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February 9, 2019

Would you rather think now or apologize later? In March of 2018, Snapchat chose the latter. As a part of their move towards 'Snap Ads,' Snapchat allowed a third party advertiser, Impossible Choices to release an ad onto their multimedia messaging platform. The advertisement oversight was brought on by an interesting series of events starting back in 2017.

When Snap Inc released their 2017 first quarter earnings, their stock fell more than 24 points. The stock was sitting at \$18.19, the lowest it has been since they released their IPO in 2016 (Constine, 2017). The biggest factor was the app's lack of Daily Active User growth around the world. The statistics showed an estimated 5% change between 2017's Q1 and 2016's Q4 (Constine, 2017). On top of that, 2017's Q1 represented the first time Snap Inc experienced a drop in average revenue per user (Constine, 2017). In need of something new, Snap Inc expanded their advertising program.

Previously Snap Inc only allowed large companies or designated Snapchat Marketing Partners (Thumbspire, 2017). As of June 2017, Snap Inc allowed any registered group to access their advertising platform. This was an interesting change given the platform's younger trending audience, on a less crowded potential advertising network.

On February 21, 2018 Snapchat took another hit when there was an uproar against a controversial new update and redesign. The concept behind Snapchat's rollout was to separate the user's 'social' from the 'media' within the app. The update caused a 6% drop in Snap Inc's stock, dropping the value by \$1.3 billion (McGarrigle, 2018). Due to the vocal response from users, analysts at Citi bank, downgraded the stock from "Neutral" to "Sell," due to expectations that the negative response would lead to a decline in users and engagement (Maggio, 2018). Now, Snapchat's advertising is more important to them than ever.

One new advertiser on Snapchat was third the party Impossible Choices, who was promoting a Would You Rather game. Impossible choices promoted a specific piece of content on March 12, 2018 asking users would they rather punch Chris Brown, a musician and domestic abuser, or slap Rihanna, a singer and a former domestic violence victim of Brown. Within a matter of hours, screenshots appeared across social media, especially Twitter. Photos of the ad were posted along with users responses to Snapchat calling the ad tone deaf, appalling, and inconsiderate.

Despite the ad coming from a third party, Snapchat took most if not all of the criticisms, being called misogynistic and sexist, and was accused by many of normalizing domestic violence. Many other users also specifically criticised Snapchat's ad screening process, and the lack thereof. There were some responses on the other side, saying that Brown and Rihanna still loved & forgave each other, or that God will forgive both Brown and Rihanna. There was an interesting section of responses shaming Twitter members for screenshotting and sharing the photo of the ad, questioning their motives. Notable celebrity respondents include Chrissy Teigan, Brittany Packnett, and Chelsea Clinton. The screenshot of the ad was also shared across news outlets from Variety and BuzzFeed, to CNN to Bloomberg and many more. Snapchat's initial response was to pull the ad, and release a short statement that the ad was approved in error, as it violated the company's advertising guidelines.

Rihanna herself responded in a post on one of Snapchat's biggest competitors, Instagram Stories. The singer posted text on a black background, eviscerating Snapchat for profiting off of the ad stating:

You spent money to animate something that would intentionally bring shame to DV victims and made a joke of it!!! This isn't about my personal feelings, cause I don't have much of them... but all the women, children, and men that have been victims of DV in the past and especially the ones who haven't made it out yet.... You let us down! Shame on you. Throw the whole app-oligy away. (Stefansky, 2018).

This was followed by a call by both Rihanna and her fans to delete the app as a whole.

Following Rihanna's statement, Snapchat apologized again saying:

This advertisement is disgusting and never should have appeared on our service. We are so sorry we made the terrible mistake of allowing it through our review process. We are investigating how that happened so that we can make sure it never happens again. (Stefansky, 2018).

Snap Inc's stock dropped an estimated 4% after Rihanna's damning response, knocking the company's market value back nearly one billion dollars in a matter of hours (Frier, 2018) (Moise, 2018). It has also since been announced that Snapchat blocked Would You Rather / Impossible Choices as an advertiser and reaffirmed that the game was unaffiliated. The company also reestablished that fact that they support the National Network to End Domestic Violence, with the group's vice president sitting on Snapchat's Safety Advisory Board (Liao, 2018)

Snap Inc learned a valuable lesson after the Would You Rather Incident, still paying the price for allowing the ad to slip through for approval. The company's website now features a very detailed list of advertisement specifications and a stricter approval process for incoming advertisements. Snap Inc as a whole continues on the downward trend in the stock market, always fighting for the superior product in short term photo sharing, along with Instagram and Facebook. Time will tell where the future of Snapchat lies, and whether they will truly be able to separate the 'social' from the 'media.'

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