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Out of their way to sell cola 2 cosmonauts named, Yuri endorse Pepsi

By Peter Healy
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Some beverage companies promote their products with oversized, inflatable versions of soda and beer cans placed atop buildings or in supermarket parking lots.

But Jay Coleman, who heads the marketing and advertising firm EMCI Ltd. in Stamford, deflated that idea. He suggested the cola giant put a 4-foot-high facsimile of its new blue soda can into outer space.

On Monday night, two Russian cosmonauts finished filming a Pepsi commercial on the space station Mir. A Pepsi "can" made of nylon and aluminum was tethered outside the spacecraft. The commercial is scheduled to air next year, according to Purchase, N.Y.-based PepsiCo Inc.

Coleman, whose firm has linked Michael Jackson and Pepsi, and Gloria Estefan and Sears Roebuck, in promotional concert tours, was especially proud of the project with the lesser known cosmonauts, Yuri Ivanovich Onufrienko and Yuri Vladimirovich Usachev.

"We went to Pepsi in early January and said the unique thing to do was put a Pepsi can into 'orbit," said the 46-year-old Coleman. "We are in the business of creating out-of-the-box, breathtaking ideas that have never been done before.'

EMCI also designed and put together the Pepsi sponsored Rod Stewart concert last year in Rio de Janeiro, Coleman said. The privately owned firm - also known as Entertainment Marketing & Communications International - moved to Stamford from Manhattan three years ago, said Coleman, who lives in Easton. The firm employs 20 people in an office building at 24 Richmond Hill Ave. near the Stamford tram station.

Coleman said the Pepsi space ad was a formidable challenge for the small firm he founded 20 years ago. That's because there was so little time to get the highly technical project together.

"What any other company would get two years to pull off, we had four months," Coleman said.

Keeping the ad's costs from soaring into the next galaxy also was a prime directive. For that reason, sending a Pepsi can to the moon was ruled out, he said.



Russian cosmonauts Commander Yuri Ivanovich Onufrienko, left, and Flight Engineer Yuri Vladimirovich Usachev hold an oversized collapsible Pepsi can Inside the Mir space station last Saturday.