

# NEWS RELEASE

## College of Commerce and Business Administration

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### Do We Pay Too Much for Brands?

Champaign, Ill. — In deciding which product to buy, brand names often provide an easy decision criterion. Generally, consumers prefer national brands (e.g., Coca-Cola) to store brands (e.g., Sam's Choice cola). However, consumers have to pay premiums for obtaining these national brands. Are these national brands worth these premiums, or should consumers better ignore national brands, go for the cheaper store brands and save a buck or two?

You can help answer this question on Wednesday February 13, from 10am-2pm, when the University of Illinois' Food and Brand Lab organizes its annual Battle of the Brands in the Illini Union ABC. During a four hour event, the Food and Brand Lab has Sam's choice cola battle Coca-Cola while at the same time Toasty O's will cross swords with Cheerios, among others.

The battle will be resolved in three rounds. During the first round, all brands will be blindfolded. That is, people will judge products without their brand names being revealed.

In the second round, the same products will be judged, but now their brand names will be revealed. Past research has shown that national brands do very well in this particular battle round. While in the blindfolded condition the difference between national and store brands generally is reasonably small, if the brand names are revealed, the difference increases substantially in favor of national brands. The real strength of brand, though, is determined in the third and final battle round. In this round, the store-brand product is labeled with the national brand name, while the national-brand product is labeled with the store brand name. If national brands survive this particular round, it can be concluded that they may be worth that "extra buck or two," even though that remains to be a subjective opinion!

The Battle of the Brands can only be fought with your help. You, as a consumer, decide which brand will be declared a winner, and which brands have to work on their image. Come and join the Food and Brand Lab's Battle of the Brands 2002

When?: Wednesday February 13, from 10am-2pm Where?: Illini Union ABC.

For Whom?: Anybody interested

More information: Brian Wansink (217-244-0208)

Nationally recognized as one of the leading business schools, the College of Commerce and Business Administration has outstanding programs in accounting, business, economics, and finance. The college enrolls more than 3,000 undergraduates, 700 MBA and master's students, and 175 doctoral candidates from all 50 states and more than 30 countries worldwide.

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Online resources: <http://www.cba.uiuc.edu/faculty/wansink.html> (Wansink c.v.) and <http://www.consumerpsychology.net/index.html> (Food and Brand Lab)