

(<https://brand24.com/blog/>)



Who does not recognize the signature green bottle with a red star?

## **Heineken.**

The **flagship beer brand** of Heineken International, an Amsterdam-based brewing company, and probably one of the most famous beer bottle in the world. Well, it has to be, as even the iconic super Agent 007 loves it. Heineken and James Bond franchise have been partners since 1997 in producing thrilling marketing campaigns that cover breathtaking TV commercials, smart product placements as well as stunning technology-driven social media initiatives.

Heineken is a proud sponsor of numerous high profile sport and music events around the world, including **European Rugby Champions Cup** and since 2005 Europe's most prestigious football competition – **UEFA Champions League**.

Heineken Lager Beer's **heritage dates back to 1873** when Dr. Elion, a student of the world renowned chemist Louis Pasteur, discovered the famous HEINEKEN A-yeast, (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLHmBHQI5c>) a strain still and exclusively used by Heineken as the key ingredient of the beer recipe. Sold in more than 170 countries, Heineken bottle forms a part of a large beverage family that includes more than 250 other regional specialty beers.

## **Heineken's Brand Strategy**

In the past years, Heineken has invested heavily in experiential marketing (<http://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/1386987/why-brands-heineken-innocent-putting-budget-behind-experiential>) **to connect with their fans on a brand new and more sophisticated level – the experiences level**. A wise move, I reckon, as it is no secret that experiences (<http://adage.com/article/digitalnext/consumers-experiences-things/299994/>) are what people increasingly use to define themselves across social media channels.

Heineken's Marketing Team do a great job at co-producing music and sport-related experiences that touch all our senses, often pushing the boundaries of modern technology to enable that. For example, for festival lovers, they have recently introduced customised Heineken wristbands (<https://www.marketingweek.com/2016/04/29/music-is-a-difficult-beast-for-brands-admits-heineken-as-it-launches-global-music-focused-campaign/>) that can light up red or green and help to choose the gig-goers which song they want to hear next – the green or the red track.

The brand's **carefully crafted social media campaigns** such as *#ShareTheSofa* and most recently *#ChampionTheMatch* initiative support the marketing efforts in delivering tremendous online "talkability", boosting brand awareness and positioning Heineken exactly where they want to be – in a place of the **No1 Beer Brand associated with Champions League**.

How does Heineken engage its fans? What techniques and tools do they use? We are here to explore that now.

## How Heineken Uses Social Media

Let's have a look at the social media channels used by Heineken.

### Facebook

Heineken's most popular social media platform is Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/HeinekenPL/>), with an impressive number of over **20 million Likes**. To give you a broader picture of the world's brewing scene, here are other top market players' Facebook figures:

