

Beyond the Boycott: Pernod Ricard Calls on Brands to Engage with Consumers to Stop Hate Speech Online

Through its affiliate Pernod Ricard USA, company will create a crowdsourcing app, giving consumers and brands a proactive voice in the fight against hate speech on social media

Paris, July 2, 2020 – Pernod Ricard announced its plan to create a crowdsourcing app that gives consumers and those affected by hate speech on social media the power to identify and report content they find objectionable directly to brands and companies. Brands can then leverage their influence with social media platforms to help ensure the content is reviewed and removed, if warranted. The app will be an additional resource for individuals, brands and social media platforms to use in the fight to stop hate speech online.

“The world is waking up to the reality that we all have a role to play in stopping the spread of hate speech, racism and misinformation on social media platforms,” said Pernod Ricard USA CEO Ann Mukherjee. “There is a long way to go. Movements like #StopHateForProfit are demonstrating that brands and consumers want them to take more urgent action. This is important, and it is why we are joining the movement for the next 30 days across all paid social media platforms, not just Facebook. But this is not sufficient. The big question is: What happens August 1st? We need more action and more people within the industry to find more solutions. Companies like ours can and should play a bigger role in problem-solving than just withholding advertising dollars. We can create tools that make it easier for consumers’ voices to be heard when they see hate speech spreading online. And that’s what we are doing.”

The app will allow consumers and brands to collaborate with one another to drive real change. Individuals affected by hate speech will be able to flag content they find objectionable directly to brands and companies. Brands can then leverage their influence to help ensure social media platforms take appropriate action. The app creates a space for collaboration between consumers and brands. It also creates a space for collaboration between brands and social media platforms. This initiative is about giving consumers a voice, helping brands own their responsibility to hold social media platforms accountable given their influence, and ultimately creating a more transparent and positive world with an internet that is safe for all.

Pernod Ricard USA’s new CMO, Pam Forbus, recognized the opportunity when she arrived at the company less than two weeks ago. “I’m still learning, but one thing that has been clear to me is that Pernod Ricard cares passionately about bringing people together – we call it conviviality. As a non-traditional CMO, I am bringing my deep experience in data, advanced analytics and social media manipulation to help leverage AI capability as we become part of the solution. We want to ensure that all people have access to safe, responsible social environments,” Forbus said. “We know our consumers feel a sense of urgency about this issue, and so do we. Launching this initiative will allow us to work directly with our consumers, each playing a small role in solving a big problem.”

A critical element of the initiative will be creating a governance, transparency and accountability structure from the outset. As Pernod Ricard identifies the partners to develop the app, they will work collaboratively to establish strict guidelines related to data privacy and consumer engagement standards for the app. They will also establish an oversight and reporting protocol, executed by an expert third-party, to ensure the highest levels of accountability and transparency.

“Stopping the spread of hate speech is a massive problem. There are many solutions to be tested and taken by a wide range of stakeholders,” said Mukherjee. “This is our initial step. And we want it to be a collective one. As a member of many major US and Global industry organizations, which include

other advertisers, as well as media and social platform companies, we want to work collaboratively with each towards this solution. At the same time, we invite all brands, big and small, to join us. Our hope is that all brands are inspired to take action on this issue in ways that make sense for them and align with their values.”

Pernod Ricard Chairman & CEO Alexandre Ricard said, “We’re confident this initiative will provide an additive resource for individuals affected by hate speech, consumers, brands and social media platforms themselves in the global fight to end these injustices. As creators of conviviality, our mission is all about sharing with respect and responsibility, bringing people together to celebrate the moments that make life worth living, not to divide, deride or tear people apart. Social media platforms share that mission, but there is still a collective work to make those platforms safe, responsible and convivial for everyone. Let’s then join forces to focus on a positive solution together.”

About Pernod Ricard

Pernod Ricard is the No. 2 worldwide producer of wines and spirits with consolidated sales of €9,182 million in FY19. Created in 1975 by the merger of Ricard and Pernod, the Group has developed through organic growth and acquisitions: Seagram (2001), Allied Domecq (2005) and Vin&Sprit (2008). Pernod Ricard, which owns 16 of the Top 100 Spirits Brands, holds one of the most prestigious and comprehensive brand portfolios in the industry, including: Absolut Vodka, Ricard pastis, Ballantine’s, Chivas Regal, Royal Salute, and The Glenlivet Scotch whiskies, Jameson Irish whiskey, Martell cognac, Havana Club rum, Beefeater gin, Malibu liqueur, Mumm and Perrier-Jouët champagnes, as well Jacob’s Creek, Brancott Estate, Campo Viejo, and Kenwood wines. Pernod Ricard’s brands are distributed across 160+ markets and by its own salesforce in 73 markets. The Group’s decentralised organisation empowers its 19,000 employees to be true on-the-ground ambassadors of its vision of “Créateurs de Convivialité.” As reaffirmed by the Group’s three-year strategic plan, “Transform and Accelerate,” deployed in 2018, Pernod Ricard’s strategy focuses on investing in long-term, profitable growth for all stakeholders. The Group remains true to its three founding values: entrepreneurial spirit, mutual trust, and a strong sense of ethics. As illustrated by the 2030 Agenda supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), “We bring good times from a good place.” In recognition of Pernod Ricard’s strong commitment to sustainable development and responsible consumption, it has received a Gold rating from Ecovadis and is ranked No. 1 in the beverage sector in Vigeo Eiris. Pernod Ricard is also a United Nation’s Global Compact LEAD company. Pernod Ricard is listed on Euronext (Ticker: RI; ISIN Code: FR0000120693) and is part of the CAC 40 index. For further information, please visit <http://www.pernod-ricard.com>.

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