

FEWER DROPS IN THE BUCKET: ALCOHOL INDUSTRY “RESPONSIBILITY” ADVERTISING DECLINED ON TELEVISION IN 2002

Introduction

*“There is no doubt that our efforts have helped promote responsible drinking. ... When it comes to fighting underage drinking and drunk driving, we all need to be a part of the solutions to these issues. When you think about it, it’s responsibility that really matters.”*¹

-- John Kaestner, vice president of Consumer Affairs at Anheuser-Busch, February 25, 2004, about all Anheuser-Busch responsibility communications

*“The federal government should fund and actively support the development of a national media effort, as a major component of an adult-oriented campaign to reduce underage drinking.”*²

National Research Council/Institute of Medicine, September 2003

In September 2003, the National Research Council/Institute of Medicine (IOM) issued a landmark report on underage drinking. Titled *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*, the report stated that underage alcohol use was associated with violence, suicide, educational failure, traffic crashes, and other problem behaviors. It cited estimates that underage drinking in 1996 led to 3,500 deaths, 2 million non-fatal injuries, and at least \$53 billion in social costs.³

The IOM report noted that “current rates [of underage drinking] are not significantly different than they were in 1993 and remain disturbingly high.”⁴ It concluded that “the problem of underage drinking in the United States is endemic and, in the committee’s judgment, is not likely to improve in the absence of a significant new intervention.”⁵

The centerpiece of the IOM’s recommendations was a call for a national media campaign, targeted at adults, “designed to animate and sustain a broad, deep, societal commitment to reduce underage drinking,”⁶ and funded at a level roughly equivalent to the \$100 million per year being spent on the Office of National Drug Control Policy’s anti-drug campaign and the American Legacy Foundation’s anti-tobacco campaign.⁷ This recommendation was based on the IOM’s review of evaluations of illegal drug, tobacco and other public health media campaigns, which found the campaigns to be effective tools for changing attitudes and behavior.⁸

¹ Anheuser-Busch Companies, “Anheuser-Busch Unveils New Alcohol Awareness Campaign: Spending on Responsibility Efforts Over 20 Years To Exceed \$500,000,000 In 2004,” 25 February 2004. Available at <http://www.anheuser-busch.com/news/AlcoholAwareness.htm> (cited 5 April 2004).

² National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (NRC/IOM), *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*, R.J. Bonnie and M.E. O’Connell, eds. (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2004), 3.

³ NRC/IOM, *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*, 13. To our knowledge, 1996 is the most recent year for which such estimates are available.

⁴ NRC/IOM, *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*, 101.

⁵ NRC/IOM, *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*, 101.

⁶ NRC/IOM, *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*, 105.

⁷ NRC/IOM, *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*, 247-8.

⁸ NRC/IOM, *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*, 115-9.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
FINDINGS	2
MESSAGES	3
AUDIENCES	3
COMPANIES	4
CONCLUSION	5
ABOUT THIS REPORT	5

The Center on
Alcohol Marketing and *Youth*

May 26, 2004

Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth
Georgetown University
2233 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Suite 525
Washington, D.C. 20007
(202) 687-1019
www.camy.org

In response to this recommendation, alcohol industry spokespersons have pointed to the industry's own media and other campaigns to promote alcohol awareness and reduce underage drinking. According to Beer Institute president Jeff Becker, "Brewers have committed hundreds of millions of dollars and substantial human, media, political and other resources to create effective anti-underage drinking programs."⁹ Anheuser-Busch Vice President Francine Katz told a Congressional subcommittee earlier this year that "my company has invested nearly a half billion dollars thus far"¹⁰ in efforts to fight the abuse of its products.¹¹ Distillers point to their investments in organizations such as the Century Council, which has received \$130 million from spirits companies since 1991 to fight drunk driving and underage drinking.¹²

The purpose of this report is to examine youth and adult exposure to alcohol industry responsibility advertising on television in 2002 in comparison with exposure to the industry's advertising for alcohol products.

Findings

The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth reviewed all alcohol industry "responsibility" advertising on television in 2002, as reported by TNS Media Intelligence/CMR. "Responsibility" ads in this report were defined as any ads warning against driving after drinking or encouraging use of a designated driver, advising viewers to drink responsibly, or informing them about the legal drinking age of 21. "Product" ads were ads that marketed alcohol products. Although many of these product ads included brief or small voluntary warnings (which research has found to be ineffective¹³), "responsibility ads" for the purposes of this report had to have as their primary focus a clear, unambiguous responsibility message such as warning against drinking and driving or discouraging underage drinking. There was no attempt to assess the effectiveness of the messages in the ads. The responsibility advertisements were analyzed in terms of spending and youth and adult audiences reached, and were also compared with such responsibility advertising in 2001.

