

Consumer Attitudes to Drinking - UK - August 2010

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What is this report about?

This report looks at the alcoholic drinking habits of today's adult consumers. The alcoholic drinks market has weathered a near perfect storm over the last five years as first the smoking ban and then the recession exacerbated the decline of drinking in the on-trade and pushed more consumers towards drinking at home.

What have we found out?

- Despite alcohol consumption being in decline since 2004, almost half of consumers are drinking alcohol 'once a week' or 'at least twice per week or more', demonstrating how ingrained drinking alcohol is as part of British culture.
- As consumers are going out less often but spending more when they do, the on-trade needs to exploit the experiential nature of pub visiting. With almost half of consumers enjoying trying new drinks, particularly those aged 18-24, the industry needs to encourage up-selling through bartender knowledge and recommendation wherever possible.
- The off-trade has prospered as consumers have shifted to drinking at home more often, with wine and spirits the big winners. One way that retailers can differentiate themselves is by making improvements in guidance e.g. Tesco and Asda's electronic wine advisers help to inspire confidence and experimentation.
- Almost seven in ten consumers state that they do not like the feeling of losing control when drunk, which suggests that a more moderate and mature attitude to drinking is starting to emerge, which should provide opportunities for manufacturers of lower alcohol drinks.
- Beer continues to be the biggest category by volumes, although this is declining. The introduction of a tiered system in terms of strength in the lager market has helped revitalised the sector.
- Consumers' are expanding their drinking repertoires, especially those aged 25-34. Cider is now drunk by almost two fifths of all adults and young male drinkers' quest for more complex tasting ales, stouts and world beers is driving growth in these markets.

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