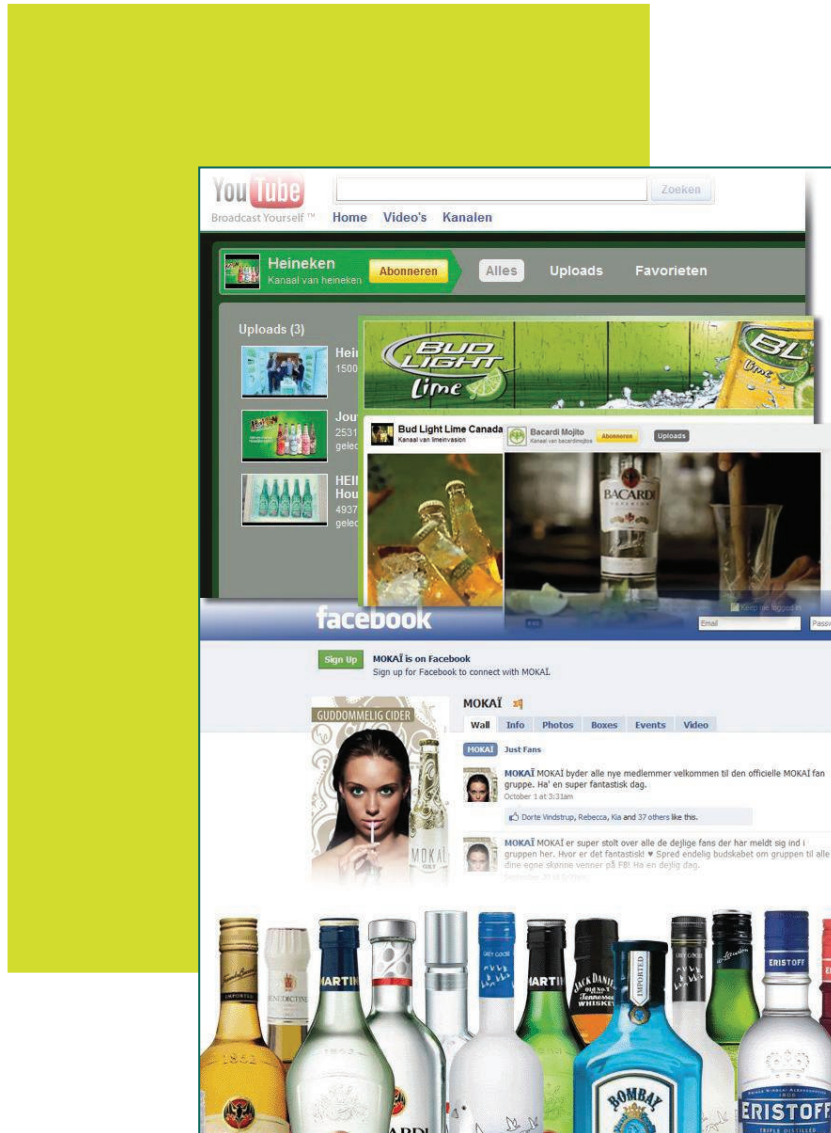
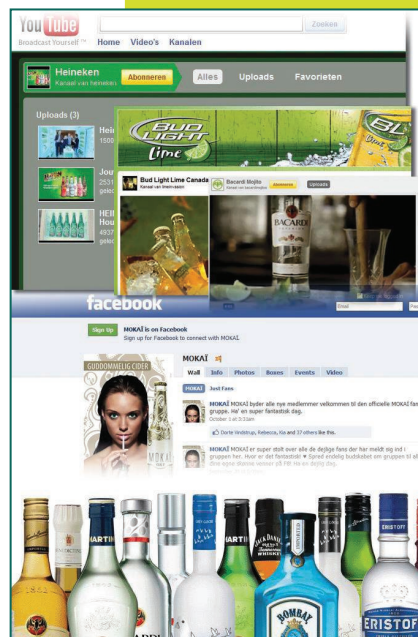


Alcohol advertising in new media Trends in Alcohol Marketing



Content

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Introduction

European figures are not publicly available, but American alcohol advertising expenditure figures show that new media investment by the industry are relatively small compared to other media, but are increasing fast (1). Relatively small investments in alcohol marketing expenditures reflect low costs and easy accessibility of new media. So although the price is small, the value of marketing in new media for alcohol advertisers is high.

