that benefit the environment, the website is vague on the effectiveness of its past donations and where they were sent.<sup>41</sup> Celsius has not participated in a voluntary environmental, social, and governance report since 2021.<sup>42</sup>

## Alani Nu

Alani was acquired by Celsius in April 2025 for \$1.8 billion, and plans to maintain the brand to reach a broader audience.<sup>43</sup> Unlike Celsius, which targets fitness-loving consumers, Alani focuses on the female wellness consumer. With pastels and neon pinks, the cans focus on matching the aesthetic popular in TikTok wellness videos. A previously untapped market, young female consumers are attracted to Alani due to the attractive gymnast and cheerleader influencers that promote the aesthetic product. Similar to Celsius, the brand uses better-for-you ingredients and is sugar-free, but focuses on the vanity effects rather than performance benefits (e.g., the ingredients help maintain healthier hair).<sup>44</sup> In just one year, Alani passed \$1 billion in sales—a 72.4% year-over-year increase.<sup>45</sup>

Though Alani focuses on a Generation Z and Millennial audience, the website makes no mention of sustainability measures.



<sup>38</sup> Sheridan, Nina, “Celsius Marketing Strategy 2025: A Case Study,” 2025, available from *Latterly.org*, accessed May 23, 2025.

<sup>39</sup> “Unveiling the Celsius Marketing Strategy,” Oct 2023, available from *brandcredential*, accessed May 23, 2025.

<sup>40</sup> Sheridan, Nina, “Celsius Marketing Strategy 2025: A Case Study,” 2025, available from *Latterly.org*, accessed May 23, 2025.

<sup>41</sup> “Celsius,” available from *Celsiussports*, accessed May 23, 2025.

<sup>42</sup> “August 2021 | ESG Report,” Aug 2021, available from *Celsius*, accessed May 23, 2025.

<sup>43</sup> “Celsius Holdings Completes Acquisition of Alani Nu,” April 2025, available from *Celsius Live Fit*, accessed May 23, 2025

<sup>44</sup> Todd, Sarah, “Why new wellness-branded energy drinks have health experts worried,” May 2025, available from *Statnews*, accessed May 23, 2025.

<sup>45</sup> “Alani Nu Surpasses \$1 Billion in Retail Sales,” April 2025, available from *Celsius Live Fit*, accessed May 23, 2025.

## Bang Energy

Monster Energy acquired Bang Energy in July 2023 for approximately \$362 million in the hopes of reaching the younger generation of energy drink consumers.<sup>46</sup> Bang Energy is known for large, extremely caffeinated energy drinks aimed towards young adults. By marketing through Generation Z influencers, Bang Energy has made itself an authentic part of the TikTok community.

With zero calories or sugar and 300 milligrams of caffeine, Bang Energy appeals to Generation Z people who love strong boosts of energy.<sup>47</sup> However, wellness or health conscious consumers will likely stay away due to the disproportionate amount of caffeine. Bang Energy often partners with energetic TikTok influencers that will show the drink in the background of an intense video. This constant stream of exposure with low-cost influencers has awarded Bang Energy over 1.6 million TikTok followers and distribution in major grocery and convenience stores.<sup>48</sup>

There is no mention of sustainability measures on the Bang Energy website.



<sup>46</sup> "News Release—Monster Beverage Completes Acquisition of Bang Energy," July 2023, available by *Monster Beverage Corporation*, accessed May 23, 2025.

<sup>47</sup> Hall, Brandon, "Are Bang Energy Drinks Healthy?" Nov 2022, available from stack, accessed May 23, 2025.

<sup>48</sup> "Bang Energy," available by *TikTok*, accessed May 23, 2025.

## Additional Players

Besides major convenient energy drink brands, an assortment of non-energy drink beverages and smaller energy drink brands can take away revenue from the current energy drink market. These additional players are less of a competitive threat than the competitors listed above because they are smaller and lesser-known companies, serve more established and inelastic markets, and/or market radically different experiences than energy drinks.

- Nguyen Coffee Supply
  - Natural Vietnamese coffee
- Stokbrew
  - High quality ready-to-go coffee
- Stumptown Coffee
  - Simplistic Luxury Coffee
- Gorgie Energy
  - Fruity green tea energy drink with low social media presence—targets older demographics
- Yerba Crew
  - DTC Yerba Grounds to brew at home
- Gold Peak Tea
  - Affordable flavored tea
- Synergy Kombucha
  - Wellness experience
- Aspire Healthy Energy
  - Natural energy drink with low caffeine quantity with low social media presence—targets older demographics

## Competitor Benchmarking

Based on research on Yerba Madre and its competitors, Yerba Madre fills the gap in the market of better-for-you energy drinks that are sustainably and ethically sourced. They are capable of satisfying the changing demands of the energy drink market.

Competitors do not either promote transparent sustainable practices, or brew with better-for-you ingredients. Some competitors do neither. Yerba Madre provides the consumer with a guilt free experience—both for their body, and for the environment.

The chart below shows Yerba Madre's competitive position in the energy drink market. It falls short in some areas due to Yerba Madre currently being a relatively small company and not having the funds available to hit the price points and marketing stunts of other companies. However, Yerba Madre's combination of strength in eco-conscious practices and health outpace any of its competitors, and its variety of yerba mate supplies offer personalized experiences for consumers. Target consumers who care about the environment and their health will likely be willing to pay a premium for these benefits.

