

Merging sport and drinking cultures through social media



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1 Executive summary

The sport-alcohol-social media triumvirate presents a significant emerging issue in the fight against alcohol-related harm. This report identifies and explores how alcohol brands are using social media to connect sport's identity, culture and camaraderie with alcohol consumption. It also reveals the main strategies undertaken by alcohol companies to achieve interaction and social activation with consumers.

Purpose

While considerable research has explored the public health implications of traditional alcohol advertising and sponsorship in sport, less is known about how alcohol brands interact with consumers through social media. The aim of this research was to identify and evaluate the sport-linked social media strategies employed by alcohol brands engaged in sport sponsorship. These findings provide initial data to shape discussion around harm reduction as well as recommendations for future research in relation to understanding how these strategies influence consumer attitudes and behaviours.

Method

This study explored sport-linked alcohol communication appearing on the most frequently used social media platforms including Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. 'Sport-linked alcohol communication' was considered to be any marketing communication text which referenced a specific sport or sporting organisation in its message content, or any image depicting an alcohol-related product or brand in a sport context.

The focus was primarily on the major alcohol brands sponsoring the Australian Football League (AFL), the National Rugby League (NRL), and Australian Cricket during the latter part of 2013 and throughout much of 2014. The study was conducted during the active seasons of each sport, paying particular attention to the associated marketing and promotional activity during key events such as finals.

The unit of analysis comprised the content of the relevant social network sites and the coding units were individual posts and images. A content analysis was used to elicit themes and images from the online text.

In total six beer brands, eight wine brands and three spirit brands were considered to be involved in sport sponsorship across the sports considered, although not all of these brands engaged in social media activities to leverage their association.

Findings

The social media platforms most commonly used by the identified alcohol brands were Facebook and Twitter, but the complementary use of other forms of digital media, such as applications ('apps'), to increase consumer engagement was noted. YouTube also featured in links from Facebook and Twitter to showcase advertisements created by the brands to promote their products or sport-related competitions.

Communication via social media often occurred in real time during sporting events, creating an environment of camaraderie through a shared sport experience and by tapping into the 'second screen' experience as consumers engaged with their mobile devices throughout an event, either in or away from a sport stadium.

Four main strategies were identified that used the association with sport to create opportunities to interact with consumers and to immerse the brands in the sport consumption experience. These sport-alcohol-social media strategies are described as 'calls to action' because they seek to stimulate consumers to actively engage with the brand, rather than passively receiving brand messages, as with conventional advertising. Further, the calls to action aimed to achieve 'social activation', that is, access to the social network of the targeted consumer.

The calls to action are:

- Call to compete – leveraging the competitive nature of sport, this strategy attempts to engage consumers – and augment the sport experience – through promotional competitions often displaying both sport and alcohol branding.
- Call to collaborate – this strategy actively pursues a higher level of engagement with consumers through co-creation of content or by stimulating user-generated content using sport as a common language.
- Call to celebrate – using sporting victory and shared camaraderie, this strategy seeks to embed alcohol as an integral part of celebrating and basking in the reflected glory of sporting achievement.
- Call to consume – beyond celebration, this strategy seeks to normalise alcohol consumption as part of the overall sport experience, attempting to embed drinking as part of a consumer's sport consumption practices and social interactions with 'mates'.

The impact and effectiveness of these calls is facilitated through the use of messages designed to resonate with the target consumer. The calls to action comprise the mechanisms used by alcohol brands through social media, and the themes of identity, culture and camaraderie give their communications the power to embed alcohol as part of the consumer's sport identity and sport experience. The ultimate goal appears to be to merge drinking culture with sport culture.

Implications: New problem, new solutions

The results from this exploratory study highlight an emerging platform for alcohol brands to engage with a new generation of digital natives who view social media as an integral aspect of their social identities.

The framework of social activation strategies used by alcohol brands in leveraging their associations with sport, and the messages they embed to maximise the effectiveness of these strategies, suggests that existing regulatory and policy interventions will struggle to interrupt the cultural blurring between drinking and sport.

While conventional advertising is unidirectional and can be more easily banned or blocked, social media works through a fundamentally different channel whereby users actively engage in the dissemination of marketing messages as well as the co-creation of content, making this medium invulnerable to most forms of existing marketing regulation.

The key considerations for policy makers can be summarised as follows:

- What type of social media content, and frequency, is appropriate for alcohol brands that seek to leverage their association with sport?
- What forms of collaboration and interaction which link sport and alcohol are appropriate for consumers to engage in?
- Are the messages linking sport and alcohol, particularly those that invite consumer collaboration or interaction, more likely to appeal to minors than other types of content or messages? Are there adequate safeguards in place to prevent minors from accessing social media content linking sport and alcohol?
- What mechanisms can be used to monitor social media activity by alcohol brands, particularly the less transparent activities which occur through consumer networks?

The framework outlined in this study is useful for policy makers and public health promoters to consider in devising mitigating strategies to target social media users and de-normalise alcohol consumption around sport.

In addition, policy makers need to monitor social media alcohol marketing. A significant and dynamic level of sophistication in understanding digital channels must be developed to match that of the alcohol marketers. Specifically, monitoring should occur of sport-linked strategies that serve to further merge sport culture with drinking culture, transforming sport into an intoxicogenic environment. Social media should be embraced and used to pursue sport and health messages in order to reduce alcohol harm.

Finally, this report identifies a number of areas for further research relating to the impact of these sport-linked social media strategies on the consumer. Specifically:

- What is the impact on attitudes to alcohol and its perceived role in the sport experience?
- What is the impact on alcohol consumption and drinking practices in general, and as part of the sport experience in particular?
- Are there particular sociocultural or demographic segments that are more vulnerable to these strategies than others?
- In terms of the calls to action, are certain strategies or tactics more effective in shaping the attitudes and practices of consumers in relation to alcohol?
- Does the association with sport enhance the social media strategies of alcohol brands by allowing them to weave alcohol into everyday conversations and activities?

2 Introduction

Significant research has explored the public health implications associated with traditional alcohol advertising, however salient information is emerging about how alcohol brands are interacting with consumers through various forms of digital media, and how these efforts are shaping attitudes and consumption (Jones and Jernigan, 2010; McCreanor et al., 2013). Of particular interest is the phenomenon of social media, which refers to digital platforms where users create 'profiles' to communicate and network with friends or others with similar interests (Kasavanam, Nusair and Teodosic, 2010).

Social networking sites allow users to develop personal information repositories, to post images and comment, to 'tag' friends, to 'like', 'follow' and 'share' the thoughts of others, to establish like-minded communities, and to interact with both individuals and organisations. Such transactions enable positive personal, role and group identity enhancement (Zhang, Jiang and Carroll, 2010).

Recognising the growth of such emerging media, a 2012 report by the Australian Medical Association highlighted the potentially harmful influence of alcohol marketing on young people and the need for regulators and policy makers to acknowledge the aggressive promotion strategies employed through new communication channels (Dobson, 2012).

Carah (2014) investigated the activities of leading alcohol brands on the preeminent social media platform, Facebook, highlighting numerous key issues and concerns. The author noted that "the alcohol industry has developed an extensive, real-time, culturally embedded mode of branding..." on this platform and that their sophisticated engagement was collaboratively ingrained in everyday life (Carah, 2014 p.5). Such interaction allows alcohol brands to both engage consumers directly as well as to activate investments, such as sponsorships.

Alcohol brands have long played a major role in the global sport sponsorship market. Not surprisingly, this investment potentially manifests a culture of alcohol in sport conditioned from this sustained narrative.

In Australia the alcohol-related contribution to sponsorship, based on 2007 estimates, is approximately \$50 million from a total pool of \$600 million (Jones, 2010). This significant level of sponsorship is now increasingly activated by a synergistic mix of traditional and digital media as brands seek to positively leverage their association with sport.

New technologies, such as social media platforms, are particularly enticing. Not only are they relatively low-cost to utilise, they represent a versatile and appealing communication channel that provides valuable, data-rich insights into consumer behaviour and access to younger, sophisticated markets that are turning away from traditional media.

From the consumer perspective, social media allow fans to simultaneously engage in multiple screens (using smartphones and other devices) during a sporting event. It also allows those consumers to engage with other like-minded individuals. Given their immersive (and potentially subversive) nature, such interactivity requires careful examination and understanding. This includes considering the impact that potentially harmful products, such as alcohol, can have through social media platforms operating within highly desirable contexts such as that provided by elite sport.

Sport has become inexorably linked to alcohol in Australian culture, and Jones (2010, p.251) suggests that this "symbiotic relationship between alcohol and sport in Australia is a key contributor to alcohol

related harm”. With alcohol brands historically well-versed in marketing communications activities and early adopters of the power of social media and broader digital platforms, we suggest that a powerful triumvirate of sport, alcohol and social media is emerging. Exploring this intertwined and complex relationship is the focus of this study.

Of particular interest is the potential for alcohol brands to communicate marketing messages, particularly to vulnerable groups such as youth, in ways that may circumvent the spirit of alcohol marketing regulations designed for traditional media.

Social media and social networking sites enable brands to engage consumers via both transparent and more covert tactics that encourage consumers to participate and collaborate in the marketing process. While transparent tactics include content created by alcohol brands clearly designed to communicate the brand’s narrative, other less visible tactics may include encouraging consumers to share content designed to provide value. This content generally contains images, text or video that is relevant to their interest (in this case, sport) and consequently consumers are likely to disseminate this to their social networks. This material is often humorous, nostalgic or absurd, in order to optimise engagement and sharing within networks while positively reinforcing the identity goals of the targeted consumers.

Understanding how and why networking, enabled by social media, appeals to people is important in determining its effectiveness as a platform for brand marketing strategies. Intrinsic to this are the concepts of self-esteem and identity which are the overarching motives for individuals in choosing to join and remain connected to any group, network or community.

2.1 Project aim

This study explores how alcohol companies use social media in their marketing activities to create promotional leverage from their associations with professional sport. Adopting a netnographic approach, this research identifies the most prevalent forms of social media for sport-linked alcohol promotion and categorises the types of marketing strategies and message themes being used by examining online text and images.

The findings from this research provide some initial data to shape discussions around alcohol harm reduction, implications for public policy, and recommendations for further research.

3 Method

Given the limited research in this area, we adopted an exploratory qualitative approach and used a version of netnography, which adapts traditional ethnographic research methods to the examination of online communities (Kozinets, 2010). Under this paradigm, collected data take a naturalistic, contextual and accessible form (Jayanti, 2010).

The focus for this study was the major alcohol brands sponsoring the Australian Football League (AFL), the National Rugby League (NRL) including State of Origin, and Australian Cricket including both the Test and One-Day International series during the latter part of 2013 and throughout most of 2014. These sports were selected for their high attendances, leading television viewership figures and their strong cultural significance in Australian society. Initial analysis also determined a presence of alcohol brands as prominent sponsors of these sports.

The study explored sport-linked alcohol communication appearing on the most frequently used social media platforms including Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. We defined sport-linked alcohol communication as any marketing text which references a specific sport or sporting organisation in its message content, or any image which depicts an alcohol-related product or brand in a sport context.

A conventional content analysis was used to elicit themes from the online text (Hara, Bonk and Angeli, 2000) and images; that is, codes were derived from the data as opposed to being guided by previous frameworks. The study was conducted in a time-frame which allowed data to be captured during the months in which each sport was active, paying particular attention to marketing and promotional activity during key events such as finals. The first stage of the research involved finalising the specific media, brands and sports to be considered. Next, messages and images were captured for each brand identified as a sponsor of the nominated sports. These data were initially checked by multiple researchers to ensure adherence to our definition of sport-linked alcohol communication. Communications were then categorised as to type of communication and coded based on message content and images. To ensure reliability, independent coders were used and a pilot was undertaken before proceeding with the full data set. Consistent with previous research related to social media in other industries (e.g., Hsieh and Shannon, 2005), the unit of analysis comprised the content of the social network sites and the coding units were individual posts and images.

3.1 Identification of alcohol brands

Alcohol sponsors were primarily identified by consulting the websites of Cricket Australia and the governing bodies and teams associated with the AFL and NRL. These sponsors encompassed beer, wine and spirit brands, and did not include alcohol distributors. Aside from the direct term 'sponsor', brands were included when referenced to categories such as 'corporate partners', 'official suppliers' and similarly labelled categories of association located on the websites of these sporting bodies during the research period. This period encompassed the 2013-14 cricket season (October 2013) through to the end of the AFL and NRL finals series (October 2014).

Alcohol brands involved in sponsoring the AFL are identified in Table 1, brands involved in sponsoring the NRL appear in Table 2, and Cricket Australia alcohol-related sponsors are listed in Table 3.

In total six beer brands, eight wine brands and three spirit brands were considered to be involved in sport sponsorship across the sports examined, although not all of these brands engaged in social media activities to leverage their association.

Table 1. AFL teams and alcohol sponsors (as of February 2014)

	Alcohol brands noted
Adelaide	Carlton Draught , Wolf Blass
Brisbane	Carlton Draught
Carlton	None
Collingwood	None
Essendon	Wolf Blass
Fremantle	Carlton Draught
Geelong	Carlton Draught
Gold Coast	Carlton Draught
Greater Western Sydney	Rosemount Estate
Hawthorn	Ninth Island Tasmania
Melbourne	Tyrrell's
North Melbourne	None
Port Adelaide	Carlton Draught
Richmond	None
St Kilda	None
Sydney Swans	McWilliam's
West Coast Eagles	Carlton Draught, West Cape Howe Mount Barker
Western Bulldogs	None

Table 2. NRL teams and alcohol sponsors (as of February 2014)

	Alcohol brands noted
Brisbane Broncos	XXXX, Bundaberg Rum
Canberra Raiders	Victoria Bitter (VB)
Canterbury Bulldogs	VB
Cronulla Sharks	VB
Gold Coast Titans	XXXX
Manly Sea Eagles	Jim Beam
Melbourne Storm	None
Newcastle Knights	Drayton's, Jim Beam
North Queensland Cowboys	XXXX,
Parramatta Eels	Tooheys New
Penrith Panthers	Tooheys New, Jim Beam
South Sydney Rabbitohs	Tooheys New, Tyrrell's
St George Illawarra Dragons	VB, McGuigan Wines
Sydney Roosters	VB
New Zealand Warriors	Lion Red
Wests Tigers	VB
State of Origin – Queensland	XXXX
State of Origin – NSW	VB
NSW Rugby League	VB
NRL (Governing Body)	VB, Wild Turkey Bourbon
National Team - Kangaroos	XXXX

Table 3. Cricket Australia series and alcohol sponsors (2013-2014 season)

	Alcohol brands noted
Ashes Test series (Australia v England)	VB
One Day International series (Australia v England)	Carlton Mid

3.2 Specifying sporting events for data collection

Content associated with the social media sites of identified alcohol sponsors was collected and analysed during the regular seasons of the AFL and NRL, including the State of Origin series between New South Wales and Queensland. Cricket Australia events encompassed the 2013-2014 Australia-England Ashes tour and the 2014 One Day International series between Australia and England.

