



Bud Light: #UpForWhatever
Campaign Research Final Project
Campaign Research Methods
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Executive Summary

Client

Bud Light Beer, an American-grown and imported brewery company, is widely known for creating the best selling beer in the United States. Since 1982, Bud Light has been producing premium brews with its signature light and American-style lager taste, which serves as a refreshing and delicious beverage for its loyal customers (Our Beers, 2016).

Issue Statement

In April of 2015, Bud Light advertised the addition of new labels on their beer during their “Up For Whatever” campaign, with a slogan which read "The perfect beer for removing 'no' from your vocabulary for the night" (Jaworowski, 2016). This campaign immediately sparked outrage across social media, with harsh criticism accusing Bud Light of promoting the rape culture and the concept of drinking irresponsibly.

Secondary Research Findings

We found that Bud Light has internal strengths, one of which is belonging to the umbrella company of Budweiser Anheuser-Busch. Budweiser is the leading beer company in America and has a large and loyal customer base. Being that they have recently merged with another company and themselves have multiple lines of products their risk of losing customers is very low. Upon examining the company's weaknesses we discovered that Budweiser's taste is unfavored among beer drinkers as compared to higher quality beer (Shultz, 2013). The company is seen as irresponsible because they overlooked such a potentially hindering label. Because most statements defending Budweiser were made through executives via Twitter it makes it seem as though the PR department did not put up a united front.

When examining external threats, pertaining to the campaign, we found that many individuals took to social media platforms to voice their negative opinions on the new slogan which allows posts to spread rapidly. Competitors such as MillerCoors could take this opportunity to call Budweiser out for appearing to promote rape culture. This has the potential to decrease Budweiser's consumer base. Though they faced threats to their campaign, the company was also provided with opportunities. The most important one being the continued use of the hashtag '#UpForWhatever', which escaped negative association with the slogan "The perfect beer for taking "No" out of your vocabulary."

Primary Research Findings

While developing our primary research of the Bud Light '#UpForWhatever' Campaign we chose to conduct surveys using James Madison University undergraduate students as our sample population. We believe that by analyzing the outcome of the data, Bud Light can then gauge the attitudes, opinions, and intended behaviors of both their publics and consumers. With that information Bud Light can further develop better campaign methods that tailor to the beliefs of their publics. In light of the results we found that there is a positive and significant relationship between perceived corporate responsibility, corporate ability, and intention to purchase. These relationships will be thoroughly discussed in the results section.

Campaign Suggestions

Before launching a new campaign Budweiser would benefit from conducting extensive primary research. One suggestion our team has for Budweiser is to conduct a think tank, or focus group, where they bring in members of the public and ask for their opinions on certain slogans, designs, or campaign ads. We have attached a proposed focus group outline which can be found in Appendix C.



Background Research

Introduction

Client & Issue

The Bud Light Company, a widespread and popular American brewery, received harsh backlash on its launch of new slogans during their “Up For Whatever” campaign. The messages on their new labels featured on their beer bottles intended to promote a carefree and spontaneous theme; however, they were misinterpreted by Bud Light consumers and were accused of insinuating messages of unethical and controversial content. The organization’s campaign evoked negative responses towards Bud Light’s image across various social media platforms.

Situation Analysis

The Bud Light Family is a branch of the Anheuser-Busch, which has been a leading world-class brewing company for over 160 years (Our Beers, 2016). With Bud Light being the top-selling beer in the United States, the particular crisis within the “Up For Whatever” campaign holds extreme significance due to the effect it had on the organization’s audiences and surrounding publics. The situation affected people’s perception of Bud Light, and negatively impacted attitudes towards the beer featured with the problematic slogans.

Bud Light's “Up For Whatever” campaign was originally launched in September of 2013, and has been using various forms of marketing strategies through the course of the the campaign’s timeline (Fromm, 2013). The article written by Jeff Fromm (2013) emphasizes the energy around the launch of “Up For Whatever” and how the utilization of the #upforwhatever successfully sent the campaign viral across social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. Fromm states “Brands like Bud Light that embrace this fluid approach to consumer engagement will see extremely positive results” (Fromm, 2016). However, prior to the company’s issue with the campaign’s slogans on their beer bottles, they received some backlash due to a tweet released from their twitter account on St. Patrick’s Day. The tweet read, “On #StPatricksDay you can pinch people who don’t wear green. You can also pinch people who aren’t #UpForWhatever” (Bukspan, 2015). This caused complaints across social media but Bud Light deleted the post shortly after with no public statement on the issue.

Bud Light intended for its campaign to associate feelings of spontaneity, good times, and having care-free nights out with friends while drinking their beer. However, with the concept of “no” being removed from one’s vocabulary turned their intentions of light-hearted fun to negative connotations with sexual assault, rape culture, and drinking irresponsibly. Even though the “Up For Whatever” campaign has been in full swing for two years the new slogan has caused publics, specifically on the social media network Twitter, to lash out against the organization (Jaworowski, 2016). According to Jaworowski (2016), Bud Light’s vice president Alexander Lambrecht has apologized for the misunderstanding of the newest labels, and has prioritized to enhance the brand’s image back to its full potential as well as the loyalty of their customers. On behalf of the organization, Lambrecht released the following apologetic statement on the Anheuser-Busch website: “The Bud Light Up For Whatever campaign, now in its second year, has inspired millions of consumers to engage with our brand in a positive and light-hearted way. In this spirit, we created more than 140 different scroll messages intended to encourage brand engagement. It’s clear that this particular message missed the mark, and we apologize. We would never condone disrespectful or irresponsible behavior. No means no. As a result, we have immediately ceased production of this message on all bottles” (“Updated: Statement”, 2016).

After the outbreak of criticism across social media, Bud Light handled the crisis situation by terminating the production of the labels and slogans. With a company so easily recognizable and successful as Bud Light, this particular crisis places them in an extremely negative light.



Even though the company formally apologized, the misinterpretation of the company's intended message continued to be evaluated and discussed in the media. Therefore, Bud Light must work against the repercussions of their crisis, understand the consequences, and move forwards in recreating their image. The event caused them to lose trust and respect from their publics, and a plan of action will be taken to revise the credibility and reputation of the organization.

Organization Analysis: Internal Factors

Structure

Anheuser Busch, the parent company of Bud Light and Budweiser, was founded in 1861 after Eberhard Anheuser and Adolphus Busch became partners for their new brewing company. They were Both German immigrants determined to make a lager that would appeal to the community in St. Louis, Missouri and to other German immigrants longing for a taste of home (Ward, 2016). In 1982, more than 100 years later, Anheuser Busch expanded their company and introduced their new beer, Bud Light ("History," n.d.). At the core of the company's business mission is to build a brand and a lifestyle for Bud Light and its consumers. Anheuser Busch uses marketing strategies, such as being the official beer sponsor for the Super Bowl, to create sociability and to bring people together (Lopez, 2013).

Bud Light has 12 operational breweries all across the United States that produce beer for adult drinkers. The company is devoted to use fresh ingredients to provide the best taste for their beers and they pride themselves on the commitment of their team. Bud Light has contributed much of their success to its team members and the company believes in equal work and pay (Rothkopf, 2016). Their team includes sales and logistics, which work to ensure the highest quality beer and packaging are sent to the over 500 independent retailers ("Our Company," n.d.). At the head of their leadership is President João Castro Neves, who oversees all North American operations. Women still don't have an established place in the structure of Anheuser Busch. Of the top 11 North American leadership positions, only one of them was a female. This was consistent in other departments; only one women in the 17-person executive board and two women in the 14-person board of directors (Harwell, 2016).

Performance

Anheuser Busch specializes in lagers and since its inception has launched several different beer products including their most popular brands such as Budweiser, Budweiser Lite, and Bud Light. It has then become the nation's most selling beer brand. Bud Light along with the rest of their products have accounted for more than half of the sales of the top beers in 2014. (Stephen, 2015). That same year Budweiser and Bud Light took home two of the top three places of the best selling beer in America. Bud Light has 19.2 percent of the market share, outperforming any of their other products (Stephen, 2015).

