

Binning the binge culture

Can we really make a difference to British drinking habits? Ahead of the £100m **Why let good times go bad?** campaign's latest push, *Eagleye* asks Drinkaware CEO Chris Sorek how it intends to help people stay in control of their night out



Chris Sorek

Isn't 'Why let good times go bad?' just another expensive advertising campaign? How do you see pubs playing their part, other than by putting up posters?

While advertising is an essential tool for building awareness, what makes this campaign different is that we're working together to directly target consumers with the right messages, at the point where decisions about their drinking behaviour are made. Pubs are in a unique position in that they're best placed to influence drinkers. Retailers can watch over their customers and encourage them to understand their boundaries and adopt sensible drinking habits.

There's a great opportunity for retailers to take the high ground and demonstrate that they're serious about tackling binge drinking. This can only help put their relationship with the government onto a much more positive footing. It's important for pubs to be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

How is it making an impact so far?

Now in its second year, the campaign has already reached 70% of young adults, and 61% of the target audience (known as the 'irresponsible shamefuls' who drink too much but regret it the next day) have engaged with the campaign and, crucially, adopted some of the tips.

What else are you doing to target younger drinkers?

While messages in pubs and on drinks packaging remains one of the most important elements, this year we'll have a much stronger presence online. Activity will centre around Facebook, with information and interactive content available across partners' pages and sites, many of which have huge followings.

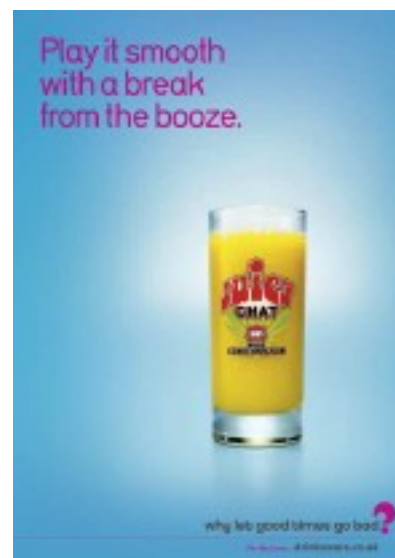
Plus we're extending the campaign's reach to tackle student culture and binge drinking abroad. By forming partnerships with the National Union of Students (NUS) and Club 18-30, we expect to reach more than seven million students and 70,000 holidaymakers.

Since April, Drinkaware has trained 160 Club 18-30 reps to help them identify and minimise alcohol-related harm among young Brits abroad. Bespoke training is also being developed for NUS staff and the experiences of second-year students are helping to inform sensible drinking advice for impressionable freshers.

Drinking is deeply ingrained in our cultural habits. How can we alter that?

Britain's reputation for binge drinking goes back to the middle ages. No one is suggesting that finding a solution will be simple; it will take a co-ordinated long-term approach to change attitudes – and that's where Drinkaware comes in.

Speaking as a friend rather than as a nanny, we can help people of all ages to understand the effect drinking can have on themselves, their families and wider society.



By providing 'smarter drinking tips', information and advice, we can nudge people to change their behaviour so they can continue to enjoy a drink without putting themselves in harm's way.

Education is key to achieving sustained behaviour change. We want to be seen as the trusted source of independent advice, providing drinkers with greater access to the facts about alcohol. 'Why let good times go bad?' is proven to effectively persuade binge drinkers to change their drinking habits, thus reducing the need for more regulations that could penalise sensible drinkers.

The trade-backed 'Why let good times go bad?' campaign runs from 6 September for four weeks, for more info visit drinkaware.co.uk



“ It’s important for pubs to be part of the solution, not part of the problem ”

Campaign materials

Look out for posters, beer mats and other point-of-sale available FREE from PROPS – Go to the retailer channel at enterpriseinns.com and click on Building your Business then PROPS

FREE

Eating isn't cheating.

Don't take off without your wingman.

Eating isn't cheating.

Play it smooth with a break from the booze.

Don't let your night turn ugly.

'DON'T YOU THINK YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH?':
The Campaign for Smarter Drinking is relying on pubs to help positively influence drinkers