

Monster Energy Drink Sales Rise Despite Legal Attacks

CORONA, Calif. (AP) — Monster Beverage Corp. got a fourth-quarter jolt from higher sales of its energy drinks [despite legal attacks alleging that the company's caffeinated concoctions pose health risks](#) [1].

The results announced Thursday seemed to validate Monster Beverage's recent efforts to combat the assault on its drinks and marketing practices. Regulators and lawsuits contend [Monster Beverage](#) [2] targets children who could be harmed or even killed by the caffeine levels in its drinks, claims that the company has adamantly denied.

"We reiterate that our energy drinks are safe, based on both our and the industry's long track record and the scientific evidence supporting the safety of our ingredients," Monster Beverage CEO Rodney Sacks said in a Thursday statement.

Investors gave the company a vote of confidence too, pushing its stock up 2.6 percent in extended trading following the release of the earnings report.

Plenty of consumers apparently still crave Monster Beverage's drinks, helping to lift the company's profit by 12 percent during the three months ending in December.

The Corona, Calif., company earned \$76.1 million, or 44 cents per share, during the quarter. That compared to \$68 million, or 39 cents per share, in the prior year.

Monster Beverage would have fared better, if not for \$4.7 million in expenses tied to the regulatory inquiries and lawsuits revolving around the safety of its drinks. Those costs more than tripled from \$1.4 million in the prior year.

Fourth-quarter revenue climbed 15 percent from the previous year to \$541 million. The company sold 52.8 million cases of its drinks in the quarter, a 14 percent increase from the previous year.

Analysts, on average, had projected fourth-quarter earnings of 46 cents per share on revenue of \$527.5 million. The earnings estimate excluded certain expenses unrelated to Monster Beverage's ongoing business. The company only provided an earnings-per-share figure that conformed with generally accepted accounting principles.

Monster Beverage's stock rose \$1.84 to \$73 in extended trading after the numbers came out.

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[1] <http://www.foodmanufacturing.com/news/2014/01/sf-ny-prosecutors-team-against-monster-beverage>

[2] <https://twitter.com/MonsterEnergy>