

Shiner Beer Event Marketing Case Study

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### Statement of the Opportunity

The main issue concerning Shiner revolves around event marketing and not knowing which guerilla marketing tactics to utilize in order to continue its participation in ACL in the future without being the official beer sponsor or facing legal action.

### List of Critical Factors

- (1) **Budget:** Although there is no specified budget, future marketing efforts should be relatively inexpensive as the koozie campaign was cheap in comparison to the official sponsorship of Heineken.
- (2) **Competition:** Shiner's guerilla marketing needs to be pervasive enough that it steals some of the spotlight from the official beer sponsor at ACL.
- (3) **Advertising History:** Thanks in large part due to McGarrah Jessee, Shiner is known for its creative advertising, so future marketing efforts cannot be run-of-the-*malt*-mill.
- (4) **Target Audience:** ACL is very popular among Millennials (those aged 18 to 34), but alcohol can only legally be consumed by those aged 21 and over, so Shiner needs to efficiently reach the drinking age crowd.
- (5) **Target Appeal:** If Shiner wants to engage with the ACL attendees without being an official sponsor, whatever marketing efforts they implement must provide the concert goers with perceived benefits.
- (6) **Promotion:** Considering that Shiner primarily focuses on selling its several lines of beers, there should be an obvious connection between the Shiner brand and its guerilla marketing tactics.

### Definition of Alternatives

**Alternative 1.** The marketing team will set up a pop-up event outside of ACL called “Shiner Saloon.”

The area used by the marketing team will be as close as possible to the Austin City Limits festival, without encroaching on official sponsorship territory. Depending on the availability and costs, either a building unit close to ACL will be rented out for the two weekends or tents will be set up. In either case, the “Shiner Saloon” will feature all of the seasonally and annually available brews customers know and love. The “Shiner Saloon” and its bartenders will have their TABC permits and necessary liquor licenses. Additionally, local bands who have not hit the level of stardom necessary for ACL will be asked to perform, so attendees can have the opportunity to drink their favorite Shiner beer and support local talent. In order to accommodate large crowds, there will be a patio area for those who are underage or who choose not to drink - in this way, everyone will be able to enjoy the show if they are not currently interested in or allowed to drink. As attendees can come and go as they please during the ACL festival, they will have the opportunity to visit the “Shiner Saloon” at any time throughout both weekends.

Pros:

- In the weeks and days prior to ACL, Shiner can let their fans and ACL attendees know via billboards, social media, and other posts, that “Shiner Saloon” is coming to them, so some of those beer dollars that would have gone towards the official beer sponsor would instead go to Shiner. (2)
- Setting up a temporary saloon is typically not a part of the traditional toolset that beer brands turn to when trying to engage with consumers. (3)

- Given that there is enough patio room and inside room for attendees of all ages who want to partake in listening to some local artists, Shiner will be able to not only efficiently reach its target market of 21+ year-olds who can consume beer in the saloon, they will have the opportunity to instill positive brand association among the underage crowd. (4)
- The target market will be able to consume their favorite local beers and listen to local bands that they may have otherwise never heard of before. (5)
- In regard to guerilla marketing, there is a conspicuous connection between the pop-up “Shiner Saloon” and the Shiner beers. (6)

Cons:

- Although hiring local bands and artists would likely be inexpensive as many simply want to build up their recognition by getting gigs, renting out an area or setting up tents with furniture and tables and other amenities, even temporarily, can quickly rack up the budget. Not to mention, acquiring TABC permits and alcohol licenses can be costly as well. (1)
- Despite target consumers having the opportunity to visit the “Shiner Saloon,” Shiner will still not have a presence inside the event. This gives the official beer sponsor the chance to do something impressive within the festival to drive sales back to their brand. (2)

**Alternative 2.** The marketing team will pass out promotional items to ACL attendees before they go to the event.

For each day of the ACL festival, street teams will pass out promotional items at various locations where festival attendees get picked up on their way to Zilker Park. Paying off any

necessary street permits and having already dealt with city ordinances by the time the festival rolls around, the street teams will give out wristbands, baseball caps, and sunglasses branded with the Shiner name and ram trademark. Further, each promotional item will have a quote on it that says, “Grab life by the horns.” Although this quote will have the opportunity to potentially resonate with any of the ACL attendees and presents obvious connections between the Shiner ram and its horns, its message will especially create positive sentiment for The University of Texas at Austin students and alumni who will think fondly of the quote as it pertains to their beloved mascot, the Longhorn.