	Yerba Madre	Red Bull	Monster	Celsius	Alani Nu	Bang Energy
Eco-Conscious	<b>Strong</b> <i>Ethically sourced, supports regenerating priority ecosystems</i>	<b>Weak</b> <i>No environmental programs in place</i>	<b>Moderate</b> <i>Programs and donations are set in place, but still unsustainable operations</i>	<b>Moderate</b> <i>50% of profits pledged to support environmental programs</i>	<b>Weak</b> <i>No mention of sustainability efforts on website</i>	<b>Weak</b> <i>No mention of sustainability efforts on website</i>
Product Range	<b>Mid-range</b> <i>Energy cans, brewed yerba mate, loose leaf &amp; mate bags, merchandise</i>	<b>Mid-range</b> <i>Has consistent core product, but expanded into multiple adjacent editions and continuously changing flavors</i>	<b>Full Line</b> <i>Energy drinks, coffee, juice, tea—all with multiple flavors</i>	<b>Limited</b> <i>Performance based energy drinks, powdered drink packets</i>	<b>Full Line</b> <i>Energy drinks, supplements, apparel, protein bars, protein shakes</i>	<b>Limited</b> <i>Sells 14 energy drink flavors</i>
Pricing	<b>High</b> <i>Premium ingredients and a unique product call for higher pricing (\$3.00 for 15.5 oz)<sup>49</sup></i>	<b>Moderate</b> <i>Lower price, but significantly smaller can than most energy drinks (\$2.50 for 8oz)</i>	<b>Low</b> <i>Average price, large beverage size (\$2.50 for 16oz)</i>	<b>Low</b> <i>Low price, average beverage size (\$2 for 12oz)</i>	<b>Moderate</b> <i>Average price, average size (\$2.50 for 12oz)</i>	<b>High</b> <i>High price, large beverage size (\$3.00 for 16oz)</i>
Resources/Marketing Power	<b>Weak</b> <i>Relatively small social media presence and number of influencers /ambassadors</i>	<b>Strong</b> <i>Famous for high budget stunts that draw media attention</i>	<b>Strong</b> <i>Sponsors A-tier athletes in extreme sports</i>	<b>Moderate</b> <i>Strong social media presence and young athlete influencers have boosted sales</i>	<b>Moderate</b> <i>Strong connection with influencers has stretched limited marketing dollars</i>	<b>Moderate</b> <i>Continuously sponsors small TikTokers to spread Bang exposure as far as possible</i>
Healthy	<b>Strong</b> <i>Organic, natural ingredients</i>	<b>Moderate</b> <i>Smaller cans (8oz), so more likely to be consumed in moderation. Ingredients not all natural</i>	<b>Weak</b> <i>Extremely high sodium, high calories</i>	<b>Strong</b> <i>Natural ingredients, formulated to boost performance</i>	<b>Strong</b> <i>Low calorie, sugar free, added vitamins</i>	<b>Moderate</b> <i>Extremely high level of caffeine, additive ingredients, but no sugar, no carbs</i>
Taste	<b>Acquired Taste</b> <i>Different taste than most energy drinks, can be off putting</i>	<b>Mainstream</b> <i>Iconic energy drink taste</i>	<b>Mainstream</b> <i>Variety of soda-like flavors</i>	<b>Mixed Opinions</b> <i>Tastes clean to some, tastes too flat to others</i>	<b>Mixed Opinions</b> <i>While sweet and fruity, can be too sweet</i>	<b>Acquired Taste</b> <i>Complaints of chemical taste or too sweet</i>
Social Media Engagement	<b>Moderate</b> <i>Varied low-cost content across different platforms, but low follower count and consistent views</i>	<b>Strong</b> <i>Interesting sports content that garners high views across all platforms and prompts customer engagement</i>	<b>Moderate</b> <i>High follower count, but proportionally low engagement. All videos feature sports content without adding text to engage viewers.</i>	<b>Strong</b> <i>Varies content based on platform and showcases many sponsorships, which brings high engagement</i>	<b>Strong</b> <i>Adapts content to match platform while maintaining consistent brand aesthetic. Incentivize high engagement through giveaways.</i>	<b>Weak</b> <i>Extremely temperamental engagement. Typical posts are in the hundreds of views, but influencer collaborations skyrocket engagement. While content works on TikTok, it does not translate well to other platforms.</i>

<sup>49</sup> Prices sourced from Walmart website.

## Consumers

### **Noteworthy Consumer Insights and Trends:**

**Hybrid workers drive weekday energy drink demand:** Energy drinks are a staple for working professionals to help them get through the workday. 84% of “hybrid” workers (those who split their time between home and office) consume energy drinks, compared to 76% of fully remote workers.<sup>50</sup> This group turns to energy drinks for improved focus and energy during the workday, and many brands have incorporated “productivity” and “mental clarity” in their message.

**Parents use energy drinks for energy and self-care:** The energy drink sector sees strong demand from parents, particularly those with young children. 84% of parents with children aged 6–11 consume energy drinks.<sup>51</sup> This demographic seeks quick and accessible forms of self-care, with messaging that emphasizes “recharging” or getting through the day

**Gen Z fuels the rise of energy drinks in sober nightlife:** An emerging category for energy drink consumption is nightlife, primarily as a replacement for alcohol. 56% of consumers report drinking energy drinks before going out at night, at least once a week.<sup>52</sup> Gen Z is the most sober generation, thus causing alternative beverages like energy drinks to see recent growth.<sup>53</sup> This trend corresponds with the growing sober-curious culture and healthy consumption.

**College students are willing to pay for functional beverages:** College students continue to be core consumers in the energy drink market. Compared to the average consumer, currently college students are more likely to purchase functional beverages and are typically willing to pay more for them.<sup>54</sup> Given their demanding academic schedules and involvement in nightlife, they make a very appealing target for energy drink brands. Many brands, including Yerba Madre, Alani, Red Bull, and others have “ambassador” programs intended to spread brand awareness around college campuses through chosen students.

**Influencer marketing drives awareness across platforms:** Marketing through social media and influencer collaborations is common among major energy drink players. For example, Alani has collaborated with Addison Rae, Paris Hilton, Brittany Mahomes, and more celebrities and



<sup>50</sup> Mintel Analyst. (2025, April 1). Energy Drinks – US – 2025. Clients-Mintel. <https://clients-mintel-com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/report/energy-drinks-us-2025>

<sup>51</sup> Mintel Analyst. (2025, April 1). Energy Drinks – US – 2025.

<sup>52</sup> Mintel Analyst. (2025, April 1). Energy Drinks – US – 2025.