In 2014, Bud Light reported a .2 percent decline of sales to retailers in their third quarter, resulting in a dip of their estimated market share (Bouckley, 2014). After this decline CEO Carlos Brito stated that their primary focus was growth and that they would not be allocating funds towards marketing its growth value portfolio (Bouckley, 2014). As of 2016, Bud Light is responsible for 19 to 20 percent of Anheuser Busch's business in the US. Recently, the company has been seeing a decline in profit due to the increasing popularity of craft beers (Taylor, 2016). Since the company's sales have been falling, Vice President Alexander Lambrecht reported that the brand would be undergoing a revamp of image and identity. Lambrecht states this is necessary because their publics have been changing as well. The company wants to reach millennials and is attempting to modernize their brand (Taylor, 2016).



Internal Impediments

Bud Light received immediate negative feedback from their audiences on their new campaign slogan. Many media sources began running the story on April 28th, 2015 with tweets from consumers saying the new campaign promoted rape culture (Koerber, 2015). Bud Light took notice and later that same day the company tweeted an apology with a link to their official statement. Vice President Alexander Lambrecht said in the Anheuser Busch statement that they would cease the production of all of the cans that would contain the slogan ("Updated: Statement," 2015). They have continued their "Up For Whatever" campaign but have shifted their focus to other marketing strategies.

Although the internal management and public relations team responded promptly to the situation, this was a big oversight by the company. The entire marketing team missed an obvious problem to the company's new slogan, which has been deemed reckless by public relations professionals (Hughes, 2015). This brings up problems in the almost all exclusive male makeup of their internal management.

Ethical Base

Bud Light continually works to provide the best product for their consumers, but at the core of their organization is social responsibility. The company has been an advocate for encouraging adults to drink responsibly and to prevent underage drinking. They have had several campaigns since 1982, starting with their "Know When To Say When" campaign for alcohol responsibility. Bud Light has spent \$900 million dollars on its "Drink Responsibly" ads to persuade adult drinkers to never drink and drive ("Alcohol Responsibility," n.d.). These ads have been more of a marketing strategy to promote brand loyalty and to persuade the audience that they have been living up to their responsibility (Roderick, 2016). While these ads seem to promote safe drinking to their public, it causes ethical concerns of the underlying motives of the company. In 2015, Bud Light reported a steady decline in sales, so the company has attempted to slow this decline with smarter marketing efforts (La Monica, 2015).

The company strongly aligns its beliefs with those of several charitable organizations. Anheuser Busch has donated more than \$500 million dollars to organizations starting in 1906 with the American Red Cross and their mission to the aid those affected by the San Francisco earthquake ("Community," n.d.). The company is also involved in communities by supporting schools, disaster relief, and has Employee Volunteer programs. In 2013, many of its team members participated in the Global Be(er) Responsible Day ("Alcohol Responsibility," n.d.).

Niche

Marketing for Bud Light has set it aside from many of its competitors. While many beer and alcohol beverages advertisements focus on selling a lifestyle, the company's ads are more more comedy oriented. While Bud Light is meant for any social occasion, with several sport partnerships, a lot of its consumers drink it a sport gatherings (Rothkopf, 2016). Most recently in 2016, Bud Light brought on comedians Seth Rogen and Amy Schumer to be part of their recent marketing campaign. With comedy, they poke fun at recent social issues such as equal pay and the upcoming election in November.

Communication Audit

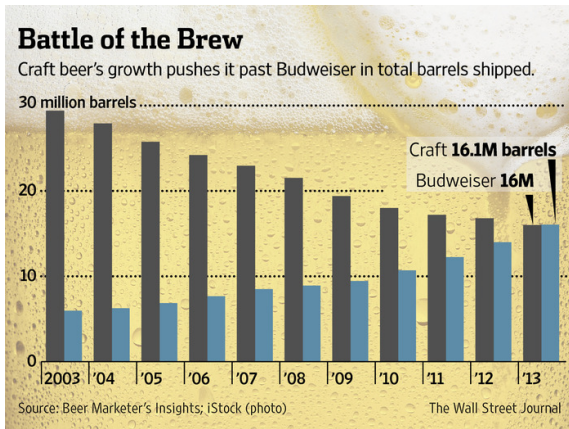
Anheuser Busch maintains a strong online presence with multiple active sites. The company has the greatest following on Facebook with about 7.7 millions likes. Through their new campaign with the NFL, the account is frequently engaging with its consumers.. Bud Light remains active on their Twitter handle as well, and with their hashtag #MyTeamCan and #BLCantasy for their new campaign, the company is constantly interacting with its followers. Bud Light is also active on their YouTube channels. Their video ads are uploaded to their account, and new content is available every couple of weeks. On their Instagram account, they have about 200k followers, and they are posting pictures and videos weekly. Much like their Facebook and Twitter posts, they are marketing for their new campaigns. On its official website, Bud Light has a contact page so consumers can get in touch with the company with concern,



comments, or even ideas. Bud Light delivers official news, statements, and press releases on the Anheuser Busch newsroom. After a thread on reddit appeared in April of 2015 criticizing the slogan, Bud Light reacted by tweeting an apology on the official Anheuser Busch Twitter account. This included a link to their newsroom of their official statement on the situation (Koerber, 2015). Bud Light has used their Twitter account to respond quickly to negative attention.

Organization Analysis: External Factors

Supporters



Budweiser's most well-known supporters are the National Football League and the American Republican Party. Every year during the Super Bowl, Budweiser receives its most viewed advertisement, a short commercial, and the NFL supplies the 114.4 million viewers (Shultz, 2013). In addition, Anheuser-Busch has spent \$149 million just on Super Bowl commercials from 2009-13, making them the one of the NFL's largest contributing sponsor (Monllos, 2015). Budweiser has also given a substantial amount of money to the Republican party, 3.6 million dollars to be exact (Anheuser-Busch, 2016) solidifying their personal interests in politics.

Competitors

Anheuser-Busch faces two major competitors. The first being MillerCoors, who is a highly competitive company and is narrowly in the number two rank for domination over the market. Together with Anheuser-Busch, they control 97% of the light beer market (Schultz, 2013). It is marketed as "The world's most refreshing beer" and in 2011 the company changed their focus to the LGBTQ community, Latinos, and women. The main component of this campaign was an ad that pictured two men dancing suggestively with the words "Out is Refreshing". However, after a look into the financial record of the MillerCoors company it was found that a significant amount of money is donated to anti-choice, anti-immigration, and anti-LGBTQ (Greenberg & Shea, 2015). Their campaign quickly backfired as customers saw through the marketing ploy.

Whereas before consumers remained loyal to one beer company, these days' consumers are more inclined to branch out and try new types of beers. This is seen in the raising populated of craft beers. Marketed as the underdog and sold in small batched, consumers feel more free to purchase a 6-pack to see how they like it. However, every 6-pack sold takes away from Budweiser's sales. (See Image Above)

Opponents

Anti-sexual assault groups and individuals are the largest opponent's the #UpForWhatever campaign. Scott Berkowitz of the of the anti-sexual-assault non-profit Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network was quoted saying "I have no idea what broke down in their internal review, but certainly there was a serious breakdown," (Mickel, 2014). What differs in this case is that the opponents are not organizations but mostly individuals, who have been highly effective in spreading their contempt for this campaign via social media platforms such as Twitter, Reddit, and Facebook. They've began attaching the campaign hashtag "#UpForWhatever" to their angry tweets which allows the discussion to trend the more the hashtag is used. More information will be discussed in the visibility section.



External impediments

Declining environment

According to the Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S, beer in alcohol market has fallen from 56 percent in 1999 of total sales to 48.8% in 2013 according to the Distilled spirits council of the U.S (Schultz, 2013). Specifically, Budweiser who 10 years ago owned a 14.4 % share in the U.S. beer market now only holds 7.6 percent (Mickel, 2014). This can be viewed as not the fault of Budweiser but a general trend, seeing as all other beer companies are also losing shares as new beers come to the market. This is causing all beer distributors alike to join forces and merge with other companies. In addition, women only make up 20 percent of the total market for beer companies (Schultz, 2013). This continues to decrease with additional efforts to commit to a healthier diet and lifestyle.

Financial

Recent years has seen a rise of disposable income in the household but how individuals are choosing to spend their money is aiding Budweiser. Consumers have been leaning toward purchasing hard liquor and wine. Consumers see this as a cost effective way to intake a higher amount of alcohol. One way consumers go about this is by “pregaming” which is defined as drinking liquor or other alcohol before going out to bars so as to save money buying drinks at the bars (Mickel, 2014).

