

## Analysis of Alcohol Marketing and Promotion on Social Media

Chen Lianjun  
Muhammad Shahzad Aslam\*

*Xiamen University, Malaysia*

### Abstract

We are living in an era ruled by social media. Lower cost, reaching more audience, companies nowadays gradually prefer to advertise and promote their products on social media. The alcohol company is as well an active role in promoting on social media. However, alcohol, as a special and risky product, has its unique way to promote on social media. So, the objective of this paper is to discover how the alcohol companies conduct a promotion on social media. The author chooses Instagram, one of the most popular social media in the world. For interactive activities with the audience, the most unique feature of social media, which is interactivity, allows alcohol companies to hold some online event to invite the audience to share some relevant posts to achieve promotion. The authors take the event held by Tsingtao Beer on Instagram to illustrate. For sponsoring sports event, because sports events and alcohol companies have similar core attitude and spirits, which is a passion, excitement, and energy, and they share the similar groups of fans and customers, alcohol companies are always willing to sponsor the sports events to achieve promotion. What's more, because of media convergence, alcohol companies are able to have the legal right to separate the video clips of sports events they sponsored on social media. So they can attract more attention from fans of events to achieve promotion. In short, most of the alcohol companies conduct interactive activities with the audience, sponsoring sports event and calling on responsible drinking to achieve promotion in social media. However, as it is impossible to prevent the teenager from accessing all the alcohol promotion on the Internet, promoting the responsible drinking should be reinforced and certain surveillance should be properly conducted by authorities.

**Keywords:** Alcohol Advertising, Brand; Marketing, Social Media, Instagram

### Introduction

Social media, a convenient platform for us to access information, play an important role in our daily life and gradually occupies our life. Because of its advantage in accessing information, it is hard for modern people to live without social media. With its popularization, more and more commercial organizations are using social media to advertise and promote their products or services to their customer and potential customers. The alcoholic beverage industry is no exception. More and more alcohol companies start to promote their product on social media. Alcohol, as a special and risky product, must have its unique way to be promoted in social media.

The following literature will be used as a reference in the report. From the research done by Carr and Hates in *Social Media: Defining, Developing, and Divining*, they mentioned the main features of social

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**\*Corresponding author:** Muhammad Shahzad Aslam, Xiamen University, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia, Email: [aslam.shahzad\(at\)xmu.edu.my](mailto:aslam.shahzad(at)xmu.edu.my)

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media, which helps understand the characteristic of promotion in social media [1]. What's more, analysis of the promotion of alcohol companies and their marketing strategy in social media will also be used. For instance, the paper of James Nicholls named Every day, Everywhere: Alcohol Marketing and Social analyzes current trends of alcohol marketing and social media, which helps understand how current alcohol companies promote in social media [2]. Furthermore, James' research also introduced the regulation of alcohol promoting in social media, which helps understand how alcohol companies promote responsibly.

The paper of the relationship between alcohol and sports events will also be cited. Shang Qian's research named Analysis on advertising strategies of beer brands in China under the background of large-scale sports events [3] and Han Yongqi's research called How the UEFA European Championship 2016 affects the beer, introduce and explain why alcohol company prefers sponsoring sports events and used them as a platform to promote in social media [4].

In the report, the authors are going to analyze how alcohol companies promote their product on social media. In terms of social media, the unique feature of promoting on social media is going to be discovered. In terms of alcohol companies, how they communicate with the audience and why they prefer sponsoring sports events to achieve promotion will also be discussed. What's more, how to promote it responsibly, will also be the objective to be analyzed.

First, the articles and reports about analysis on the feature of social media will be read and discussed to understand the characteristic of social media and promotion in social media. Based on this, The authors will apply it to the promotion of alcohol industry in social media. The promotion post of alcohol product will be found and analyzed as an example. Moreover, the paper about alcohol marketing on sports events will also be read and applied in the post-alcohol promoting sports events to analyze. The authors are also going to search the post about calling on responsible drinking to analyze company's promoting strategy and purpose.

### Methodology

For this research, The authors used Instagram as our search tool.

More and more people are using Instagram as their main social media. Users can follow their own interesting account and keywords, and easily create interaction with other users. Nowadays, about 25 million business profiles on Instagram and over 200 million users will visit at least one business profile a day. Not only this, there are 50% of Instagram users follow brands, and 80% of them follow at least one brand [5].