The study incorporated data generated during both lengthy seasons spread over several months (AFL and NRL and Cricket Australia Ashes Test series) and shorter-duration sporting events consisting of individual events separated by days or weeks such as the NRL State of Origin (three dates) and the Cricket Australia One Day International series (five dates).

3.3 Identifying social media platforms for data collection

Social networking sites, predominantly Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, were located (where available) for each of the alcohol brands identified, and social media communications linked to sport were identified. Additional technologies were considered, for example smart phone applications linked to Facebook. A review of the social network sites of the sport brands revealed that their alcohol sponsors were generally not prominently promoted via these channels. Therefore, data collection was limited to the social media sites of alcohol brands.

Although our main focus was not to quantify social media activity, Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7 present a snapshot of two beer brands, Carlton Draught and Victoria Bitter (VB), and their activities on the two most prominent platforms, Facebook and Twitter, during specific periods of key activity. This includes the AFL finals and leadup period (June-September 2014), and the NRL State of Origin matches and leadup period (April-July 2014).

Table 4. Facebook activity: Carlton Draught (June-September 2014)

Carlton Draught	Sport-related posts				Other posts			
	Posts	Likes	Comments	Shares	Posts	Likes	Comments	Shares
June	1	31	5	3	3	642	79	376
July	1	31	7	0	3	2,238	204	261
August	2	362	21	23	5	1,657	211	213
September	13	5,522	1,099	248	1	82	19	11
Total	17	5,946	1,132	274	12	4,619	513	841

Table 5. Twitter activity: Carlton Draught (June-September 2014)

Carlton Draught	Sport-related Tweets			Other Tweets		
	Posts	Retweets	Favourites	Posts	Retweets	Favourites
June	1	24	57	2	5	2
July	1	0	0	2	11	6
August	3	4	8	1	3	1
September	5	6	6	0	0	0
Total	10	34	71	5	19	9

Table 6. Facebook activity: Victoria Bitter (April-July 2014)

Victoria Bitter	Sport-related posts				Other posts			
	Posts	Likes	Comments	Shares	Posts	Likes	Comments	Shares
April	1	157	16	12	7	3,479	445	579
May	4	1,035	82	115	4	1,778	200	272
June	0	0	0	0	7	5,741	547	1,043
July	1	520	11	82	7	5,002	583	1,703
Total	6	1,712	109	209	25	16,000	1,775	3,597

Table 7. Twitter activity: Victoria Bitter (April-July 2014)

Victoria Bitter	Sport-related Tweets			Other Tweets		
	Posts	Retweets	Favourites	Posts	Retweets	Favourites
April	3	0	0	2	3	2
May	18	125	281	4	20	29
June	7	45	53	1	5	4
July	6	39	47	5	35	27
Total	34	209	381	12	63	62

3.4 Data collection and categories of data analysis

The study sought to collate and categorise the strategies and themes describing how alcohol brands leverage their sport sponsorship association via social media to engage consumers. Individual units of content were captured in order to indicate the overt engagement, while also recognising that many social media users are described as ‘lurkers’, in that they only passively observe. Lurkers read content without interacting (for instance, in Facebook they may read posts but don’t ‘like’, ‘comment’, ‘share’, or ‘tag’ content).

All content was collected for the initial longer-term Cricket Australia event (Ashes tour) and for the initial short-term Cricket Australia events (One Day International series). Data collection continued throughout the research period incorporating the regular season and finals games or special event competitions associated with the AFL and NRL. Standard screen capture technology was used to take snapshots of the Facebook timelines and Twitter profiles of the selected alcohol brands during the data collection periods.

Data analysis occurred at interim stages throughout the data collection using an iterative process involving multiple researchers, reviewing independently and formulating collectively. Codes of categorisation were developed from this iterative process of analysis and review (for example, social media strategies and communication themes). As the research progressed, data were assessed to determine if a saturation of codes was established. After this point, data were collected in order to establish diversity within codes.

Content collected included alcohol branded content, consumer-generated content, co-created content, content resulting from interactive applications including tipping competitions, liquor store location and pub location apps, and the fusion of sport brand websites, third party Facebook campaign software, alcohol brands and consumer Facebook pages. Content also included consumers’ social networking engagement (responses) resulting from any of the aforementioned content types.

Our data themes categorise content based on the overarching strategic intent, recognising that social media tools and forms of social networking engagement continue to evolve. Similarly, the classification of communication themes adopts a broad social-psychological categorisation. The aim is to provide a classification guide that will remain useful as technologies, strategies, and networking continue to evolve.

4 Findings

Alcohol brands sponsoring the AFL, NRL and Cricket Australia vary in their levels of activity on social media in general, and in leveraging their associations with sport via social media specifically. The most active brands in terms of frequency and quantity of posts were two leading beer brands, Carlton Draught and VB, and a globally distributed bourbon brand, Wild Turkey. These brands maintain major sponsorship investments with one or more of the sports investigated in the study as presented in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3.

The social media platforms most commonly used by alcohol brands were Facebook and Twitter, but the complementary use of other forms of digital media, such as applications ('apps') to increase consumer engagement was noted. Further, a number of the communications on social media directed viewers to the brand's website, for example, to provide further information on competitions. Other social media platforms included YouTube channels, Instagram and Google+.

Communication via social media often occurred in real time during sporting events, creating an environment of a shared sport experience by utilising the increasingly ubiquitous presence of the 'second screen' as consumers engage with their mobile devices throughout an event, either in or away from a sport stadium.

In cataloguing and analysing the social media activity that was linked to sport, including images, message content and brand conversations, we found that alcohol marketers used a range of methods to create a fusion between sport culture and drinking culture. In particular, we identified four strategies used by alcohol marketers to leverage their associations with sport and create opportunities to interact with consumers by linking their brands with sport consumption.

We describe these strategies as 'calls to action' as they seek to stimulate consumers to actively engage with the brand as opposed to passively absorbing brand messages through traditional advertising or sponsorship activity. Further, these strategies aim to achieve 'social activation', to encourage customers to act as advocates for the brand thereby gaining access to the personal social network of the targeted consumer. This objective of social activation will become increasingly important as we move toward what has been referred to as the 'recommendation economy', largely powered by digital platforms.

The calls to action used by alcohol marketers are described as follows:

- Call to compete – leveraging off the competitive nature of sport, and perhaps its fans, this strategy attempts to engage consumers – and augment the sport experience – through promotional competitions generally featuring sport-related prizes often displaying both sport and alcohol branding. These prizes are likely to be highly desirable and facilitate the winner's display of team or sport identification.
- Call to collaborate – this strategy actively pursues a higher level of engagement with consumers through co-creation of content or by stimulating user-generated content using sport as a common interest. These communications are pursuing social activation and seek to generate differing levels of involvement.
- Call to celebrate – using sporting victory, shared achievements and team identification, this strategy seeks to embed alcohol as an integral part of celebrating and basking in the reflected glory of a team's achievement.

- Call to consume – beyond celebration, this strategy seeks to normalise alcohol consumption as part of the overall sport experience, attempting to entrench drinking within a consumer’s sport consumption practices and social interactions with ‘mates’.

We further determined that the impact and effectiveness of these calls to action are enabled by the use of messages and images that encompass specific themes designed to resonate with the target consumer. These themes relate to identity (including sport identity, male identity, Australian identity), culture (sport culture, Australian culture – both present and with a sense of nostalgia for the past) and camaraderie (a shared sporting passion bringing alcohol brand and consumer together as part of a community). It should be noted that the themes are interrelated, that is, brand authored content pertaining to sport generally included one or more of these themes.

These strategies and message themes are illustrated in Figure 1, and will be discussed in the following sections. Examples of these strategies and themes are also presented.

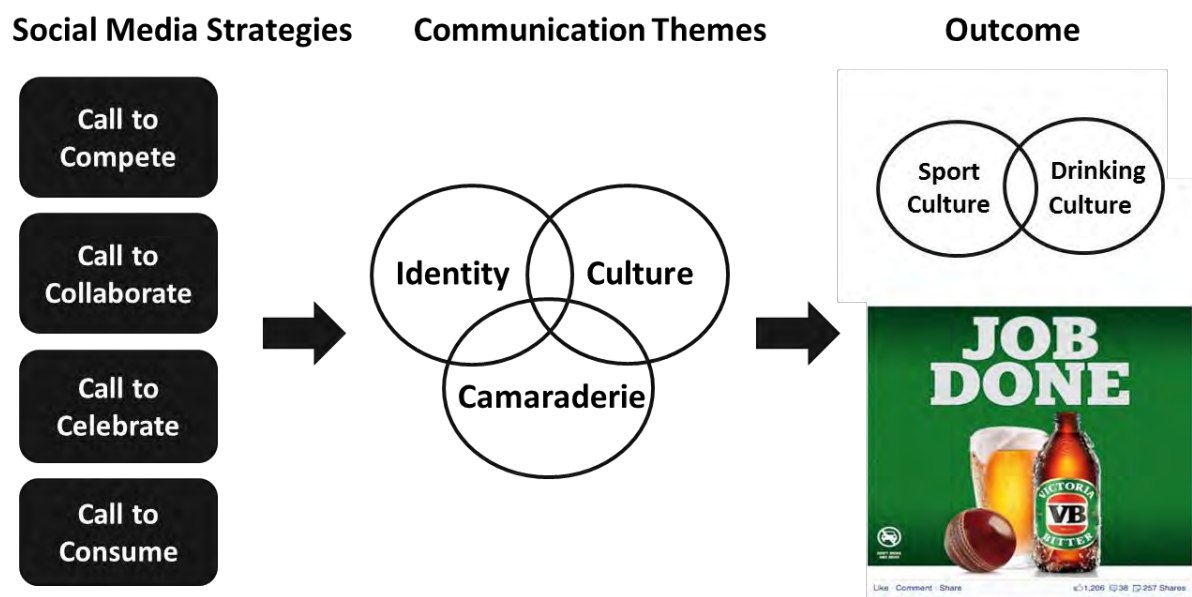


Figure 1. The impact of sport-linked alcohol marketing through social media

4.1 Calls to action

Calls to action are the mechanisms used by alcohol brands through social media, and the themes of identity, culture and camaraderie give their communications the power to embed alcohol as part of the consumer's sport identity and sport experience.

The ultimate goal appears to be a convergence of drinking culture with sport culture. It could be argued that this goal has been pursued previously through traditional advertising and sponsorship of sport. However, using digital platforms provides the potential to actively engage consumers both cognitively and emotionally, to stimulate user generated content around the brand, to permeate a consumer's social networks, and to access detailed data on consumers, thereby allowing for the development of highly targeted and personalised messages.

Communication through social media has the potential to change the dynamic between marketer and consumer from commercial interaction to social interaction. The demarcation between marketer and consumer therefore becomes blurred as consumers embrace the role of brand advocate and co-creator of brand-related content.

4.1.1 Call to compete

This call to action, using promotional competitions, was heavily featured and represents a standard approach for engaging and alerting consumers to sport sponsorship relationships. Competitions generally offered sport-related prizes and displayed images combining alcohol products with sport. For example, one competition required consumers to purchase a carton of beer in order to access a code providing a chance to win an alcohol branded rugby shirt, while another brand offered tickets to the football playoffs.

More elaborate competitions were also employed, such as football tipping, which ran throughout the season and encouraged consumers to invite friends to play along by posting the following prompt on Facebook: "Think you can beat me? Download Draught Pick <http://appstore.com/draughtpick>." Once the app was downloaded, users were reminded by regular messages to interact and compete.

Competition-based promotions have a natural synergy with the competitive nature of sport, and featuring sport-based prizes further reinforces the association between alcohol and sport. The following example, Post 1, depicts the merging of sport and drinking cultures via a competition promoted on Wild Turkey's Facebook page inviting NRL fans to compete to win a Wild Turkey branded football with the fan's name inscribed.

Post 1. Wild Turkey NRL Personalised Leather Footy competition



Post 2 and Post 3 both relate to the VB sponsored NRL 'Name in the Game' competition. Post 2 depicts the successful prize winning entrants for the promotion. These winners had their names printed on the player jerseys of the NSW Blues State of Origin Team. Post 3 shows the VB website link promoted through VB's Facebook site, which required NRL fans to purchase specially marked cartons of VB from distributors, or to seek a scratch card when purchasing a VB at participating pubs.

Post 2. VB/NRL Name in the Game competition



Post 3. VB/NRL Name in the Game competition entry and prizes

Prizes

There are two prizes as part of the Back the Blues promotion in 2014.



Win Your Name in an Origin Game

You can win your name in an Origin Game instantly by purchasing specially marked cartons of VB cans or stubbies to collect a unique code.

You can also win instantly by purchasing a VB at a participating licensed venue, receiving a scratch card, and revealing a unique code.

Enter your code(s) via this site to see if you have won, [click here](#).



Win your own personalised Official 2014 Blues jersey

You can win a personalised Official 2014 Blues jersey by purchasing specially marked cartons of VB cans or stubbies and collecting 10 unique codes. Once you have entered your 10 unique code(s) on this site you can claim your jersey, [click here](#).

You can also win your very own personalised Official 2014 Blues jersey instantly by purchasing a VB at a participating licensed venue, receiving a scratch card, and entering your unique code into the venue's official draw. Draws will be held on the night of each Origin Game. You must be at the participating licensed venue at the time of the draw to win unless you're in ACT.

Post 4 demonstrates Bundaberg Rum's association with rugby league, where fans are encouraged to purchase particular products at BWS liquor outlets for the chance to win a trip to Sydney and a celebrity-hosted dinner. This competition is interesting as it bridges fans of the two major football codes, despite Bundaberg only having a relationship with one NRL club. Also, this shows a linkage on social media between an alcohol brand and retailer.

Post 4. Bundaberg Rum NRL Footy Legends competition

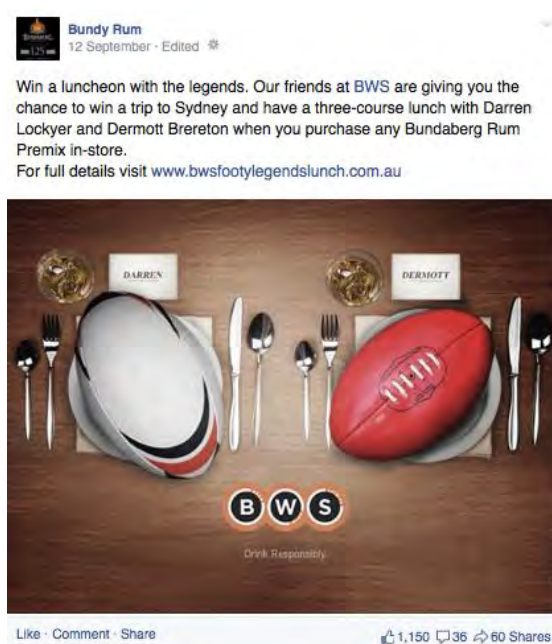


Table 8 presents a summary of the 'call to compete' strategy, providing details of social media tactics as well as some additional examples of social media posts.