European youngsters (16-24 years old) spend an increasing amount of time on the internet (2). Since 2007, they spend on average more time on the internet than they do watching television (2). Alcohol producers have kept in pace with this development and know how to reach these new consumers through new media.

This has, for example, been proven by an investigation by Marin Institute, which shows the large amount of paid alcohol advertisements on the social network website Facebook (3). Other research shows that one in every five Dutch youngsters (age 12-17) has ever visited an alcohol producer's website (4).

The following EUCAM trend report shows how alcohol advertisers make use of new media to reach their target groups. It seems that especially young people are reached and attracted by the marketing practices in new media.

Social Network Sites

Websites such as Facebook, Hyves, MSN, and Myspace are popular mediums for young people to stay in touch with each other. For example Facebook, the largest social network site of the world (over 250 million users), enables its users to create personalized pages, profiles and link up with other users with comparable interests. A third of the Facebook users are under the age of twenty (3). Not only have alcohol producers used social network sites for their paid ad spaces, but more importantly they have adopted the specific (mostly free) features of each network.

One of the producers who have embraced the marketing of their products through social network sites is Southern Comfort. The first company in the alcohol industry to dedicate its entire advertising budget to digital online properties, their main advertising outlet is Facebook (5). Their Facebook page offers company information as well as recipes, photos of products, events and featured artists and rebates.

(Source: <http://www.facebook.com/southerncomfort?v=wall&ref=search>, Facebook members only.)

facebook Home Profile Friends Inbox Gerard van der Waal Settings Logout Search

Southern Comfort Become a Fan

Wall Info Photos Recipes Rockstar Pic Rebate >>

Southern Comfort Just Fans

Southern Comfort What's the ultimate warm drink combo? Southern Comfort in Apple Cider, Coffee or Cocoa?

Fri at 5:08pm · Share

183 people like this.

View all 139 comments

Southern Comfort Last week we gave you an exclusive first look at the New Orleans photo shoot featuring Sophie Ellis-Bextor, Frankmusik and Remi Nicole. Check out the latest images of the artists enjoying delicious Southern Comfort cocktails in the home of jazz....Learn how to make these drinks at www.bigeasycocktails.co.uk

Another company that has turned to Facebook for its promotional value, is the Danish brewer Cult. Cult has a Facebook fan group for their product Mokai, which Facebook users can visit to find news and videos about the product, express their appreciation of the product and declare themselves fans of the product. Among other alcohol brands represented on Facebook are Sommersby Apple sider, Budweiser, Keystone Light, Coors Light, Crown Royal, Grey Goose, Smirnoff, Jack Daniels, Captain Morgan, Bacardi and Heineken (3).



Source: <http://www.facebook.com/CULT.MOKAI>

Producer's websites

Besides the use of third party websites, a popular place to find information and advertisements is on the producers' websites themselves. The time that these websites merely informed the visitors about the characteristics of the product is long gone. Nowadays, these websites have grown to encompass far more. For example the Dutch website of Heineken gives information on concerts, sports and events, as well as tickets to parties and special events. As such, the website presents itself as an expression of the lifestyle that the brand propagates.

However, it is not just through their product websites that alcohol producers spread their image. Creative use of the internet and its technologies has generated a vast array of interactive applications or so called widgets that help alcohol producers to market their product. One such widget is the Bacardi Banner Widget with which people could invite friends to their party or be invited for another party in a digital setting that was filled with Bacardi-branding (6). Another inventive move was the creation of a themed online radio station by Absolut Vodka, which played music that corresponded with the image of the product (7).



Part of the Heineken.nl homepage, showing an overview of sponsored concerts and sports events, as well as special offers (E-aanbiedingen). (Taken from Heineken.nl on November 11th, 2009.)



Part of an Evite, created with the Bacardi Banner Widget. (Taken from <http://www.Iacadvertising.com/custom/bacardi/bacardimojito>, on November 11th, 2009.)