<sup>53</sup> Guest Author. (2023, October 17). Why gen Z is driving food and beverage brands to become more sustainable. Food Industry Executive.

<sup>54</sup> Rasch, C. (2023). Functional Beverages: Market Trends and Opportunities, 2. <https://www-marketresearch-com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/academic/Product/18058329>

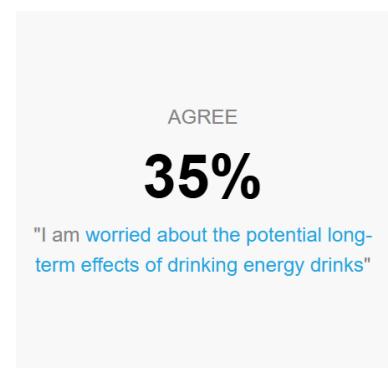
influencers. Red Bull and Monster Energy also have non-traditional social media campaigns involving dangerous stunts and extreme sports.

**Variants and Alternative Formats:** Several major energy drink players have released energy products in different formats, such as Celsius “On-the-Go Packets” or Alani “Energy Sticks.”<sup>55</sup> These formats give consumers more options in terms of convenience and ease of purchase. Additionally, they are sustainable because they get rid of the need for single-use bottles.

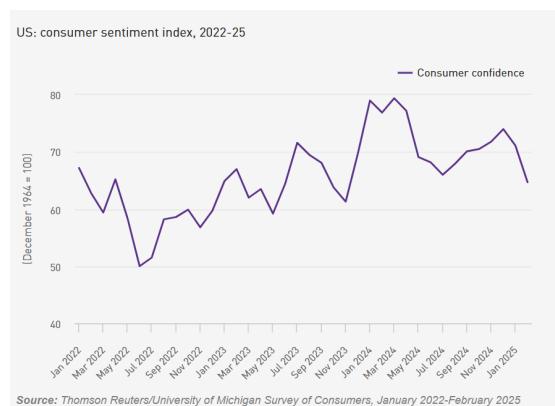


## Macro Environmental Analysis

**Health and Wellness Trends:** Consumers are concerned for their health more than ever, and potential negative health consequences which arise from the artificial ingredients and excess caffeine are troublesome for the industry. According to a 2023 survey done by the International Food Information Council, improving energy and maintaining weight are the top sought health benefits from consumers.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, 61% of consumers want to limit sugar content in their diets, though sugar still remains the top choice over artificial sweeteners. 46% of consumers seek vitamins and minerals to consider an energy drink healthy.<sup>57</sup>



**Economic Downturn:** When consumers have a greater disposable income, they are more likely to purchase energy drinks more often and are also more likely to purchase single-serve packages.<sup>58</sup> In 2025, consumer sentiment has declined 10% from January, which is the lowest it has been since late 2023. This decrease was seen across all ages and socioeconomic groups, likely attributable to fears related to tariff-induced prices.<sup>59</sup> With ongoing inflation and economic uncertainty, we expect to see further



<sup>55</sup> Mintel Analyst. (2025, April 1). Energy Drinks – US – 2025.

<sup>56</sup> Rasch, C. (2023). Functional Beverages: Market Trends and Opportunities

<sup>57</sup> Mintel Analyst. (2025, April 1). Energy Drinks – US – 2025.

<sup>58</sup> Rose, A. (2025, Apr.) Energy Drink Production in the US (OD4295). [US Industry (NAICS) Report]. IBISWorld.

<sup>59</sup> Mintel Analyst. (2025, April 1). Energy Drinks – US – 2025.

decreases in discretionary spending categories such as energy drinks. In fact, as of 2023, the importance of price as a driver for beverage decisions jumped from 68% to 76%.<sup>60</sup> Consumers are more concerned than ever about finding affordable options, even if it means sacrificing other factors such as healthfulness or sustainability.

**Innovation Efforts:** Particularly female consumers within the functional beverage market are especially drawn to innovation efforts such as flavor multipacks.<sup>61</sup> In fact, 43% of consumers consider flavor more important than brand.<sup>62</sup> Consumers also seek variety in use (work, fitness, nightlife, etc.) as well as in flavor (new, bold, exciting flavors). For this reason, many consumers in this market do not become loyal to one drink or brand. 73% of consumers enjoy two or more types of energy drinks.<sup>63</sup>



LTO Flavors

New Formats

**Sustainable Packaging:** Younger consumers especially are pushing for more sustainable products in the beverage industry. Given the market saturation, Gen Z consumers in particular are learning to “shop their values” and prioritize eco-conscious brands.<sup>64</sup> As a result, we are seeing companies moving towards more environmentally friendly packaging and business models to attract a younger audience. This goes beyond the scope of sustainability as well. Younger consumers such as Gen Z and millennials are attracted to brands who value ethical sourcing and supply chains. Therefore, brands are having to make innovative changes to keep up with these socially conscious consumers.



60 Rasch, C. (2023). Functional Beverages: Market Trends and Opportunities

61 Mintel Analyst. (2025, April 1). Energy Drinks – US – 2025.

62 Mintel Analyst. (2025, April 1). Energy Drinks – US – 2025.

63 Mintel Analyst. (2025, April 1). Energy Drinks – US – 2025.

64 Guest Author. (2023, October 17). Why gen Z is driving food and beverage brands to become more sustainable. Food Industry Executive.