Table 8. Call to compete

Strategy: Call to compete
Call using promotional competitions that connect the alcohol brand to the sport, with rewards including cash prizes, sport-related prizes, or discounted alcohol purchases.
Tactics: Social media engagement
<p>Encompasses alcohol branded use of social media promoting sport competitions, including alcohol products as rewards. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• smartphone application (interactive sport application) linked to Facebook that invites friends to join and informs them of rewards for participating• both AFL and NRL tipping competitions• regular push notification reminders to enter team selections, polls and quizzes• reward points applied to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">> polls – intra-game with reward points> trivia quizzes – intra-game with reward points> bonus point opportunities – intra-game bonus points linked to actual on-field team goal scoring.• website application (interactive sport application)<ul style="list-style-type: none">> interactive competitions (e.g. NRL tipping competition http://footytipping.localliquor.com.au/members/index)> email reminder notification to play tipping game.• other sport-related competitions types:<ul style="list-style-type: none">> photos – e.g. Carlton Mid best dressed> sport-related prizes – e.g. signed t-shirt, rugby ball with name, NRL Name In The Game (name on a NSW Blues Guernsey).• entry requirements<ul style="list-style-type: none">> some required participants to purchase beer to get an entry code from the inside packaging> others required downloading an application> others required entry via a website.

Examples

Below is a Facebook post advertising Carlton Draught's AFL footy tipping competition via their downloadable Smartphone Application called Draught Pick:

"We know the chance to win a trip to the AFL Grand Final is a pretty good reason to download our Draught Pick app, but you'll score beer deals throughout the season just for putting in your picks. iPhone users get it here..."

Next is an image of an iPhone with Draught Pick Application displayed. The top caption reads: "Draught Pick is beginning to really cheapen our brand". The bottom caption reads: "No seriously, you can score \$5 off a case of Carlton Draught". To view this Facebook post [see Appendix, Post 62](#).

Once the Draught Pick smartphone application has been downloaded to an iPhone the sign up process includes a page highlighting the benefits of linking to Facebook:

"Sign up using Facebook – Why?

- It makes it easier to find friends and makes it easier for your Facebook friends to find you.
- You can only share through Facebook (your score, badges and your tips).
- You get your Facebook profile photo as your Draught Pick profile pick so your friends can easily find you.
- We won't post on your behalf without your permission."

For smartphone post shown above, linking Draught Pick to Facebook [see Appendix, Post 63](#).

Draught Pick encourages users to invite their friends to join them in the competition by downloading the smartphone application:

"Draught Pick is up to 423% more awesome when shared with friends" ([See Appendix, Post 65](#))

To view all smartphone posts (screen images) showing the process that users experience when signing up to the Draught Pick AFL footy tipping competition [see Appendix, Post 63](#).

Once a new user is signed up to the Smartphone Application, they are prompted to invite their Facebook friends to join them in the footy tipping competition. Facebook accounts under 18 appeared to be able to access information through indirect means, when any of their Facebook friends who were using the Draught Pick application shared information from via the application to their Facebook account:

The following automated Facebook message is posted on behalf of the new user with their consent:

"Think you can beat me? Download Draught Pick <http://appstore.com/draughtpick>" ([See Appendix, Post 64](#))

Push notifications

Draught Pick uses push notifications to remind users to involve themselves in the competition on a regular basis, as footy games are about to commence. For example, pop up reminders appear superimposed on any existing screen image on the user's iPhone:

"Draught Pick – The match between Brisbane Lions and Essendon is about to start. Get your picks in.",

"Draught Pick now – The AFL match between Richmond and St Kilda just started" ([See Appendix, Post 66](#))

"Draught Pick – You scored 126 in the match between Western Bulldogs and Sydney Swans." ([See Appendix, Post 67](#))

Poll questions (where competition points are awarded for selecting the most popular fan response)

“Which Olympic sport would the average AFL player be best suited for? – Swimming, Rowing, Athletics, Rhythmic Gymnastics” ([See Appendix, Post 68](#))

“Who’d get served first at the pub? – Leigh Matthews, Tony Lockett, Gary Ablett Sr., Gary Ablett Jr.” ([See Appendix, Post 68](#))

Trivia (where competition points are awarded for correct answers to sport trivia questions)

Push notification reminder: “It’s time for the 1st quarter trivia, good luck!” ([See Appendix, Post 69](#))

“Which team does Michael Hurley play for?”

“Who was famously dropped from the 1993 Grand Final?”

Trivia: “Well done – You got 1 out of 3. Keep it up. – Total 10”

Trivia: “Whoa! – You got all the questions right. Nice one. Macavaney! – 6, 6, 6, (18)” ([See Appendix, Post 70](#))

For images of the Draught Pick in-game reward points multiplier [see Appendix, Post 72](#).

Twitter

Carlton Draught post from @CarltonDraught: “Win finals tickets to @NorthKangaroos Vs @EssendonFC at the G. facebook.com/CarltonDraught pic.twitter.com/GnOwj6eZ82” ([See Appendix, Post 56](#))

“It’s time to stand together, on the field, right there with the Blues. Victoria Bitter is giving you a once in a lifetime opportunity to have your name printed on the chests of the Blues players in the upcoming State of Origin series. Visit our website to find out how you can get your name in the game <http://bit.ly/vbbacktheblues> #VBNAMEINTHEGAME” ([See Appendix, Post 49](#))

Television news presenter Tweet is retweeted by Victoria Bitter, promoting competition:

“I’ve finally made the team – happy to start off the bench Mr Daley. Go the mighty Blues #7News #VBNAMEINTHEGAME” ([See Appendix, Post 57](#))

Rugby player:

“Be there with us, back the Blues and get your name on our jersey. Great initiative from VB #vbnameinthegame” ([See Appendix, Post 58](#))

Radio announcer:

“Check out the latest recruit for the @Vic_Bitter @NSWRL #Origin side!” ([See Appendix, Post 59](#))

Facebook

“Bird Up for Wild Turkey Bourbon Super Saturday and get your personalised leather footy! – Find out how here: <http://bit.ly/1hn7PZBNRL>” National Rugby League ([See Appendix, Post 52](#))

YouTube link posted via Facebook

Victoria Bitter ad: “Back the Blues – Get your name printed on the chests of the NSW Blues players in the upcoming State of Origin series. For more info head to – <http://bit.ly/backtheblues>” ([See Appendix, Post 60](#))

YouTube link posted via Facebook

“Yep, if you click the link below, you’ll be one of the first people to see the brand new Victoria Bitter ad featuring our live cricket scoreboards. You’ll also find out how you could win one for yourself. Get to it – <http://bit.ly/vbliveashes>” (See Appendix, Post 61)

Facebook

“If you’re a BWS customer and a fan of the cricket then listen up. There’s a chance to win 1 of 15 Victoria Bitter Live Cricket Scoreboards. Visit <http://www.bws.com.au/cricketscoreboard/> for full details – For your chance to win, tell us your moment of cricket glory in 25 words or less” (See Appendix, Post 53)

Facebook

Friday night watch and win competition:

Friday Night Football: “It’s back again! Not just the NRL season, but also Victoria Bitter’s Watch & Win prize giveaway. Just buy a carton of Victoria Bitter and watch the game to receive your special code and full entry details. – Who do you think will take out tonight’s clash between the Roosters & the Broncos?” (See Appendix, Post 50)

“We’ve partnered with our mates at BWS to make sure you won’t be left high and dry for Friday Night Footy. Just sign up to VB’s Big Cold Bulletin and you’ll be the first to hear about upcoming BWS deals built especially for NRL and Victoria Bitter fans. Get on board here <http://www.victoriabitter.com.au/the-big-cold-bulletin/>” (See Appendix, Post 51)

4.1.2 Call to collaborate

Social media provides an ideal platform for collaboration and co-creation. The brands examined in this study have embraced this opportunity, actively encouraging consumers to share content via platforms facilitating sharing through specific apps, competitions and events.

A continuum of involvement strategies are employed to provide opportunities for consumers to act as collaborators in the marketing of alcohol products. Lower involvement collaboration simply invited consumers to 'like', 'comment' or 'share' content. Consumers were encouraged to respond not only to brand generated content but also to content generated by other consumers, thereby stimulating further brand conversations.

Higher involvement activities focused on the co-creation of content. For example, a competition organised at a major sporting event used alcohol sponsor-branded photos to facilitate co-created content with fans who could subsequently share their content on Facebook. Fans could click on their photo (or any other photo that was posted publicly) and initiate Facebook actions, including likes, shares, comments and tags, as well as inviting their network to vote for their photo to win a prize.

4.1.2.1 Lower involvement

Examples of lower involvement collaboration demonstrate how alcohol brands use social media to invite consumers to 'like', 'comment' or 'share' content.

Post 4 presents a sample of fan responses which demonstrate how conversations about sport and alcohol are merged, for example a portion of the comments reads:

Mark Spud: "Doggies of course mate:-P Cheers Spud!" Wes: "Go the doggies and yes please for the drink", and Miki (responding to Wes): "and gobble a can of turkey".

Post 4 clearly creates an association between the alcohol brand and the sport through a visual image and seeks to engage fans around the shared interest of sport by posting a sport-related question on Facebook: "Who are you tipping to lift the trophy?" Post 4 shows the level of 'interaction' that then ensues among fans.

Post 4. Wild Turkey NRL Grand Final


Wild Turkey Australia
 5 October

Bunnies. Bulldogs. And a Turkey or two...

As an official sponsor of the NRL, Wild Turkey is looking forward to seeing both team's step up in today's NRL Grand Final. Who are you tipping to lift the trophy?



Like · Comment · Share
 373 49 33 Shares

Like · Comment · Share
 373 49 33 Shares

373 people like this.

Write a comment...

Lou Mori I love wild turkey I drink it all the time 🍷
 Like · Reply · 2 · 6 October at 19:08

Wild Turkey Australia Stoked to hear you're a fan Lou. Bird Up.
 Like · 7 October at 08:53

Write a reply...

Nathan Marks Had my fair share of turkey's
 Like · Reply · 1 · 6 October at 22:20

Wild Turkey Australia Bet they went down well Nathan. Bird Up.
 Like · 7 October at 08:53

Nathan Marks They sure did, 101 stubbies go down like a dream
 Like · 7 October at 09:43

Write a reply...

Michael Black Read my mind... bunnies? Dogs? Turkey ftw!
 Like · Reply · 3 · 5 October at 18:08

Michaela Brown Bruno Fragomeli have you cracked open the diamond yet?!
 Like · Reply · 2 · 5 October at 16:38

Leonie O'Connor-Byrne Up the bunnies
 Like · Reply · 2 · 5 October at 16:05

Mark Spud Russell Doggies of course mate :-P cheers Spud!
 Like · Reply · 2 · 5 October at 16:02

Joseph Barclay Rtwr Bunnies
 Like · Reply · 2 · 5 October at 16:01

Craig Chambers Who cares, lets just drink more Wild Turkey. ...
 Like · Reply · 1 · 5 October at 17:48

Colin Stephen Tonks Who cares?
 Like · Reply · 1 · 5 October at 17:34

Wayne Niesler WILL BE A TOP GAME ANYHOW BEST OF LUCK TO BOTH TEAMS GO RABBITOHS
 Like · Reply · 1 · 5 October at 17:21

Wayne Niesler RABBITOHS 16 DOGS 10
 Like · Reply · 1 · 5 October at 17:19

Wes Feeney Go the doggies and yes please for the drink
 Like · Reply · 1 · 5 October at 17:10

Miki Jansz And gobble a can of turkey

Post 5 depicts a Facebook image from Jim Beam, a brand associated with three NRL teams. This post pitches two cans of Jim Beam Bourbon and Cola against each other, in the “Greatest Head to Head”, portraying the competing State of Origin teams, the NSW Blues and Queensland Maroons. The brand calls upon fans to collaborate in nominating the side they support: “The Blue and Maroon boys are up for another night. Who’s your team?” This call to collaborate received 195 likes, 31 comments and 16 shares on Facebook.

Post 5. Jim Beam and NRL State of Origin



Post 6 and Post 7 depict another example from Jim Beam. Given that the brand sponsors multiple sports, Post 6 depicts Jim Beam's 'Word Up' promotion, which uses their Facebook site to call upon fans to collaborate by nominating their favourite sport. This post also encourages the purchase of Jim Beam cans labelled with the Word Up promotion, so that fans can use the cans to spell out their favourite sport team. Post 7 reveals fan responses which identify a mix of AFL and NRL teams. Although no response specifically linked Jim Beam to the NRL teams they sponsor, it did engage fans in linking Jim Beam to the sport.

Post 6. Jim Beam Word Up promotion



Post 7. Jim Beam fan responses to favourite sport question



Table 9 provides a summary of the ‘call to collaborate’, focusing on strategy and tactics at the lower end of the involvement continuum with additional examples of social media posts.

