

instincts

Instincts is a monthly publication on branding for clients, associates and friends.

Our Vision: to be recognized as the organization responsible for teaching the broader understanding and appreciation of "Brand."

Dropping the F-Bomb can blow up the Brand

The new media battleground for advertisers is YouTube and its powerful network of connected youth who pass forward attention-grabbing ads. A case in point is "Swear Jar," the Bud Light video clip about an office that uses the F-word more times than you can count when it's decided to use the jar's proceeds to buy beer.



Successful at getting massive distribution? For sure – a young guy in our office received it from three different friends in under 30 minutes, and then he showed the rest of us. Funny? You bet. But the humor comes at the expense of Bud Light parent Anheuser-Busch, the Fortune 500 behemoth that's putting its name to this F-ing material and killing a bit of its Brand equity with every click through.

How so? Consider this: proudly displayed on the Anheuser-Busch website is a prominent "In the Community" section and this statement: "Anheuser-Busch encourages parents to be role models."

What would the Brand Coach coach?

Strong Brands are built with relentless consistency in everything a company says or does. A-B's success at building Bud Light mindshare on YouTube should not come at the expense of the stated corporate culture presented in other media. In this and every case of Brand inconsistency, it is the CEO who must be, as we say at Instinct, the CBO – the "Chief Brand Officer" – and set limits.

Or the company may find itself, like Kellogg's, bleeding Brand Equity to negative publicity and lawsuits from parent groups – concerned in Kellogg's case about their cereals' contribution to childhood obesity (a Brand Dr. Kellogg founded to make healthy foods). Kellogg's has been forced to stop advertising its high-sugar products to mostly-kid audiences and eliminate cross-promotions with the animated characters kids love so much.

I predict that companies like Anheuser-Busch, who use sensational behavior to market their products today, will be called into U.S. congressional hearings tomorrow – when society looks for the corporate culprits who, in contrast to their stated Brand Values, lead the morals of American youth astray.

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See "Swear Jar" for yourself (you've been warned!): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJL5dxgVaM>

New! Read an excerpt from our upcoming book – BRAND: It Ain't the Logo (It's what people think of you™).
www.instinctbrandequity.com