**Budweiser – 13.4 million likes**

**Stella Artois – 7.8 million likes**

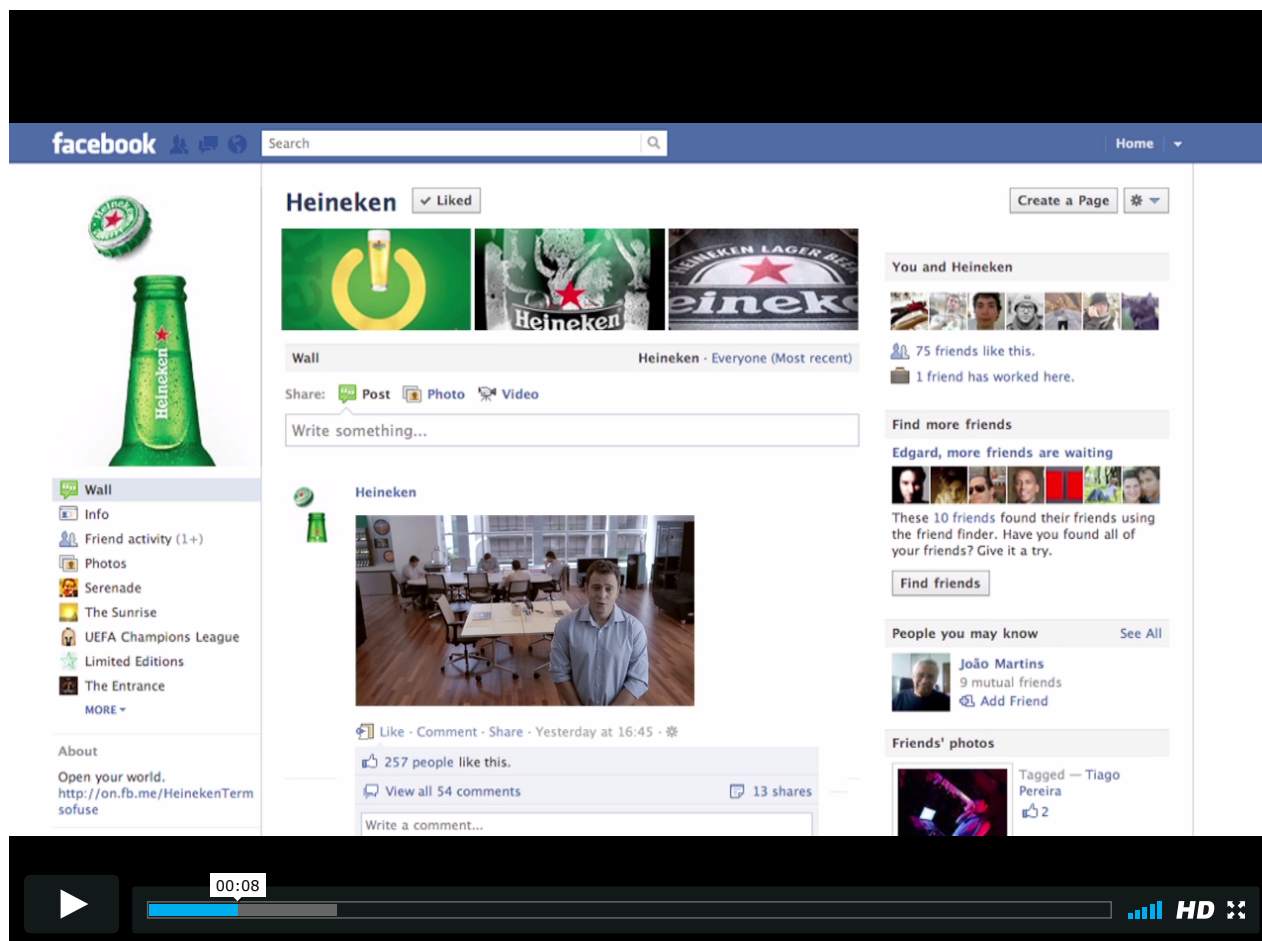
**Guinness – 5.5 million likes**

**Carlsberg – 2.4 million likes**

Heineken leads this queue. No doubt.

An important fact to mention is that Heineken has **optimized the Facebook Page with geo-targeting**. This means they serve content specific to their public's location. The regional Fan Pages are aggregated, though, so the general Likes count sums up to one impressive result.

The company approaches the **Likes generating** mission quite seriously and effectively. In 2012, Brazil Fan Page launched a famous real-time campaign called "*One Like One Balloon*" that turned out to be incredibly successful in producing spectacular fan engagement and following. The idea behind the campaign was to answer to every new Page Like by blowing up a green balloon and placing it in the Brazilian Heineken's office space. The office space got full in just one (literally: one) day and the whole initiative generated thousands of comments in addition to more than 1 million new Fans in frankly no-time. Have a look at the campaign's promo video [here](#).



Heineken's Facebook strategy **is aimed primarily to deliver relevant content that entertains and engages their Fans** who are mainly, but not exclusively, football lovers. Almost like a coach speaking to players before a football game, they want to ignite their Fans' enthusiasm and encourage them to take decisive actions – shares, comments, likes. It is a very elegant and clever strategy as it does sell beer without even mentioning the sale itself.