## SWOT Summary

<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <p>Health-focused natural products</p> <p>Market Driven Regeneration business model: commitment to environmental sustainability</p> <p>Cultural authenticity and transparency in sourcing and production</p> <p>Unique Energy Boost from unique leaves and brewing method</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <p>Niche Market of eco and health-conscious consumers (lacks wider brand recognition)</p> <p>Taste Barrier: earthy and bitter taste could deter new customers</p> <p>Limited Product Breadth including only canned drinks with few flavors</p> <p>Higher Price Point than most competitors in the energy drink industry</p>
<p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <p>Health and Wellness trends (including social media) create pressure to consume healthier alternatives for energy drinks</p> <p>Product Innovation: new flavors, energy shots, infusions, etc.</p> <p>Geographical Expansion into international markets</p> <p>Collaboration/endorsements/sponsorships with influencers in the health/wellness</p>	<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <p>Intense industry competition from major players such as Red Bull, Monster, Celsius with brand recognition and loyal customers</p> <p>Economic downturns; rising prices, lower disposable income, risk of recession</p> <p>Supply Chain Risks: Tariffs on South American countries disrupt sourcing from Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina</p> <p>Market Saturation within flavored, energy, and health beverages</p>

# Marketing Strategy

## Focal Problem/Opportunity

Following the rebrand and name change in 2025, Yerba Madre is seeking avenues for growth and increased market penetration. While the company has established a presence among niche segments, its next strategic priority is to expand its consumer base and build stronger brand awareness. As major energy drink brands come out with new product lines focused on getting high energy in an efficient manner, Yerba Madre must adapt to remain competitive in the energy drink market.

Our focal challenge is to expand Yerba Madre's target market by product line expansion which will capture a wider audience so that Yerba Madre can strengthen its position as a health conscious, energy drink brand in the competitive energy drink market.

## Target Markets

Yerba Madre's current marketing strategy mainly focuses on two main demographics. The first is those interested in the historical and cultural importance of yerba mate. The social media campaigns are not what is effective for this segment, rather it is the sustainable sourcing and brand reputation. This demographic also buys more of the leaf packets of yerba mate rather than the canned drink.<sup>65</sup> The second current key demographic is young, 18–25 aged women who are looking for a healthy energy drink. This demographic is composed of students and young professionals who need an energy boost but do not want the added sugar of an energy drink.

To grow its reach, Yerba Madre should focus on two main segments—students/the young working professional and young mothers. These two focal target segments are environmentally conscious, engaged with social media, and follow influencers. This will make these groups easily accessible, measureable and highly profitable. While the primary target segment is already a common customer of Yerba Madre, the brand should deepen its awareness across this target market. The young mother segment is a new consumer base for Yerba Madre to extend its reach with the use of new marketing strategies that have not been used by the brand before.

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<sup>65</sup> Yerba Madre. (n.d.). *Loose leaf mate bags*. Yerba Madre. Retrieved May 22, 2025

## **Primary Target Segment: The young working professional**



Our main target segment is women 18–25 who are either in college or recently graduated. This market is hardworking, environmentally conscious, and values brands that prioritize sustainability and ethical sourcing, reflecting response to a societal marketing orientation. This younger demographic will be perceptive to social media and influencer marketing, making them easy to acquire as loyal customers. Furthermore, the young working person needs an energy fix, and if they are concerned about health, they will choose a healthy alternative like the Yerba Madre products. They tend to choose brands that align with their personal values and project a positive image, and will therefore be enticed by Yerba Madre's environmental initiatives. They tend to choose healthier alternatives to traditional energy drinks for their caffeine intake, making Yerba Madre a solid option. Easy accessibility through vending machines, convenience stores, and promotions on campus is important to target this segment.<sup>66</sup>

## **Secondary Target Segment: The maturing young mother**

Our secondary target market is the early-stage mother who is between 25–35. This demographic is highly active on social media and always interested in the newest "mom hack". This market is an important secondary target segment, because like our primary market, they consume a lot of social media and would be influenced by online marketing campaigns. They also would be a brand new angle for Yerba Madre to take in hopes of expanding their consumer base. While these women do place a high importance on what goes into their body and physical health, they are busy mothers and will do what is necessary to go from their job to taking care of their child. This means they drink many coffees and caffeinated beverages to sustain themselves. They are always looking for a healthy alternative, especially if it is promoted by their favorite mom influencer. This demographic is mostly in one geographic location – California.<sup>67</sup> They are socially progressive and are willing to spend a bit more money for a quick energy fix. This target segment would be new to



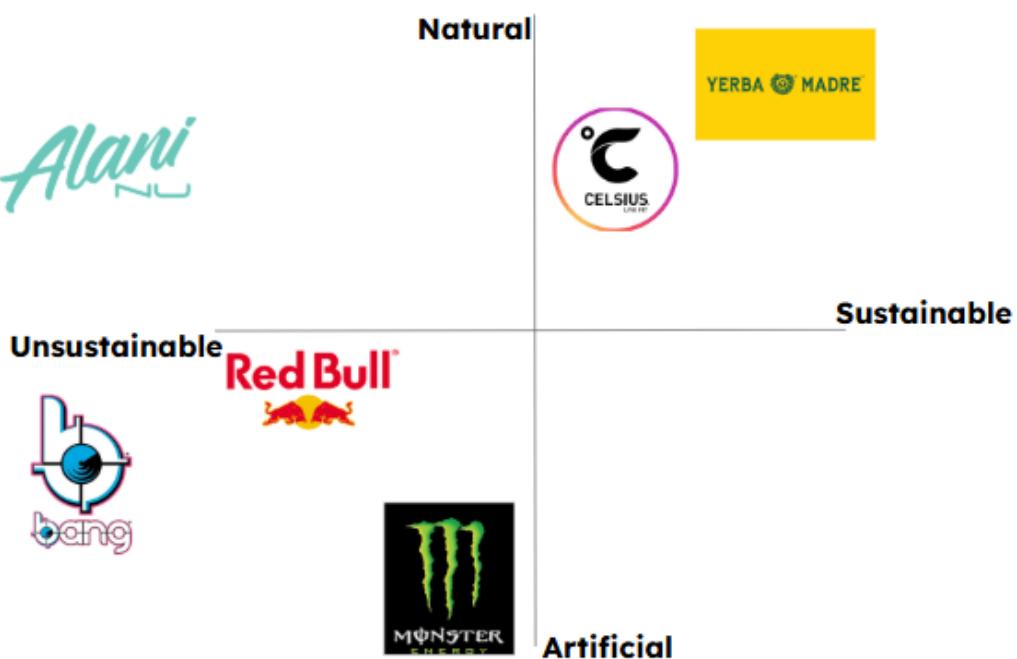
<sup>66</sup> Guest Author. (2023, October 17). *Why gen Z is driving food and beverage brands to become more sustainable*. Food Industry Executive.