User generated content

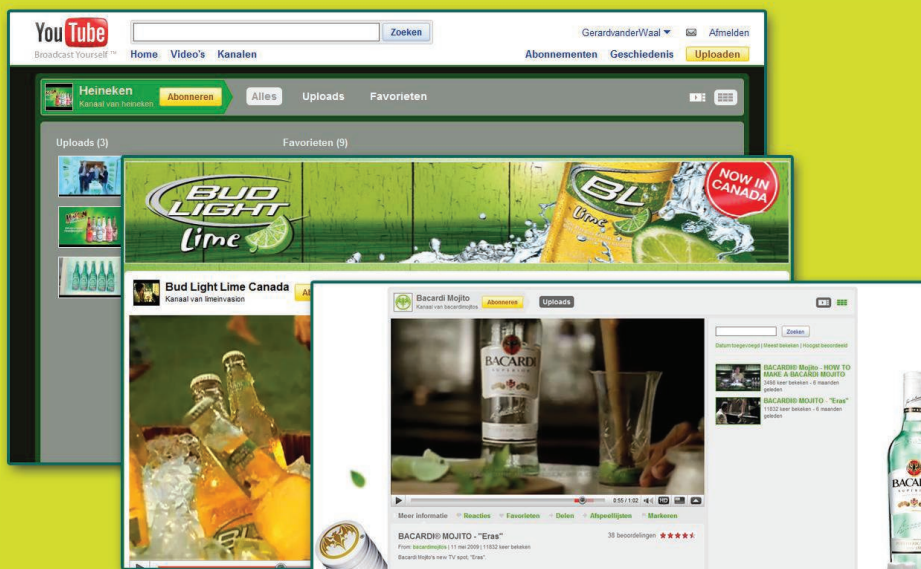
"Why do all the hard work yourself, when you could generate attention with content created by consumers?" This seems to be a recurring thought in many industries around the globe, especially for companies that have all the interactive features of the internet at hand. With the ever growing popularity and diminishing prices of digital camera's and camcorders, as well as the interactive possibilities of the web, it has become much easier for consumers to publish their pictures and videos online.



The Captain Morgan Pose of, taken at November 15 2009, from: <http://www.doubleclick.com/insight/gallery/examples/captain-morgan-pose-off.asp>

Consumers can post videos of the use of alcohol, of drunk people and their 'funny' actions as well as videos that vocalize their opinion about products. This did not escape the attention of alcohol producers which have eagerly called for consumers to send in pictures and videos of themselves which build on the brands image. A good example of this is the Captain Morgan pose off, in which consumers of Diagio's Captain Morgan Rum were asked to upload pictures of themselves in the same pose as the brands mascot Captain Morgan. The campaign included a gallery of all the uploaded pictures, a virtual spokes person, and instruction videos by Playboy's 'girls next door' (8).

However, it is not just consumers who use websites such as youtube.com, alcohol producers such as Heineken, Bacardi and Budweiser have opened their own Youtube channels with collections of various videos, such as television commercials, viral clips and special internet broadcasts. Below are parts of the respective YouTube channels of Heineken, Bud Lime Light and Bacardi Mojito.



Direct Marketing

Many forms of marketing rely on the consumer visiting the websites of producers. The internet provides many different opportunities, however, to target people that have professed to be interested in certain brands or products, either through email or certain applications for computers or smart phones.

