

# [***Mark Cuban Calls Going Woke Good Business And Conservatives And Fellow Shark Kevin O Leary Bite Back***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68G5-XVD1-DXVP-51X4-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 746 words

**Byline:** Conor Murray, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** O Leary rebutted Cuban s comments, calling wokeness bad business in a Fox News interview.

**Body**

**Topline**

Billionaire and**Shark Tank**judge Mark Cuban defended companies that have faced boycotts over their woke outreach to the LGBTQ community, drawing objections from conservatives including his fellow shark, Kevin O Leary who point to Bud Light s dip in sales as a consequence.

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Mark Cuban attends the 2019 NBA Awards at Barker Hangar on June 24, 2019 in Santa Monica, California. (Photo by Rich Fury/Getty Images)

Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

Though a long list of companies have been targeted for being woke in recent weeks, Cuban predicts this won t stop corporations from marketing toward the LGBTQ community,tellingthe**Pittsburgh Post-Gazette** they are betting on future customers and showing they care about them.

Cuban said being woke is good business because most of the Top 10 market cap companies in the United States (includingApple,MicrosoftandAlphabet) can be considered woke for being vocally supportive of LGBTQ issues and Pride month.

Cuban said a dip in market cap is meaningless, because it s not like the drop is because tens of thousands of individual holders sold their stocks.

Bud Light sparked calls for a boycott after it sent transgender TikTok star Dylan Mulvaney a customized can with her face on it in early April, setting off a series of online protests against businesses deemed woke.

Weeks after calls for a boycott gained steam, Bud Light sales reportedlyfellabout 25% over the week ending on May 13 compared to one year ago and Bud Light lost its status as themost popular U.S. beer while sales of competitor beers like Coors Light and Miller Lite surged.

**Chief Critics**

Kevin O Leary, a fellow judge on**Shark Tank**, pushed back on Cuban s comments on Fox News Wednesday morning, saying he views Bud Light s marketing as bad business, citing the company s dip in sales. He has previously criticized the company s partnership with Mulvaney and its handling of the boycott,callingBud Light the poster boy for brand mismanagement. Conservative pundit Ben Shapiro posted a YouTube video criticizing Cuban on Tuesday night,calling wokeness a pathetic ideological movement. Former Trump advisor Stephen Miller pushed for continued boycotts of woke companies,urginghis Twitter followers to prove Mark Cuban wrong. Evangelical and president of the Christian organization Samaritan's Purse Franklin GrahamcriticizedCuban s comments to his nearly 3 million Twitter followers, calling wokeness a sin.

**Crucial Quote**

Call me woke, Cuban reportedlytoldMichigan political and business leaders on Mackinac Island on May 31. You don t need to call it DEI, you can call it whatever you want I call it good business. It means taking the people that you re selling to and making sure your workforce looks like them, and making sure you can reflect their values and being able to connect to that. That s what works for me.

**Forbes Valuation**

$5.1 billion. That s Cuban snet worthas of Wednesday, according to the**Forbes** real-time net worth tracker, making him the 539th richest person in the world. In addition to his Shark Tank fame, Cuban owns the Dallas Mavericks and cofounded Cost Plus Drugs in 2022 to sell prescription drugs at lower prices.

**Key Background**

Companies have comeunder fireone by one by angry right-wing social media users for openly supporting the LGBTQ community. After the Bud Lightboycottbegan in early April, conservatives have seized on the momentum to protest other companies, including Target and Kohl s, for selling Pride merchandise. Other companies, like The North Face and Jack Daniels, were criticized for featuring drag queens in their advertisements, while organizations like Major League Baseball and the U.S. Navy angered some by making celebratory social mediapostsfor Pride month. The backlash against woke companies comes amid legislation targeting the LGBTQ community and drag performances in many state legislatures. Starbucks most recently facedcriticismfrom the left and self-congratulatory reactions from the right after a workers union, Starbucks Workers United, alleged the company banned stores from putting up Pride decorations. The company, however, has refuted this, stating no policy regarding Pride decorations have changed.

**Further Reading**

Garth Brooks, Cracker Barrel Are The Latest Targets Of LGBTQ Culture Wars: Here Are All The Others From Bud Light To Target(Forbes)

What Does Woke Even Mean? How A Decades-Old Racial Justice Term Became Co-Opted By ***Politics***(Forbes)

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