

Advertisement: Beam Suntory advertisement

Advertiser: Beam Suntory (DISCUS Member)

Complainant: Member of the public

Complaint Summary:

The complainant asserts that the Beam Suntory advertisement described below violates Responsible Content Provision Nos. B1 and B2, which provide, respectively, that “[b]everage alcohol advertising and marketing materials should portray beverage alcohol products and drinkers in a responsible manner and reflect generally accepted contemporary standards of good taste” and “responsible drinking statements should be included in beverage alcohol advertising, marketing materials, and promotional events where practicable.”



The complainant states that a “Beam Suntory ad that ran on YouTube TV this morning encourages consumers to ‘Binge something other than work’ while grabbing a glass of bourbon. This directly conflicts with the DISCUS code provisions [B] Social Responsibility 1- Good Taste & Responsible Use and 2- Responsible Drinking Statements.”

Code Review Board Decision:

In response to the complaint, the advertiser acknowledged that the advertisement did not comply with Responsible Content Provision No. B1, immediately removed it from circulation, and addressed a process failure that had allowed it to be used without undergoing their standard review and approval.

The advertiser stated that “[u]pon receipt of the Complaint, Beam immediately removed the Advertisement as it had not been reviewed or approved in accordance with our established internal procedures. This Advertisement would not have been approved if our established process was followed, and we have taken corrective action with those responsible for the process failure. This is an extremely rare occasion that an

advertisement is utilized without the proper review and is a one-off anomaly in our opinion, as Beam has a robust, well-established process for reviewing advertising materials to ensure responsible execution.”

After careful consideration of the complaint and the advertiser’s response, the Code Review Board found that the Beam Suntory advertisement did not portray beverage alcohol products and drinkers in a responsible manner and, as such, violated Responsible Content Provision No. B1. The Board commends the advertiser for its swift responsive action.

The Board, however, concluded that the advertisement did not violate Responsible Content Provision No. B2. In arriving at its decision, the Board found that the Beam Suntory advertisement did include the responsible drinking statement “[Drink Smart](#),” which also refers consumers to a Beam Suntory webpage about making informed, responsible choices regarding beverage alcohol.

Action by Advertiser: Upon receiving the complaint, the advertiser removed the advertisement that was the subject of the complaint.

Status: Resolved. Responsive action taken.