1. The authors were searching the keywords by Hashtag, the keywords The authors chose are divided into:

- i. Trending hashtag on Instagram
- ii. Brand name of the Alcoholic drink
- iii. Event-related or hold by Alcoholic companies.

2. The authors search directly to the official Instagram account of the alcoholic company. Through the visit of those official pages, The authors find more useful information to do analysis.

### Inclusion and Exclusion Posts

In order to get the accurate information that related with our topic, which is analysis on methods and feature of promotion of alcohol companies, The authors selected the posts by the official account of the alcoholic company. From those official accounts, The authors can more execute our objectives by directly about how the alcoholic companies promote their brand and products in social media. For example, The authors can see it from the posts for the event noticed held by the company.

On the other hand, The authors have excluded posts from the personal account other than alcoholic companies' official account, which is less relevant to the method of promotion.

### Result

After searching relevant keyword in mainstream social media, the results of alcohol product promotion can be mainly categorized into three sorts such as Interactive activities with the audience, promotion by sponsoring for sports event and calling on responsible drinking.

### Discussion

As is known to all, one of the most unique features of social media is interactivity, which broke the mode of one-way communication in traditional media. What's more, social media breaks the boundary of time and space [1]. All these features enable the alcohol company to hold some online activities to interact and communicate with the customers to promote their product in the worldwide range. Generally, the alcohol company invites the audience to post the relevant content with a certain tag in such online activities and attracts them to join in by certain award. Then those alcohol companies select some of them to post into their official social media accounts, which are consistent with the brand mission and brand concept. So the promotion in social media accounts of those alcohol companies is completed. Moreover, during the process of interaction, the audiences as well post the relevant content in their own accounts to take part in activities, which at the same time promotes the alcohol brands with the realm of audience. Consequently, the promotion is completed twice in social media [2] (Table 1).

Take the promotion of Tsingtao Beer for example. Tsingtao Beer, a well-known beer company founded in China more than 100 years ago, launch a photo contest in Instagram called #ThisDeservesATsingtao in 2014 [6]. The contest requested the participants share the moment with Tsingtao's beer that they think the company of

**Table 1:** List of Keywords, type of post and location of study for search strategy.

	i.	ii.	iii.
<b>Keywords (by Hashtag)</b>	#instabeer #instadrink	#Tsingtao #Budweiser	#Worldcup #ULC
<b>Posts (Top/Recent)</b>	Recent		
<b>Locations</b>	Worldwide		

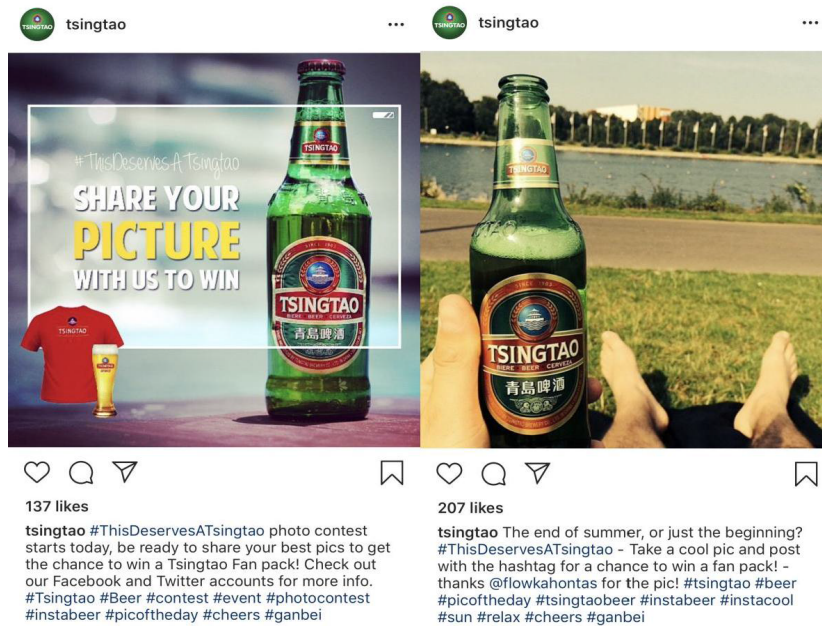


Figure 1: Instagram as a medium for interactive activities with audience.

Table 2: List of selected brands for the analysis.