Table 9. Call to collaborate - Lower levels of involvement

Strategy: Call to collaborate – lower involvement
Collaboration incorporates a continuum of lower and higher levels of consumer involvement in the marketing process regarding content posted on alcohol brands’ social media sites.
Tactics: Social media engagement
The examples shown depict a range of tactics used to illicit likes, comments and shares.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook posts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > inviting likes, comments or shares > inviting answers to questions. Twitter posts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > inviting retweets and comments.
Examples
<p>Facebook</p> <p>“Scoreboard under construction – We know Victoria Bitter fans love the cricket. That’s why we’re installing these massive Live Cricket Scoreboards across the nation to make sure you’ll never miss a run, ball, wicket or fingers crossed, an Ashton Agar moment. Let us know if you’ve seen them. Cheers to @BrendenWood for the pic.” (345 likes, 28 comments, 28 shares) (See Appendix, Post 46)</p> <p>Facebook post featuring rugby and cricket star players on taps: “These five beer taps cover a fair whack of VB history. How long have you been on board with the Big Cold Beer” (656 likes, 63 comments, 64 shares) (See Appendix, Post 35)</p> <p>“Wild Turkey Bourbon - It’s time for some R & R (RARE and reflection), what has been your RARE moment of the season so far?” (437 likes, 36 shares) (See Appendix, Post 34)</p> <p>Facebook post with an image of Mitchell Johnson, ‘Bring Back the Mo’ Special Edition kiosk at the event: “Some fans go to A LOT of trouble to enter the Carlton Mid ODI Dress Up Comp with \$10k on the line! Info: http://cricket.us/DressUpComp See the MCG winner: http://cricket.us/M1CALK vote and enter here: http://cricket.us/1eGARQg” (9,740 likes, 259 comments, 411 shares) (See Appendix, Post 31)</p> <p>Facebook linked to YouTube with links to advertisements that have generated many thousands of views (e.g. Victoria Bitter Ad – Live Cricket Scoreboard (15, 616 views) (See Appendix, Post 80)</p> <p>Twitter</p> <p>VB: “Ian Healy gets a look at our big, and small Live Cricket Scoreboards” (See Appendix, Post 47)</p> <p>VB: “So what do you think? Will our boys be able to bring back the urn to this side of the pond? #ashes #vblivecricket” (See Appendix, Post 35)</p> <p>VB retweeted a fan Tweet:</p> <p>“A whole new type of wireless just arrived in the mail @vic_bitter gonna be a fun ashes #ashtag” (fan had received his wireless scoreboard reward from VB – part of competition) (See Appendix, Post 48)</p> <p>VB retweeted radio Tweet by Triple M radio announcer:</p> <p>“Got the @Vic-Bitter scoreboard in studio at @TrippleMMelb – Sweeeeet!” (See Appendix, Post 38)</p>

VB fans' responses to above retweet:

"@DangerousDaveW @Vic-Bitter @TripleMMelb don't know why but I kinda want a VB right now for some reason?" [\(See Appendix, Post 38\)](#)

"Woo! Our @Vic_Bitter scoreboard turned up. Just in time for the #ashes to start tomorrow." [\(See Appendix Post 39\)](#)

Karl Stefanovic (Television presenter) tweeted:

"An early today show Christmas present. I love beer." (88 retweets, 137 favourites) [\(See Appendix, Post 40\)](#)

VB commented on Stefanovic's Tweet:

"You can even get it hosting a morning show. Cheers to you @karlstefanovic #forahardearndthirst" [\(See Appendix, Post 40\)](#)

4.1.2.2 Higher involvement

Examples of higher involvement calls to collaborate used by alcohol brands to stimulate user-generated content are described next, with additional examples presented in Table 10.

The following posts (Post 8, Post 9, and Post 10) were co-created and required some level of effort, as fans came to Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) in fancy dress and agreed to collaborate in photography supplied by the event.

When they retrieved their photos and shared them on Facebook, the Carlton Mid One Day International (ODI) sponsorship logo was superimposed on the photograph. Also, providing a link to a Facebook account was a requirement of competition entry for any fan who wanted to upload their image as their competition entry. Fans could then ask their personal Facebook networks to vote by 'liking' their photo. Tags and shares replicate the image (with existing Facebook actions) on recipients' Facebook pages.

The branding of the Carlton Mid ODI series provides meaning and context to the participants' costumes. In this example, all but one comment is a tag (using the name of someone in their Facebook network). This substantiates the success of the strategy in providing valued branded content for consumers who then disseminate it.

Post 8. Facebook photo of fans with the Carlton Mid product



Post 9. Facebook photo co-created with Carlton Mid logo superimposed



Post 10. Facebook photo co-created with Carlton Mid logo superimposed



Post 11 depicts further user generated brand content in a different context. A fan (Josh) has presumably sent in a photo of four regional football players covered in mud and enjoying a can of VB after the game. VB have used the consumer-supplied photo and added the following comment and caption:

“Four quarters in four inches of mud. You’ve earned it boys – Big thanks to our mate Josh for sending this one in – You can get it fighting for the flag”

Post 11. Fan photo posted by VB featuring regional footballers drinking VB



This image illustrates the merging of sport and drinking cultures through social media as the fan-generated image exemplifies the VB motto of drinking after a 'hard day's work' and having 'earned it'. The choice of this image by VB, and then superimposing their own caption, reinforces the VB brand identity (reinforcing traditional working class values) and culture linked to sport and communicated via social media.

Table 10. Call to collaborate - Higher levels of involvement

Strategy: Call to collaborate – higher involvement
Higher involvement refers to a higher investment of time, effort and personal association with identity markers in the construction, co-creation, sharing and/or responding to content posted.
Tactics: Social media engagement
<p>For example, content is shared to Facebook, from a smartphone app. (tipping competition), which shares the outcomes of participating with the alcohol branded tool, with friends, which includes sharing details of redeeming beer products as rewards and inviting friends to participate.</p> <p>For example, the Carlton Mid ODI Best Dressed competition required participants to attend the cricket in fancy dress, pose for professional photographs with or without supplied models (optional), and to upload either that co-created photo or a self-created photo of themselves to the competition website for entry. Linked to Facebook, the competition encourages entrants to send an automated message, together with their alcohol branded photo (super imposed brand) to their entire Facebook social network to encourage them to vote. As Facebook likes determine the winner, with significant cash prizes to winners.</p> <p>Encourage consumers to share:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• smartphone applications (interactive sport application)<ul style="list-style-type: none">> reward notification shared via Facebook• photos (Facebook and Twitter)• alcohol branded photos (sport event/competition context)<ul style="list-style-type: none">> sport event context> co-created with sport consumers> underage sport consumers• alcohol consumption photos (sport event/competition context).

Examples

Smartphone App (Draught Pick)

Two screen shots alerting success in redeeming rewards:

“Success! (Share with Messages, email or Facebook)”

Shared to Facebook – ready to be posted: “I just claimed my reward on Draught Pick <http://appstore.com/draughtpick>” (See Appendix, Post 74)

Facebook

(Same message shared from Draught Pick app to Facebook). Facebook post with link to draught pick app download, enticing friends to compete for rewards. (This post is highly involved, as the user must consider whether to advertise to their friends that they compete for alcohol purchase discounts, and that they wish to invite their friends to also consider participating.)

“I just claimed my reward on Draught Pick <http://appstore.com/draughtpick>” (See Appendix, Post 75)

Further examples of co-creation of photographic content between Cricket Australia, Carlton Mid and Cricket fans (some were used by fans as their entry photo to the Best Dressed Competition – Many were shared within fans personal Facebook networks:

Co-created photos featuring best-dressed fans and models at the Carlton Mid ODI at the MCG (See Appendix, Post 28)

Co-created photos featuring best-dressed fans drinking Carlton Mid in the special entertainment area provided within the stadium for best-dressed fans (See Appendix, Post 29)

Facebook linked to website (Carlton Mid ODI Best Dressed Competition). Facebook post (image of fancy dressed fans: a masked male with female both holding glasses of beer (female with a costume beer prop as part of her Germanic beer-cultured outfit) at MCG):

“There have been some quality dress ups already this summer! Vote for the best from the MCG ODI <http://cricketa.us/1hxoKro> Want to win \$5,000? More info: <http://cricket.au/1c7wzP4> Maxwell on fire at the Gabba: <http://cricket.us/1dVAvUr>” (3,109 likes, 63 shares) (See Appendix Post 30)

Fan responses to this post:

(Andrew) “you can’t see the bloke, but I’m going to say he is punching above his weight!”

(Peter) Never mind the result, how does that guy drink that beer?

(Robert) ‘With great difficulty”

(Hector) “Mi kind of chick BEEr!!!”

(Brent) “I don’t need to see the rest, she wins hands down”

For each of the above fan responses see Appendix, Post 30.

4.1.3 Call to celebrate

A strategy that appeared to be particularly successful in eliciting consumer interaction was the shared camaraderie of celebrating a sporting victory. Posts and Tweets by alcohol brands gained leverage from the emotion and reflected glory associated with sporting wins, using these events as an opportunity to link images of sporting success with alcohol on various social media sites. Furthermore, this strategy normalises the consumption of alcohol as an appropriate way to celebrate a victory. Essentially this content served to embed alcohol consumption into the rituals of a loyal fan.

In one example, VB posted the following comment on Facebook after a particularly momentous victory: “We’ve done it. Australia has just been ranked the world’s number 1 test nation. Under the solid leadership of Michael Clarke, our revamped team has put in the hard yards and dominated all in their path – well done boys!” This comment was accompanied by a link to a relevant article in a leading newspaper as well as an advertising image featuring a bottle of beer beside a cricket ball and the headline “Best of the Test. Congratulations Australia.”

This strategy embraces the collective shared identity of a sporting nation and embeds the brand as a part of sporting culture, benefitting from the positive associations attributed to a major sporting achievement. The purposeful use of ‘we’ and ‘our’ create a persona for the brand, and one that consumers can relate to as part of their sport identity.

Post 12 depicts how an alcohol brand combines sport and drinking culture to unite in celebrating. By invoking a sense of nostalgia, the united brand identities portray values such as hard work and fair play. In this post an image and quote by the legendary sportsman Don Bradman is used to reinforce the values of fair play, integrity and hard work that the VB brand and the Cricket Australia brand share. This post received 799 likes, 27 comments, 82 shares.

Post 12. VB's nostalgic celebration of Don Bradman



Post 13 is a Tweet by VB calling on fans to celebrate the “Hard Earned Victory!” of the NSW Blues in State of Origin Game 1 in 2014. It’s notable that VB have replaced the players in the image with cut-out cans of VB. This image aptly communicates the merging of sport and alcohol brands.

Post 13. VB celebrating the NSW Blues State of Origin victory



Table 11 presents a summary of the ‘call to celebrate’ strategy including details of social media tactics, as well as additional examples of social media posts.

Table 11. Call to celebrate

Strategy: Call to celebrate
<p>Posts and Tweets by alcohol brands leveraged the emotion and reflected glory associated with sporting wins, using these events as an opportunity to link images of sporting success with alcohol on various social media sites.</p> <p>This strategy normalises the consumption of alcohol as an appropriate way to celebrate a victory.</p>
Tactics: Social media engagement
<p>Fans were encouraged to share and comment on the posts, sometimes responding to questions invoking their views on team performance and what it means to them or inclusively thanking them for their support, reinforcing the bond between the alcohol brand, the team the fan and a united sense of belonging and positive identity formation.</p> <p>Alcohol consumption is reinforced as a normalised part of sport and celebration.</p>
Examples
<p>Facebook</p> <p>VB: “Job Done – Draw stumps our ashes mission is complete – Cheers boys! Can’t wait for the next series” (1208 likes, 38 comments, 257 shares) (See Appendix, Post 33)</p> <p>“NSW VB Blues State of Origin 2014 Victors – Does victory get any better than this? Well done boys, for all your hard work” (115 likes, 2 comments, 26 shares) (See Appendix Post 41)</p> <p>“NSW VB Blues State of Origin Champs – They came they saw, they conquered. Well done Blues for a massive State of Origin series win! A hard earned victory! What do you reckon has been the best moment of the series so far?” (599 likes, 77 comments, 165 shares) (See Appendix, Post 42)</p> <p>Twitter</p> <p>VB: “NRL Blues – Blues Blockade – The defence from the blues has been outstanding. Keep holding the line boys. Victory is on the cards #Orgin pic.twitter.com/BK2a2OWVB2” (See Appendix, Post 43)</p> <p>VB Tweet: “That’s what you call one-upmanship. Well done boys, that victory deserves a cold Vic Bitter. #ashes #vblivecricket” (See Appendix, Post 44)</p>

4.1.4 Call to consume

Alcohol brands go beyond just linking alcohol to celebratory rituals in sport. In fact, they are often enthusiastic in their encouragement to consume alcohol as part of the regular sport experience, using a variety of messages to suggest that it is an essential part of a sport fan's identification as an authentic supporter. For example Wild Turkey suggests, using images and posts on Facebook and Twitter, that a fan cannot fully enjoy a rugby league game unless he or she is drinking, commenting, "It's not Super Saturday unless there's a Turkey in your hand! Who's your team? Bird up!"

Further, not only is alcohol positioned as appropriate to consume when celebrating a win, but also when commiserating a loss. A post from Carlton Draught suggests: "Your couch won't buy you a beer if your team loses, but your friends will. Go on, get to the pub and watch the footy." The brand supported their call to action by providing a footy finder app that helps consumers to locate the nearest pub both serving its beer and televising the football that it sponsors.

Post 14 depicts a XXXX Facebook post linking the enjoyment of sport (NRL) to sharing a drink with friends, featuring the image of a football alongside images of XXXX products. Facebook comments for this image echo the cultural nexus between sport and drinking. For example, Jodi comments: "Bulldogs and Bday drinkies and plenty of XXXX" (See Post 15) and Graham comments: "Go the MIGHTY BUNNIES" together with an image of a XXXX Stubby Holder that reads: "XXXX Proudly QLD Official Beer" (See Post 16).

Post 14. XXXX Facebook post



Post 15. XXXX consumer response to Facebook post

Jodi Becker Bulldogs and bday drinkys and plenty of xxxx :)
Like · Reply · 4 October at 21:51

Post 16. XXXX consumer response to Facebook post

Graham Ossie Osborne Go the MIGHTY BUNNIES



Like · Reply · 23 · 3 October at 16:43

Post 17 illustrates a particularly engaging call to consume for the sport fan. Rewards for many of the alcohol-sport sponsored competitions involve discount purchases of alcohol. These three screen-shots from the mobile app, Draught Pick (AFL tipping competition), congratulates the fan and calls them to collect their discounted alcohol. The call to consume directs the consumer to their partner distributor, Liquorland, and a GPS Draught Finder indicates store locations in proximity to the fan/consumer.

Post 17. Carlton Draught - Draught Pick alcohol rewards

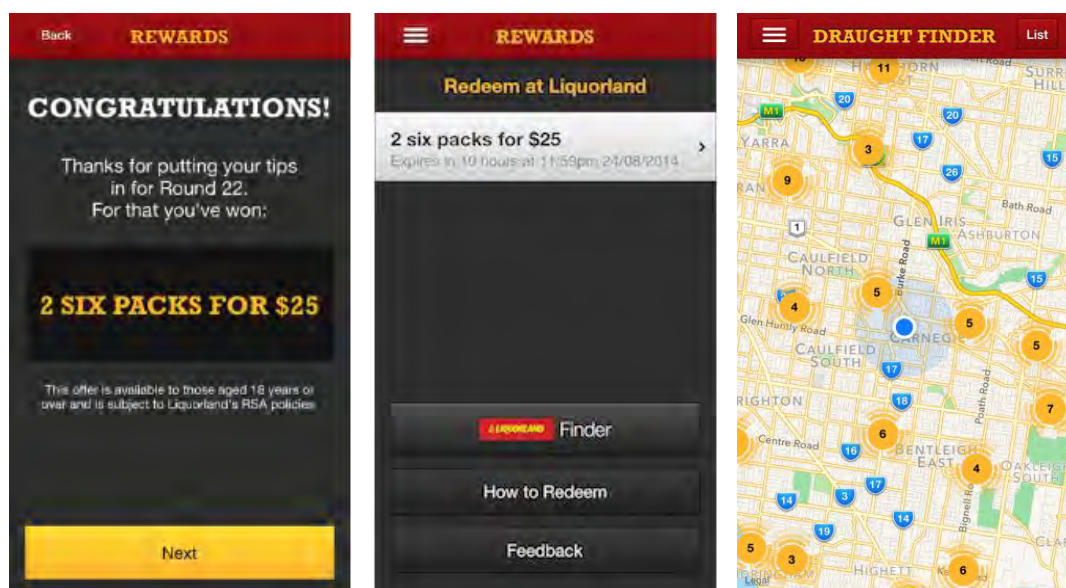


Table 12 presents a summary of the ‘call to consume’ strategy, and provides details of social media tactics as well as additional examples of social media posts.