## Content & Engagement

The global giant does make an effort to **adapt each regional Facebook Page content to the cultural context**. For example, the U. S. Heineken Page uses the American English term "Soccer" as an equivalent for European "football". Other regional Pages often feature local football heroes. However, the general guidelines stay the same:

- A Facebook page is a mix of updates, images, and videos related to current sport & music news and events.
- They use Facebook Live option, for example, to broadcast a live Q&A session with brewing experts to vitalise the brand's image with a pinch of storytelling (<http://brand24.com/blog/3-storytelling-strategies-to-win-social-media-with-your-brand/>) and capitalize on the brand's heritage.
- They frequently engage users with attention-grabbing contests and quizzes. This resonates well with the brand's sporty image and spectacular football game's emotions that the brand is all about.
- The tone of voice is very approachable, friendly and chatty. Replies are given regularly often with a Fan's name tag. They even switch between languages to answer their Fans in a suitable language (the U. S Page creates posts and comments in English and Spanish).

- Their content is short, dynamic, and to the point, often served with dedicated hashtags like #SoccerIsHere, #UCL (UEFA Champions League) or #OpenBondsWorld.

## Twitter

On Twitter, Heineken runs multiple regional accounts, but the main ones are @Heineken

(<https://twitter.com/Heineken>) with over **137K Followers** and @HEINEKENCorp

(<https://twitter.com/HEINEKENCorp>) that shares company's strategy updates and promotes other family's brands.

## Content & Engagement

Unlike Facebook content strategy that builds partly on brand's heritage and partly on music and football-related news,

**Twitter content focuses strongly on the football side of the business** (at least now, during the Champions League).

A properly thought through idea, in my opinion, as the fast Twitter feed filled with the immensity of football-related news, enables to imitate the emotions of a sportscaster reporting on the most exciting football game you have ever seen! (hint: experiential marketing )

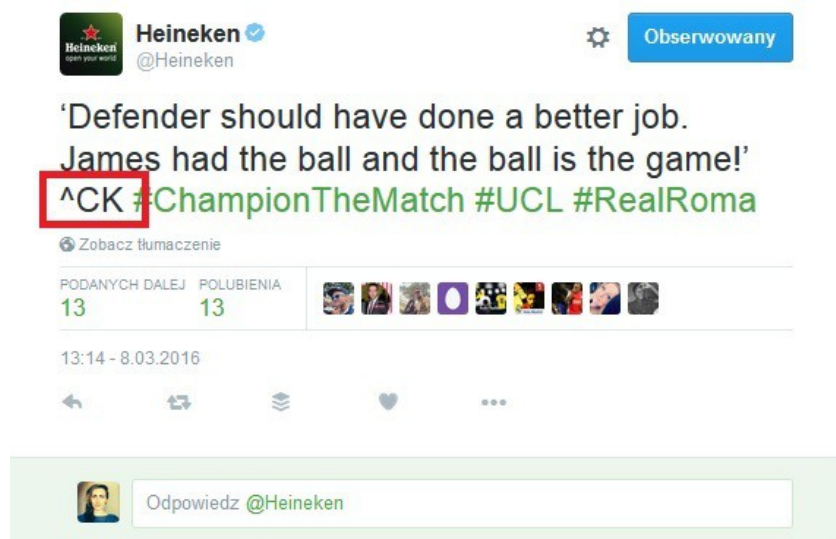
Shares



The content they share on Twitter is a combination of high-quality sports-based memes, videos and text updates.

They keep a good ratio of text vs. visual tweets that receive not massive but a regular number of likes and retweets.

They often use their Staff's initials to indicate who created a particular tweet and make it more personal.



Images shared are usually professionally shot to maintain the brand's "Champion League" identity, and they frequently use football celebrity endorsement to support the brand's credibility. Like recently, they have featured David Trezeguet (<https://twitter.com/Trezegoldavid>) and Carles Puyol (<https://twitter.com/Carles5puyol>) to make the #UCL communication more impactful:



Heineken on Twitter acts like a high-class football player, they keep the level of the game high with the professionally designed content but also enjoy the team spirit and **invite their Fans to participate in a very conversational dialogue**. The language is unofficial and filled with football-related terms. Everyone can ask a question here and call the brand by the "first name". In a way, when you enter Heineken's Twitter account you feel like joining a group of lads sitting in a pub and commenting on the game with a nicely chilled pint of beer, no other than Heineken beer of course.