Twitter

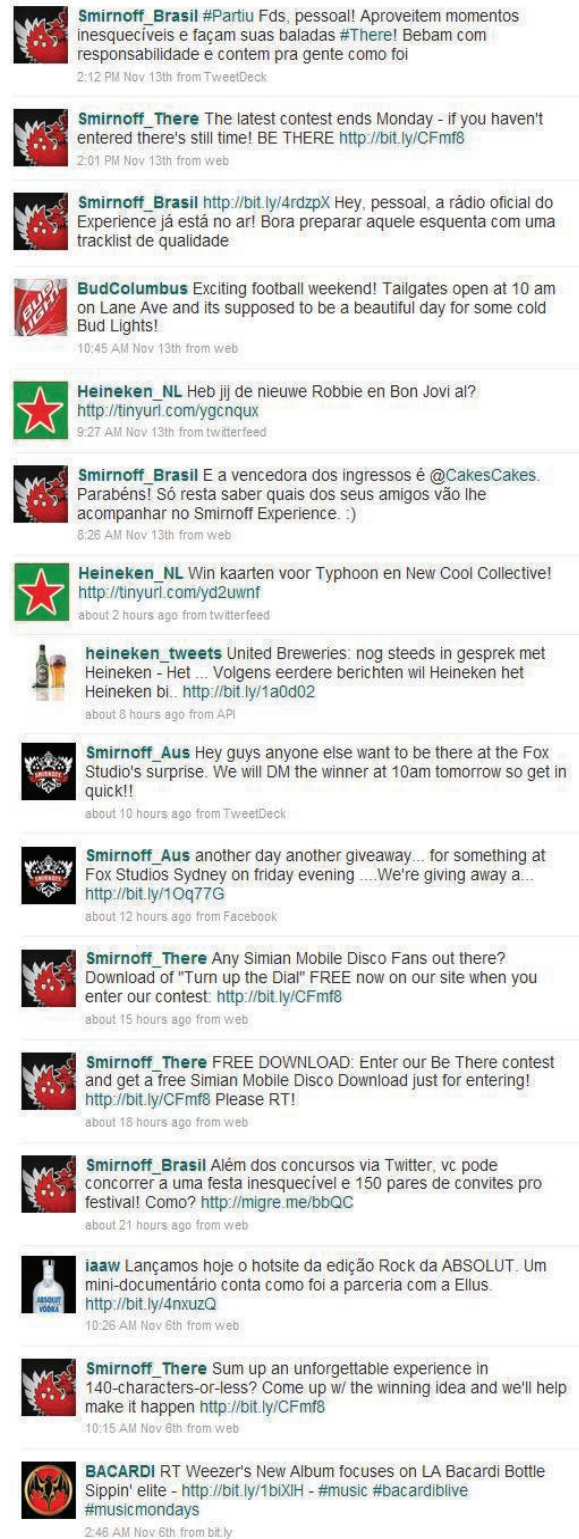
One of the more recent developments in the world of online communication is microblogging, which is sometimes dubbed the "SMS of the internet" (9). The most popular service to provide microblogging is Twitter which combined aspects of social networking sites with the technology of microblogging, providing users the opportunity to send fast and short messages of up to 140 characters. Recipients known as followers subscribe to the messages or "tweets" of selected users and receive the messages with applications on either computer or smart phone.

Alcohol producers such as Diageo have used Twitter for cross-media marketing campaigns such as the Smirnoff "Be there" campaign of the summer of 2009 (10). In this campaign, Twitter users could send in "an idea for how they propose to turn an ordinary situation into something extraordinary" (10). Other brands that we found use Twitter to market their brand and products are Heineken, Bacardi, Absolut vodka and Budweiser.

Right: A selection of international Twitter messages or tweets from Heineken Smirnoff, Budweiser, Absolut Vodka and Bacardi. (Taken on November 11th, 2009. Source: Twitter.com)

Below: The Twitter mascot. (Source: Twitter.com)

tweet
tweet!





An example of Email marketing, in this case a newsletter from the Dutch beer brewer Grolsch, informing the recipient about a new contest.



Part of the U.S. Heineken Beertender Club. (Taken at November 15, 2009, from: <http://beertender.usa.heineken.com>)

Email marketing

An easy and popular way for alcohol producers to keep potential customers informed about their products and create hype is through email marketing. People only have to subscribe once, providing their email address, and will thereafter periodically find newsletters about either products or brands in their inbox. These newsletters will inform the subscriber about events, sweepstakes, special offers and new products.

Loyalty websites

If there is anything but sales figures for producers to strive for, it is consumer loyalty. The last couple of years have seen the introduction of the integration of cutting edge internet technology with the well-tried practice of loyalty programs. In the Netherlands, for example, Heineken introduced the Beertender Club (beertender.nl) and in the United States SabMiller began the Miller High Life Extras products (millerhighlife.com). Both loyalty programs use comparable methods. First a consumer signs up for an account online, after which it becomes possible to enter codes, which are found either on Heineken Beertender products or on Miller High Life programs, to earn points. These points in turn function as currency to buy exclusive products such as downloadable songs, clothing and paraphernalia as well as to enter sweepstakes. In this way consumers are rewarded for their brand loyalty and gain more rewards if they buy more of the products.

(The login screen of Millers High Life Extras, taken from www.millerhighlife.com on November 11th, 2009.)

