



wonderworks



WONDERWORKS
INTELLIGENCE REPORT
**CONSUMER EDUCATION AND THE
RISE OF THE HOME PREMISE**

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CONSUMER EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE AND THE RISE OF THE HOME PREMISE

In our previous report Education and Advocacy – A Drinks Brand's Hidden Weapon, we explored the quiet but vital role that education plays in generating engaged advocates within the On Trade. We saw that creating a well-educated trade audience not only boosts brand loyalty, but also generates consumer advocacy indirectly in the process. So why should brands consider direct consumer education?

The answer lies in the step between awareness and adoption.

Trade advocacy helps consumers to explore new drinks with confidence, advised by trusted professionals who enable that crucial first interaction with an unfamiliar brand. Direct consumer education provides the next step in converting drinkers to adopt a brand fully: giving them the knowledge and tools to enjoy the liquid, while allowing them to see how it can fit into and enhance their lifestyle.

The Rise of the Home Premise

Consumer education has always been a tool for brands to generate awareness and demand for their product outside of the supermarket aisle, to then drive easy conversion and Off Trade sales. And there are a number of tried and tested methods to explore here.

In recent years, however, we have seen rapid growth of education through digital channels, driven by social media communication and the evolution of the 'home bartender' – and now the creation of a blurred channel, the Home Premise. Brands have a wide arsenal of tools to connect with people, both in person and online, to raise awareness, align with lifestyles and get products into hands with the tap of a screen.

So the question of whether to focus on physical events or online tactics had already been gathering momentum when the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic removed any choice, forcing reliance on digital channels to educate, entertain and drive sales.

While the need to migrate 100% online has been a tremendous obstacle for the industry to overcome, we have seen amazing initiatives around the world to raise awareness and support education at home, creating a wealth of insight.

In this report we will review traditional methods of consumer education and examine how digital mechanics compare – the relative strengths, weaknesses and pitfalls, and the learnings that have emerged in the course of the global pandemic.

We'll cover:

- First-hand insights from leading figures in the industry.
- Wonderworks' guide to the key categories in traditional and digital consumer education.
- Best-in-class case studies.
- The opinions of consumers gathered through surveys of 200 UK- and US-based individuals.

We hope this 360° view of a rapidly changing world will provide plenty of food for thought.



Deanston Tasting experience

To gather some Top Tips, we reached out to various contacts in key positions within the drinks industry – from brand owners to brand ambassadors – who are responsible for driving consumer education.

They have informed 5 key considerations for effective delivery of consumer education events whether live, or virtual.

1. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

It is vital to ask questions to clearly understand audience needs:

- Are they casual drinkers or home bartenders?
- Do they have low or high levels of category knowledge?
- What skills can I pass on that will genuinely benefit them?
- Can I open up a new occasion or serve style for them?
- What are their other interests?

With this understanding it's crucial to tailor the content of your event.

“Engaging with people’s needs is essential if you’re trying to create a connection.”

Camille Vidal Founder of La Maison Wellness and creator of Mindful Cocktails™

“You have to make sure people are engaged, but you also have to be sure they’re getting the right information they want and need.”

Zahra Bates, Global Education Manager at Beam Suntory

2. CREATE IMMERSION

People learn far more effectively when there is something for them to play with, both physically and sensorily.

Activities like cocktail-mixing sessions get people hands-on and ensure they enjoy and remember the experience.

On a higher investment level, brand home and distillery visits are unparalleled opportunities to showcase the culture that makes a brand unique and bring its story to life.

Recreating a brand's culture in a bar takeover can also be extremely powerful, engaging the senses to transport consumers and help them get a feel for the brand's identity.

3. KEEP IT SIMPLE

Having defined your audience and the experience, you need to clearly define a set of up to three key messages or core identity points that people will leave with and keep your communication clear, simple and to the point.

4. AVOID BARRIERS TO ENTRY

While perfect technique and production knowledge are vital touchpoints in nurturing bartender advocacy, they can have the opposite effect on consumers.

It is important to make sure people leave an education experience understanding the quality and value of a product, but also feeling confident that they can explore and have fun at home.

This is why guided cocktail masterclasses can be so powerful as they encourage free experimentation and dispel any stigma or fear about misusing a product.

"People can be put off because nobody wants to be wrong or make something bad. They think it has to be a certain way."

Keli Rivers, Sipsmith US Brand Ambassador

"When people come to Speyside, my job is almost done, because all they need to do is see it, smell it, hear it, touch it."

Alex Robertson, Head of Heritage and Education at Chivas Brothers

"It's important to create something fun, something interactive, something people can get involved in."

