

# Stream This Song to Help Save Bars and Clubs, Thanks to Crown Royal

## Key Insight:

- During the pandemic, brands have been lending financial support to establishments crucial to their business model.

Crown Royal plans to give back to the very places that have made it a household name: bars, clubs and other small music venues.

The Diageo-owned Canadian whisky brand will debut a national campaign Monday featuring a new recording of Sly and The Family Stone's *If You Want Me to Stay*, sung by singer songwriter Ari Lennox and Hamilton's Anthony Ramos. Each time someone streams the song, Crown Royal will donate \$1 (up to \$500,000) to bars and clubs in danger of closing due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Main Street Alliance, an organization dedicated to small businesses, will help distribute the funds. Anomaly New York served as lead creative agency.

"When we look at what we do at Diageo, or the purpose that drives the company, it's all about celebrating life everywhere with our products," said Sophie Kelly, Diageo's svp of whiskeys in North America. "In the last six months, it's become very evident that if we had to live our purpose, what we need to do is get in the game and support the people who have supported us."

Kelly added that 90% of independent venues, bars and clubs across the country are currently at risk of disappearing.

Crown Royal's campaign is Diageo's latest initiative to give back to the people and places crucial to its business model. Earlier this summer, the alcohol giant introduced a \$100 million recovery fund for bars and pubs around the world. More recently, its Bulleit Bourbon brand released an ad about out-of-work bartenders and pledged \$250,000 to bolster the North American hospitality industry.

Other brands have taken a similar approach in assisting the establishments that purchase their products. In April, for example, Heinz ketchup introduced a program that gave financial aid to the nation's many local diners and restaurants struggling since the Covid-19 outbreak.

Bar and restaurant closures have created a set of problems for Diageo, too. Last month, the maker of Guinness, Johnnie Walker and Baileys reported that worldwide organic net sales were down 8.4% during the first half of 2020 compared to the first half of 2019. In North America, where alcohol delivery has surged in popularity, the company's organic net sales grew 2%. Crown Royal itself saw U.S. sales increase 8%.

In August, Diageo announced plans to acquire Ryan Reynolds' Aviation American Gin and its parent company, Davos Brands, in a deal worth an estimated \$610 million.

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