Table 12. Call to consume

Strategy: Call to consume
<p>Alcohol brands go beyond just linking alcohol as part of a celebratory ritual and are often explicit in their encouragement to consume alcohol as part of the regular sport experience, using a variety of messages to suggest that it is a part of a sport fan’s identification.</p> <p>This includes both messages that identify alcohol consumption as appropriate for celebrating success and for commiseration.</p>
Tactics: Social media engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages consumers to drink via social media tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > smartphone application linked to Facebook > Facebook > Twitter. • Messages include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > suggestions to drink > suggestions fans were at the bar as they missed a quiz or poll > suggestions fans meet friends at a branded pub for a drink. • GPS location technology used to locate pubs and alcohol brand distributors.

Examples

Smartphone application (Draught Pick) linked to Facebook

Draught Pick discount beer rewards to redeem from Liquorland stores:

“Warning once you press ‘Redeem’ you will only have 10 mins to claim your offer, so it’s best to see a Liquorland team member first.”

“Time remaining (9:59) – 2 six packs for \$25 – unique code (1523456)”

“Success! You just successfully claimed your offer at 2.17pm on 24 Aug 2014. Enjoy your beer!”

For each of the three screen captures above [see Appendix, Post 73](#).

Carlton Draught Beer Pot image: “Sorry you missed trivia. Let’s hope you were getting a pot.” [\(See Appendix, Post 71\)](#)

Facebook

“That’s what we call one-upmanship. Well done boys, that victory deserves a cold Victoria Bitter.” [\(See Appendix, Post 78\)](#)

Wild Turkey Bourbon NRL Super Saturday: “Turkey fans, you know what time it is ... But do you know who will win?” [\(See Appendix, Post 76\)](#)

Fan response (James): “Had some yesterday for anzac day great stuff” [\(See Appendix, Post 76\)](#)

Wild Turkey Australia response: “How’d They go down James? Bird Up. ” [\(See Appendix, Post 76\)](#)

Fan response (Alan): “BIRD UP TIME started a few hours ago” [\(See Appendix, Post 76\)](#)

Wild Turkey Australia response: “Sounds great Allan, how’d they go down? ” [\(See Appendix, Post 76\)](#)

Fan response (John): BIRD UP my Flightless Brothers! Who needs to fly when you can just stand there and be cool!” [\(See Appendix, Post 76\)](#)

Fan response (Wayne): “Don’t like it Love it Bird Up” [\(See Appendix, Post 76\)](#)

Fan response (Tony): “I’ll have a nightcap if you don’t mind!” [\(See Appendix, Post 76\)](#)

Fan response (Graham): “Don’t know, just know I’m, up for it, like I need a reason. Lol.” [\(See Appendix, Post 76\)](#)

Wild Turkey Bourbon NRL Super Saturday: “It’s not Saturday unless there’s a Turkey in your hand. Who’s your team? Bird Up! ” [\(See Appendix, Post 77\)](#)

Twitter

Carlton Draught Tweet and Facebook post: “Your couch won’t buy you a beer if your team loses, but your mates will. Go and get to the pub and watch the footy ...” [\(See Appendix, Post 79\)](#)

Carlton Draught Tweet: Image of a Carlton Draught branded banner with a football poem. “If you promise to visit the pub and watch the #footy, we promise to give up poetry. #madefrombeer” [\(See Appendix, Post 81\)](#)

4.2 Themes used in sport-linked communication

Our findings suggest that the impact and effectiveness of the calls to action are enabled by the use of messages and images reflecting specific themes designed to resonate with the target consumer. We categorise these pivotal themes as relating to identity, culture and camaraderie. These themes are interrelated and brand authored content pertaining to sport generally embedded more than one theme in any given communication. The three themes, and examples of illustrative content, are detailed in Table 13 and discussed in the following sections.

4.2.1 Identity

In simple terms, a person's identity is comprised of both differentiating characteristics of an individual as well as elements pertaining to membership in particular social groups. Identity is shaped through interaction and influences attitudes, behaviour and affiliations. In general, individuals seek to belong to groups that positively influence their self-esteem.

In analysing the messages and images used by alcohol brands, we noted the frequent use of communications that revolved around consumers' identification with a particular sport or sport team. The identity narrative in many of these messages also linked sport identity to gender identity, particularly what it means to be male, as well as components of national identity and solidarity, typically used in relation to international competitions. Some communications also used class identity, for example the content generated by VB with their hard working 'blue collar' imagery. Essentially these messages seek to position the alcohol brand as a central element in belonging to the 'in-group', with the brand delivering a trusted social connection between the members.

For example, Post 18 is a fan Tweet on the VB Twitter account demonstrating positive identity associations with the VB narrative that merges sport and drinking cultures, commenting: "This is living".

Post 18. VB "this is living"



Post 19 also leverages consumers' sporting identity, linking it with the hard working personality associated with the brand positioning of VB, by extending the context of hard work to sport. The image even featured VB cans as representations of actual players reported on in the twitter post by the brand.

Post 19. State of Origin celebration



Post 20 shows a Wild Turkey Facebook post which suggests that the 'Super Saturday' game isn't complete without a drink. The post links sport identity to alcohol consumption with the line "Who's your team? Bird Up" suggesting perhaps that you are not supporting your team properly without a drink in your hand. The post may also allude to masculine identity by incorporating a phrase very similar to the commonly used term 'man up'.

Post 20. Wild Turkey Bird Up



4.2.2 Culture

Culture relates to the specific ideas, values and behaviours of a particular people or society. Australia has a rich history of sport involvement, including grass roots participation, event attendance and fandom of professional sports. Australian sporting culture propagates values such as hard work, fair play and performance excellence. Sporting codes and teams commonly display these characteristics as core historical themes and as lionised benchmarks. National events, such as ANZAC Day, have even been appropriated by sporting-related celebrations. Brands such as VB project a nostalgic sense of Australian life recalling an era when life was a (seemingly) more utopian time and masculine roles

were clear cut. According to the stylised cliché, men worked hard and were rewarded with a beer at the end of the day. They enjoyed simple pleasures, such as weekend barbeques shared with mates around a game of backyard cricket. For a brand like VB, high profile sportsmen of the 1970s represent this ideal.

The codification of the hyper-masculine brand narrative—via text and imagery—in portraying a nostalgic version of Australian culture is designed to appeal to the traditional working class targeted by beer brands such as VB and XXXX. Post 21 illustrates how VB uses social media to post the rules of backyard cricket, which it refers to as an ‘Australian institution’, and to encourage males to emulate a mythical level of Australian masculinity:

“VB Backyard Cricket – Official Rules #1: First Ball, Not Out. – Being summer, it’s the perfect time to break out the wickets (or an empty VB carton will do) and get stuck into the Australian institution that is Backyard Cricket. But every game needs rules so we thought we’d highlight some of them –”.

Posting rules traditionally used in backyard cricket reminds consumers of a time when their own fathers may have enjoyed the ‘simple pleasure’ of backyard sport and a beer.

Post 21. VB posting backyard cricket rules #1 and #2



Post 22 depicts a further example of the beer-sport culture of mythmaking. VB uses Twitter to invite consumers to show their support for the Australian team by participating in a game of backyard cricket with their mates and drinking VB. The image shows cricket stumps made from VB cans:

“We reckon the best way to support our cricket team on their current tour of South Africa is to clear your weekend, set up some stumps and invite your mates around for a few overs of backyard cricket, not to mention a few cans of cold Victoria bitter – who’s up for it? And cheers to our mate joey for creating these pitch perfect Vic Bitter wickets.”

Post 22. Linking backyard cricket and alcohol



4.2.3 Camaraderie

A final theme noted in many of the social media communications generated by alcohol brands was that of camaraderie. Camaraderie has been described as a mutual trust and friendship experienced by people who spend significant amounts of time together and may include elements of loyalty and goodwill. Camaraderie has been established as a key motivation for fans who engage with sport and the psychological concept of group identification is clearly embedded in this phenomenon.

Our analysis indicates that content created by alcohol marketers seeks to both participate and facilitate the natural camaraderie that forms around sport. Communications through social media platforms seek to group the brand and consumer as one, united in their support of a sport or team, sharing victories and defeat. These messages commonly feature words such as 'we', 'us' and 'them', signalling this coming together as a community united by a shared passion for sport. For example, Post 23 creates a sense of unity with the appeal "Let's show the Poms what we're made of", with the 'we' implying solidarity and shared values in terms of the sporting outcome, not only as cricket fans but also as a nation. This communication further sought to engage the consumer in conversation about the match, as one might do with a fellow spectator or 'mate'.

We noted several examples of fans engaging in conversation around sport, and sporting outcomes, in response to comments initiated by an alcohol brand. Consumers also responded to comments posted by other consumers. The nature of the brand's participation in these conversations was often much like that of just another fan. These dialogues were generally peppered with fan comments relating to the alcohol brand such as "love VB" or "Wild Turkey is the real winner", the latter in response to a post asking who was likely to win a particular NRL match.

Post 23. Solidarity and conversation around sport and beer



A similar theme is illustrated in a Facebook post by Wild Turkey, Post 24 , posing a question about the outcome of an important game, thus encouraging friendly banter and engagement around both sport and the brand. Further, consumer comments also reflect the link between alcohol and the sport experience, with one fan, anticipating a loss for his team, commenting: "Yes Im afraid to say the NSW clean sweep but the RARE bird will help ease the pain BIRD UP QLD."

Post 24. Solidarity and conversation around sport

Wild Turkey Australia
9 July

Tonight, will Queensland play for pride? Or will New South Wales go for the clean sweep?



Like · Comment · Share

290 15 26 Shares

290 people like this.

Top Comments



Write a comment...



Justin Amey Clean sweep

Like · Reply · 3 · 9 July at 16:25



Troy Shield Blues will get what they deserve tonight , a lesson on how to play football.

Like · Reply · 2 · 9 July at 16:33



Wayne Niesler Yes Im afraid to say the NSW clean sweep but the RARE bird will help ease the pain BIRD UP QLD

Like · Reply · 2 · 9 July at 16:31



Annika Jane Go the blues!!

Like · Reply · 2 · 9 July at 16:30



Shawn Melouney clean sweep bird up nsw

Like · Reply · 1 · 9 July at 17:22



Jerry Kadir QUEENSLANDER

Like · Reply · 1 · 9 July at 17:03



Gary Madden Qld will play for pride

Like · Reply · 1 · 9 July at 16:49

Further, in addition to acting as an online participant in the camaraderie around sport, alcohol brands seek to embed alcohol as a facilitator of the camaraderie associated with the sport experience. For example a Facebook post by Carlton Draught (Post 25) reminds consumers of the benefits of enjoying the football in a drinking environment. This facilitates interaction with likeminded individuals, noting the combined role of sport and alcohol in bringing together strangers united in their passion for sport, or in enabling mateship and camaraderie even in the face of defeat.

Post 25. Camaraderie and Carlton Draught

Carlton Draught
11 April

Your couch won't buy you a beer if your team loses, but your mates will.
Go on, get to the pub and watch the footy.



Like · Comment · Share

136 10 14 Shares

Post 26 depicts a similar approach used by XXXX Gold, clearly presenting the norm of beer as part of the sport experience and the camaraderie with mates.

Post 26. Camaraderie and XXXX Gold



Post 27 adopts an inclusive approach by starting the message with, 'Footy fans like us' and recognising a shared nervousness in anticipation of a 'big game'. The post then presents an insider's view of the rituals involved in preparing for such an event, facilitating a sense of shared camaraderie between the brand and sport fan.

Post 27. Camaraderie and Bundaberg Rum



Table 13. Themes emerging from content associating alcohol and sport

Theme: Identity	
Description	Examples
<p>Content relating to identity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • masculinity • sport • drinking • hard working • sport loving • social drinking • time spent with mates • suburban backyard, sport and drinking with mates. 	<p>Facebook</p> <p>Wild Turkey Bourbon NRL “Super Saturday – Bird UP” campaign asking men to “Bird Up” – to stand up to difficult challenges – as the Wild Turkey Brand identity (See Appendix, Post 77)</p> <p>Twitter</p> <p>VB Cricket: “3AW Breakfast @RossAndJohn – Looking to scoring the Annual 3AW Breakfast Backyard Cricket Match with one of these @Vic-Bitter pic.twitter.com/uFXZYfShs” Image of beer bottles and cricket ball with stubby holder batsman pads inside a box with an electric Victoria Bitter Scoreboard as the lid (See Appendix, Post 45)</p> <p>“Victoria Bitter Fan Exclusive – Yep, if you click the link below, you’ll be one of the first people to see the brand new Victoria Bitter ad featuring our live cricket scoreboards. You’ll also find out how you could win one for yourself” This post included an image of a man mowing his backyard lawn with a Victoria Bitter live scoreboard on his tool box (See Appendix, Post 55)</p>
Theme: Culture	
Description	Examples
<p>Content relating to culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sport culture • great sporting moments • content evoking drinking culture • drinking embedded in Australian culture • content embedding drinking within sport culture as routine • reminders that identity and cultural authenticity requires routine participation. 	<p>Facebook</p> <p>Bundaberg Rum: “Bundy Rum – We were hoping for a golden point in tonight’s match but at least we have a golden drop.” (See Appendix, Post 82)</p> <p>Tooheys New: “Support your local footy club – By purchasing specially marked cartons for Tooheys New you can help your local footy club get the gear they need – from footballs to jerseys and much more! To find out more and to see if your local senior footy club is participating head to www.tooheysnewfootyfund.com.au” (See Appendix, Post 54)</p> <p>Twitter</p> <p>“*SCOREBOARD UNDER CONSTRUCTION* - We know Victoria Bitter fans love the cricket. That’s why we’re installing these massive Live Cricket Scoreboards across the nation to make sure you’ll never miss a run, ball, wicket or fingers crossed, an Ashton Agar moment. Let us know if you’ve seen them. Cheers to @BrendenWood for the pic.” (See Appendix, Post 46)</p>
Theme: Camaraderie	
Description	Examples
<p>Content relating to camaraderie:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mateship • time spent together • sharing a drink with mates. 	<p>Facebook</p> <p>Bundaberg Rum: “Footy fans like us like their footy epic. And because an epic footy finals season deserves an equally epic TV ad, the rum you love is launching its latest spectacular during the game you love. Welcome to Bundaberg. – Footy Fans Keep Your Eyes Peeled” (See Appendix, Post 36)</p>

5 Summary of results and concluding comments

Summary of results

Sport is embedded in the cultural fabric of Australia and in the personal and social identities of its fans. As a result, sport provides a powerful marketing platform for brands, particularly when combined with the collaborative and immersive nature of social media.

