Alcohol, Social Responsibility & you
What is Social Responsibility?

As someone working in a company that is involved in the production, marketing or sale of alcohol in the UK, it is important that you understand what is meant by the term ‘social responsibility’.

In relation to alcohol, the term is generally used to define the actions taken by industry to produce, market or sell alcohol in a way that promotes sensible consumption and in no way promotes alcohol misuse.

This is important because alcohol, whilst it is perfectly compatible with a healthy lifestyle when consumed in moderation, can have serious negative health and social consequences if consumed irresponsibly.

Your company may have a social responsibility policy which sets out its commitments in this area.

Why have a social responsibility policy?

The Government and health community recognise that although industry has a role to play, it is up to the individual consumer who chooses to drink to enjoy alcohol in a responsible manner.

Not only is there a moral imperative for businesses to act responsibly, but there are also sound commercial reasons for doing so:

- Supporting industry self-regulation and promoting responsible consumption may help to enhance your reputation as a respectable business;
- Promoting regular yet moderate consumption helps to ensure a sustainable long term business;
- Promoting responsible consumption helps to build the ‘premium’ nature of brands, and promotes long term consumer loyalty;
- Supporting industry self-regulation helps to preserve long term trading freedoms;
- Working for a responsible and ethical company may help to motivate staff;
- ‘Binge drinking’ and other types of alcohol misuse damage the reputation of the alcohol drinks industry as a whole;
- By acting responsibly, industry will increasingly be seen in a positive light by the ethical shareholder lobby.
What’s it got to do with me?

It is important that, as someone working for any company involved in the production, marketing or sale of alcohol in the UK, you remember that you are an ambassador for your company.

Working in the alcohol drinks industry is, and should be, fun. But the frequent availability of alcohol at work functions should be respected, and enjoyed responsibly.

In particular, it’s important that you don’t break the law. The legal alcohol limit for driving in the UK is 80mg of alcohol in 100ml of blood. There is no failsafe guide as to how to stay under the legal alcohol limit, so it is generally recommended that if you plan to drive you should avoid drinking alcohol.

Some useful things to remember to enjoy a safe and enjoyable night:

- Know what a unit is and how many are in your drink;
- Make sure you understand the Government’s Sensible Drinking Message and how it relates to you;
- Avoid top-ups so you can keep track of your unit intake;
- Consider alternating your drinks with water to stay refreshed;
- Consider soft drink ‘spacers’ between drinks to help pace an evening;
- Consider eating before or whilst drinking which can slow alcohol absorption;
- Think about how you’re going to get home before you leave home – grab a cab or designate a driver.
What’s the WSTA?

The Wine and Spirit Trade Association (WSTA) is the leading trade association representing the UK wine and spirit trade. The WSTA has developed and shared best practice which has been implemented across the UK drinks trade. This is set out in the Social Responsibility Standards for the Production, Marketing and Sale of Alcoholic Drinks (www.wsta.co.uk).

The WSTA has worked with its members (over 320 businesses involved across the wine and spirit supply chain) to develop a practical WSTA Toolkit: Social Responsibility to help ensure that all businesses, whatever their size and corporate make-up can successfully develop and implement a relevant and effective social responsibility policy.

The WSTA Toolkit: Social Responsibility is available from www.wsta.co.uk

Where can I find more information?

The WSTA is your industry trade association representing your interests with Government in the UK and Europe. It can help you with enquiries on technical or legal issues, and can provide you with further information on social responsibility.
www.wsta.co.uk

The Drinkaware Trust is an independent charity funded by the industry to run education campaigns on responsible alcohol consumption. It can provide you with information about drinking responsibly and keeping safe.
www.drinkaware.co.uk

The Portman Group runs the industry Code of Practice on naming, packaging and marketing alcoholic products.
www.portmangroup.co.uk

AIM - Alcohol in Moderation is a non profit organisation which promotes the responsible and moderate use of alcohol internationally. AIM maintains a free database of peer reviewed articles on alcohol, health and social aspect issues via www.aim-digest.com

The Wine And Spirit Trade Association
One strong voice for the trade

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