



Anheuser Busch-InBev

PURPOSE

Anheuser Busch was founded in 1852 and incorporated in 1875. It is the largest brewing company in the United States and prides itself on quality and heritage. Anheuser Busch dominates the American beer market with a 48% market share. In addition to brewing beer, Anheuser Busch also operates theme parks in Tampa, Orlando, Williamsburg, San Antonio and San Diego.

The recent sale of Anheuser Busch to the Belgian company InBev for \$52 billion necessitated a thorough look at the online conversations and feedback that arose since the time of the sale. In order to ensure a smooth transition, Anheuser Busch-InBev must acknowledge the public's changing opinion of the brand.

METHODOLOGY

We conducted our research by observing a wide array of social media outlets. By searching on Myspace, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Icerocket, Technorati, and Google Blog Search we found many groups, blogs and conversations regarding Anheuser Busch-InBev. To narrow results, we focused on information that reflected public opinion of the brand and originated within the year 2009.

Technorati verified the credibility of our sources through ranking and authority systems. A lower rank indicated the most popular of blogs and a higher authority indicated more links to and from the blog. Quantcast supplied data of monthly visits and demographics for the blogs and Web sites. Credibility of our sources varied from topic to topic, but generally the data which we included in our social media monitoring table were consistently conclusive.

RESULTS

Generally, Anheuser Busch-InBev received mixed reactions among online conversations. On Twitter, people expressed both distaste and an appreciation of Budweiser beer and products. Twitter conversations also included reactions to Anheuser Busch-InBev's Super Bowl advertisements. Most were pleased with the consistency of quality in relation to the current economic state.

Flickr, Myspace and Facebook had a variety of groups that were related to Anheuser Busch-InBev. The group on Flickr, "Anheuser Busch: Budweiser and More," had photos of memorabilia and the famous Clydesdales. The group on Myspace was comprised of hardcore Budweiser fans who proclaimed, "Bud is my only friend." Facebook had both Fans of Budweiser and a petition to stop the sale of Anheuser Busch-InBev. Additionally, the petition group asked its members to boycott InBev products.

Many bloggers took part in the online conversation regarding Anheuser Busch-InBev. Most of these reactions were negative, centering on the sale of Anheuser Busch to InBev. Specifically, many bloggers noted that InBev seemed to be trying to maintain the "Americanism" image originally started by Anheuser Busch. These bloggers stressed the importance of maintaining this image to ensure the same quality that has been associated with this brand. Most of the reactions for the Super



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Bowl advertisements remained positive, although they lost their number one rating for the first time in ten years. Still, two of their advertisements remained in the top five rated Super Bowl ads.

CONCLUSION

Initial reaction to the sale of Anheuser Busch to InBev was consistently negative. Anheuser Busch-InBev's new advertisements are on the right track to ensure a positive view of the new company and consistent brand recognition. We noticed that fans of Budweiser products are serious in their brand loyalty. Many felt betrayed when the "Great American" brewery was sold to a Belgian company. As a result, many decided to discontinue purchasing Anheuser Busch-InBev products.

Anheuser Busch-InBev needs to maintain the image of brand stability that has been built over the past 156 years. "Americanism" should continue to be a prominent idea in new advertisements of their products. Although their focus is on spreading worldwide, their main concern for Budweiser products should focus on the American public. While market share has gone down by 2% since the sale, Anheuser Busch-InBev still maintains a comfortable advantage over other brands in the United States. If Anheuser Busch-InBev does not lose focus, this market share can be maintained.