



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on May 23, 2023

Bud Light (in the Brain?) Launches Camouflage Bottle to Battle “Trans” Controversy

A simple rule of life is that when you’re in a hole, stop digging. Since this applies to marketing, too, some observers are wondering if Bud Light’s strategists are a bit light in good sense. After all, beer maker Anheuser-Busch’s (AB’s) efforts to combat the boycott against it — and its attempt to play “both sides” in the Dylan Mulvaney controversy — have only exacerbated its woes.



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First AB inspired mockery and were accused of pandering by rolling out an [über-patriotic commercial](#) on the Mulvaney scandal’s heels. Now, in a similar vein, the company will “temporarily redesign its Bud Light and Budweiser aluminum bottles with camouflage print in an effort to boost sales,” [reports](#) Fox News.

As most readers know, AB’s problems arose after it partnered with MUSS (Made-up Sexual Status, aka “transgender”) “influencer” Mulvaney, a man who masquerades as a woman; Mulvaney posted an April 1 Instagram video opening a Bud Light beer to promote a March Madness contest, and the company gave him a can with his face on it to commemorate his “365 days of ‘girlhood.’”

Unfortunately for AB, it didn’t, and couldn’t, just say “April Fools!” and un-ring this bell. A backlash and boycott ensued, and the company began bleeding Bud Light customers. As for AB’s latest effort, Fox [relates](#) that the “company is set to launch a line of camouflage aluminum bottles that promote the ‘Folds of Honor’ program, which provides educational scholarships for families of fallen and disabled American military service members and first responders.”

“‘It’s an aluminum bottle,’ a source familiar with the plan told the [New York] Post. ‘I believe it is the only package that will be transitioning, but I am not 100% certain on that.’”

“Strange turn of a phrase for AB in dealing with the controversy,” noted the top commenter under the Fox piece. “Wasn’t it a package in transitioning that led to their marketing problems in the first place??”

Of course, Folds of Honor appears a noble endeavor. Yet some may wonder if what’s really camouflaged here are AB’s intentions — which should amount to, first and foremost, a desire to make money.

If this is the case, however, AB has just compounded its mistakes. As Salon [wrote](#) in a Monday headline, “Bud Light tried to please everyone — and ended up angering everyone — with its Dylan Mulvaney response.” The site continues:

Anheuser-Busch, the parent company of Bud Light, received two important letters last week.



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One letter was from the office of Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, announcing that he was launching a Senate investigation into the brand. The other letter was from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), which rates companies based on their commitment to LGBTQ safety and equality. The organization [sic] let Anheuser-Busch know that their Corporate Equality Index score had been suspended, effective immediately.

This just echoes what brand strategist Kelly O’Keefe, who has advised companies such as Capital One, UPS, and Walmart, [recently told Newsweek](#). “Bud Light and their leadership ... made a tragic mistake, I think, trying to keep a hand in both sides and failing miserably at that,” the site relates him as saying. Yet this stoking of passions’ fires reflects an even more basic error. As another Fox News commenter [put it](#) (sometimes an article’s best commentary is in its comments section):

I’m a retired marketing manager. I’ve been in those meetings where exec’s push for bad and desperate ideas like a cammo bottle. I’ve said it before — what they should do is nothing until this news cycle blows over. By continuing to throw stuff at the wall like the Clydesdale video, free beer to distributors, and now the cammo bottle — all they’re doing is keeping the bad news cycle going.

AB’s first and most fundamental mistake, however, was its decision to prove there really is such thing as bad press. In Dale Carnegie’s once-famous 1936 self-help book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, he warned that expressing strong opinions was a popularity killer. Now, in reality, we all have a moral duty to put principle before pocketbook and take courageous, civilization-buttrussing stands. This said, Carnegie has a point:

If a company is going to adopt a controversial position, correct or not, it should realize that it could alienate a good part of its market.

Despite this, here was AB’s decision, translated: We’re going to wade into one of our time’s *most controversial issues* (perhaps due to [ESG pressure?](#)), one inspiring protests, school-board-meeting mayhem, and sometimes violence. What’s more, we’re going to side with not the street but the pseudo-elite — even though the street is our market. What could possibly go wrong?

But what *has* gone wrong, societally, is reflected in our wokeness-inspired economic battles. Partially owing to the prevailing relativism, which makes each person his own author of “morality,” there’s less and less we agree on. Several decades ago, for example, a business could visibly donate to the Boy Scouts and everyone, left, right, and center, would applaud. But then the sexual devolutionaries and atheists took issue with the Scouts’ moral stances, and supporting them became politically incorrect. (Since then, the Scouts have been co-opted and received a “wokeover,” so they may be press palatable again.)

So where are we now, as a society? We certainly agree that beer manufacturers should make beer, not trouble. The problem is that we can’t even begin to agree on what trouble is.



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