

DRINKS GIANT DIAGEO LEADS ALCOHOL INDUSTRY IN CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN ASIA PACIFIC



Premium drinks company places great importance on CSR and urges consumers to drink responsibly



As the world's leading premium drinks company, the Diageo family of alcohol drinks brands, which includes iconic names such as Johnnie Walker, Guinness, Baileys and Smirnoff, are household names across the globe. The scale of popularity of some of these brands is staggering - for example, an astonishing 175 glasses of Johnnie Walker are drunk every second. Guinness became an international brand even before Coca-Cola had left the shores of America and over two billion pints are sold around the world every year.

With this in mind, a company such as Diageo cannot fail to be acutely aware of the influence it has over consumers. Since its formation just over ten years ago, one of the company's core values has always been to be proud of what it does and to act responsibly, with the highest standards of integrity.

Creating the code

Diageo has worked hard to ensure that it is a responsible corporate citizen - both globally and locally. The company has developed a code of business conduct, a responsible marketing code and an employee alcohol policy. Every Diageo office and employee across the world is expected to be familiar with these guidelines and to adhere to them in their working practices. For example, Diageo will only place its advertisements in media where a majority of the audience can be deemed to be over the legal purchase age of alcohol. Likewise, people seen drinking in its advertisements or in any marketing material must be at least 25 years old.

Community support

Diageo's activities go far beyond the walls of the company. Fully aware that the success of its drinks business is dependent on the environment in which the company find itself, its teams strive to support the communities in which they work.

Involvement ranges from a fund-raising concert to support an old people's home and an orphanage in Taiwan; helping to set up an environmental education centre on Singapore's nature reserve island of Pulau Ubin; working with the National Trust Korea to create an ecological village in an area of wasteland and partnering with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in China to help conserve Taihu Lake, China's third largest freshwater lake.

The big priority

Diageo's primary aim, which has been developed over the last decade, remains to ensure a sustainable place in society for alcohol beverages by taking strong and effective action to reduce the harm that occurs when alcohol is misused. The team believes passionately in Responsible Drinking (RD): while alcohol is there to be enjoyed and appreciated, it should also be consumed responsibly. And, it is on the company's shoulders to ensure that consumers understand how to drink alcohol in a controlled manner.

In recent years, Diageo has rolled out a number of RD initiatives throughout Asia, including a number of campaigns here in Singapore....



Funky feathered friends

Many readers may be aware of the most recent initiative, the 'Diageo Guardian Angel' campaign. Fronted by local celebrities Jamie Yeo and Utt, the campaign encouraged consumers to "listen to your Diageo Guardian Angel - if you drink, don't drive." For three months, a team of RD ambassadors, dressed as angels, visited Singapore's key clubs and bars on Friday nights distributing RD giveaways.

In the words of Lin Menuhin, alcohol and responsibility director, Diageo Asia Pacific: "Alcohol is there to be enjoyed - but responsibly. No one should ever drink and drive. Our Guardian Angels were designed to grab everyone's attention and help deliver this message in an appealing and inspirational way. We hoped to stimulate a thought process in people for them to think carefully about their actions. Over 350 people were either killed or injured on our roads last year because of drink driving - that's 350 too many."

The Angels handed out 10,000 leaflets containing RD tips such as Don't Drink and Drive and Space your Drinks with Non-Alcoholic Beverages, 5,000 Diageo Angels-branded tattoos, 10,000 branded water

bottles and 2,000 Diageo Angels T-shirts. When asked about why she chose to endorse the campaign, celebrity ambassador Jamie Yeo added: "The campaign was very refreshing, but most importantly meaningful. I am fully aware that my profession means that I am often in the public eye. I have to think very carefully about what I say and do as this will have an impact on others."

I am in a tremendous position where I can influence others to think – and stop – before they drink and drive."



Revvng up awareness through F1

The global Johnnie Walker sponsorship of the F1 Vodafone McLaren Mercedes has propelled the whisky brand's message of RD and safe driving onto television screens across the world. Campaigns are undertaken around race time in all F1 markets to maximise the message.

Possibly the most talked about event on the Singapore calendar, the forthcoming F1 night race will give Diageo a powerful platform to deliver the message 'stay in control - never drink and drive' to local and global audiences, through the sponsorship.

In advance of the race, Johnnie Walker is launching a Formula One™ interactive campaign - JOIN THE PACT. The campaign, led by the team's driver, Lewis Hamilton and two-time Formula One™ world champion, Mika Häkkinen, has been created to powerfully communicate the Never Drink and Drive message. The campaign will invite consumers to make a pact on the website www.jointhepact.com to Never Drink and Drive.

When asked about his visit to Singapore, Häkkinen commented: "I'm thrilled to be coming to the great city of Singapore to play a part in such an excellent campaign. Lewis and I feel that any chance we get to drive home this crucial life message to consumers is another great step forward. We urge everyone to Join the Pact and never drink and drive."

And what else is next?

As a relative newcomer to the Asian market – Diageo only set up its Asian headquarters in Singapore in early 2006 – the company's work in terms of educating the general public on RD has only just begun. Yet, the team is very proud of what it has achieved in such a short space of time. Each campaign has been innovative, eye-catching, well-executed and extremely well-received by the public.

Lin added: "As a company, we are very excited about the many campaigns which we have yet to roll out and feel that we will achieve great things in terms of raising awareness of the importance of Responsible Drinking." ■

Article contribution courtesy of DIAGEO, www.diageo.com

