

How are brands adapting their social media strategy during COVID-19?

As social media continues to dominate, IWSR explains why and how beverage brands can adapt to the current climate.

In this new environment, brands will need to radically rethink their key messages when communicating with consumers on social media. For beverage alcohol, connection often revolved around the joy of socialising with friends and family and this now needs to be adjusted. Brands are quickly trying to establish a new relevance in a global market that has become unrecognisable in the space of just a few weeks.

Mark Meek, CEO of IWSR, comments, “relevance is paramount during a crisis like this. Social content needs to reflect the reality of the situation we are in, while also being purposeful in one of three ways: highlighting essential information, supporting the community, or offering entertainment and engagement while consumers are at home.”

“Brands will need to take a more inventive approach to social media in the coming months, but should remember to keep honesty and community at the heart of their communication,” says Meek.

“For now, social media will not serve as a means to promote an aspirational lifestyle, but a way to cope with the new normal we are all living.”

Below are some examples of the engaging ways that brands can help to get their messages out to their consumers whilst in isolation.

Engage with new skills

Cocktails are becoming more prevalent on the stay at home agenda with cocktail making being a new skill that individuals are hoping to learn with the time they now have on their hands. Brands can offer tutorials to those looking to attempt this new skill through videos posted online or through live Twitter and Instagram streaming with their followers.

Brands are also sharing recipes with interesting visuals on their social channels to tempt their consumers and give them new angles on their products. The GB team at Diageo Reserve World Class has scheduled a series of brand ambassador social media takeovers across its World Class GB and Diageo Bar Academy platforms. Targeting both bartenders and consumers, these videos showcase cocktail recipes and skills for creating homemade syrups and cordials.

Recreate the on-premise experience

Social media channels can also help to facilitate human interaction by getting involved in virtual happy hours or launching virtual pubs that celebrate the on-premise atmosphere and experience.

Through virtual bars, on-premise operators can live stream bartenders offering live mixology, live-stream DJ's, or offer interactive virtual Q&A sessions with industry influencers, brand ambassadors or leading bartenders.

For example, Brewdog Online Bar hosts a virtual pub quiz for consumers, as well as live virtual tastings and live stream yoga classes under its no- alcohol brand, Brewdog AF. In keeping with its brand identity, Beavertown Beer has launched Instagram Live Draw-Alongs that are hosted by its Creative Director.

Virtual tours of wineries, breweries and distilleries can also help consumers connect with their favourite drinks brands in an environment that isn't always available to them, offering added intrigue.

Supporting ecommerce

"Many people are exploring home drinking and delivery services for the first time during lockdown and social distancing. Consumption habits formed now might stick around in the future, so brands have a real opportunity to appeal to new audiences and should try to make it easy for new consumers to go from engaging with social content to trying the actual product," recommends Meek.

As an example of this, Signature Brew's Pub-In-A-Box allows consumers to bring the pub experience to their house. The Pub-In-A-Box can be bought online and includes signature beers, glassware, snacks, a beer mat, Spotify playlists and a music quiz. If consumers are eligible for local delivery, musicians who have had their tours cancelled deliver the pub-in-a-box to consumers as well.

The most important thing with so many brands now increasing focus on social media and virtual hang outs is that each needs an edge to cut through the noise, whilst remaining authentic and creating engaging content to bust the boredom of staying home.

To find out more about the IWSR's data and insights visit: www.theiwsr.com

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About the IWSR

The IWSR is the leading source of data and intelligence on the alcoholic beverage market. The IWSR's database, essential to the industry, quantifies the global market of wine, spirits, beer, cider, and mixed drinks by volume and value in 157 countries, and provides insight into short- and long-term trends, including five-year volume and value forecasts. The IWSR tracks overall consumption and trends at brand, price segment and category level. Its data is used by the major international wine, spirits and beer companies, as well as financial and alcoholic beverage market suppliers. The IWSR's unique methodology allows it to get closer to what is actually consumed and better understand how markets work. Its analysts travel the world in order to meet over 1,600 local professionals to capture market trends and the 'why' behind the numbers.