Political

With the launch of their latest campaign, “America is in Your Hands”, Budweiser changed the name on their 12 oz. cans from “Budweiser” to “America”. Vice President of Budweiser, Ricardo Marques had said “We are embarking on what should be the most patriotic summer that this generation has ever seen” (Budweiser Emblazons, 2016). The problem with that is that patriotism is being highly questioned amongst Americans as being a good thing or not. Presidential nominee Donald J. Trump’s campaign slogan is “Make America Great Again”, a slogan that has been criticized for carrying racist, xenophobic, and homophobic underlying messages. Aligning the two slogans together makes it appear as if Budweiser agrees with Trump’s campaign ideals thus making the beer company unattractive to liberal thinkers or democrats who would rather drink a beer that doesn’t boast homegrown roots.

Consumers

With the millennial generation being the most pivotal buying power the world has seen, Budweiser has tried to direct marketing strategies towards them. The problem is millennials want nothing to do with it, 44 percent of 21- to 27-year-old drinkers today have never even tried Budweiser (Shultz, 2013). They would rather choose a beer with little popularity so that they don’t feel like they’re feeding into the ploy of big businesses. Millennials would in turn choose to consume more ready- to-drink cocktails and craft beer which makes up 15 percent of their out-of-home buys and it is growing by two percentage points a year (Shultz, 2013).

Public Environment

Reputation

Budweiser is generally perceived as a trustworthy and reliable company. Their product remains the same with little change to the appearance. Dating back to 1860, the company is rooted in the “American lifestyle” and therefore is favorites as an American classic, much like Coca-Cola. Even after this issue, online sources and mass media still describe Budweiser as an All-American beer, but in the recent weeks after the debut of the slogan online journalist published outrages articles criticizing how little thought must have gone into it.



Visibility

Anheuser-Busch, and in turn Budweiser is arguably on the most visible and widely known beer companies. The past Super Bowl ad 'Lost Puppy' was viewed 47 million times (Chasmar, 2016). In terms of this recent campaign issue, the initial Reddit post that brought light to the attention receives almost 4,000 points, that is just people who like or dislike it, it does not include the total number of people who have seen the post. From Reddit individuals took to Twitter to voice their discontent, using Bud Light's own hashtag "#UpForWhatever". So many people began talking about it that the hashtag was trending on Twitter.

Media Environment

In the recent wake of the "the perfect beer for taking "No" out of your vocabulary" slogan, Budweiser was met with outrage and backlash from a multitude of individual Twitter and Reddit users rather than by just one or two organizations. Budweiser has published an official apology via twitter and vowed to halt production on all bottles with that slogan. Lisa Weser, senior director of US marketing communications tweeted "It's clear that this message missed the mark, and we regret it. We would never condone disrespectful or irresponsible behavior." (Monolls, 2015). The environment of Twitter and social media platforms make it possible for Budweiser to get information to the public quickly, it also makes it quicker for individuals to voice their opinion and for that opinion to spread and influence others.

Analyzing the Publics

Bud Light has various major publics, which include anyone who has the ability to drink beer. People who are of the legal drinking age are considered to be within Bud Light's publics. The publics that will most be most affected by the "Up For Whatever" campaign situation range from Bud Light customers, producers, and particularly the enablers due to their role of setting the norms and standards of the organizations.

Customers

Research conducted by Hair, J., Bush, R., & Ortinau, D. (2016) the age group for major of consumer purchase of beer is 21-30 years of age with medium to high income, and the sex of consumer depends on the type of beer. This age group would be considered the key public in the situation, because for them beer can be incorporated as the selection of alcohol into any gathering such as sporting events and celebrations. Potential customers may include the college age group, ranging from 18-21 despite the legal drinking age. Beer is a common prevalent factor on college campuses, and ranging between the "preparation" and "action" stages of change model, this audience has potential customers for when they become the legal age.

Producers

The Bud Light company is produced by Anheuser Busch organization, who technically owns and creates the Bud Light. Anheuser Busch provides Bud Light with the services of its breweries to produce the beer in its locations throughout the country. According to the Bud Light fact sheet featured on the Anheuser-Busch website (2016), Bud Light is the official beer partner of the NFL, UFC, NBA, SXSW, and prolific Super Bowl partner and advertiser. Bud Light's partners, the various sport organizations that promote and advertise the beers contribute with services of providing beers at their events (NFL games, UFC fights, etc.) as well as materials of promotion and advertisements with commercials and ads (Super bowl commercials, billboards at venues, etc.) ("Bud Light", 2016). These organizations are considered producers for Bud Light due to their potential to produce an audience for the organization through publicity and advertisement. It seems very likely they would also support the Bud Light's position on their crisis situation because of their positive and prominent relationship with the organization.



Limiters

Bud Light's competitors include the range of other top-selling beers in America in the year of 2016 ("Sales of the leading domestic beer", 2016). These beer brands include Coors Light, Miller Light, Budweiser, Michelob Ultra Light, and Natural Light. A key competitor of Budweiser is Coors who showed their dominance over the beer market following Budweiser's merger with InBev in 2008. Budweiser dropped a few points in market share, falling under the "monopoly" threshold of 50 percent down around 48 percent ("Beer Market Study", 2015). Taking advantage of this fall, Coors Light passed Bud in market shares during their "Keeping the Cold" campaign. Another limiting factor when it comes to Budweiser sales, and the beer industry as a whole, is the recent increase in sales of wines and spirits, which rose 4 percent in 2011 while beer sales dropped 1.3 percent. Even with beer still dominating with 49.2 percent of alcohol sales, the other categories are steadily becoming more aggressive in their marketing, posing a big threat ("Beer Market Study", 2015).

Enablers

The Bud Light company is a product line which falls under the umbrella of the Anheuser-Busch company. This widespread organization operates 16 breweries, 17 distributorships, and 23 agricultural and packaging facilities across the country ("Our Beers", 2016). The numerous amount of branches within Anheuser-Busch create the opportunity for Bud Light to have a vast network of colleagues and connections. Regulators of the company could be bars and venues that provide Bud Light brews, with their requirement to regulate their customers to consume the products responsibly. Another category of regulators could be considered the management and leadership teams of Anheuser-Busch, who overlook and control the management functions and operations of Bud Light.

Opinion Leaders

Bud Light is active on various social media networks, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and their website. This is the most influential and direct way to communicate with their customers, but other organizations and publics have the ability to do so as well. Bud Light's partnerships, particular the sport organizations, have a strong influence over the publicity of Bud Light's products during the events; for example, how the NFL has promoted Bud Light brews over the course of the years during the Super Bowl commercials. The vice president of their company, Alexander Lambrecht, speaks vocally on behalf of the organization which was proven during his apologetic statement during the "Up For Whatever" campaign (Jaworowski, 2016). In the case of the particular crisis, Bud Light's top management are highly authoritative and due to their popularity, hold high positions of influence for their company. In the situation of targeting key publics, those positions which possess the factors of respect and authority have the most potential for influencing their audience to enhance their image.



SWOT Analysis & Key Target Publics

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Major corporations such as the NFL, UFC, NBA, and SXSW being large supporters of Budweiser ● Success of the Budweiser 12 oz. cans name change to “America” ● Budweiser and Bud Light ranked in the top 5 selling beers in the United States (Scott, 2015). ● Rapid response by communication head Lisa Weser ● Merger with InBev 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Marketing team created a slogan that indirectly promoted unethical decision making ● Response by the company to the issue made primarily through social media platforms ● Poor quality tasting products ● Men make up the majority of those working within the leading corporate structure
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NFL and Superbowl affiliation ● Name change to their 12 oz. cans from “Budweiser” to “America” ● “#UpForWhatever” hashtag was not negatively associated with the slogan “the perfect beer for removing “no” from your vocabulary for the night.” ● Anheuser-Busch’s merger with InBev 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decline in market shares of beer, rise in wine and spirits (Bailey, 2015) ● The trend to stay loyal to one beer brand is dead ● Leader of the anti-sexual-assault non-profit Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network making public statements directed towards the Bud Light branch ● Lisa Weser, senior director of US marketing communications only tweeting an apology for the faulty campaign message, not mentioning an explanation ● Social media being the main platform for customer reviews

Key Target Publics

- **Consumers**
 - According to research done by Hair, J., Bush, R., & Ortinau, D. (2016), Budweiser’s key target public are those 21-30 years of age with medium to high income, with sex depending on the type of beer.
 - In terms of Bud Light, their key target publics contains individuals ages 18-21 despite the legal drinking age (college students) which was found in the same 2016 study.
- **Communities-** Of critical importance to this issue, target communities would include active anti-sexual-assault groups such as the non-profit Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) lead by Scott Berkowitz.
- **Team Members:** All those who work within Budweiser
- **Investors:** Current and prospective shareholders and bondholders in Anheuser-Busch Inbev SA Sponsored ADR (Belgium).