Brand	Accounts' Username
Tsingtao Beer	@tsingtao
Budweiser	@budweiser,
Tiger Beer	@ tigerbeer,
Heineken	@ heineken

After the searching progress, the authors selected several useful posts to do analysis.

Table 3: The likes of the post before and after the contest (Source: Instagram).

Likes of preceding 7 posts before contest	172	180	245	159	126	130	149
Likes of following 7 posts after contest	207	188	262	257	214	222	262

Tsingtao's beer is necessary at that moment and tag the #ThisDeservesATsingtao. The selected one will be awarded Tsingtao Fan pack. Once the activity was announced, the participants from all over the world post the relevant content enthusiastically [7] (Table 2).

To observe its influence and consequence, likes of preceding 7 posts before contest and likes of following 7 posts after a contest in Tsingtao Beer's Instagram account are collected (Figure 1). Comparing the likes before and after the contest, it is found that the likes after the contest increased obviously, which indicates that such interactive activity and promotion brought and increased the attention of people towards Tsingtao Beer [7]. With the lower cost, larger influence and more attention, interactive activities in social media are preferred by more and more alcohol companies. As a result, it is not surprising that those alcohol companies frequently conduct such kind of promotion in recent years (Table 3).

Promotion by sponsoring for sports event and report the event's information in social media (Figure 2). The alcohol companies are always good partners of sports events. It is hard to find sports events without the sponsorship of alcohol

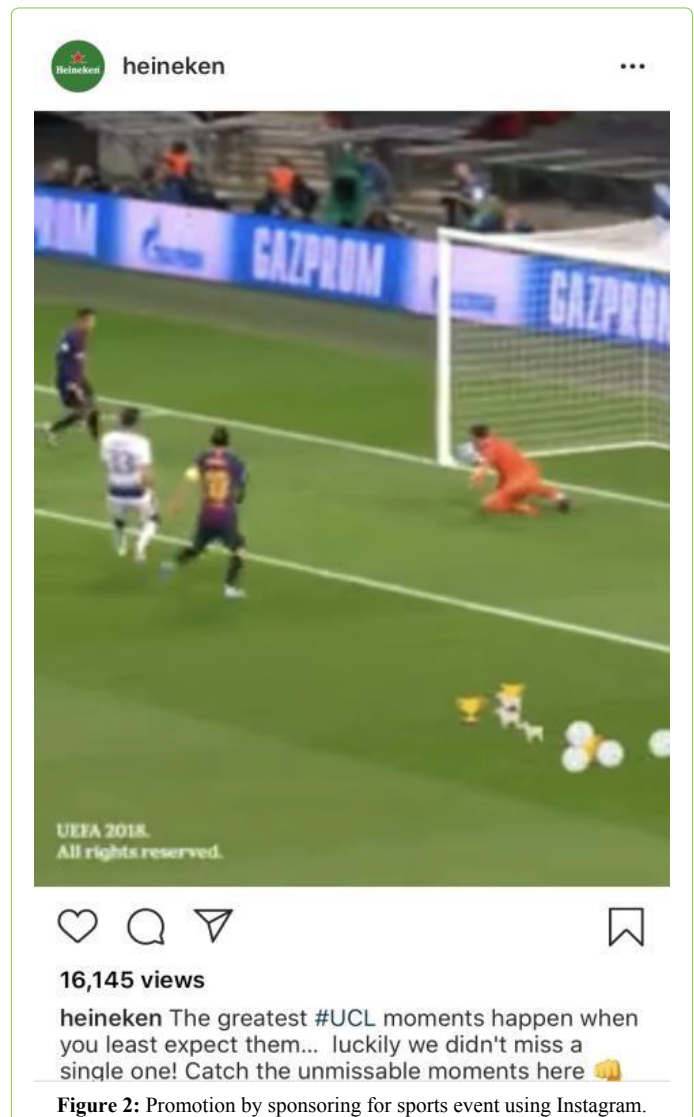


Figure 2: Promotion by sponsoring for sports event using Instagram.