<sup>67</sup> Mintel Analyst. (2025, April 1). *Energy Drinks – US – 2025*. Clients-Mintel.

Yerba Madre and would require some packaging alterations or specific wording in marketing strategies to reach. Easy accessibility is essential through convenience stores, however, this customer may also frequent health conscious stores like Whole foods.

## Yerba Madre's Competitive Advantage and Brand Positioning:

Yerba Madre's ingredients set it apart from other energy drinks on the market, as well as other yerba mate brands. In terms of yerba mate distributors, Yerba Madre is definitely the leading brand in terms of brand awareness. Furthermore, Yerba Madre focuses on convenience by offering canned options, and sustainable and natural ingredients. Compared to other energy drinks, Yerba Madre is by far the most natural as it has natural caffeine and no additional sugar in several products. Once Yerba Madre is more widely known and distributed in vending machines, it can also lead in convenience.



### Positioning Statement:

For health conscious, young women, Yerba Madre is the only energy drink brand that **delivers a unique flavor with clean energy in a trendy and sustainable format**, offering a smoother boost of energy that aligns with their values and lifestyles. Consumers can believe this of Yerba Madre because they:

- Became the first yerba mate brand to achieve Regenerative Organic Certified™ Gold status
- Offer affordable pricing \$0.18 per oz
- Sources products from small farms in South America which they give back to through improving local education, nutrition, and equity
- Contain 100% natural caffeine and organic ingredients
- Have five certifications honoring their product as ethical and environmentally focused

### **Marketing Strategy and Goal:**

To address the focal problem, Yerba Madre will implement a strategy centered on targeted outreach, social media campaigns, product innovation, and building loyalty. Adding a new product will grow our share within the target market and reach a new segment to develop the brand and increase revenue.

Strategic Pillars:

<b>Product Innovation</b>	Develop energy powder packet technology to adapt to the market and provide a new, healthy, energy packed option for young professionals and moms.
<b>Brand Awareness</b>	Improve the scope of the consumer base for Yerba Madre by using targeted social media campaigns and influencers.
<b>Loyalty Growth</b>	Deepen brand loyalty from existing customers by adding a product that has new uses as compared to the traditional yerba mate drink.

## Goals and Measurable Targets

- **Brand awareness:** Increase Yerba Madre's social media presence by gaining 10,000 new followers across all social media platforms by the next fiscal year, while launching two digital campaigns by that date that clearly communicate Yerba Madre's new products and mission of sustainability, wellness, and natural energy.
- **ROI on marketing campaigns:** Achieve a 3:1 return on investment on influencer marketing campaigns launched in the fall of 2025, targeting 18–25 year olds who are health-conscious consumers, as measured by sales attribution, promotion code usage, and engagement metrics.
- **New Customer Acquisition:** Launch a targeted social media campaign for new moms seeking healthy energy alternatives by the fall of 2025, and grow engagement from the 25–40 year old female demographic by 25% on Instagram and Facebook (based on insights data) over the next fiscal year.

# Marketing Mix Recommendations

## Product

We recommend extending Yerba Madre's brand to new product lines while remaining in the same category of energy drinks. Our research suggests that consumers seek variety in the energy drink category. They are willing to switch brands and try new flavors, so Yerba Madre's product offerings can benefit from innovation and exciting new offerings. We propose the following new product lines:

### "Feel" Variants

Flavor experimentation is one of the strongest trends in the energy drink category.<sup>68</sup> New functional beverage variants align perfectly with current industry trends driven by consumer demand for variety, personalization, and health-conscious options.<sup>69</sup>

Yerba Madre currently appeals to health-conscious consumers looking for a clean energy source, but the current offerings are a bit limited to consumers who may want different functional benefits without always relying on caffeine. To expand its appeal and reach our new target segments, Yerba Madre should launch a line of functional beverages with different levels of caffeine (with some completely caffeine free), each formulated to support a distinct "feel", such as *Focus* for studying/working, *Vibe* for nightlife, *Calm* for relaxation, *Digest* for gut health, *Glow* for skin support, or *Boost* for immunity benefits. Each of these will correspond with a new flavor, which also aims to attract new and existing customers.

These blends allow for mood-based consumption while staying in line with wellness trends. The novelty of the drinks and consumers' willingness to experiment in this category would drive trials. Functional "starter packages" (including one bottle of each blend) could lower the barrier for entry, letting consumers experience different flavors and effects without committing to a particular product.



<sup>68</sup> Mintel Analyst. (2025, April 1). *Energy Drinks – US – 2025*. Clients-Mintel.

<sup>69</sup> This image was generated using OpenAI as a tool to help visualize the product line using our original ideas and research.

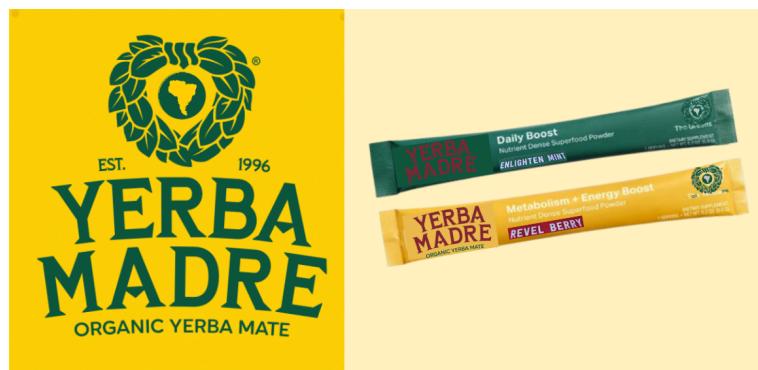
This line would strongly appeal to young professionals, students, and especially young mothers who may be breastfeeding or pregnant. These groups are increasingly focused on wellness and often seek options that fit their specific needs, such as low-caffeine options that won't disrupt pregnancy or breastfeeding. By offering targeted blends, Yerba Madre meets consumers where they are, whether that's looking for a late-night energy boost to study for finals, or meeting the demands of new parenthood. This line empowers consumers to choose beverages not just based on flavor, but on how they want to feel—creating a personalized, health-conscious experience that aligns with their lifestyle.