Key findings included:

- Alcohol industry "responsibility" advertising declined substantially in 2002 from 2001 levels, at the same time that alcohol product advertising increased significantly.¹⁴ In 2002, alcohol companies placed 289,381 product commercials for alcohol on television and 1,280 responsibility advertisements, compared with 208,909 product advertisements and 2,379 responsibility ads in 2001. In other words, for every one responsibility ad aired in 2002, there were 226 product ads. In 2001, the ratio was 1 to 88. For every dollar spent on responsibility ads in 2002, the industry spent \$99 on product ads. In 2001, the ratio was \$1 to \$35 (see Figure 1).

Table 1: Alcohol Industry Product, Responsibility and Other Advertising on Television, 2001-2002

	2002		2001		% change 2001-2002	
	Ads	Dollars	Ads	Dollars	Ads	Dollars
Responsibility Ads	1,280	\$10,043,997	2,379	\$23,217,900	-46%	-57%
Product Ads	289,381	\$990,225,497	208,909	\$811,166,400	39%	22%
Other Ads ¹⁵	3,439	\$5,038,609	3,311	\$13,434,600	4%	-62%
Total	294,100	\$1,005,308,103	214,599	\$847,818,900	37%	19%

Sources: TNS Media Intelligence/CMR, Nielsen Media Research

⁹ Statement of Jeff Becker, President of the Beer Institute, United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, Subcommittee on Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, September 30, 2003.

¹⁰ Testimony of Francine Katz, Vice-President, Corporate Communications, Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc., presented to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce, Subcommittee on Education Reform, February 11, 2004.

¹¹ According to the Anheuser-Busch Web site, since 1982 the company and its wholesalers "have invested more than \$465 million in alcohol awareness and education efforts to help fight underage drinking and drunk driving and to promote personal responsibility." "Anheuser-Busch Unveils New Alcohol Awareness Campaign." Available at <http://www.anheuser-busch.com/news/AlcoholAwareness.htm> (cited 5 April 2004).

¹² Century Council, "About the Council." Available at <http://www.centurycouncil.org/home.html> (cited 18 May 2004).

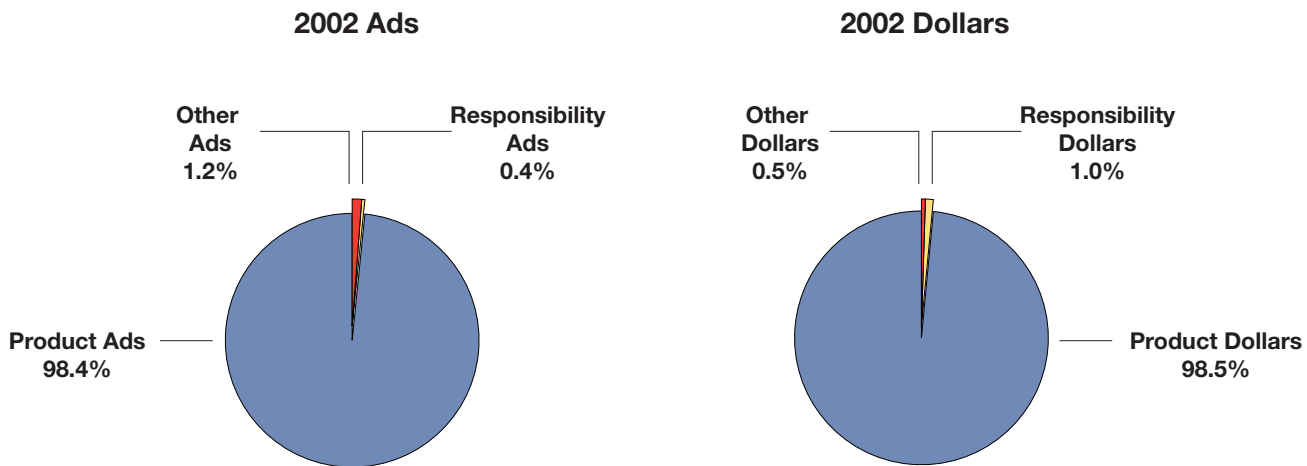
¹³ RJ Fox et al., "Adolescents' attention to beer and cigarette print ads and associated product warnings," *Journal of Advertising* 27, no. 3 (1998): 57-68.

¹⁴ Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, *Youth Exposure to Alcohol Ads on Television, 2002: From 2001 to 2002, Alcohol's Adland Grew Vaster* (Washington, DC: Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2004).

¹⁵ "Other" refers to civic advertising not related to alcohol and to other corporate and community advertising purchased by alcohol companies.

- Advertising purchased by alcohol producers warning about drunk driving or the legal drinking age accounted for one percent of dollars spent, and less than one half of one percent of ads purchased by alcohol companies on television in 2002.

Figure 1: Alcohol Industry Television Advertising in 2002



Source: TNS Media Intelligence/CMR