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Primary Research

Introduction

In April of 2015, Bud Light found itself in a marketing and public relations dilemma concerning their slogan for their “Up For Whatever” campaign. The slogan “The perfect beer for taking “No” out of your vocabulary” had underlying tones which mistakenly promoted rape culture and irresponsible drinking. This unfortunately sparked outrage across several forms of social media associating negative connotations with Bud Light’s reputation and image. Their marketing team completely overlooked how the slogan would be perceived by their publics, and immediately acted upon their misinterpreted message. Bud Light replied swiftly with a genuine apology, and has been working to exert more scrutiny to overseeing their potential campaigns.

From the findings derived from the analysis of Bud Light’s “Up For Whatever” campaign, our group has come to the consensus to conduct further research in the form of a survey. Due to the fact the campaign triggered emotional responses from various publics, it is essential for Bud Light to regain the security and loyalty of relationships they previously shared with their customers. We intend to examine the public awareness of the issue as well as the public awareness of Bud Light’s efforts to remedy the crisis. Secondly we hope to analyze if the level of awareness resulted from the emotional response, specifically negative emotional responses, and if those emotions had an impact on Bud Light’s perceived corporate ability and corporate responsibility. Lastly, we aim to examine if the emotional negative responses had an impact on consumer intent to purchase. We believe a survey is the most suitable method of research for this particular situation for many reasons. The responses from the numerous publics among JMU students will provide an extensive look into the ways different audiences, not just their consumers, perceive their past and future campaigns. By focusing on examining the attitudes and behaviors of Bud Light’s publics as well, we hope that the findings from our research will act as information for the organization to utilize while improving the development of their future campaigns. We believe that the data derived from our survey will enhance Bud Light’s understanding of their publics as well as the successfully help them improve their public image as a whole.



Research Hypotheses

Effects of awareness on emotional response

The idea that the more you know, the more you care is clearly exemplified through the Bud Light #UpForWhatever campaign. It was proposed that the slogan “the perfect beer for removing ‘no’ from your vocabulary for the night” was approved because throughout many levels of the creative process, there existed a masculine majority deciding whether or not to implement this slogan. This is flawed in that women, who are inherently more aware of the stigmas surrounding sexual assault and women in our society, were not present to speak up about how the slogan alludes to the promotion of sexual assault behavior (“Advertising Professors,” 2015). Also, in terms of the public’s response, a mass majority of those who knew about the slogan showed negative emotions such as anger, which can be seen throughout many social media platforms. Both of these examples show that those who are less aware would have less emotional response to the slogan and its implications, whereas those who are more aware would have a higher emotional response to the slogan. Based on this discussion, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H1: Those with increased awareness towards the campaign displayed more emotional responses towards the slogan.

Effects of emotional responses on attitudes towards corporate responsibility

After Bud Light launched its #UpForWhatever slogan, they received immediate backlash from many consumers. The company was accused of promoting sexual assault. Many people were outraged that Bud Light, a popular beer company, was seemingly advertising rape culture on their products. Consumers began to associate the company with these negative connotations and this affected the way they viewed the company. “Branding also has an intangible nature that serves as a set of promises to consumers regarding trust, consistency, expectations and performance of a product or service” (Sago, 2014). Bud Light has always stated their support for responsible drinking through several campaigns. This is part of the company’s perceived corporate responsibility and ability. Positive or negative publicity can affect how consumers evaluate the company as a whole. Research on negative publicity has found that it has an influence over positive perceptions of a company (Monga, 2008). Because of this we seek to examine the following hypothesis.

H2: Consumers who experienced emotional reactions of anger towards the slogan affect the evaluation of corporate responsibility.

Effects of emotional responses on attitudes towards corporate ability

As stated previously, there were a large portion of publics who were outraged at the idea of a beer company promoting rape culture. People took to social media platforms to express their contempt for the situation which produced widespread negative publicity for Bud Light. Perceived negative publicity about companies is likely to gain consumer distrust, because publicity is considered a credible source of information (Ahluwalia et al., 2000). This is enough to cause probable suggestion that the negative publicity Bud Light received correlates similarly with a negative evaluation of corporate ability, which leads us the third hypothesis.



H3: Consumers who experienced emotional reactions of anger towards apology affect the evaluation of corporate ability.

Effects of attitudes on behavioral intentions

Bud Light's campaign evoked a negative response and perception from its customers. Sales for the beer had been declining and the campaign affected Bud Light's customer loyalty. It's important for Bud Light to maintain a trustworthy image and measure consumer attitudes after their campaign. The company's image suffered as many took to social media to voice their disapproval of Bud Light. According to Sago (2014), "negative corporate news had some adverse impact on aspects of consumer affinity, such as behavior, towards favorite brands." The public's attitude of the issue affected their evaluation of the company's social responsibility and ability. Perceived consumer attitudes have an influence over behavior intentions toward the company. This includes "brand perception, price levels willing to pay, and willingness to purchase" (Sago, 2014). Consumers place more weight on negative publicity over positive and begin to shift their judgment and behavior (Monga, 2008). Based on these expectations, the following hypotheses were created:

H4: The consumer evaluation of corporate ability affects the consumer intent to purchase.

H5: The consumer evaluation of corporate responsibility affects the consumer intent to purchase.

Method

1. Sampling method

The population from which we sampled was the James Madison University student body. 2,000 potential participants were randomly selected from a JMU email list and the email will contain the link to the survey. We had anticipated 10 percent of these selected individuals to respond or 200 completed surveys. We ended up receiving 181 completed surveys. We chose to use JMU students because the scope of this study pertains to consumer publics. Bud Light's consumer public contains young adults with average age ranging from 21-30 (Hair, J., Bush, R., & Ortinau, D. (2016). This corresponds well with the JMU average student age (18-24) so the target sample represented our population well.

2. Data Collection & Procedures

An online self-report survey methodology was employed to collect data. A total of 2,000 JMU students were randomly selected from the institutions Office of the Registrar's student email list and 181 responses were anticipated. Submitted surveys that were incomplete were disregarded and not assessed. The target sample of JMU students were chosen because of their representativeness of the total consumer population of Bud Light. The email sent to the random recipients contained a persuasive message encouraging the participation in the completion of the survey. A consent form was also presented before the participant took the survey. The survey assessed public awareness of the issue corporate ability, corporate responsibility, emotions and intent to purchase Bud Light products. Taking the survey required 15 minutes on average and those who were under the legal drinking age of 21 were encouraged to answer truthfully without consequence.



3. Measurements

Awareness

For the awareness variable, we chose to analyze the participant's awareness of the Bud Light's controversial campaign as well as their efforts to resolve their particular crisis. We asked the participants to indicate on a 5 point likert scale ranging between 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 indicating strongly agree. We examined their levels of awareness of (a.) the campaign, (b.) the "Up For Whatever" hashtag, (c.) the controversial slogan, (d.) the specific actions Bud Light took to resolve the issue. We believe these questions developed a valid depiction of the participant's awareness and understanding of the campaign. To analyze the data, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to assess reliability and internal consistency of the scale. For the first awareness measurement of campaign awareness the data showed a cronbach alpha score of 0.78, with a revised score of 0.80 by eliminating item three. For the measurement of crisis awareness the data revealed a cronbach alpha score of 0.96.