### Powdered Energy Packets

Introducing a line of Yerba Madre mix-in powder packets provides an opportunity to expand reach while deepening loyalty among existing customers. Powdered beverages are increasingly popular in the energy drink industry, with major players such as Celsius and Alani launching packet-based beverage options in recent years.<sup>70</sup> Users enjoy the clean ingredients, portability, and customization of the packet format.

Yerba Madre's existing customer base will be eager to try the new format from a trusted brand, especially when it's positioned as the on-the-go, sustainable, wellness option. For new consumers, the convenience and novelty of the packets makes it easy to incorporate Yerba Madre into their daily routines. Powders can also be more versatile compared to Yerba Madre's current offering of canned beverages, since they can be mixed into water, smoothies, juices, etc. This customization appeals to wellness trends, since individuals can tailor their beverages exactly to their needs.

Since powders have less packaging waste and lower shipping footprints, they are more sustainable, thus making them especially appealing to eco-conscious Gen Z and Millennial consumers. While Yerba Madre offers more sustainable options of loose-leaf and Mate bags, these are not as convenient because the consumer has to brew the drink. By branding these packets as minimalist and convenient, this line would stand out in the wellness spaces and align perfectly with Yerba Madre's values and the evolving needs of its customers.



<sup>70</sup> Mintel Analyst. (2025, April 1). *Energy Drinks – US – 2025*. Clients-Mintel.

## Pricing

Yerba Madre's current pricing structure is at a premium compared to a typical energy drink, but still reasonable for their current customer base. However, when trying to market to more 18–25 year olds, primarily college students, the price of products should be cheaper than the typical Yerba Madre product. Our primary and secondary target markets are price sensitive consumers, and while Yerba Madre is a healthier alternative, it may not be enticing enough for a higher priced product. Currently, a single serve Yerba Madre can costs \$2.84<sup>71</sup>, which is \$1.00 more than a single serve can of their closest competitor, Celsius<sup>72</sup>. It is widely believed that healthy alternatives are more expensive than typical, unhealthy products, thus this price difference is not unreasonable.<sup>73</sup> However, for the target markets and new products, the pricing should be more comparable to Yerba Madre's competitors.

Celsius' powdered energy sticks cost \$0.84 per stick, thus Yerba Madre should focus on a similar pricing range. Ideally, the powdered energy sticks should cost the same, or less, than the price of a Celsius powdered energy stick to stay competitive. If the sticks need to be priced higher, it should be at a margin no higher than the margin between a Celsius and Yerba Madre single serve can, which is 35%. The new "Feel" variations of the typical single serve can should maintain the same pricing structure as current Yerba Madre products.



Price discounts for first time customers should be maintained to incentivize people to try Yerba Madre. Given the unique flavor of Yerba Mate acts as a barrier for people to try the beverage, a price discount is necessary to obtain first time customers. This should decrease the hesitation that a consumer may have due to the price difference between Yerba Madre and a less healthy alternative.

Price promotions should only be utilized for the target market and can be distributed at college campus visits and in-person, product events. More information on price promotions are in the promotion section of this report.

<sup>71</sup> Yerba Madre. (n.d.). *Berry Lemonade*. Yerba Madre.

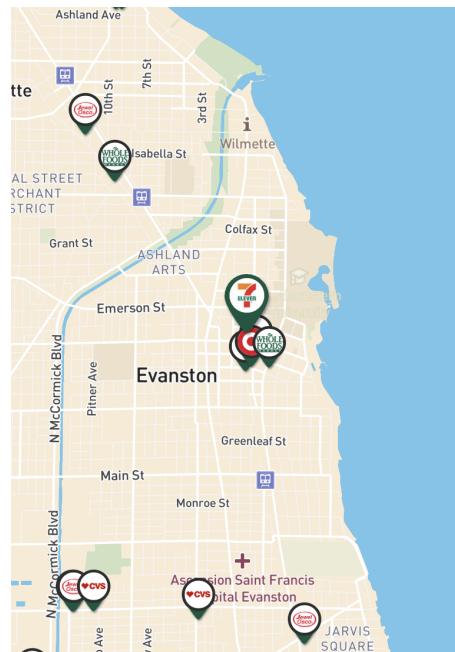
<sup>72</sup> Celsius. (n.d.). *Celsius Official Store*. Amazon.

<sup>73</sup> Karsit, I. (2023, December 27). *Healthy foods are often more expensive. Here's why*. CNBC.

## Distribution

Currently, Yerba Madre mainly distributes their products through Amazon, as their website is connected to the Amazon site rather than offering direct to consumer shipping. However, their website does feature a map, pictured to the right, which shows the nearest retailers of Yerba Madre.<sup>74</sup> They are relatively spread out, but sold at major retailers like Target, Whole Foods, and 7-Eleven. For physical retailers, distribution is not a large issue and Yerba Madre should continue to utilize these stores.

To reach the target markets, Yerba Madre should focus on two new retail expansions. The first expansion is college campus convenience stores and pop up events for the new energy powder packs. The second expansion is health conscious fast casual restaurants for the brand expansion “feel” variants.



### Campus Book Stores, Vending Machines, and Pop Ups:

Our primary target market, the young working professional, can most easily be found on college campuses. Furthermore, college students are always looking for a “quick fix” energy option, and promoting Yerba Madre on college campuses can help gain a loyal customer base. The new powder energy packs will be easy for college students to use on the go and new flavors will entice repeat customers to continue drinking Yerba Madre.

As previously described, the biggest barrier to increasing Yerba Madre’s consumer base is the unique flavor. While this unique flavor is loved by most, it can serve as a barrier to entry for potential consumers. Thus, distributing Yerba Madre for free on college campuses and then selling them in local convenience stores can help more people try Yerba Madre without hesitation and become loyal customers. To begin this method of distribution, Yerba Madre should focus on the five “healthiest” college campuses as concluded by the FoodService Director.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>74</sup> “Find Yerba Madre.” *Yerbamadre.com*. Accessed 6/5/2025.

