

** Will print automatically! If it doesn't, click [here](#). **

CRAIN'S

NEW YORK BUSINESS

Article can be found at http://www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20150405/RETAIL_APPAREL/150409944/-is-this-bud-for-you-beer-giant-taps-nyc-talent-with-free-suds

Is this Bud for you? Beer giant taps NYC talent with free suds

Getting past happy hour is only the first test as Anheuser-Busch InBev puts down stakes in city.

E.J. Schultz

Published: April 5, 2015 - 12:01 am

Want to work for Anheuser-Busch InBev in New York City? Then you better be prepared for the happy-hour test.

Friday-evening socializing—with plenty of Bud and Bud Light—is part of a multistep interviewing process the brewer will conduct as it seeks to fill around 50 positions in its new marketing and sales office in the Big Apple. But candidates shouldn't relax too much: Saturday will be filled with so-called "panel interviews," when they will be quizzed by several Anheuser-Busch InBev execs, alongside other job applicants.

The mixture of business and pleasure is part of an aggressive recruitment effort aimed at attracting top talent to the office, which will soon open in Chelsea on West 24th Street between Sixth and Seventh avenues. The location will eventually house some 250 sales and marketing professionals, including many who will transfer from the brewer's U.S. headquarters in St. Louis. Plans include a beer garden on the ground floor that will be open to the public.

The move marks a significant cultural change for the company, whose U.S. operations have long been run from St. Louis (where it was founded in 1852), even after Anheuser-Busch's acquisition in 2008 by InBev, now based in São Paulo.

While AB InBev will keep its U.S. headquarters in St. Louis, the U.S. "commercial strategy" office in New York is meant to provide it exposure to urban trends, according to an internal memo sent late last year when the decision was made.

The move also gets marketing executives closer to key partners based here, including ad agencies, sports leagues and music and entertainment execs. And it provides for greater proximity to the brewer's global office, which opened in New York at 250 Park Ave. in 2009.

The city's attractive talent pool is a key part of the relocation equation. "Being in New York will allow us to recruit and develop great talent from outside of the organization," said U.S. Marketing Vice President Jorn Socquet, who described how AB InBev is filling the jobs in an interview.

FOLLOW THAT CAR

Anheuser-Busch's expansion to the Big Apple follows a similarly minded move to the city planned by Cadillac, the Detroit



Bloomberg News

Anheuser-Busch expects to employ 250 in its expanded New York City office.

luxury automaker that last September announced it will [park its headquarters](#) in Hudson Square. The car company, a division of General Motors, will use its downtown office as a global hub for executive, marketing and sales staff who hope to rev up the brand's hipness quotient and grow sales overseas. Engineering, design and manufacturing will remain in Cadillac's Detroit location.

Anheuser-Busch is casting a wide net in New York, with plans to review some 600 candidates for 40 to 50 positions here. Recruitment ads on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook are driving people to a microsite that lists job opportunities and describes New York as "a city that shares the heartbeat of our driven, meritocracy culture." The site even seeks to position Anheuser-Busch as a fast-moving "startup": One video is filled with younger-looking employees touting the company as a place where people get promoted based on results, not tenure.

Mr. Socquet said marketing experience is not a requirement, and noted that one person he recently hired was a teacher. "If you have a set of brains and you have the guts to [make] bold and entrepreneurial decisions, those are the types of [people] I want on my team," he said.

The microsite solicits email addresses from interested candidates, who are then contacted by a recruiter. After some initial screening, about 100 people will be selected for weekend interviews being held over several weeks in New York.

The Friday happy hours are meant to be relaxing. But that doesn't mean executives won't be watching. "Our team will know exactly who is in the room," Mr. Socquet said. On Saturdays, candidates will be asked to respond to case studies sent in advance that are based on actual business problems.

Also, panel interviews will be conducted, in which five AB InBev execs grill five candidates—all at once. The process is modeled after a program the brewer uses in Brazil to identify contenders for its global management training program.

AGGRESSIVE INTERVIEWS

"We tend to be pretty aggressive in those interviews, meaning sometimes we pit candidates against one another just to see how they stand up in our organization," Mr. Socquet said. "If you just have these one-on-one interviews, we don't know how you react in a social setting. And for us that is of such crucial importance."

Mr. Socquet is a fan of face-to-face meetings when it comes to ad agencies, too. It is one of the reasons the brewer is opening a New York office, where several of Anheuser-Busch's agencies have operations, including Anomaly, BBDO and MediaCom. "If you really want to have a good working relationship with agencies you've got to meet with them as often as you can," Mr. Socquet said.

But the move here will also make it easier for the brewer to meet with new ad agencies. "Going to New York," he said, "it will be good to date again, look around [see] who is out there, have some interesting conversation and see what we could potentially do to add to our roster."

E.J. Schultz writes for Crain's sibling publication Advertising Age.



Entire contents ©2015 Crain Communications Inc.

The mega-deal to bring in Anheuser-Busch in completely fills the building, which is part of Kaufman's Madison Square Portfolio. **AlleyNYC**, which specializes in coworking space, [inked a deal](#) in the building for 36,000 square feet in March.

Kaufman signed a 99-year ground lease for the Ring Portfolio—which along with 119-125 West 24th Street included **15 West 27th Street, 19 West 24th Street** and **45 West 27th Street**—with **Extell Development** in April 2014. The developer renovated all four buildings and plans to begin leasing the remaining three in the next few months.

Mr. Greenspan said the Anheuser-Busch deal was a big step toward attracting new tenants to the portfolio.

“It’s solidifies the whole project of the four buildings in terms of credit and anchoring the project completely,” Mr. Greenspan told *Commercial Observer*. The beer maker, he said, was likely drawn by “the fact that the building was vacant and they’re able to use their own entrance. “The neighborhood certainly helped [as did] the creativity and the geographic location,” he added.