Emotional response

The emotional response variable was measured on Semantic Differential scale. This provided a valid measurement of attitudes of the participants on Bud Light's slogan and how they felt about Bud Light's promise to improve their future campaigns. The statements explained Bud Light's slogan and the structure of their public apology, providing insight to emotional responses before and after the campaign. We asked the participant to indicate on a 5 point scale which adjective most accurately depicted the how they felt about the statements with the emotions ranging from (a.) anger vs. happiness, (b.) disappointment vs. satisfaction, (c.) disrespected vs. respect, and (d.) fearful vs. secure. The questions in the survey investigating the effect of the emotional responses were measured by cronbach's alpha coefficient, and the results serve as a reliable measurement revealing important emotions Bud Light should focus on incorporating into campaigns in the future. The data for the variable of emotional response to the slogan revealed a cronbach alpha score of 0.92, with a revised cronbach alpha score of 0.93, if the fourth measurement (fearful vs. secure) were to be taken out. The data for the variable of emotional response after Bud Light's apology revealed a cronbach alpha score of 0.94, with a revised score of 0.95, if the second measurement of emotion (disappointment vs. satisfaction) were to be removed.

Perceived corporate ability

To measure perceived corporate ability we chose to measure it using a five-point Likert scale from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree). The questionnaire measures these using three topics, whether or not Bud Light offers; a) a diverse range of products and services as an organization, b) products that are reasonably priced, and c) products that have a pleasing taste. The cronbach's alpha coefficient was examined to assess reliability and internal consistency of the scale. The data showed a cronbach alpha score of 0.70, any revision of measurements would result in a lower cronbach alpha score.

Perceived corporate responsibility

To measure perceived corporate responsibility we chose to measure it using a five-point Likert scale from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree). The questionnaire measures these using three topics, whether or not Bud Light; a) engages in philanthropic behavior that gives back to the community, b) genuinely cares about their customers, and c) takes corporate responsibility seriously. The cronbach's alpha coefficient was examined to assess reliability and internal consistency of the scale. The data revealed a Cronbach Alpha score of 0.83. Any adjustments would result in a lower cronbach alpha score.



Intent to purchase

Intent to purchase is measured on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree) based on the whether this crisis made them more or less inclined to buy Bud Light products. This scale offers the ability for the participant to stay neutral as well. Because this variable only consists of one measurement, which would be the most reliable we could possess, it has Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 1.

Results

Demographic information of respondents

Our survey was administered through a James Madison University's mass email server. We accumulated 181 respondents, but after cleaning the data, we were left with 109 respondents. The descriptive analysis of the surveys shows that the average age was in the 21-23 group ($SD = 0.35$). There were more female participants ($n=71, 67\%$) than male participants ($n=35, 33\%$). As for ethnicity, the majority of participants were white ($n=100, 93.5\%$), followed by Black or African American ($n=4, 3.7\%$), and Other ($n=3, 2.8\%$). As for class standing, 1 participant was a sophomore (0.9%), followed by juniors ($n=24, 22.4\%$), and then seniors ($n=75, 70.1\%$).

Test of Hypotheses

RQ1: What is the public awareness of the issue concerning Bud Light's #UpForWhatever campaign?

For the awareness variable, the average score for public awareness of the #UpForWhatever campaign was 2.9 ($SD=1.71$), awareness of social media use of this hashtag was 3.8 ($SD=1.47$), and the public awareness of the slogan "The perfect beer for taking 'no' out of your vocabulary" was 3.5 ($SD= 1.67$). After analyzing the data, the researchers concluded that the most public awareness was of the social media presence of Bud Light's campaign.

RQ2: What is the emotional response of the public (anger, etc.)?

The emotional response variables from semantic differential scales within the survey were analyzed through the method of regression tests. The findings derived from the research identified that the average score of the emotional response of anger versus happiness towards Bud Light's slogan was 2.3 ($SD=1.11$), the emotional response regarding feelings of disappointment versus satisfaction was 2.1 ($SD=1.08$), the emotional response regarding feelings of disrespect versus respect was 2.08 ($SD=1.04$), and the emotional response regarding fear versus security was 2.69 ($SD=.95$). Results from the second semantic differential scale focused on Bud Light's response to the crisis displayed that the average score of the emotional response of anger versus happiness was 3.2 ($SD=.87$), the emotional response of disappointment versus satisfaction was 3.2 ($SD=.96$), the emotional response regarding disrespect versus respect was 3.2 ($SD=.92$), and the emotional response regarding fear versus security was 3.2 ($SD=.78$). After analyzing the data, researchers concluded that overall Bud Light's slogan evoked negative emotions; however, respondents displayed a significant increase in positive emotional responses regarding Bud Light's actions in response to the crisis.



RQ3: What is the public awareness of Bud Light's crisis response?

In terms of crisis response awareness, the average score for public awareness of Bud Light's actions to manage the issue was 4.3 (SD=1.15), awareness of the termination of production of the slogan was 4.0 (SD=1.40), awareness of Bud Light's apology was 4.2 (SD= 1.19), and awareness of the organization's promise to run their future campaigns under more scrutiny was 4.2 (SD= 1.20). After analyzing the data, we concluded that Bud Light's publics had a greater awareness of their actions to manage this issue in relation to their crisis response.

RQ4: Whether awareness of Bud Light's crisis response makes any difference between emotional responses?

To measure a relationship between awareness of Bud Light's responses to the crisis and emotional responses experienced by publics we conducted a regression test of the two values. Upon analyzing the data we found that the test showed a negative relationship between the variables. However, it was not of a statistically significant level ($\beta = -.167, p > .05$). Reflecting on these findings we concluded that awareness of Bud Light's crisis response did not make any difference in emotional responses.

RQ5: Current evaluation of corporate reputation?

In measuring the corporate reputation of Bud Light, two aspects were measured: perceived corporate ability (product, qualities, pricing, services, etc.) and perceived corporate responsibility. The average CA score for Bud Light having a diverse product line was 2.9 (SD=1.31), 2.0 (SD=0.99) for Bud Light's products being reasonably priced, and 3.1 (SD=1.40) for Bud Light products having a good taste. As for CSR, the average scores were found to be 3.2 (SD=0.89) for Bud Light engaging in philanthropic behavior that gives back to the community, 3.0 (SD=1.10) for Bud Light genuinely caring for its customers, and 3.0 (SD=0.98) for Bud Light taking corporate responsibility seriously. The scores show an overarching average score of 2.9 for Bud Light's corporate reputation.

RQ6: Which evaluation (CA vs. CSR) is more important when it comes to purchasing intent?

When analyzing corporate responsibility and corporate ability in relation to their influence on purchasing intent, it was found through a regression test on the relationship between CA and purchase intent that CA had a significant influence on purchase intent with a p-value of .000. A regression test was also run on CSR and purchase intent which also found that CSR significantly influences purchasing intent with a p-value of .000 as well. Because the two significance scores were the same, the Beta score was then compared in order to find which had more influence on purchase intent, CSR or CA. With a Beta score of .70, CA was found to have the most influence on purchasing intent compared to CSR's Beta score of .53. Thus, when it comes to purchasing intent, corporate ability is more important.

H1: Those with increased awareness towards the campaign displayed more emotional responses towards the slogan.

The first hypothesis proposes that those in the public with prior awareness for the ##UpForWhatever campaign experience more emotional or negative responses toward the slogan. A regression test was performed to measure the relationships between awareness and emotions towards the campaign slogan. The test showed a negative effect between the variables, however it was not statistically significant ($\beta = -.17, p < .09$). Thus, H1 was not supported.



H2: Consumers who experienced emotional reactions of anger towards the slogan affect the evaluation of corporate responsibility.

This second hypothesis is for examining the effects of negative emotions towards the campaign slogan on consumer evaluation of corporate responsibility. A regression test was conducted on the relationship between emotions and corporate responsibility. The test showed a negative effect between the variables, with a statistically significant level ($\beta = -.24, p < .05$). Thus, H2 was supported.

H3: Consumers who experienced emotional reactions of anger towards apology affect the evaluation of corporate ability.

This third hypothesis is for examining the effects of negative emotions towards Bud Light's apology on consumer evaluation of corporate ability. A regression test was performed on the relationship between emotions and corporate ability. The test showed a negative effect between the variables, with a statistically significant level ($\beta = -.31, p < .001$). Thus, H3 was supported.

H4: The consumer evaluation of corporate ability affects the consumer intent to purchase.

This fourth hypothesis is for examining the effects of Bud Light's corporate ability on the intent to purchase their products. A regression test was performed on the relationship between corporate ability and intent to purchase. The test showed a positive effect between the variables, with a statistically significant level ($\beta = .70, p < .001$). Thus, H4 was supported.