Our findings contribute to emerging research exploring how alcohol brands are using social media, particularly through sport-linked communication.

We have identified four strategies, which we refer to as calls to action, in which these brands use sport to activate consumers. In doing so, alcohol brands use messages, images and brand conversation that are centred on and around the interrelated themes of identity, culture and camaraderie.

It has been suggested that digital marketing strategies “have the potential to embed brands in the lives and lifestyles of consumers, creating an intimate relationship and sense of kinship between the brand and user” (Jernigan and O’Hara, 2004, p.631).

Given the power of sport to create and sustain highly identified and vested consumers, and to resonate with a broad range of demographic groups, social media provides an ideal platform for alcohol marketers to use their association with sport to facilitate active engagement with consumers, achieving key communication objectives for their brands.

Social media strategies employed by alcohol brands go beyond promoting their product by seeking to normalise and routinise consumption as part of sport spectatorship, celebration or commiseration. In essence, the ‘call to consume’ and ‘call to celebrate’ strategies create the potential for alcohol consumption to become ritualised within the nature of sport, where tribal and repetitive behaviours (from superstitions to choreographed audience participation) are well documented. As technology continues to advance, the use of social media as part of the sport experience will only increase.

The results from this study demonstrate how alcohol brands and marketers wield several key strategies to connect sport culture and drinking culture. Four strategies were observed that stimulate consumers to actively engage with the brand and facilitate access to the social network of the targeted consumer. These calls to action included:

- Call to compete: by leveraging the competitive nature of sport, this strategy attempts to engage consumers – and augment the sport experience – through promotional competitions featuring sport-related prizes displaying both sport and alcohol branding.
- Call to collaborate: this strategy actively pursues a higher level of engagement with consumers through co-creation of content or by stimulating user-generated content using sport as a common language.
- Call to celebrate: using sporting victory and shared camaraderie, this strategy seeks to embed alcohol as an integral part of celebrating and basking in the reflected glory of a team’s achievement.
- Call to consume: beyond celebration, this strategy seeks to normalise alcohol consumption as part of the overall sport experience, attempting to embed drinking as part of a consumer’s sport consumption practices and social interactions with ‘mates’.

The impact and effectiveness of these calls to action was facilitated through the use of themes relating to identity, culture and camaraderie. These themes are interrelated and serve as a mechanism to link sport and alcohol cultures.

The identity theme relates to communications that frequently alluded to an attachment to a particular sport or team, but also incorporated elements of gender, class and national identities. Communications which reference sport culture, in particular the values of hard-work, fair-play and performance excellence, are used by alcohol brands to connect and relate to consumers. Finally, the theme of camaraderie is used to unite the brand and consumers around a shared passion for sport, celebrating victories and commiserating defeat.

Concluding comments

It is easy enough to understand digital marketing as any form of marketing that uses technology, which of course means a focus on the Internet and all the devices, channels and media that it implicates. However, this broad definition no longer distinguishes digital marketing from other forms in an era when just about every marketing activity incorporates a digital aspect.

The simple act of watching live sport cannot escape the digital era either. Surveys suggest that around 50 per cent of sport fans refer to their smart phones for extra value adding content during events. At the same time as the technologies and tools of the digital era have become entrenched in our sporting experiences, sport marketers have come to terms with a new way of looking at their offerings.

In short, the use of digital marketing in sport, including social media platforms, reflects a new mind-set where the conventional distance between sport properties, their marketing representatives, and fans is completely blurred, and where success means constant adaptation. No longer are digital tools just 'add-ons' to the standard marketing methods. Today, a digital world means a digital message, and that message is infused with commercially driven alcohol promotions.

Recent surveys in North America, Western Europe, and the Asia Pacific report that between two-thirds and 85 per cent of fans use social media during games, while up to half check scores or watch highlights after the event using smart phones and other portable devices. While data and updates are compelling services for fans, the real power of social media lies in its unprecedented ability to create close, personal engagements between sport properties and their followers. One conclusion is absolutely undisputed: the use of social media has become the most powerful tool ever available for linking brands, behaviour and consumers.

Few could argue that the contemporary sport consumer has changed radically in just a few, short years. We want sport content at our convenience, which typically means on the run, and often comes with the expectation of updates from our favourite and most trusted sources of social networking insight. In short, we want to know what is going on, and we want to be able to find out '24/7'.

This access must be customised, or at least 'customisable', in order to meet the fickle preferences of each individual consumer. Access must also arrive seamlessly. That means both a smooth download as well as through an integrated platform where the consumer needs only engage with a single or a few locations for their updates.

Integration plays a central role in effective social media engagement because consumers are using their smart phones and mobile devices for Internet browsing almost as much as computers. In addition, they check email messages and social networking sites, post photos and comments, listen to voice messages, consult their calendars, check the weather forecast, use apps, and play music and

games. Although it varies depending on the region, some studies suggest that consumers within certain demographics pick up their phones more than 100 times a day. No wonder hardware manufacturers and app developers are so focused on providing an interface that captures the user's demand for intuitive functionality.

Because sport consumers are often well educated about both sport and technology, they expect more than the garden-variety results. Rather, content must be accompanied by novelty, entertainment and insight.

Finally, as attending sporting events can be prohibitively expensive, leading sport consumers find alternative ways of engaging with game content and look for new ways to generate the excitement and buzz of the contest.

Enter the alcohol brand and their approach to leveraging the sport-drinking-social media triumvirate.

6 Implications for policy makers and future research

The findings from this study suggest a number of implications for policy makers and regulators as well as a number of questions that suggest a need for further research.

The key considerations for policy makers can be summarised as follows:

- What type of social media content, and frequency, is appropriate for alcohol brands that seek to leverage their association with sport?
- What forms of collaboration and interaction which link sport and alcohol are appropriate for consumers to engage in?
- Are the messages linking sport and alcohol, particularly those that invite consumer collaboration or interaction, more likely to appeal to minors than other types of content or messages? Are there adequate safeguards in place to prevent minors from exposure to social media content linking sport and alcohol?
- What mechanisms can be used to monitor social media activity by alcohol brands, particularly the less transparent activities which occur through consumer networks?

Many researchers have expressed concern regarding the ability to regulate and control social media content (Nicholls, 2012), particularly as a sizeable amount of this content is user-generated or disseminated by the general public.

Further, concern has also been expressed regarding access to this content by young people, particularly minors, and it has been recognised that age filters on alcohol websites and commercial internet filters are ineffective mechanisms for restricting access (Jones et al., 2014). Young people represent a particularly vulnerable group given their high reliance on social media as a tool for self-expression, esteem and belonging as well as a general willingness to divulge information in their profiles and comments. The youth segment is a significant consumer of not only social media, but sport as well, in terms of both attendance at games and remote spectating. Both social media and sport are important contributors to the social identity crafted by many young people.

Existing regulatory frameworks have not kept pace with the dynamic and rapid growth of digital media. In addition, regulators are challenged by the global nature of digital media and the significant investment being made by alcohol marketers to capitalise on a medium where their marketing activities are not always readily apparent.

This research has identified a framework outlining the consumer engagement and social activation strategies used by alcohol brands in leveraging their association with sport in order to position their consumption messages for maximum impact. This framework is an essential information source for policy makers and public health advocates in devising mitigating strategies to target social media users and de-normalise alcohol consumption around sport.

At the same time however, policy makers must invest in monitoring the evolution of alcohol marketing activities taking place through digital media as newer platforms subsume the existing ones. A significant and dynamic level of sophistication in understanding these complex channels must be developed to match that of the alcohol marketers, especially as it invariably will account for an increasing portion of their marketing budgets. Convenient access to detailed personal data of users, combined with sophisticated algorithms designed to convert data into tailored marketing

communications, means that the use of social media by alcohol marketers will only continue to grow, both in usage and successful targeting. Specifically, monitoring of sport-linked strategies that serve to further merge sport culture with drinking culture, transforming sport into an intoxicogenic environment, is needed.

The findings from this exploratory study have revealed the strategies and messages used by alcohol brands to leverage their association with sport. However, it is critical to understand the ultimate impact of these strategies on consumer attitudes and behaviour with regard to alcohol consumption.

As such, there are a number of questions which need to be addressed:

- What is the consumer motivation to engage with sport-linked alcohol marketing via social media?
- What is the impact of these strategies on attitudes to alcohol and its perceived role in the sport experience?
- What is the impact of these strategies on alcohol consumption and drinking practices in general, and as part of the sport experience in particular?
- Do these strategies influence the perception of alcohol brands? That is, do these strategies essentially blur the line between marketer and consumer as the two parties come together on a social platform to celebrate, commiserate and engage more generally in camaraderie around the common interest in sport?
- Are there particular sociocultural or demographic segments that are more vulnerable to these strategies than others?

In addition, further research needs to investigate the specific use of different social media technologies for alcohol promotion. At present, three social media platforms dominate, although there is always a proliferation of new options on the rise. Most alcohol marketers are using a variety of platforms, where a focus on one or two can be used to seed others. The power lies with using each platform for a different purpose.

For example, Facebook allows alcohol brands to connect with consumers and sport fans, as well as to help fans connect with each other. Facebook is therefore the place for sharing photos, event details, news, comments and links. Increasingly, Facebook is being employed as a direct selling hub as well. Twitter, however, takes the lead for mobile connectivity and instant communications. It established the microblogging trend with a compelling restriction of 140 characters per post. Most serious sport fans 'follow' at least one high profile athlete or player in order to receive the latest inside information. Fans can also follow clubs and teams to access live scores or specialist updates about player injuries, team tactics, or club promotions. These lead directly to updates and information seeded by alcohol brands. Finally, YouTube is employed by alcohol brands to upload and share video content. Many larger sport organisations develop their own 'station' and broadcast snippets, highlights, or even live events that can provide further hyperlinks to the messages of their alcohol sponsors.

Of course, there is a suite of additional platforms available for alcohol marketers to experiment with. Some examples include Flickr, Instagram and Pinterest to post and comment on sporting images, while Tumblr has combined microblogging with imagery. Location-based social media applications like Foursquare present another influential avenue for alcohol marketers to explore. These platforms use downloadable applications to allow users to register their visits to specific venues and even receive discounts or giveaways for their activity. Obviously alcohol companies have much to gain from

location-based social media in driving attendance, participation or even retail merchandise sales. Social media is no longer the exclusive purview of major sport venues. One study commissioned by Sport England found that more than a third of participants would be more active in their sports if they could access a web tool to search and review opportunities locally. Conversely, alcohol marketers have realised that providing apps offering suggestions for pubs and retail outlets stocking their products and presenting live broadcasts of sport, drives consumption and brand loyalty.

All social media channels can support and leverage more ‘traditional’ online blogs. In addition, feed column platforms like Hootsuite and Tweetdeck can help manage the clutter of different channels by allocating or re-directing content across a range of outlets automatically.

It is also increasingly common for alcohol companies to provide their own proprietary mobile applications that allow sport fans to access information, content and commentary through a unique avenue. Bringing together a social hub for consumers has become known as social ‘curation’. Typically through the sport enterprise’s website, all of its social media accounts can be accessed in a sleek and interactive manner featuring the sponsor’s products and messages.

The findings of this study emphasise the importance of establishing a deeper understanding of how alcohol brands use various forms of social curation to drive consumption.

Based on the calls to action identified in this study, future research needs to delve into the impact of each of these strategies as follows:

- Are certain strategies or tactics more effective in shaping the attitudes and practices of consumers in relation to alcohol?
- How might these strategies individually or collectively shift the norms associated with drinking in general, and drinking as an element of sport consumption?
- Does the association with sport enhance the social media strategies of alcohol brands by allowing them to weave alcohol into everyday conversations and activities?
- With regard to strategies that encourage consumers provide user-generated content and disseminate brand-authored content to their networks, are consumers aware of how their actions contribute to promoting alcohol brands?

This report has answered the research question that the study sought to address: ‘How is social media being used in brand marketing to promote alcohol through associations with professional sport?’ However, in doing so, the sophistication, accelerated usage and pervasiveness of these strategies suggest that there are more questions that need to be addressed.

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8.2 Carlton Mid One-Day International cricket series

Post 28. Facebook photos co-created with Carlton Mid logo superimposed





Cricket Australia
Liked · 17 January '16

CACG2XA9D

Enter The Carlton Mid ODI Series Best Dressed Competition for your chance to win up to \$10K! The Carlton Mid ODI Series is Summer's Biggest Dress Up Party and we want to see your best costume. Simply upload your photo at <http://www.facebook.com/cricketaustralia> or www.cricnet.com.au/DressUpComp

— at Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG)

Like · Comment · Share

Replies · Events · Be first

1 photo

Write a comment...
Post Drafts

People you may know

Sai Akhmand
Add Friend



Cricket Australia
Liked · 17 January '16

CACG2XF1R

Enter The Carlton Mid ODI Series Best Dressed Competition for your chance to win up to \$10K! The Carlton Mid ODI Series is Summer's Biggest Dress Up Party and we want to see your best costume. Simply upload your photo at <http://www.facebook.com/cricketaustralia> or www.cricnet.com.au/DressUpComp

— at Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG)

Like · Comment · Share

0 people like this.