<sup>75</sup> FoodService Director. (2013, July 15). *The 25 healthiest colleges in the U.S.* FoodService Director.

<b>University</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Book Stores</b>
Bowdoin College	1,850	Maine	2
Stanford	8,054	California	5
Virginia Tech	31,035	Virginia	2
Rice	4,574	Texas	1
WashU St. Louis	8,267	Missouri	2

Furthermore, Yerba Madre should be sold in more campus bookstores as well as vending machines. These methods of distribution are accessible for college students and will increase the likelihood of college students to purchase the drink.

Pop up events should be held on these campuses and the Yerba Madre drink should be distributed to students. More information on how to do so is in the Promotion section of this report. Generally, these health conscious campuses are mid-sized, thus if the objectives described in the Marketing Strategy portion of this report are met, Yerba Madre should expand to larger campuses with a wider variety of students and health conscious views.

### **Health Conscious Fast Casual Restaurants:**

To reach the primary and secondary target markets, Yerba Madre should also focus on new avenues of distribution. Healthier fast casual restaurants often sell brand name sodas and drinks to go along with their food, thus Yerba Madre should try to get into some of these restaurants. Given that yerba mate is organically sourced and a healthier alternative to a soda or coffee, this beverage option could be very successful in these health conscious restaurants. While many more stores could be added over time, Yerba Madre should start with distribution through Elephant and Vine and Chipotle.

### **Elephant and Vine**

Elephant and Vine is a vegan Chicago fast casual chain restaurant. They are known for their plant-based food that is flavor packed, fast, and accessible. Customers place their orders at the counter and can either eat in the comfortable dining area or take their meals to go. Delivery options are also available. The restaurant currently distributes Poppi and Coca-Cola products. Yerba Madre would be a perfect addition to their canned beverage options given that it is a healthy energy alternative and is perfectly fitted for Elephant and Vine's target health-conscious consumer.

## **Chipotle**

While Chipotle is not known for being the healthiest fast food chain, it is definitely healthier than restaurants like McDonald's and Burger King and is marketed at a higher price point. Chipotle sells canned products such as Coca-Cola and Poppi, thus adding Yerba Madre as a healthier alternative for a beverage would align with their current offerings. The restaurant serves as a common lunch hangout for college students and professionals. Yerba Madre also has similar goals to Chipotle, emphasizing a brand based on fresh, whole ingredients.

## **Promotion**

The goals of our promotional campaign are to promote our new product, expand to a new target market of young mothers, and increase brand awareness through digital marketing and non-traditional marketing techniques.

### **Digital marketing—Social media campaign**

#### **Influencer program:**

Our influencer marketing campaign is designed to increase engagement rate on TikTok and Instagram since these platforms are commonly used by both our target markets—college students/young professionals (age 18–25) and young mothers (age 26–35). We are targeting industry standards for engagement rates with 6–8% on TikTok<sup>76</sup> and 3–6% on Instagram<sup>77</sup> over six months, since Yerba Madre engagement metrics are lower than top competitors. Social media influencers are key partners in this campaign and this would facilitate a shift from a product/selling orientation (the current marketing campaign) to a marketing orientation.

#### **Targeting college students and young professionals:**

For Gen Z and young professionals, we will partner with influencers that post study, lifestyle, and party content. A micro influencer partnership would have a significant number of impressions without losing authenticity. We will partner with influencers who are well-known within specific college communities- such as students who post campus content. They can feature the drink in trends like daily study vlogs or ‘get ready with me’ videos that are currently trending on TikTok, and also showcase the product being sold

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<sup>76</sup> Brandwatch, (2025,March 24) “What Is a Good Engagement Rate on TikTok for 2025?”

<sup>77</sup> Brandwatch(2024, October 7). “What Is Engagement Rate?: Brandwatch Social Media Glossary.”

at their campus bookstore. When launching this campaign, we would partner with 10-15 niche influencers to gauge initial effectiveness of the campaign.

#### **Targeting young mothers:**

To cater to our new target market, we will partner with ‘momfluencers’ who focus on clean living or postpartum wellness. Partnerships with doulas/wellness coaches who make healthy recommendations for new moms would also help establish credibility within this market and add authenticity to this marketing campaign. Product reviews and Q&As on Instagram lives about postpartum wellness could be informational and appeal to this target market. These partnerships will position Yerba Madre as a daily staple for mothers who need an energy boost to get through demanding schedules. A macro influencer would be ideal for this segment to keep the content authentic and increase the number of impressions. We will partner with 10-15 macro influencers, allocating a higher share of our influencer budget to the mom target segment. Since this is an entirely new market segment it may require higher investment for initial outreach.

These influencer partnerships will include the new packet samples to promote the launch of our new product. In addition to paid media, we anticipate earned media-unsponsored influencers doing taste test trends to review the new products. The only downside to this form of media is influencers may not have positive views about the product taste, and we may need to adapt messaging as needed.

#### **Content marketing**

To complement influencer efforts, we are leveraging content marketing (inbound communication) to facilitate brand storytelling and build long term trust through education and cultural relevance. Yerba Madre’s health and eco-conscious positioning gives us a competitive advantage that content marketing supports. Tapping into Yerba Madre’s traditional South American roots, and posts about its health benefits would be informative for customers who want to understand the advantages of consumption over traditional energy drinks. Instagram stories featuring short informative content like ‘5 Science-Backed Health Benefits of Yerba Mate’ or ‘Why Yerba Madre is the Healthier Alternative to Coffee’ would balance informative messaging with trend-driven content across Instagram and TikTok.

To boost engagement and gather consumer insights we will also include interactive polls and quizzes as part of these educational Instagram stories. Posts and stories should represent the organic, healthy positioning of the brand through earthy tones (green and yellow) and minimalist/handwritten fonts.