@goal Well, it looks like they'll have to now.. Would have loved to see some more action tonight. #ChampionTheMatch #UCL #CityvReal

10:35 PM - 26 Apr 2016

6 3



They are good at building engagement with their Followers by asking them direct questions to get them talking or voting for the game results:



**Heineken**
  
@Heineken



Let's break that stalemate. Who will score first tonight?  
#ChampionTheMatch




1:30 PM - 4 May 2016


39% Real Madrid CF

38% Manchester City FC


23% Me! Scored some Heinekens

4,292 votes • Final results



 39
  46



As well as being strictly football focused, **they can be funny too**, by relating their content to the Fans' everyday situations like being at work. Jokes and laughter make brands more approachable and easier to relate to on social. People join you more likely if they enjoy your sense of humour and they see you don't treat yourself too seriously. Plus, by portraying the situations common for every football lover, Heineken facilitates creating a social community that shares the same experience and feelings and this translates for them into a large number of retweets:







**Heineken**
  
@Heineken



.@delpieroale presents: 5 ways to distract your boss and  
#ChampionTheMatch. #UCL RMAWOB

5:14 PM - 11 Apr 2016


 244
  573



It is quite clear that Heineken has a **very good understanding of their Twitter audience**. They speak their Fans' language and therefore are able to get a regular and high level of engagement.

## Instagram

Similar to Twitter, Heineken on Instagram has multiple regional accounts. The main one (@Heineken) (<https://www.instagram.com/heineken/>) has over **156K Followers**. Quite a nice Followers count has the Brazilian one (@Heineken Brazil) (<https://www.instagram.com/heinekenbr/>) with 81.2K Likes, ahead of the U.S. one (@Heineken US) ([https://www.instagram.com/heineken\\_us/](https://www.instagram.com/heineken_us/)) with 22.8K Followers. However, they aren't quite as active here as they are on other social platforms with the last post being created 26 weeks ago.

## Content & Engagement

Unlike Facebook and Twitter pages, Heineken has given their Instagram account a completely different, **more personal and perhaps more humanized touch**. On a very rare occasion you will see the signature green bottle being featured here, instead, their Instagram account is more like a **mood board that reveals the brand's wider context**.

Heineken's Instagram profile is aimed to transmit different aspects of brand's unique personality and story that often become authentic people's stories – the Heineken's drinkers stories. For example, the #HeadingOutWith (<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/headingoutwith/>) campaign, a part of the bigger "Fans of the World" initiative, is widely featured on Instagram. It promotes User-Generated Content (<http://brand24.com/blog/3-reasons-why-user-generated-content-can-make-you-money/>) and presents profiles of different, sometimes unusual, social circles celebrating weekends. We can see diverse groups of people from Make-up Artists:





to "No Vacancy in LA" subculture:





Besides relevant and authentic stories, they also regularly promote their other social platforms on Instagram – including YouTube. Like here on the occasion of another Fan-featuring campaign called “Dropped” (<http://www.adweek.com/news/advertising-branding/heinekens-reality-style-ads-are-raking-youtube-views-152134>).



Similar to Facebook and Twitter, Heineken's approach to content on Instagram targets millennials who "would rather tell people about something they have done than about something they have got".

(<http://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/1386987/why-brands-heineken-innocent-putting-budget-behind-experiential>)

Rather than pushing the sale, they post photos and videos to tell stories and make people relate to and engage.

However, they seem not to interact with their Fans on Instagram too often, as some of the Followers' questions are being lefts unattended.

## Conclusions

Overall, **Heineken knows how to do social media**. I like the fact that they produce new and fresh content for each platform but keep it within a clear and very consistent brand message. I absolutely love that, as a global brand, they do adapt the content to the cultural contexts making it even more relevant for the audience. One area that I feel they could improve a bit, though, is their Instagram engagement both in a sense of more frequent publications as well as stronger interaction with their Fans.

What makes Heineken's social media strategy successful? **Over-average understanding of the average Heineken's drinker**. They know what his/her language, habits and sense of humour is, and therefore there is no need to push the sale. It is enough to strengthen the relations giving their Fans amazing EXPERIENCE they are more than keen to share on social media.

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Name

**Scott Flear** • a year ago

I'm a fan of Heineken but one brand I think that does amazingly well on social media is Paddy Power, a betting site. They are very "human" and funny. They can cross the line at times but I really look forward to their updates during and after matches.

1 ^ | ▾ • Reply • Share ▾

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