



Bud Light Distributor Sends Out Public Plea to Bring Back Customers

Description

A Bud Light distributor in Alabama issued a public plea to bring back customers who boycotted the brand after it produced a can with transgender influencer Dylan Mulvaney's face on it.

Steve Tatum, with the Montgomery, Alabama-based Bama Budweiser distributor, deployed a radio advertisement for several area stations, pleading with customers to purchase Bud Light again. In April and during the first week of May, sales of Bud Light were down significantly, and sales of other Anheuser-Busch products also dropped amid the Mulvaney backlash.

"We too at Bama Budweiser are upset about it and have made our feelings known to the top leadership at Anheuser-Busch," Tatum said in the ad, according to multiple news reports. "The voice of the consumer has been heard, and Anheuser-Busch has taken action."

'#BudLightPartner'

Like Anheuser-Busch's leadership, Tatum also tried to distance Bud Light from Mulvaney, a biological male who had posted the custom-made Bud Light can and used the hashtag "#BudLightPartner" in early April, drawing significant ire from consumers and conservative celebrities. Several popular country singers, including Travis Tritt and John Rich, said they wouldn't serve the beer, while Kid Rock posted a video of him shooting cases of Bud Light with a gun.

"We at Bama Budweiser, an independent wholesaler, employ around 100 people who live here, work here, and our children go to school here," Tatum said in the ad. "We do not, and as I said before, did not support this issue involving Dylan Mulvaney. There was one single can made. It was not for sale and wasn't properly approved. As a result, the Bud Light brand has new leadership."

“Dylan Mulvaney is not under contract with Bud Light. The videos you may have seen are Mulvaney’s own social media posts that went viral, and many web-based news outlets have distorted the story. You deserve to know the truth, and life is too short to let a couple of individuals decide what you can eat or drink or spend your hard-earned money on. And remember, making friends is our business, not enemies.”

Drop in Sales

The latest industry data show that Bud Light’s sales dropped in the first week of May, falling by 23.6 percent in the week that ended on May 6, Beer Business Daily reported using Nielsen IQ data. In the final week of April, sales for the beer dropped by 23.3 percent.

“Trends aren’t getting much worse, but certainly not getting any better either,” Beer Business Daily wrote in a commentary on the figures.

Tatum told AL.com that he’s received positive feedback for his ad campaign. However, he said there has been no response from Anheuser-Busch or Bud Light corporate officials.

“I’m just trying to look after Bama Budweiser,” he said. “I’ve worked too hard to give it all away.”

The distributor told Newsweek, “I felt like we had to get a message out there.

“We are tied to a corporation, but that’s not necessarily our beliefs in our market here in Alabama.”

Sales volumes for Anheuser-Busch products also dropped by 9.7 percent for the first week in May, a slight improvement on the 11.4 percent decline in late April, according to industry data. Anheuser-Busch, which has headquarters in the Netherlands, also makes Budweiser, Michelob, Stella Artois, and Beck’s, among other beers.

‘Misinformation and Confusion’

Anheuser-Busch CEO Michel Doukeris told the Financial Times in a recent interview that his company believes that the Bud Light boycott was triggered by “misinformation and confusion” circulating on social media and sought to distance his firm from Mulvaney. Doukeris said Mulvaney wasn’t part of an official marketing campaign and that “one can” was produced with Mulvaney’s face on it.

“It was one post. It was not an advertisement,” Doukeris told the media outlet. He said the viral videos of billboards with images of the Bud Light can with Mulvaney’s face on it were created “electronically,” but he didn’t address why Mulvaney wrote the hashtag on social media suggesting a partnership.

Initially, Anheuser-Busch USA CEO Brendan Whitworth released a statement that didn’t address the boycott or the Mulvaney partnership. The company “never intended to be part of a discussion that divides people,” he said in a statement, which was criticized by conservatives.

In the meantime, Anheuser-Busch InBev had its stock downgraded recently by an HSBC analyst who said the firm is now dealing with a “Bud Light crisis” of sorts. There are “deeper problems”

than Anheuser-Busch would like to admit publicly after its marketing engagement with the transgender influencer became a hot topic, according to the analyst.

‘The Tide Has Turned’

While some analysts and researchers say boycotts of large corporations are rarely effective, former Anheuser-Busch executive Anson Frericks said last week that the Bud Light boycott is actually working.

“Now, the tide has turned. A poll conducted earlier this year shows that 68 percent of Americans think that companies that speak out on social issues do it as a marketing ploy,” he wrote. “And a study out earlier this month shows that Americans are much more likely to distrust institutions they view as politicized—even when they take political positions that align with their views. In today’s heated political environment, the surest course for companies—particularly those in high-visibility, competitive markets—is to focus on their brand and stay out of the debates.”

Anheuser-Busch didn’t respond by press time to requests by The Epoch Times for comment.

By Jack Phillips

Category

1. Main
2. Racism-Trans/Gender-LGBTQ+-Sex. crimes

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