

ANA Publishes Open Letter to 'Good Brands'

'Open Letter' calls on brands that claim to support diversity and inclusion to support news on those topics by advertising on general news sites

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, July 18, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Association of National Advertisers](#) today published an ['Open Letter to Good Brands.'](#)



Al Jazeera Media Network

The letter, penned by [Al Jazeera Media Network](#) Senior VP of business development and growth Michael Weaver, notes that many agencies work to keep brands away from general news sites — doing a disservice to the brands, as well as the sites that depend on advertising revenue in order to pay their editors and reporters.

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Brands that want to be regarded as a cut above their competitors should not only not avoid placement near news stories — they should seek it out.”

*Al Jazeera Media Network SVP
of Business Development
Michael Weaver*

Weaver also informed ANA readers that news consumers tend to be more intelligent and engaged than consumers of other sites, so brands that want to be taken seriously may want to support good journalism, rather than avoid it.

Weaver suggested that brands taking this stance may earn goodwill from news readers -- particularly as other brands stay away.

The entire column may be read on <https://www.ana.net/miccontent/show/id/ii-2023-07-open-letter-good-brands>, or below:

An Open Letter to Good Brands

Is your agency failing you by keeping your ads away from the general news?

You may want to ask. Many ad agencies say they need to keep brands off news sites for two reasons, both false:

- They tell brands that readers don't know what they're getting into when they visit a news site

— and so the readers will be shocked if some of the news described there is negative in tone; and

- They preach the importance of adjacency, the idea that an ad's placement next to a news story implies endorsement of that story. (That might be true of partisan editorials. It's not true of straight reporting.)

To avoid associating a brand with the shock felt by naïve readers, or with the values implied by a story about the world in which we live, all too many ad agencies block particular key words they deem inflammatory — words describing skin color, for example — or just the entire category of news from the possible destinations of their brands' ads.

Think for a moment about how many agencies and brands trumpet their commitment to DEI.

Even after the Bud Light fiasco it's a lot, right?

Now consider the hypocrisy of ensuring, behind the scenes, that one's ads will never support any reporting that describes inequity and exclusion.

I guess that's one way to make the world look more inclusive: Just stop paying people to cover exclusion — or, worse, white supremacy in its various forms.

Okay, so some brands are behaving hypocritically. But what if your brand doesn't care about diversity, equity or inclusion? Might it still make sense to avoid placing your ads near general news stories?

Well, it might, if —

- you don't care whether the people who see your ads are intelligent or engaged, and
- you don't want anyone to take your brand seriously

Those points apply to several brands that we could name but won't. They know who they are. Probably you do, too.

Every other brand, though — all the brands that want to be regarded as a cut above their competitors — should not only not avoid placement near news stories — they should seek it out.

The gutting of newsrooms all over the country — even National Geographic just opted to lay off its staff, despite a huge, educated, prosperous readership — means that advertising next to news stories provides a genuine opportunity for forward-thinking brands.

Just as Nike's brand earned serious, sustained media coverage for its steadfast support of former 49er quarterback Colin Kaepernick, your brand could earn a halo by committing to support the news.

"Good reporting," by the way, is a far less controversial topic than Colin Kaepernick. Aside from dictators and polluters, very few people are against good reporting.

Picture this ad in the NY Times: "Our brand supports the U.S. Constitution. We believe in the freedom of the press, and we know that the press needs support right now in order to do its crucial job. So, we've committed to running our ads near general-news stories — even unpleasant ones — for the foreseeable future. Because informed Americans make better decisions. And our brand believes in better decisions."

Might a few major reporters look upon your brand favorably if it led the way to supporting good journalism?

They might. But even if they don't, supporting good journalism is the right thing to do. It'll help your bottom line, too.

Michael Weaver is SVP of business development and growth at Al Jazeera Media Network.

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<https://www.adweek.com/adweek-wire/ana-publishes-open-letter-to-good-brands/>

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