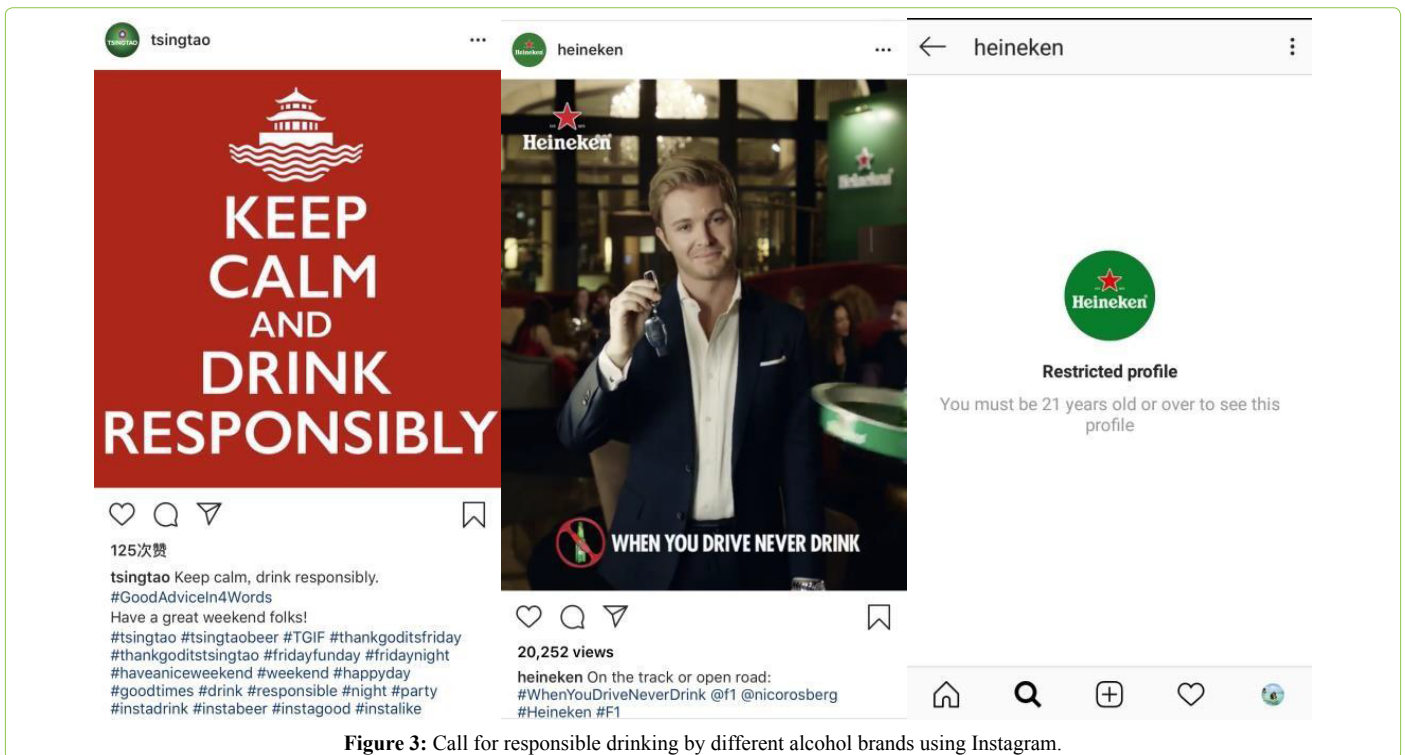


Figure 3: Call for responsible drinking by different alcohol brands using Instagram.

companies. Especially in the era of social media, you can always find the latest information about the sports events in the social media account of alcohol brand. The close relationship between sports events and alcohol companies can trace back to their similar core attitude and spirits first. In terms of attitude and spirit. Alcohol produces passion, excitement, and energy, which is similar to the features of a sports event. Based on the common attitude, alcohol companies prefer to sponsor a sports event to promote their product via this platform. [3]. What's more, in terms of customers, sports events and alcohol companies also share similar groups of fans and customers. The fans of sports events are mostly fond of athleticism and have sufficient passion. Alcohol is the fastest catalyst for passion and energy, which is embraced and advocated by fans of sports and sports events. Consequently, fans of sports events are the target consumers of alcohol [4]. Naturally, alcohol brands want to sponsor sports events to access the space of advertisement to promote their product (Figure 3).

Moreover, due to the development of new media, more and more sports fans prefer to follow the information on sports event on social media. Social media breaks the boundary of time and space, which provides quicker and more convenient access to information. What's more, one of the significant features of new media is media convergence, which provides text, sound, video information and interactive space at the same time. It provides a better experience for the audience, which attracts more audience to read the post [1]. Furthermore, after sponsoring the sports event, the alcohol company has the legal right to access and separate the short-video and picture of a sports event in their social media account. By spreading this information, they can attract more attention from fans of events. That's why alcohol companies prefer to sponsor sports events and post the events' information in their social media accounts.