H5: The consumer evaluation of corporate responsibility affects the consumer intent to purchase.

The fifth hypothesis is for examining the effects of consumer evaluation of Bud Light's corporate responsibility on the intent to purchase their products. A regression test was performed on the relationship between corporate responsibility and intent to purchase. The test showed a positive effect between the variables, with a statistically significant level ($\beta = .53, p < .001$). Thus, H5 was supported.

Conclusion

Summary

In April of 2015, Bud Light found itself in a marketing and public relations dilemma concerning their slogan for their campaign. The slogan "The perfect beer for taking "No" out of your vocabulary" had underlying tones that promotes rape culture and irresponsible drinking. Bud Light has made much of their advertising on the notion that they encourage responsible drinking. There was a huge oversight from within the internal structure of Bud Light. Their marketing team completely overlooked how this slogan would be received by their publics, and immediately acted upon their misinterpreted message. This problem has shed light onto the current makeup of the team, which consists of mostly men. Bud Light replied swiftly, and has been working to exert more scrutiny to overseeing their upcoming campaigns. Further research with focus groups and surveys could allow an extensive look into how different audiences, not just their consumers, perceive their past and potential future campaigns.



Theoretical Implications

From the data derived from this study, empirical findings support the existing relationship between consumers' emotional responses towards the "Up For Whatever" campaign and its effect on the evaluation of corporate responsibility and corporate ability of Bud Light. The results indicate the importance campaigns have on evaluating an organization and their significant role in shaping an organization's public image. When companies have a strong, comprehensive, and responsible policies they follow accordingly, it positively impacts how their publics feel and evaluate the organization. Findings from this study identify that emotional responses of anger towards the campaign had a negative effect on the evaluation of Bud Light's corporate ability and reputation, which indicates the correlation between key messages and a consumer's intent to purchase the company's products. These results display the importance for Bud Light to examine the quality of their organization's messages to prevent brand image in future campaigns.

Practical implications

The findings from the survey regarding Bud Light's "Up For Whatever" campaign focused primarily on the relationship between the emotional responses of the campaign and its effect on the consumer's evaluation of the organization. The hypotheses which were supported display that negative reactions to the campaign had a direct impact on consumers' evaluations on corporate ability and responsibility, and the evaluation of corporate ability and responsibility correlated with a consumer's intent to purchase. Future studies should focus directly on enhancing Bud Light's reputational management as well as their relationship management. With that being said, the significance of the emotions of Bud Light's consumers indicates the need to develop a more strategic establishment of the organization's messages to its target publics. Due to the findings which suggest corporate responsibility and corporate ability affect consumers' intent to purchase, an implication to utilize this finding would be to launch a campaign with the incorporation of a strategic philanthropy to display Bud Light's improvement of their internal structure. Due to the controversy with the disrespect for women in their previous campaign, partnering with a nonprofit women's organization with a primary message of the importance of professional women could implicate Bud Light's value of women in the workforce. Findings from the study also prove that there wasn't any correlation between those who were aware of the campaign and their feelings towards the slogan. Meaning, that even people who didn't know about the "Up For Whatever" campaign still could have had potential negative feelings regarding the slogan. To ensure the promotion of more positive campaign messages in the future, Bud Light should implicate a media-relations campaign to reach affected publics and social media users, to send the message that social responsibility is still at the core of the organization. Survey findings also display respondents frequently stated they were still likely to buy their products, so another suggestion for Bud Light to consider would be the incorporation a "drinking responsibly" campaign on their products. Placing emphasis on drinking responsibly communicates that they care more about their consumers well-being than their sales. A possible existing partnership with an organization like the NFL could combine efforts to develop a campaign to promote and advocate for responsible drinking. This campaign would be directed at the affected publics, regaining the trust relationship with their publics as well as their competitive advantage of customer loyalty.

Implications of Your Survey

After completing secondary research on the Bud Light campaign, our group was able to determine several variables that were relevant to the case. We created hypotheses with independent and dependent variables based on the concepts. We also created questions for our survey using each concept in our hypotheses. Our group determined these to be awareness, corporate responsibility, corporate ability, emotions, and intent to purchase. Creating a questionnaire measured our variables and help test our hypotheses. The data allows Bud Light to measure their publics' current attitudes to the issue in order to implement a plan.



Limitations and Future Study

The researchers were limited in a few areas. While only being able to conduct a single research study on one demographic: James Madison University students, of which the average age was 21-23. Students may not have taken the survey in the proper amount of time to give genuine and correct responses. Another limitation is that the researchers simply are using survey data instead of a diversity of studies such as using focus groups or questionnaires. Also, this study included a survey created and conducted for the first time by the researchers.

For future researchers, it could be suggested that a more diverse population be targeted in terms of demographics as well as creating and conducting focus groups, additional questionnaires and follow-up surveys. As far as for what to target within similar future studies, employees of Bud Light could be studied to gain a better understanding about how they reacted and felt about the issue and how it has possibly changed the company in any way to understand more about how a similar issue could be avoided in the future.

As mentioned before, the age group targeted through the survey was finite with respondents ranging from average ages of 21-23. Within reviewing the responses respondents who were under the age of 21 were not recorded which took our total number of responses within the study down about 30%, lowering the reliability of the study's overall conclusions. Thus, responses were only taken from individuals aged 21 and older given the legality in regards to drinking. Because the age to drink doesn't prohibit an individual under 21 from having a clear perception of the company, future researchers could expand the ages to younger than 21 as well as those over the average ages of college students in order to gain more information on the public's perception of the issue.

Overall, for a more efficient and effective campaign development, the findings from this study on Bud Light could be utilized. The research concludes that increased communication is very much needed to alleviate the poor public perception of the Bud Light #UpforWhatever campaign.



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Appendix A

Final Questionnaire

Please indicate how strongly you feel about the following statements.

Q1. I am aware of Bud Light's #UpForwhatever Campaign.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Q2. I have seen posts on social media sites using this hashtag.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Q3. I am aware of the slogan "The perfect beer for taking No out of your vocabulary" used by Bud Light in their campaign.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Please indicate how strongly you feel about the following statements.

Q4. I am aware of the actions Bud Light has taken to manage this issue.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Q5. I am aware that Bud Light immediately terminated the production of the controversial slogans on their beer after the media outbreak

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Q6. I am aware Bud Light executives made a public apology on behalf of the organization's campaign

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Q7. I am aware of Bud Light's promise to manage its public image and campaign messages under more scrutiny in the future.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Q8. Bud Light offers a diverse range of products and services as an organization

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Q9. Bud Light products are reasonably priced.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Q10. Bud Light products have a good taste.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Q11. Bud Light engages in philanthropic behavior that gives back to the community.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Q12. Bud Light genuinely cares about their customers.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Q13. Bud Light takes corporate responsibility seriously.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Please plot on the scale where you feel most represents your emotions in regards to the statements.



Q14. Upon seeing the slogan “ The perfect beer for taking “No” out of your vocabulary”, I felt feelings of:

Anger	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Happiness
Disappointment	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Satisfaction
Disrespected	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Respected
Fearful	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Secure

Q15. After Bud Light’s apology on behalf of the slogan and promise to closely evaluate future messages evoked feelings of:

Anger	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Happiness
Disappointment	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Satisfaction
Disrespected	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Respected
Fearful	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Secure

Q16. How likely are you to purchase Bud Light products in the future.

Extremely Likely Likely Neutral Unlikely Extremely Unlikely

Q17. How old are you?

- a. Under 18
- b. 18-20
- c. 21-23
- d. Over 23

Q18. Gender

- a. Male
- b. Female

Q19. Choose your academic year in school.

- a. Freshman
- b. Sophomore
- c. Junior
- d. Senior

Q20. Which race do you most identify with?

- a. White
- b. Black or African American
- c. American Indian and Alaska Native
- d. Asian
- e. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- f. Other



Appendix B

IRB and Informed Consent Form

James Madison University Human Research Review Request

FOR IRB USE ONLY:

Exempt:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Protocol Number:	1 st Review:	Reviewer:
Expedited:	<input type="checkbox"/>	IRB:	2 nd Review:	Reviewer:
Full Board:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Received:	3 rd Review:	

Project Title: Bud Light "Up For Whatever" Slogan Study

Project Dates: From: 11 /06 /16 To: 11 /05 / 17

(Not to exceed 1 year minus 1 day)

MM/DD/YY MM/DD/YY

Minimum # of Participants: 100

Maximum # of Participants: 300

Funding: **External Funding:** Yes: No: **If yes, Sponsor:**

Internal Funding: Yes: No: **If yes, Sponsor:**

Independently: Yes: No:

Incentives: Will monetary incentives be offered? Yes: No:

If yes: How much per recipient? _____ In what form?

