

Personal Ethics Reflection

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For my group's controversial product assignment, we created an advertisement for Deep Eddy Vodka, a local Austin liquor brand. While developing the campaign, I experienced minimal ethical dilemmas, as I believe we executed it pretty well. The truth is, American society and collegiate culture have normalized excessive alcohol consumption to a point where advertisements don't even feel unethical. Alcoholism is a huge issue, and our campaign couldn't do much to affect that. All we were doing with our ad was possibly shifting people's brand preference, which made sense if they were gonna drink anyway. If anything, I'm less concerned about the product and more about the contents of the ad. I think the ad shows a female figure in a very passive way, which is a bit objectifying. I wish I could have involved her a bit more in the end, but it would start to take away from the point of her being a full illusion. In addition, I think our ad inadvertently normalized excessive drinking to the point of losing reality. This amount of drinking leaves all idea of moderation behind, and it is very excessive. Overall, the ad still had a great message, and I didn't necessarily experience any dilemmas.

Alcohol advertising is a very slippery slope. I believe the primary issue comes from the encouragement of excessive drinking. This is especially apparent based on the kind of alcohol being advertised. Wine advertising will never be as problematic as an advertisement for beverages like 4 Loko or Beatbox. Even with these attributes, the truth is, alcohol advertising is not the issue; drinking culture in America is. While alcohol advertising might contribute to the issue, the root issue lies with the American people and laws. For these reasons, I believe that

advertising for alcohol with a message of enjoyment and moderation is completely ethical. People have their vices, and I have no problem with brands selling to that vice. If they are going to drink anyway, why not provide a superior product? No one is drinking for the first time because they see an advertisement. Alcohol's prevalence in society has fed into this, as other substances might have the opposite effect. Alcohol has been available and common since prohibition, and Americans don't see it going away anytime soon. Under the right conditions, alcohol advertising is completely fine and ethical. However, advertisers of alcohol must take steps to be sure they are not promoting excessive drinking and risk-prone behaviors like DUIs.

My ethical standards for advertising have remained relatively stagnant throughout the project. I don't drink, which is rare for a white communications major. That may sound stereotypical, but the data just proves my point. I do not find much enjoyment in substances, and I honestly have more fun when I am sober and feel more in control. In addition, I think the issues with alcohol use and DUIs are administrative and are a result of America's backward laws. I believe that the drinking and driving ages in America should be switched. By allowing kids to drink at 16 and drive at 21, the false confidence that enables drunk driving will not be built, and a culture of avoiding DUIs will result. A similar system is used in Germany, where less concentrated alcoholic beverages are allowed at 16, primarily beer and wine, followed by spirits at 18. Driving is also pushed back a year, with teens getting their full license at 18 years old. America, of course, cannot copy this model directly, as driving at 16 is a necessity for some in rural areas in certain parts of America. If we had better public transport and more infrastructure, sure, but for now, this still seems a bit out of reach. One thing that gives me personal hope is the newfound prevalence of Waymo vehicles and other self-driving cars on the marketplace. Even if

the laws do not support this issue, soon enough, a majority of cars will be able to correct for impaired drivers' mistakes and keep them on the right track. In the end, my moral and ethical compass has stayed relatively the same. I think alcohol culture in the US is broken, and people use it as a form of escapism to leave behind worries and insecurities in their everyday lives. I don't understand it, but I have a very different background and outlook than most. That's ok. As long as I encourage healthy habits in my work, it's all ok.