1 photo

Write a comment...
Post Drafts

People you may know

Srinath Jayaraman
Add Friend

Ramesh Das
Add Friend



Cricket Australia
Liked · 17 January '16

CACG2X9FK

Enter The Carlton Mid ODI Series Best Dressed Competition for your chance to win up to \$10K! The Carlton Mid ODI Series is Summer's Biggest Dress Up Party and we want to see your best costume. Simply upload your photo at <http://www.facebook.com/cricketaustralia> or www.cricnet.com.au/DressUpComp

— at Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG)

Like · Comment · Share

1 photo

Write a comment...
Post Drafts

People you may know

Srinath Jayaraman
Add Friend

Ramesh Das
Add Friend

Post 29. Facebook photos co-created with Carlton Mid logo superimposed



Post 30. Co-created Facebook photo (attracting over 3,200 Facebook actions)

 Cricket Australia
17 January

There have been some quality dress ups already this summer! Vote for the best from the MCG ODI:
<http://cricketa.us/1hxoKro>

Want to win \$5,000? More info: <http://cricketa.us/1c7wzP4>
Maxwell on fire at the Gabba: <http://cricketa.us/1dVAVUr>



Like · Comment · Share 63

 Jasjeet Singh, Golan Anold, Ravi Thapa and 3,109 others like this. Top Comments +

 Andrew Rigby you can't see the bloke, but I'm going to say he his punching above his weight!
👍 35 · 17 January at 01:58

 Darren Holden Classic!
👍 1 · 17 January at 02:53

 Peter Choat Never mind the result, how does that guy drink that beer?
👍 4 · 17 January at 03:35

 Robert Cox With great difficulty.
17 January at 17:20

 Nathan Brown Michael bevan – where r u???
👍 3 · 17 January at 02:09

 Ben Jordan SLENDER MAN!!!!
👍 3 · 17 January at 01:55

 Kamil Mushtaq Wow girl is looking hot
👍 3 · 17 January at 01:55

 Jesse Fletcher wheres the real beer?
👍 1 · 17 January at 01:56

 Hector Yllasca mil kind of chick BEER !!
👍 1 · 17 January at 08:00

 Brent Nichols I dont need to see the rest. she wins hands down
👍 1 · 17 January at 02:16

Post 31. Fancy dress competition promoted and displaying alcohol sponsorship



Cricket Australia

24 January

Some fans go to A LOT of trouble to enter the Carlton Mid ODI Dress Up Comp with \$10k on the line! Info: <http://cricketa.us/DressUpComp>

See the MCG winner: <http://cricketa.us/M1CAIk>
Vote and enter here: <http://cricketa.us/1eGARQg>



Like · Comment · Share

411

9,740 people like this.

Top Comments

8.3 Social Media Examples

Post 32. Carlton Draught celebrating 150 years (284 likes, 16 shares)



Post 33. VB job done!



Post 34. Wild Turkey RARE question seeking response

Wild Turkey Australia
3 May

It's time for some R & R (RARE and reflection), what has been your RARE moment of the NRL season so far?



Like · Comment · Share

417 people like this.

Write a comment...

Shane Nissen Saturday slipping



Like · Reply · 4 · 3 May at 10:10

Wild Turkey Australia replied · 6 Replies

Denise Arundell Smart Very nice drop

Like · Reply · 1 · 3 May at 19:11

Wild Turkey Australia We agree Denise. Bird Up,

Like · 1 · 5 May at 09:16

Keith Holmes Got one right now

Like · Reply · 3 May at 17:49

Wild Turkey Australia Bet it went down well Keith.

Like · 5 May at 09:38

Write a reply...

Leigh Birrell Will try them next time round already got a 10pk of 101s today very moreish too 😊

Like · Reply · 2 · 3 May at 22:12

Wild Turkey Australia Sounds awesome Leigh. How'd they go down?

Like · 5 May at 09:38

Write a reply...

Mark Pickett 101 for me please

Like · Reply · 3 · 3 May at 19:36

Wayne Niesler Super league Bird Up

Like · Reply · 2 · 3 May at 18:27

Shaun Holloway Nom nom nom

Like · Reply · 1 · 4 May at 12:21

Terry Donehue RARE BREED for me

Like · Reply · 1 · 4 May at 08:40

Glenn Wiggins Mothers milk!

Like · Reply · 1 · 4 May at 08:27

Dell Humphries Yum love em

Like · Reply · 1 · 3 May at 21:47

Rick Ardley Johnnys like Lolly water, this u can actually taste.

Like · Reply · 1 · 3 May at 15:31

Greg Witty The best Turkey yet.....yum

Like · Reply · 4 May at 17:22

Clint Byers Colin Subotic Next year!!

Like · Reply · 3 May at 17:54

Karl Newsome Daniel Dumbo

Like · Reply · 3 May at 15:23

Steven Brian Pounsett Johnnie walkers better

Like · Reply · 3 May at 15:23

Post 35. VB question seeking response



 **Victoria Bitter** @Vic_Bitter · 14 Nov 2013
So what do you think? Will our boys be able to bring the urn back to this side of the pond? #ashes #vblivecricket



RETWEETS 4 FAVORITES 3



6:30 PM · 14 Nov 2013 · Details

[Hide photo](#)

Post 36: Camaraderie and Bundaberg Rum



Post 37. Hard working culture



Post 38. VB retweets Tweet from radio announcer



Post 39. Fan Tweet upon receiving competition scoreboard



Post 40. Television host Tweet



Post 41. VB - NRL State of Origin victory (115 likes, 2 comments, 26 shares)



Post 42. NSW VB Blues State of Origin champions (599 likes, 77 comments, 165 shares)



Post 43. State of Origin mid game celebration



Post 44. VB call to celebrate



Post 45. Identifying VB with the tradition of backyard cricket



Post 46. VB giant scoreboard



Post 47. Former cricket player with VB scoreboards



Post 48. VB retweeted a fan Tweet



Post 49. VB – NRL State of Origin 'Name in the Game' competition



Post 50. VB – NRL ‘Friday Night Watch and Win’ competition



Post 51. VB – NRL ‘Friday Night Watch and Win’ competition



Post 52. Wild Turkey - NRL 'Name on the Ball' competition



Post 53. BWS/VB cricket scoreboard competition



Post 54. Embedding the Tooheys New brand in sport culture

Competition requiring purchase of Tooheys beer

“Every carton of beer has a code with allocated points which fans can allocate via the Tooheys Facebook/webpage (<http://www.tooheysnewfootyfund.com.au>) “

“The Tooheys New Footy Fund is a program focused on supporting senior Rugby League and Rugby Union clubs in Regional NSW. Each unique code found inside every specially marked carton is worth 20 Reward Points, which can be allocated to participating senior footy clubs online. When the club has enough points, they can redeem their points for new footy gear. Too easy!”



Post 55. A chance to win a VB Scoreboard



Post 56. Carlton Draught AFL finals tickets competition and successful entrant



Post 57. News presenter Tweet 'Name in the Game' competition



Post 58. Rugby league player Tweet 'Name in the Game' competition



Post 59. Radio station Tweet 'Name in the Game' competition



Post 60. VB - NRL State of Origin 'Name in the Game' competition YouTube Ad



Published on Apr 30, 2014

Get your name printed on the chests of the NSW Blues players in the upcoming State of Origin series. For more info head to - <http://bit.ly/backtheblues>

Category Sports

License Standard YouTube License

Post 61. VB YouTube - Test cricket scoreboard competition

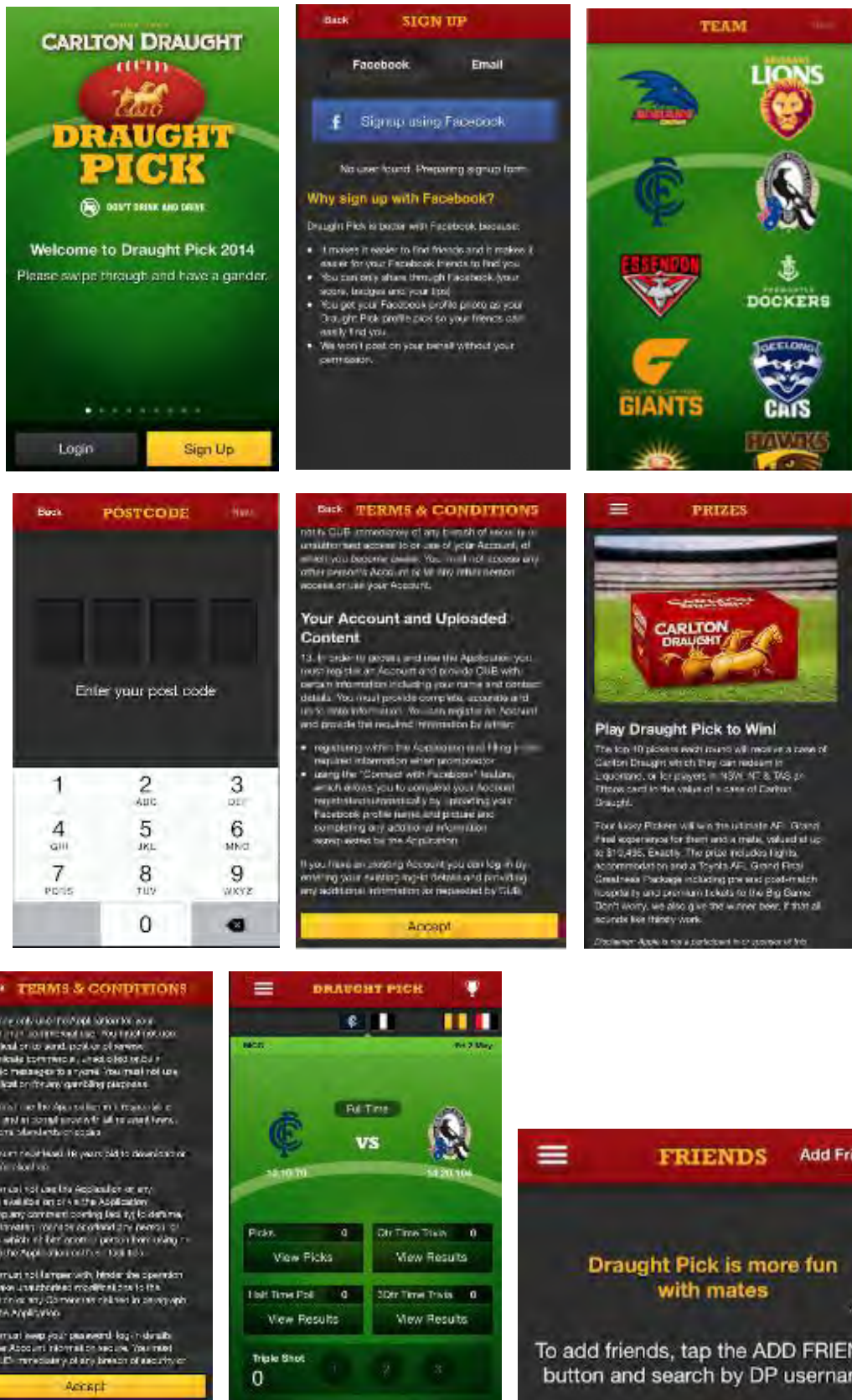


Post 62. Facebook post promoting Carlton Draught's app Draught Pick

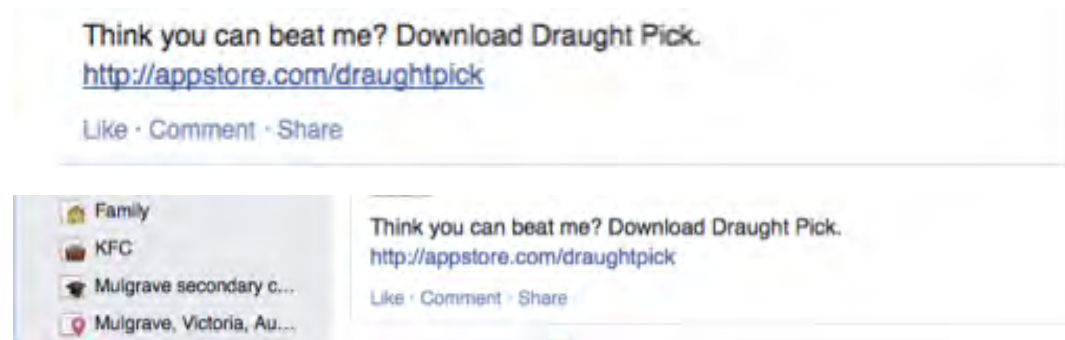
Carlton Draught's smartphone application, 'Draught Pick', is a mobile application enabling AFL fans to compete in a footy tipping competition with cash prizes and discounts on alcohol purchases of Carlton Draught. The application is linked to Facebook, which requires giving access to Facebook profile data and access to contact the user's friends list with permission when prompted. The application encourages users to post an automated message to their Facebook friends, encouraging them to join the competition by downloading the application (a link is provided with an automated message).



Post 63. Draught Pick screenshots of typical sign-up process



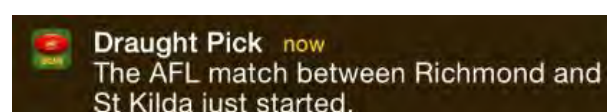
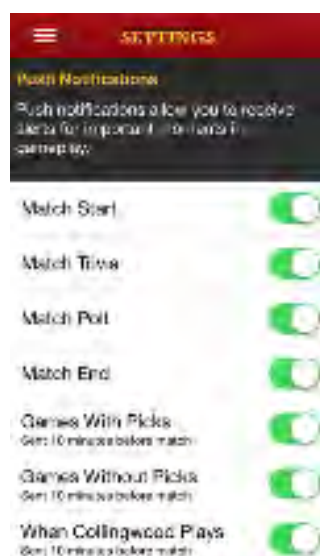
Post 64. Draught Pick application sends an invite via the user's Facebook account, appearing on their wall



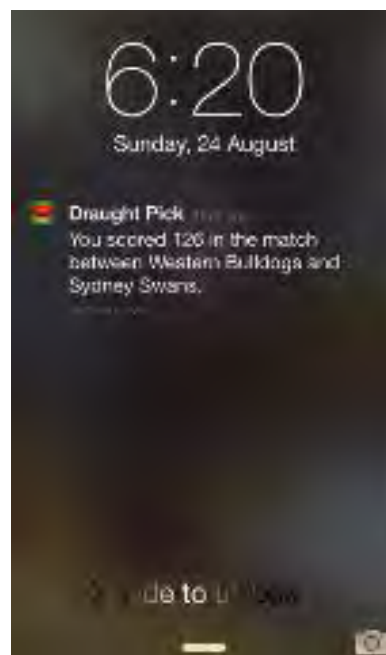
Post 65. Draught Pick invite to share with Facebook friends