Must follow JMU Financial Policy:

<http://www.jmu.edu/financemanual/procedures/4205.shtml#.394IRBApprovedResearchSubjects>

Responsible Researcher(s): Yeonsoo Kim

E-mail Address: Kim28yx@jmu.edu

Telephone: 540-568-2396

Department: School of Communication Studies



Address (MSC): MSC 2106

Please Select: Faculty Undergraduate Student
 Administrator/Staff Member Graduate Student

(if Applicable):

Research Advisor: Yeonsoo Kim, Ph.D.
E-mail Address: Kim28yx@jmu.edu
Telephone: 540-568-2396
Department: School of Communication Studies
Address (MSC): MSC 2106

Investigator: Please respond to the questions below. The IRB will utilize your responses to evaluate your protocol submission.

1. YES NO Does the James Madison University Institutional Review Board define the project as *research*?

The James Madison University IRB defines "research" as a "systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to *generalizable knowledge*." All research involving human participants conducted by James Madison University faculty and staff and students is subject to IRB review.

2. YES NO Are the human participants in your study *living* individuals?

"Individuals whose physiologic or behavioral characteristics and responses are the object of study in a research project. Under the federal regulations, human subjects are defined as: living individual(s) about whom an investigator conducting research obtains:

(1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual; or (2) identifiable private information."

3. YES NO Will you obtain data through *intervention* or *interaction* with these individuals?

"Intervention" includes both physical procedures by which data are gathered (e.g., measurement of heart rate or venipuncture) and manipulations of the participant or the participant's environment that are performed for research purposes. "Interaction" includes communication or interpersonal contact between the investigator and participant (e.g., surveying or interviewing).

4. YES NO Will you obtain *identifiable private information* about these individuals?

"Private information" includes information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, or information provided for specific purposes which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public (e.g., a medical record or student record). "Identifiable" means that the identity of the participant may be ascertained by the investigator or associated with the information (e.g., by name, code number, pattern of answers, etc.).

5. YES NO Does the study present *more than minimal risk* to the participants?

"Minimal risk" means that the risks of harm or discomfort anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. Note that the concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes psychological, emotional, or behavioral risk as well as risks to employability, economic well being, social standing, and risks of civil and criminal liability.



CERTIFICATIONS:

For James Madison University to obtain a Federal Wide Assurance (FWA) with the Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, all research staff working with human participants must sign this form and receive training in ethical guidelines and regulations. "Research staff" is defined as persons who have direct and substantive involvement in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting research and includes students fulfilling these roles as well as their faculty advisors. The Office of Research Integrity maintains a roster of all researchers who have completed training within the past three years.

Test module at ORI website <http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/irbtraining.shtml>

Name of Researcher(s) and Research Advisor	Training Completion Date
Brynn Bresnahan	9/21/2016
Brooke Rera	04/05/2016
Missy Swan	9/20/2016
Jennifer Lopez-Gallardo	9/19/2016
Yeonsoo Kim	9/20/2014

For additional training interests, or to access a Spanish version, visit the National Institutes of Health Protecting Human Research Participants (PHRP) Course at: <http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>.

By signing below, the Responsible Researcher(s), and the Faculty Advisor (if applicable), certifies that he/she is familiar with the ethical guidelines and regulations regarding the protection of human research participants from research risks. In addition, he/she agrees to abide by all sponsor and university policies and procedures in conducting the research. He/she further certifies that he/she has completed training regarding human participant research ethics within the last three years.

__Jennifer Lopez-Gallardo_____ 10/21/2016 _____
Principal Investigator Signature Date

__Brooke Rera_____ 10/21/2016 _____
Principal Investigator Signature Date

__Brynn Bresnahan_____ 10/21/2016 _____
Principal Investigator Signature Date

_____Melissa Swan_____ 10/21/2016 _____
Principal Investigator Signature Date

Faculty Advisor Signature Date



Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by undergraduate students from James Madison University. The purpose of this study is to assess public awareness of Bud Light's #UpForWhatever campaign, examine emotions experienced, analyze public opinion of Bud Light concerning factors of corporate ability and responsibility, and intent to purchase Bud Light products in light of the issue.

Research Procedures

Should you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to review this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. This study consists of a survey that will be administered to individual participants via an online survey site, Qualtrics. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to your perception of awareness, public opinion.

Time Required

Participation in this study should take no longer than 10-15 minutes.

Risks

The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life).

Benefits

No direct compensations are anticipated. No monetary compensation will be given on behalf of the researcher for participating in this study. No direct benefits are anticipated. Potential benefits from participation in this study include giving insight of your into how corporate social responsible programs impact their attitudes toward companies.

Confidentiality

The results of this research will only be used for an in class assignment and will not be published or viewable in anyway to the public. While individual responses are anonymously obtained and recorded online through the Qualtrics software, data is kept in the strictest confidence. No identifiable information will be collected from the participant and no identifiable responses will be presented in the final form of this study. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data for academic purposes. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher for one semester. After one semester, pending completion of the case study, all information will be destroyed.

Participation & Withdrawal

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. However, once your



responses have been submitted and anonymously recorded you will not be able to withdraw from the study.

Questions about the Study

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Yeonsoo Kim, Ph.D.

School of Communication Studies

James Madison University

Kim28yx@jmu.edu

(540) 568-6228

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject

Dr. David Cockley

Chair, Institutional Review Board

James Madison University

(540) 568-2834

cocklede@jmu.edu

Giving of Consent

I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age. By clicking on the link below, and completing and submitting this anonymous survey, I am consenting to participate in this research.

____Brooke Rera____ 10/21/2016____
Name of Researcher (Printed) Date

____Jennifer Lopez-Gallardo____ 10/21/2016____
Name of Researcher (Printed) Date

____Melissa Swan____ 10/21/2016____
Name of Researcher (Printed) Date

____Brynn Bresnahan____ 10/21/2016____
Name of Researcher (Printed) Date

This study has been approved by the IRB, protocol #No. 17-0259.



Appendix C

Focus Group Proposal

Background

The Bud Light Family is a branch of the Anheuser-Busch, which has been a leading world-class brewing company for over 160 years (Our Beers, 2016). With Bud Light being the top-selling beer in the United States, the particular crisis within the “Up For Whatever” campaign holds extreme significance due to the effect it had on the organization’s audiences and surrounding publics. We seek to find if this situation affected people’s perception of Bud Light, and/or negatively impacted attitudes towards the beer concerning with the problematic slogans.

Objectives

Our objectives for the focus group are to pose a number of research questions in order to either prove or disprove our hypotheses. The goal of this study is to assess public awareness of Bud Light’s #UpForWhatever campaign, examine emotions experienced, analyze public opinion of Bud Light concerning factors of corporate ability and responsibility, and intent to purchase Bud Light products in light of the issue. Specifically, the objectives are to first, to see if those with increased awareness of this issue displayed more negative emotional responses. Secondly, to see if those who experienced reactions of anger affected the evaluation of corporate responsibility, ability, and ultimately consumer’s intent to purchase.

Methodology

The focus group conducted will be considered a traditional focus group, meaning that we will be selecting individuals randomly from a population. Our population will consist of James Madison University undergraduate students. Because not all JMU students are of the legal drinking age and our focus group centers on a beer company, we will segment the public by age. We will only be recruiting students who are of 21 years of age or older. Instead of just one focus group at one time, we will hold multiple focus groups on the same day. This is to ensure that participants are not just tagging on to what one participant says because this would give us skewed results in the true opinions of the publics. Each group will consist of 20 students and there will be five separate focus groups, 100 focus group participants in total.

