

Joe Rogan's advertisers are mostly staying silent on the Spotify host after COVID misinformation complaints

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Joe Rogan.

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- Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, and other artists pulled their music from

Spotify following complaints that Joe Rogan spread COVID misinformation.

- Advertiser CbdMD expressed support for Rogan while Omnicom Media Group distanced itself from the podcast star.
- Most of his advertisers have stayed quiet on their association with the host, though.

Complaints have grown louder over Joe Rogan's spreading what has been called misinformation about COVID, with artists including Neil Young and Joni Mitchell [pulling their music](#) from Spotify. But one group is staying mostly quiet: Rogan's advertisers.

One exception was CBD brand CbdMD. "Our response is simple: We support Joe Rogan," said Tyler Miller, CbdMD's senior director of communications.

Another, advertising company Omnicom Media Group, distanced itself. Omnicom cited Rogan's popular show when it inked a \$20 million ad deal with Spotify back in 2020, but asked about the deal this week in light of the controversy, an OMG spokesperson said the company had no clients running ads on Rogan's podcast.

Other recent advertisers include Athletic Greens, DraftKings, Stamps.com, Unilever-owned Onnit Labs, and MeUndies. None responded to inquiries about whether they'd continue their ad support of the show.

Many big advertisers shy away from controversy, but Rogan is a major draw for certain marketers, who buy the directly to have host-read messages featured. Some of them stuck by Rogan when he hosted conspiracy theorist Alex Jones [two years ago](#).

To Eric Yaverbaum, CEO of Ericho Communications and author of Public Relations for Dummies, advertisers' lack of comment indicates their support of Rogan. "They are willing to go along for the ride," he said.

"Some DTC brands have had so much success on the back of his show that to them, it's worth it," said Jason Harris, CEO of ad agency Mekanism.

The Rogan episode comes as subscription-driven Spotify has been making a big push to grow its advertising business and podcasts have boosted its ad revenue. In response to the backlash, [Spotify said](#) it would add content advisories to podcasts that discuss COVID-19 and direct listeners to a resource hub. [Rogan said](#) he planned to add experts with differing opinions to the show. A Spotify spokeswoman pointed Insider to its recent blog post.

Lou Paskalis, president of marketing trade group MMA Global and a marketing vet who's outspoken on so-called brand safety, said advertisers have a history of tolerating platform measurement errors, lapses in judgment, and other problems in the interest of growth.

"Short of a shareholder or customer revolt against advertisers for advertising

on specific platforms, I am skeptical about most advertisers' willingness to make meaningful changes in where they invest their ad dollars based on 'bad behavior' on the part of those platforms alone," he said.

Others see a risk to Rogan's advertisers, especially if the backlash grows. Indeed, after the Alex Jones episode, [some distanced themselves from the show and condemned the episode.](#)

"A brand doesn't want to get caught up in the controversy," Harris said. "You can advertise on the platform, but you have to distance yourself from Joe Rogan's show."

Mike Mothner, CEO of ad agency WPromote, thought the content advisories didn't go far enough in addressing how a topic is discussed and predicted brands would rethink their ad spending there.

But while the fragmentation of the audio audience gives advertisers many places to move spend, previous advertiser boycotts on platforms like Facebook and YouTube have been short-lived.

"Advertisers have many options on where to put Spotify ad dollars, whereas Facebook advertisers had a hard time finding where to put their ad dollars," said Obele Brown-West, chief solutions officer at ad agency Tinuiti.

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