

Beer - UK - December 2013

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"The market is having greater success with the newer range of sweeter flavoured/alcoholic ginger beers which are typically positioned as gender-neutral and which are equally likely to be drunk by men and women. These continue to offer a route for beer brands to increase usage and make beer more accessible to women."

– Chris Wisson, Senior Drinks Analyst

This report looks at the following areas:

- Can cask ales play a role in boosting on-trade use?
- How can beer boost its appeal to female drinkers?
- How can beers build brand preference?
- How can stout address its 'heavy-going' image?

Beer remains a category in flux. While volume sales continue to fall, there are reasons for operators to be positive. Beer remains the leading drinks category by some distance, both in terms of usage and value sales this year. The year 2013 saw the removal of the beer tax escalator, providing long overdue relief for brewers.

Spirit/flavoured beers and lower-alcohol beers are showing reasonably strong growth from their small bases and gaining usage among groups such as 18-24s. Similarly, the craft movement continues to thrive, with the number of UK breweries reaching a 70-year high, providing drinkers with arguably the widest choice of beers they have ever had.

However, this also means that there are more brands competing for a shrinking 'share of throat' as beer is affected by the trend of falling overall alcohol usage, as a growing share of people are cutting back on their consumption. Convincing consumers of high quality and value for money remains important, not only for operators to compete against others in the beer market but also in terms of staving off competition from challengers such as cider.

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