## Social media layout and weekly content plan

- **TikTok and Instagram reels** -> Influencer and lifestyle content—eg. daily vlogs, ‘morning with Yerba Madre for moms’
- **Instagram carousels and stories** -> Content marketing with educational info about health benefits, cultural roots, and regeneration efforts.
- **Website (maintaining current format )**-> recipes using mate, blogs, brand storytelling.

### Sample week

Day	Post type	Audience
Monday	Influencer Reel + TikTok (Study/Party Vlog)	Students
Tuesday	Stories/Carousel(Health benefits of Yerba Mate)	Both
Thursday	Reel/TikTok (Momfluencer Postpartum daily routine)	Moms
Saturday	New Product feature + links to website	Both

## Non-traditional marketing campaign

Along with a heavily boosted social media campaign, we will also conduct a non-traditional experiential marketing campaign focused on sampling and peer-based promotion primarily on college campuses. Since Yerba Madre has a unique flavor profile compared to traditional energy drink competitors like Red Bull and Monster Energy, sampling is essential. By removing the obstacles for first-time customers to try the project, we can convert consumer skepticism towards yerba mate into customer loyalty.

### College student tactics

- 1) Library refill stations—Yerba Madre will set up pop up hydration zones near libraries and study lounges during finals season. The goal is to create a relaxing corner with Yerba branding where students can take a quick break from studying and refresh themselves with samples.
  - a. **Sampling kit content:** Powdered energy packet and *Focus* or *Calm* feel variant drink. This aligns the brand with academic performance and well-being.
- 2) Game stalls—Yerba ambassadors will set up stalls on busy corners in college campuses during the school day so students will pass the stall between classes. The stall will have popular music and quick games for the chance to win different flavors of our new products.
  - a. **Sampling kit content:** Powdered energy packet and *Boost* or *Vibe* feel variant. This aligns the brand with a party vibe and positions the drink as an option for nights out.

## For Mothers

- 1) #Forthemadres Mother's Day event—Yerba Madre collaborates with local vendors at farmers markets or outdoor parks for this themed sampling event.
  - a. **Sampling kit content:** Powdered energy packet, a 'Feel' variant flavor based on their mood, and a wellness tip sticker.

Customers must scan a QR code at these stalls which takes them to Yerba Madre's instagram page. They must follow the page to receive free sample packets and a 10% coupon code from the ambassador, creating a seamless bridge between in person sampling and digital storytelling. QR codes will be tracked using UTM links to measure engagement and page views.

# Metrics to Monitor Progress

To ensure promotions are running smoothly and progress is maintained, the following approaches are suggested:

## Long Term Metrics and Targets— Achieve in Six Months

- Increase Instagram and TikTok following by 50%
- Boost TikTok engagement to 8% and Instagram engagement to 6%
- Drive annual revenue growth up to at least 6%
- Grow brand awareness (grow Yerba Madre unpaid social media shares and content by 30%)
- Overcome taste barrier— make yerba mate a well-known flavor profile by increasing the product adoption rate by 30%.
- Grow market share in the energy drink sector by increasing the online consumer's lifetime value by 20%

## Short Term Metrics to Examine Key Campaign Features

Social Media Campaigns Using Micro and Macro Influencers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Analyze consumer engagement with each influencer's posts. E.g. number of shares, views, likes, comments.</li><li>● Monitor consumer satisfaction based on comments left on sponsored and non-sponsored posts.</li><li>● Create custom links for each influencer with a special 10% discount. Track how many consumers redeem the discount from the influencer. Use this to help determine new customer acquisition costs for the young mother demographic.</li><li>● Give long-term influencers an affiliate link and integrate Yerba Madre as part of their brand. This will encourage consumers to use that link on all further Yerba Madre purchases to support the influencer and quicken the TTV rate. Use this data to determine the customer retention rate per influencer and the ROI for sponsoring the influencer.</li></ul>
College Pop Up Shops and Non-Traditional Marketing:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Track number of students engaged with promotion through UTM links from scanned QR codes needed to receive a free sample. Use different QR codes at different locations/events to determine the popularity of each event.</li><li>● Record the % uptake of sales (compared to the previous month) in college bookstores and nearby distribution locations in the week after an event.</li><li>● Measure buzz around the event through social media posts</li></ul>

	<p>and comments. E.g. for Northwestern, monitor Fizz to see if students are spreading the word about Yerba Madre's free samples.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note spikes in social media followings after events</li> <li>• Measure number of hashtag shares for #Forthemadres after each young mother-directed event.</li> </ul>
Brick and Mortar Restaurants, Bookstores, and Vending Machines:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach all sales targets required by the retailers selling Yerba Madre. If sales targets are not met, note which flavors are performing best and worst.</li> <li>• Compare sell-through for each flavor to competing beverages in the retailer.</li> <li>• Measure sales growth in beverages sold the month after online and pop up shop promotions. If specific products/flavors were featured at an event, note their sell-through rate after the event compared to the non-featured products.</li> </ul>
Content Creation and Organic Buzz:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor effects of educational content on brand awareness by noting views and shares.</li> <li>• Compare the audience's sentiment of content on various platforms to determine which styles of content work for which platforms.</li> <li>• Gauge the consumers' interest in sharing Yerba Madre through non-sponsored reviews. Note praise, criticism, and total videos.</li> <li>• Note responses to created polls and quizzes to understand the consumer's current perception of Yerba Madre.</li> <li>• Determine conversion rate of views to follows on social media from the different styles of content provided.</li> </ul>
Online Sales:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine relative market share on a month-by-month basis.</li> <li>• Estimate the approximate change of CLV as frequently as possible (month by month).</li> <li>• Note website hits and subscribers to the Yerba Madre email newsletter.</li> </ul>
Brand Loyalty:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track repeat online customers to determine brand loyalty. Find the frequency, quantity, and type of products purchased.</li> <li>• Through social media interactions and in-person feedback at events, determine Customer Satisfaction Score and Customer Resolution Rate.</li> </ul>

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