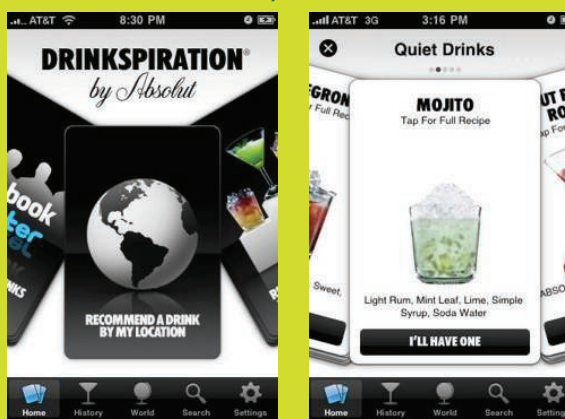


Smart Phone applications

With the advent of Apple's iPhone and the succeeding popularity of similar smart phones like the Google Android, software developers have been busy making small sized applications to use on such devices. The result is a plethora of easy to use, cheap (and free) programs for people to play around with on their phones. A development that was not lost on alcohol producers. The programs range from inventive little gizmos like Ibeer (11), which uses the movement detectors of the iPhone to simulate the movement of beer in a glass, to the intricate Drinkspiration by Absolut Vodka. The free Drinkspiration offers the user drink recommendations based on various categories. Firstly the user can choose between trendy drinks, drinks with an edge, drinks to fit whatever sort of bar scene they are in and even drinks based on the type of glass they want to use. Amongst other features, the application lets users see what the drinks look like, what the ingredients are and share information on what they are drinking on multiple social network sites. This way users can let everyone know just what they are drinking (8).



(Screenshot from the Ibeer instruction video. Source: Youtube.com.)



(Screenshots from Drinkspiration in action on the iPhone. Source: appshouter.com.)

Online adds

Just as producers and marketers can placate walls and buildings with advertisements and banners in the real world, so of course do they on the internet. Many commercial websites sell advertising space and the alcohol industry has proven to be a frequent buyer of these spaces. As far back as 2002 the American alcohol industry spent an annual \$21,6 million dollars on banners (12). An ancillary problem of banners on third party sites proves to be that in many cases the banners are placed on sites which are popular with young people, such as Hyves.nl and MSN (4).



(An example of banners found on the website www.piratebay.org on June 2nd, 2009, no longer online.)

An important development in alcohol marketing on the internet was the 2008 decision of Google to include advertisements for alcohol brands in their Adwords search program (13). Google first started out including beer advertisements in the United States in the fall of 2008, but soon broadened this company policy to also include spirits (13). In 2009, the company policy was expanded internationally to 32 countries among which 15 European countries (14). This development means that when using alcohol related search phrases in google, the user will also get to see a number of alcohol related advertisements right next to the search results.

