

# The Effect of Adbusting on Busted Brands

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## **Abstract**

A new phenomenon challenges brand marketers: adbusting. Adbusting is a form of advertising activism where a group or an individual alters existing brand communication (e.g., a billboard ad) to promote social causes (e.g., anti-capitalism) or denounce firm (e.g., environmental policies) or political behavior (e.g., a far-right party). In contrast to traditional brand advertising, the company and brand involuntarily become a vehicle for messages promoted by a third party. However, despite the loss of control over ad content, adbusting may have positive effects for the busted brand. The incongruity of the message with existing brand schemata may increase cognitive processing, thereby raising ad awareness and increasing buzz through social media amplification. In addition, depending on the content of the adbust, such incidents may even influence purchase intent for the brand. The present research uses a panel of adbusting incidents to explore the role of adbusting for the busted brands.

**Keywords:** *advertising activism; brand buzz; political advertising*

**Track:** Advertising & Marketing Communications