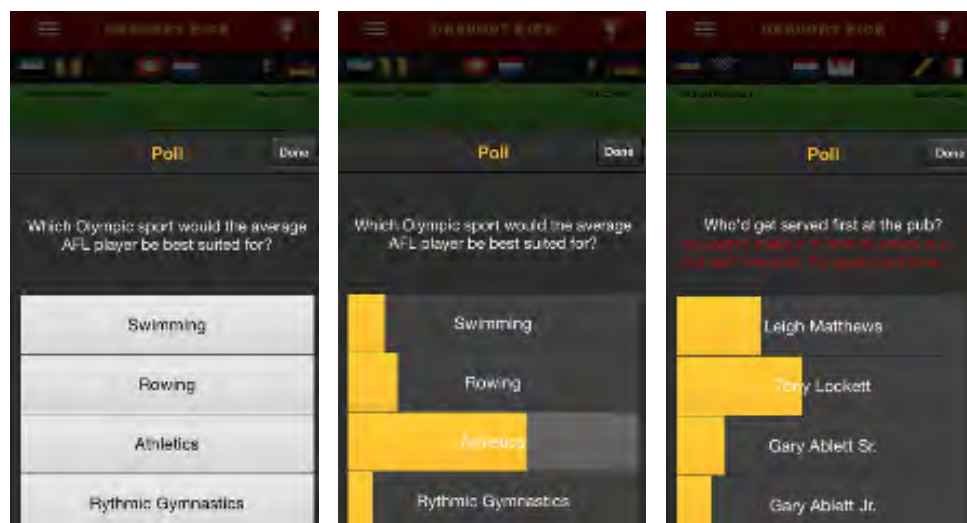
Post 66. Reminder to compete



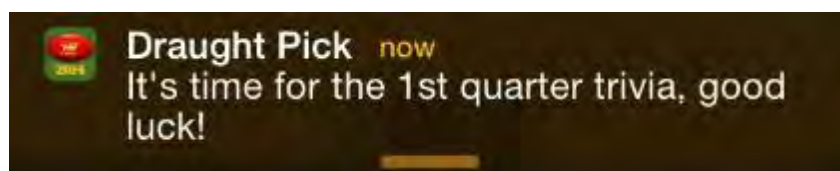
Post 67. Draught Pick push notification of competition score



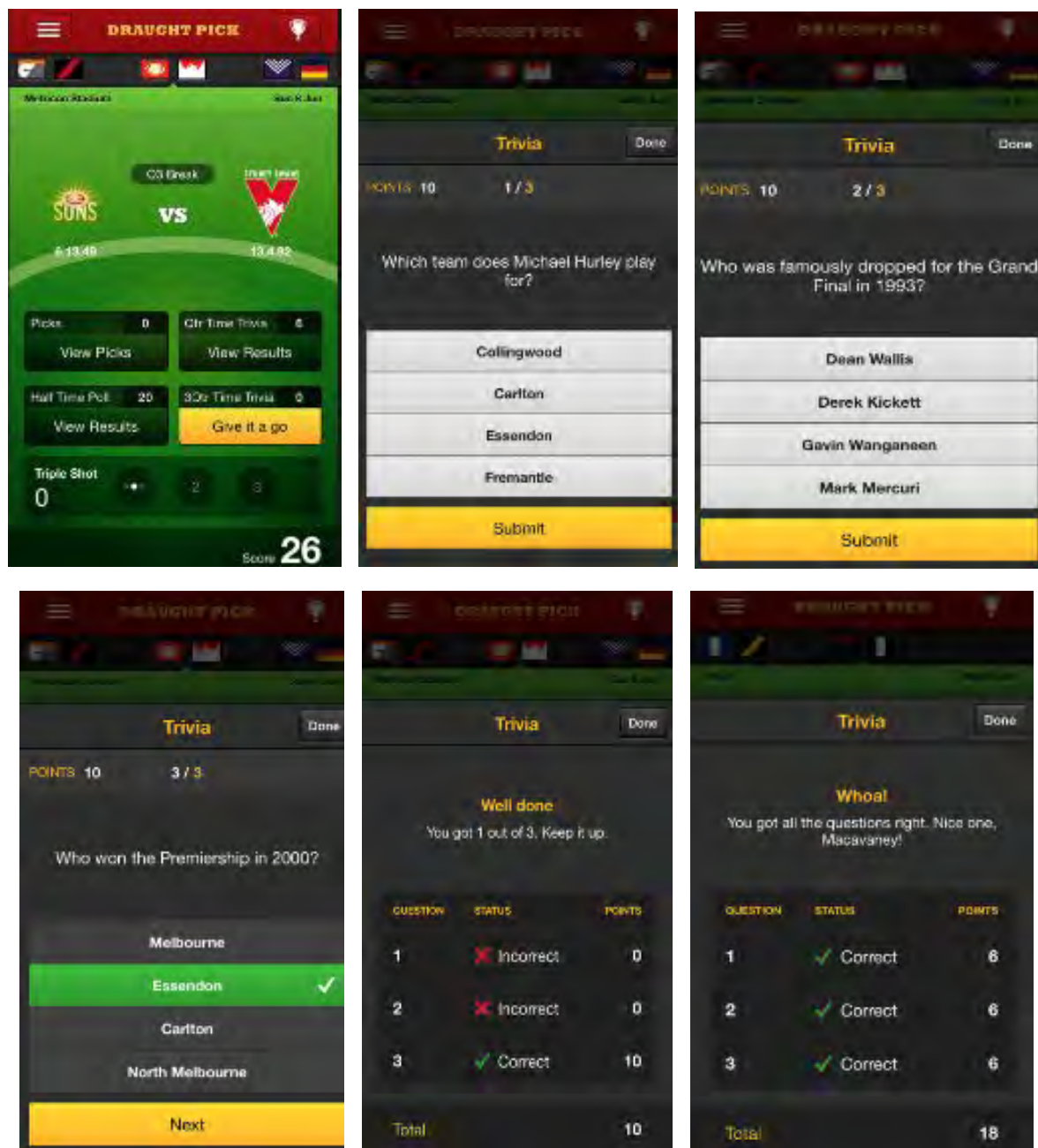
Post 68. Draught Pick poll - invitation to compete for additional points



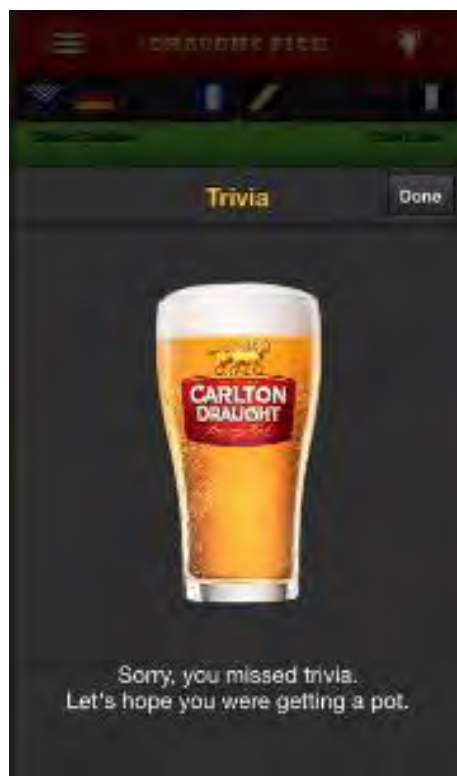
Post 69. Draught Pick trivia push notification reminder



Post 70. Triva - typical screen shots during AFL game



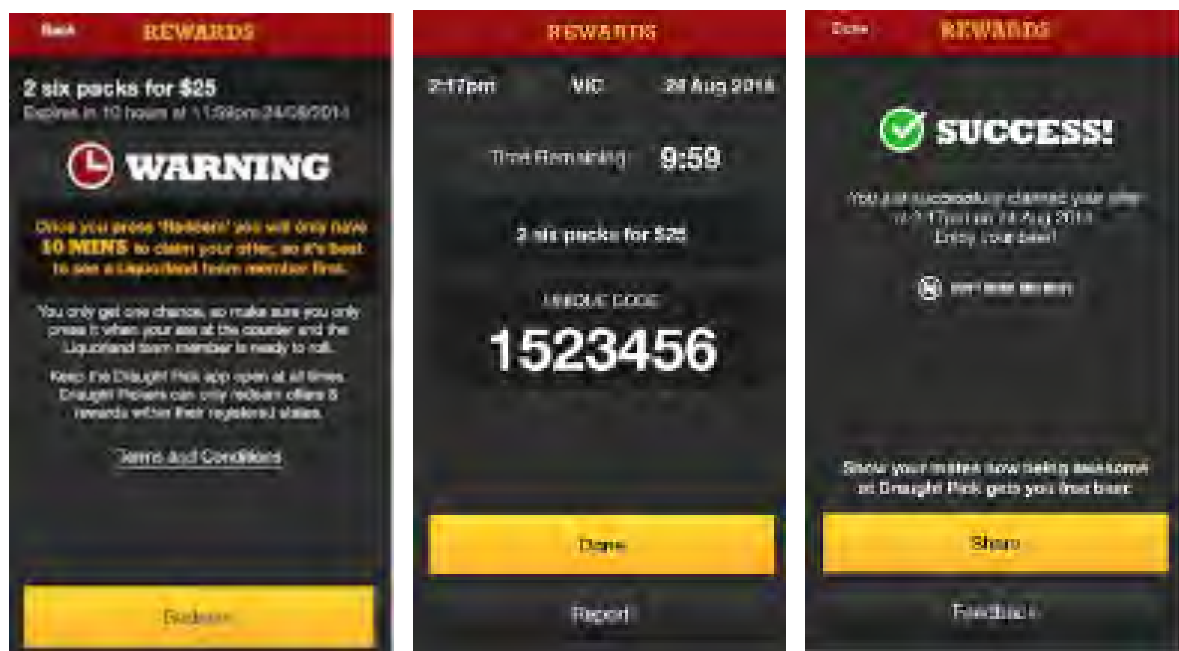
Post 71. Draught Pick - Message implies obtaining beer as an acceptable reason for missing trivia



Post 72. Rewards for activating in-game scoring multiplier



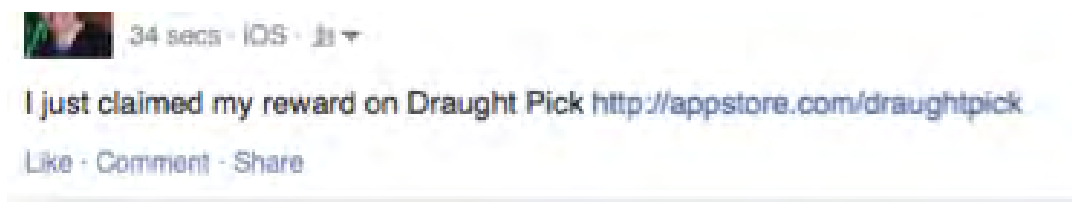
Post 73. Redeem rewards - Draught Pick



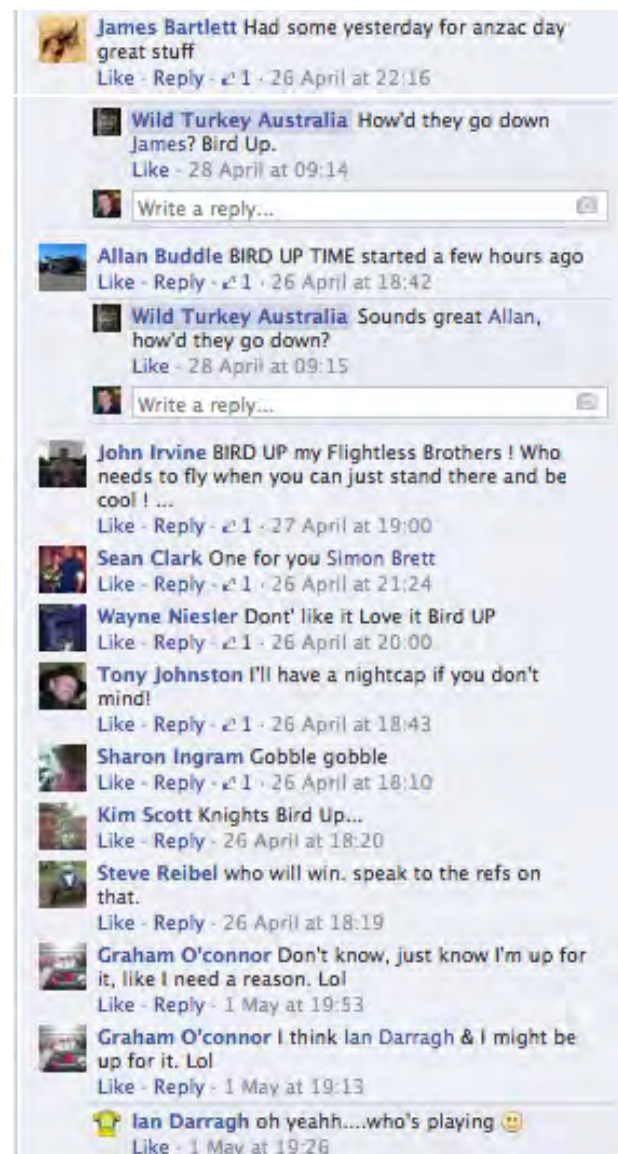
Post 74. Share - Social media alternatives - including Facebook messages



Post 75. Shared rewards message displayed on Facebook



Post 76. - Wild Turkey Super Saturday



Post 77. Wild Turkey - Super Saturday sponsorship - Bird Up



Post 78. VB and Cricket



Post 79. Call to a pub - Carlton Draught

 **Carlton Draught**
11 April ❄️

Your couch won't buy you a beer if your team loses, but your mates will.
Go on, get to the pub and watch the footy.



**FOOTY AT THE PUB
THE ONLY TIME YOU CAN
BEAR HUG STRANGERS**

 **DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE** **OFFICIAL BEER OF THE AFL**

Like · Comment · Share 👍 136 💬 10 📄 14 Shares



FRONT BAR FOLKLORE
WITH NICK MOLLOY

IF A SIREN BLOWS

If a siren blows in 'Surrender and the umpire doesn't hear it, does it really blow?'
According to Chris Connolly, it sure does blow.
44 days ago

Post 80. YouTube linked to VB Facebook Page

The image shows a screenshot of the VB Facebook page. At the top is a large green banner with the text "KNOCK OFF WITH THE BIG COLD BEER" and "For a hard earned thirst." Below this is the VB logo and a navigation bar with links to Timeline, About, Photos, YouTube, and More. Below the navigation bar is a video player showing a scene from a Tough Mudder event. Below the video player is a grid of nine video uploads, each with a thumbnail, title, view count, and upload date.

Video Title	Views	Upload Date
Victoria Bitter Ad - Hard Yakka Voucher	1,444	May 2014
Victoria Bitter Ad - Back The Blues	5,613	April 2014
Victoria Bitter -- Live Cricket Scoreboard ...	531	November 2013
Victoria Bitter Ad - Live Cricket Scoreboard	15,616	November 2013
Tough Mudder - Sydney	324	April 2013
Raise a Glass 2013 - 'Doug'	11,798	March 2013
Victoria Bitter Ad - For a Hard Earned Thi...	5,639	March 2013
Tough Mudder, Melbourne 2013	774	January 2013
Victoria Bitter Ad - For A Hard Earned Thi...	33,553	November 2012

Post 81. Call to a pub - Carlton Draught



Post 82. Bundaberg Rum





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