Logistics

The focus group will take place on a weeknight on the James Madison University Campus, specifically in Miller Hall, room 102. This room is ideal because the seats are already arranged in a way that encourages discussion. Participants, will all be students of the university selected based on their age and willingness to volunteer. Participants will be recruited through a mass email sent to JMU students informing them that if they are of 21 years of age, they are eligible to participate. Because we can offer no monetary incentive, students will be given extra credit in their communication class in exchange for their participation. Students will then be randomly selected using based on a first come, first serve bases, filling the allotted 100 participant spaces. The staff will include two people, a moderator and a note taker. Both will be on the research team for the study. The focus group will take approximately 45 minutes with a maximum time of one hour. This is to encourage participation without exhausting or discouraging participants.



Discussion Guide

Good afternoon/morning, and welcome to this focus group session. You have been asked to participate in a focus group for our Campaign Research Methods class, SCOM 388 in the JMU School of Communication Studies. I'd like to start off by thanking you all for taking the time to join us. You were all recruited to participate in this focus group through JMU's mass email server. This focus group should take approximately 45 minutes, but no more than one hour. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. My name is Brooke Rera, I'm a senior Communications Major, with a concentration in Public Relations and I will be the moderator for today's focus group. Our note taker today is, X, he/she is also part of our research team in this class.

We will be focusing our discussion around the Bud Light "#UpForWhatever" campaign. This discussion will look at attitudes and beliefs about the campaign, and different levels of intent to purchase Bud Light products. The goal of this study is to assess public awareness of Bud Light's #UpForWhatever campaign, examine emotions experienced, analyze public opinion of Bud Light concerning factors of corporate ability and responsibility, and intent to purchase Bud Light products in light of the issue. This study will also look at how the public felt about the Bud Light before and after the campaign. We will look at the emotions experienced and your beliefs and attitudes of the Bud Light company as well as the campaign itself.

That being said, this is a confidential focus group. What is shared here is just for the use of the researchers and should not be discussed with or by others outside of this focus group. The results of this research will only be used for an in class assignment and will not be published or viewable in any way to the public. No identifiable information will be collected from the participant and no identifiable responses will be presented in the final form of this study. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data for academic purposes. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher for one semester. After one semester, pending completion of the case study, all information will be destroyed.

As the moderator, my role is to ask questions, prompt discussion and listen to your opinions. I will not be participating in the conversation and I will not be providing my opinion regarding anything said. The note-taker's role is to record everything being said in order to accurately transcribe information. While I will not be participating, I want to encourage open discussion amongst all participants during the course of this focus group. I will be asking about 10 questions (9 key questions, and one ending question) and will move the discussion through them. Please be mindful to share the floor with others as this is a discussion and we are interested in what each of you have to say. That being said, please feel free to voice any opinion you may have about the statement or questions prompted. We consider all comments whether positive or negative to be helpful in our research.

If there are no further questions let's begin by going around the room and introducing ourselves.



Focus Group Questionnaire

Focus Group Questionnaire

Opening: Let's start with initial introductions. First, tell everyone in the group your name, what year you are at JMU, your major and a fun fact.

Introduction: Are you aware of Bud Light and their products?

PROBE:

What are your thoughts on their products?

Would you consider yourself a supporter of the brand?

If so, how often do you purchase their products?

Transition: Are you aware that Bud Light has multiple social media accounts?

PROBE:

Do you know of their social media accounts?

Do you follow them on these accounts?

Are there any ways you suggest for improving their social media content?

Key: Are you aware of Bud Light's "Up For Whatever Campaign" and their slogan "The Perfect Beer for Taking 'No' From Your Vocabulary?"

PROBE:

Do you think this campaign aligns with Bud Light's values of responsible drinking?

How do you think this slogan relates to drinking culture?

What do you believe to be the biggest problem with the slogan?

BREAK

Transition: Before the break you were able to express your thoughts about Bud Light and their campaign. Are there any questions regarding what was covered in the first half of this session?

PROBE:

Are there any new thoughts anyone would like to add?

Is there anything we missed that you wanted to talk about?

Key: Bud Light released an apology statement on their Twitter account after receiving backlash on their slogan. Do you think this apology was sincere?

PROBE:

What other way do you think Bud Light could have expressed their apology?

How did their apology make you feel?

Did you forgive Bud Light after they made that statement?

Key: Do you think Bud Light's oversight with their slogan is reflective of the company?

PROBE:

Was this just a mishap with marketing or with the company as a whole?

Are you likely to support the brand after this?

What are some ways Bud Light can prevent this from happening again?

Key: What do you think is the best way to improve attitudes towards Bud Light?

Ending: After discussing the awareness and attitudes of Bud Light's campaign and slogan, what is your overall impression of the company and their response to the situation?



Summary: The note-taker, X, will be summarizing the key points that were made today during our discussion.

(X reads key points with what was said and not said).

Does this summary sound complete?

Final question: Is there anything that we did not talk about, but you would like to have? Is there anything you wish you said but didn't? Do you have any advice for improvement?

Conclusion

We expect that all answers will be as helpful to our research, though some answers will provide us with more insight than others as to why they feel the way they do. We understand that women may be more affected by the campaign than men and expect to find that women experienced stronger emotional reactions to the campaign than men did.

The focus group however, was helpful in understanding what aspects of Bud Light public like and what aspects the public thinks needs improvement as well as seeing how participants suggest handling the campaign issue as opposed to how Bud Light had. The information gathered from the focus group could be increasingly useful when paired, or triangulated with quantitative data of surveys. We believe that with a multifaceted method of research we can pinpoint values of the Bud Light public and see first, where the campaign initially went wrong and secondly, how to correct it in the most efficient way possible.



Appendix D

Data Analysis Output

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.743	.349		10.708	.000
	Emotionapology	-.345	.106	-.306	-3.267	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Ability

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.465	.192		18.028	.000
	Emotionslogan	-.199	.081	-.237	-2.468	.015

a. Dependent Variable: Responsibility

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.553	.247		10.328	.000
	Awareness	-.115	.067	-.167	-1.727	.087

a. Dependent Variable: Emotionslogan



Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.231	.302		-.765	.446
	Ability	1.060	.107	.696	9.872	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Intentaverage

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.251	.463		-.542	.589
	Responsibility	.923	.147	.525	6.259	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Intentaverage



Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.775	3

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Awareness1	3.0943	1.71007	106
Awareness2	3.7736	1.46894	106
Awareness3	3.5472	1.66837	106

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Awareness1	7.3208	6.715	.747	.528
Awareness2	6.6415	8.956	.586	.725
Awareness3	6.8679	8.459	.518	.798

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.955	4

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
CrisisAwareness1	4.2642	1.14893	106
CrisisAwareness2	4.0094	1.40404	106
CrisisAwareness3	4.2075	1.19297	106
VAR00001	4.1887	1.20407	106

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
CrisisAwareness1	12.4057	13.062	.882	.944
CrisisAwareness2	12.6604	11.388	.881	.948
CrisisAwareness3	12.4623	12.460	.929	.929
VAR00001	12.4811	12.671	.885	.942



Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.828	3

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Responsibility1	3.1524	.88558	105
Responsibility2	3.0000	1.06518	105
Responsibility3	2.9333	.98319	105

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Responsibility1	5.9333	3.524	.642	.808
Responsibility2	6.0857	2.791	.708	.745
Responsibility3	6.1524	3.015	.721	.727

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.695	3

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Reputation1	2.8774	1.31441	106
Reputation2	1.9623	.99450	106
Reputation3	3.0755	1.39863	106

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Reputation1	5.0377	4.265	.500	.619
Reputation2	5.9528	5.303	.527	.611
Reputation3	4.8396	3.812	.538	.575



Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.920	4

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Emotion1	2.3208	1.10881	106
Emotion2	2.0755	1.07525	106
Emotion3	2.0849	1.04305	106
Emotion4	2.6887	.94982	106

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Emotion1	6.8491	7.653	.854	.883
Emotion2	7.0943	7.991	.819	.896
Emotion3	7.0849	7.907	.874	.876
Emotion4	6.4811	9.071	.725	.926

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.939	4

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Emotion1a	3.2075	.86978	106
Emotion2a	3.1792	.96409	106
Emotion3a	3.1792	.92373	106
Emotion4a	3.2170	.76848	106

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Emotion1a	9.5755	6.170	.843	.923
Emotion2a	9.6038	5.499	.916	.900
Emotion3a	9.6038	5.746	.897	.906
Emotion4a	9.5660	6.858	.776	.945