Pros:

- Given that no street vendor permit or payment is actually required if there are no sales transactions, the only fees will come from the promotional items, which are inexpensive. These can be bought in bulk to acquire economies of scale, and can even be used for later events in the future. (1)
- With attendees sporting Shiner merchandise at an event with sole sponsorship rights given to another beer brand, this is a great way for Shiner to battle with the official sponsor in the ACL arena. (2)
- With the baseball cap and sunglasses serving utilitarian purposes and the wristband being used for aesthetic enjoyment, ACL attendees will benefit from the promotional items. (5)

Cons:

- Giving out promotional items at an event is not a new, creative concept. Moreover, McGarrah Jessee has already given out koozies, other promotional items. (3)

- The street teams will not be able to effectively or appropriately distinguish between older underage consumers and those of age; in this way, everyone will be able to receive the free Shiner merchandise, so Shiner is not being as efficient as possible. (4)
- Even though consumers may appreciate the free merchandise, there is not a direct link between the promotional items and the Shiner brand. While awareness will likely increase, it may not lead to incremental beer sales. (6)

**Alternative 3.** The marketing team will set up an area outside of the ACL festival for beer drinkers to exchange their finished cans and bottles for Shiner beer.

To go along with the eco-friendliness of Austin natives, and in particular ACL attendees and staff members who strive to keep Zilker Park clean and minimize the carbon footprint from the two week event, Shiner will turn recycling into a rewarding experience for those 21 and over. As many concert venues and festivals are littered with beer cans and bottles by the day's end, Shiner will take this opportunity to give back to its fans by giving them Shiner beer when they turn in beer cans from the event. To serve beer, the street team will need the necessary alcohol licenses and TABC permits. Moreover, Shiner should set a limit on how many beers can be given out to each individual who submits more than one empty beer can or bottle. A reasonable number would be one or two beers - this will limit Shiner's liability and will also keep costs lower.

Pros:

- Consumers will likely be excited that their empty Heineken (or other beer if the official sponsor differs in coming years) beers can be exchanged for a Shiner; this will lead to

increased discussion about the promotion and the Shiner beers as a whole during the event. (2)

- Recycling beer cans and bottles for new beer falls more under nontraditional, creative advertising that would align with McGarrah Jessee's marketing efforts. (3)
- Shiner will be able to easily engage with their target consumers using this tactic. More than likely those who bring in the empty cans will be 21 or over, but for an extra precaution, the street team members will check IDs to ensure only the target market is receiving free beers. (4)
- The target consumers will love the opportunity to get a free beer just by recycling an empty beer can or bottle. Especially those who hold environmental responsibility close to their heart, they will feel as if they are benefitting from a cause that they support. (5)
- There is a clear-cut connection between recycling empty beer cans to get free Shiner beer and the Shiner brand. (6)

#### Cons:

- Shiner will have to pay for the TABC permits and liquor licenses, which are not always cheap. Further, as Shiner beers will be given out for free, there is a high likelihood that the budget could be expensive as no incremental revenues are coming in. (1)
- Unfortunately, the entirety of the campaign relies on the consumer first drinking a different brand's beer to enjoy a Shiner. In this way, the success of Shiner is tied to the success of the official beer sponsor, so the two companies may share the spotlight, rather than compete for it. (2)

### **Conclusion**

The recommended alternative would be the first option, setting up a pop-up event called “Shiner Saloon” for the Austin City Limits festival. While the promotional items and the recycled beer exchange marketing idea offer their own unique advantages, overall, the most beneficial guerilla marketing tactic to utilize is the temporary creation of the “Shiner Saloon.” Although it may be more expensive than the other options, the “Shiner Saloon” offers the brand the opportunity to engage with its consumers in a fun setting that they own. With live music playing, Shiner has the potential to create positive memories for its target market and lay the groundwork for brand loyalty. For the promotional items, there are positive associations between the brand and the consumers, but there is no critical connection relating back to beer. On the other hand, with the recycled beer exchange, consumers may see beer as a commodity and may just simply want another beer to gulp down in the hot Austin weather. However, with the “Shiner Saloon,” all participants who are there more than likely want to be there, and those that drink the Shiner beers will be paying customers that opt to drink the beer by choice.