On-trade Soft Drinks - UK - December 2009

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What is this report about?

Mintel's consumer research shows that there is widespread dissatisfaction with soft drinks in the on-trade but particularly pubs, which rely primarily on draught serve. Consumers resent paying inflated prices for a low-quality product, and consider the range of soft drinks on offer to be limited and lacking in healthier options. Around a fifth of consumers think that pubs actively discourage consumption of soft drinks.

Research shows that a better soft drinks proposition would be particularly attractive to women, families and older consumers. In other words, just the audience pubs need to attract as they attempt to broaden their consumer base beyond men aged 18-24.

What have we found out?

- Cash-squeezed consumers have been cutting back on eating/drinking out.
 As a result, sales of on-trade soft drinks have declined by 6% (by value) between 2007 and 2009 in sharp contrast to 2004-2007 when sales grew steadily (8% by value).
- Mintel's research shows 29 million adults resent paying what they perceive
 to be very high prices for soft drinks in a pub or bar when they know they
 can buy it for so much cheaper in shops.
- Pubs, bars and restaurants primarily sell non-diet versions of soft drinks.
 Yet on-trade outlets are not maximising the potential opportunity as 32 million adults think they should stock a healthier range of soft drinks.
- Eight in ten people prefer to drink soft drinks rather than alcohol at lunchtime.
- The on-trade soft drinks market is dominated by Britvic and Coca Cola Enterprises (CCE) who between them account for 80% of the market (by value).
- Despite struggling for some years in the off-trade, Pepsi (owned by Britvic) is the joint top selling brand (along with Coca Cola) in the on-trade. The brand has benefited from Britvic's state-of-the-art dispensing technology.

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