Take Heineken for example. Heineken, one of the largest beer companies in the world, was found in Holland in 1863. It is no hard to find the advertisement for Heineken in most of International sports events. Its sponsorship towards those sports events is relevantly frequent. For instance, Heineken sponsors the 2018/2019 season of UCL (UEFA Champions League). During the whole season of competition, Heineken keeps upgrading the latest information about the competition in their Instagram account [8]. Contributed by new media technology, the relevant information is mostly presented in the form of short videos, including the summaries and the excellent moments of the competition, which is more attractive and vivid.

Moreover, the amount of views on the event's post is generally higher than another ordinary promotion post. The event's posts mostly exceed 15,000 views, while ordinary promotion posts only access a few thousand views [9]. Consequently, such promotion by sponsoring for sports events and reporting it on brands' social media does bring more attention from the audience toward to Heineken, which makes such promotion meaningful and successful.

How to control irresponsible drinking is always a tough and pressing issue in society, such as drunk driving and drinking under legal drinking age. Promoting responsible drinking is as well part of the social responsibilities of alcohol companies. Meanwhile, the supervisory institution of advertising conducts relevant action and policy to regulate alcohol advertisement and promotion, especially focusing on social media. For instance, DISCUS, USA spirits industry self-regulator, published the code of practice for digital marketing, which is to forbid the alcohol companies from targeting teenagers who are under legal drinking age [2]. As a result, alcohol companies have taken certain actions to call on responsible drinking on their social media, like

forbidding teenagers under legal drinking age accessing their Instagram page and post some advertisements to call on refusing drunk driving in social media. Besides the reason for the force of regulation, such action is as well to establish a good enterprise image. It is another kind of positive promotion on social media.

Take Heineken for example again. The posts on Heineken's official Instagram are not only the promotions of alcohol product, but also the reminds of refusing drunk driving. Heineken even invites celebrities to publicize the harm of drunk driving. What's more, if the user is below the legal drinking age-regulated by the local government, he or she cannot access the Heineken's Instagram page. The page will turn into blank and appear a remind "You must be 21 years old or over to see the profile", which can only be achieved and operable in social media [8]. Not only Heineken, but most of alcohol companies pages cannot be accessed by whose age is below legal drinking age-regulated by local government, which prevent teenagers from the positive alcohol publicity and trying alcohol [2]. Such action helps the alcohol enterprise perform their social responsibility, as well as helps them to shape the good image of the brand, which is another successful way of promotion.

## Conclusion

In a nutshell, through the analysis of the alcohol promotion post on Instagram, the alcohol promotion in social media can be generally categorized into three types. One is through the interactive activities with the audience, which encourages the audience to post relevant photos and alcohol company selects some of them on their official account. It attracts more attention from the audience to the brand and achieves twice promotions, which is in the realm of the brand and in the realm of users who post photos in their account. Another kind of promotion is sponsoring sports events and reporting the event in their account. Because of the common attitude and spirit between alcohol and sports event, alcohol company is willing to promote their product through this platform. What's more, they share the same group of fans and consumer, which contributes to their promotion. After sponsoring the event, they have the legal right to access and separate the information of events, which

attracts more people to pay attention to the brand. The last kind of promotion mentioned is promoting responsible drinking. Alcohol companies invite a celebrity to publicize the harm of drunk driving. They event forbid teenager who is under legal drinking age-regulated by local government to access their page in social media, which is a positive brand promotion in another way and shape the excellent image of the brand. The most important things are, above promotion are mostly based on and contributed by the feature of social media.

What can be reinforced about promotion in social media is calling on responsible drinking. Because of the rapid development of social media, information becomes more and more easily accessible. Teenage under the legal drinking age regulate by local government can easily access the alcohol promotion and affected by them. But it is impossible to prevent the teenager from accessing all the alcohol promotion on the Internet. As a result, promoting responsible drinking and promote alcohol in a proper manner is significant. What's more, the relevant institution should as well conduct the regulation and keep on surveillance on alcohol promotion in social media, ensuring the positive effect of alcohol promotion.

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