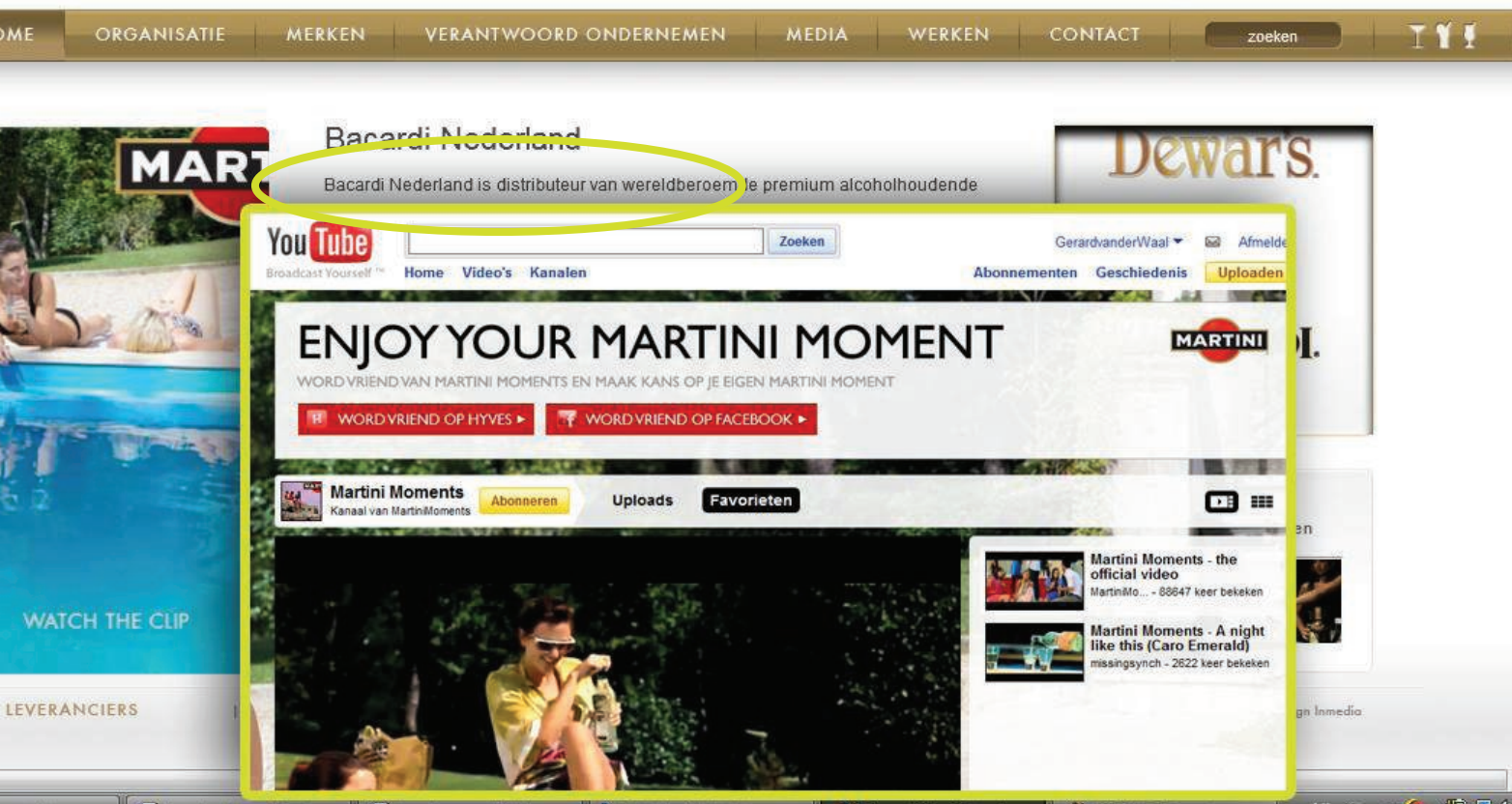


An example of Google Adwords. The used search phrase was "bier", the Dutch word for beer. On the right hand side, next to the search results appeared three sponsored links. The first one is by a local brewer, the second one was based upon earlier searches and the third is for an online beer store. (Quarry entered on November 11th, 2009.)

Internet-wide campaigns

While it would look as though all the above mentioned methods of brand and product marketing are powerful enough on their own, an additional strength of alcohol advertising in new media is the incorporation of different methods into one campaign. A good example of this is found on the Dutch website of Bacardi (www.bacardi-martini.nl). The homepage carries a banner of two women by a swimmingpool, drinking a Martini, under the logo of Martini, at the bottom of the banner are the words "watch the clip". When this banner is clicked, the user is redirected to Martini's YouTube channel, which, apart from various video clips, also sports a banner that encourages users to go to social network sites Hyves or Facebook (below: inside the circle) to become friends of Martini Moments and take part in a contest.

(Source: www.bacardi-martini.nl.)



Conclusion

The amount of alcohol marketing on the internet and other new media is increasing. This trend report shows that advertisers utilize the possibilities of creating interactive marketing that is more and more personalized to attract specific target groups. Alcohol advertisers attract young people by approaching them at several social network sites, banners on popular websites and approaching them directly by sending emails or creating a fan club. Even young people themselves have become part of the marketing strategy. By using user-generated websites, such as YouTube, youngsters become free and influential marketers. User-generated marketing practices are becoming more and more integrated in websites of alcohol producers. In this way it becomes very difficult for policy makers to distinguish advertising from expressions by consumers.

The anonymous, interactive and global nature of advertising on new media is a challenge for policy makers. Monitoring the adherence to content restrictions in existing self regulation by independent parties is problematic. Although challenging, clear restrictions on the volume of alcohol advertising that are embedded by law may be a necessary step to regulate alcohol marketing in new media.

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Trends in Alcohol Marketing

Alcohol advertising in new media

Alcohol marketing on the internet and other new media is on the rise. This trend report shows how advertisers utilize the possibilities of new media by creating interactive marketing that is more and more personalized to attract specific target groups. The report shows how alcohol advertisers attract young people by approaching them at several social network sites, through banners on popular websites and approaching them directly by sending emails or creating a fan club.

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