Dan Wilks, Co-founder & Director at Create Cocktails



Virtual Gin Tasting At Shakespeare Distillery

"Bartenders love the facts and figures and they like to dig into the detail, but you need to transcend the technical for consumers."

Claire Warner, Co-founder of Æcorn

5. GIVE OPTIONS, NOT INSTRUCTIONS

Consumers are constantly bombarded with brand messages and can be very sceptical if sessions deliver a one-dimensional deep dive on a brand.

Offering similar brands from the same portfolio, or partnering with other brands in a category, allows consumers to form a more genuine bond as they feel less railroaded into one opinion.



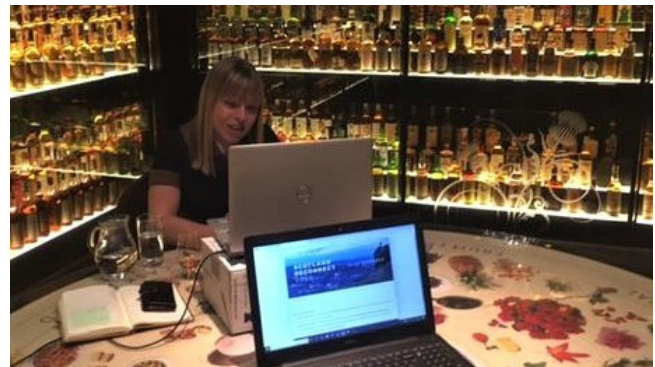
The Scotch Whisky Experience online tastings include all the elements to unlock the secrets of Scotch and delve into the flavours and stories behind Scotland's most famous product.

"I always include a mix of teaching about the drink, the ingredients and the occasion. It's important to let people make their own decisions and find their own balance."

Camille Vidal Founder of La Maison Wellness and creator of Mindful Cocktails™

"Having more than one brand makes sessions feel less like a sales pitch."

Keli Rivers, Sipsmith US Brand Ambassador



Consumer Insights:

Within our consumer survey, Cocktail Masterclasses were ranked as the most appealing brand experience in both the UK and the US, closely followed by Distillery Visits.

Core Categories of Traditional Consumer Education Events

Traditional consumer events balance the needs to entertain and educate their audience to bring their brand to life.

Educate ←

→ **Entertain**

Drive Credibility

Drive Emotional Connection



TT Liquor cocktail classes



Roku Gin Pop up bar at Taste of London



La Maison Wellness on vegan drinks

Education Sessions

Special Experiences

Passion Point Events

Experiences best held in smaller groups, helping to upskill consumers with brand information, tasting skills and drinks classes.

Short duration events to grab attention and headlines, creating a unique experience that can immerse visitors in your brand’s heritage and culture.

Partnership with events that align with your customers’ lifestyles and interests to create a unique elevated cultural experience.

Examples:

- Cocktail classes
- Guided tastings
- Meet the Maker sessions

Examples:

- Lighthouse bar takeovers
- Pop-up bar events
- Distillery visits (even virtual!)

Examples:

- Art / Music / Sport / Lifestyle collaborations
- Restaurant collaborations
- Festival pop-ups

Suited to:

Educating home bartenders
Opening new serve occasions

Suited to:

Engaging casual drinkers
Raising profile

Suited to:

Entertaining all categories of consumer
Mass awareness

Digital Approaches to Consumer Education in the Home Premise

The growth of social media has allowed many of the traditional approaches to consumer education to evolve steadily to the point where they can now take place digitally and enter the Home Premise. People today share an entire digital life online, and with the pandemic, brands currently have a captive audience more keen to experiment.

A dialogue has been opened between brands and consumers on a range of levels, from online masterclasses to the simple act of consumers being able to share pictures of the drinks they have made at home.

This dialogue is also more globally accessible than it has ever been, allowing brands to reach thousands of people across the world instantly. Rather than travelling significant distances to visit a distillery or meet the creator of a brand, consumers can have this content delivered to them at home.

But while the reach and access potential of digital education is enormous, it comes with limitations on engagement and interactivity – key values of face-to-face contact.

This factor has been one of the main challenges faced by brands over the course of the Pandemic.

So How Do We Replace the Face-to-Face?

The steps that come together so naturally in an Out-Of-Home event format – education, entertainment, personalisation and interaction with the product itself – are far more difficult to deliver online.

While traditional live event formats apply – aligning to passion points, creating a cultural immersion and passing on skills through education – delivery has to be adapted.

Learnings over the last year of how to overcome barriers tell us that a more single-minded communication is needed, with more distinct separation of the goal being whether to educate, or entertain. This must be combined with a more dynamic and evolved integration of retail and e-commerce in order to get product in hand for tasting.



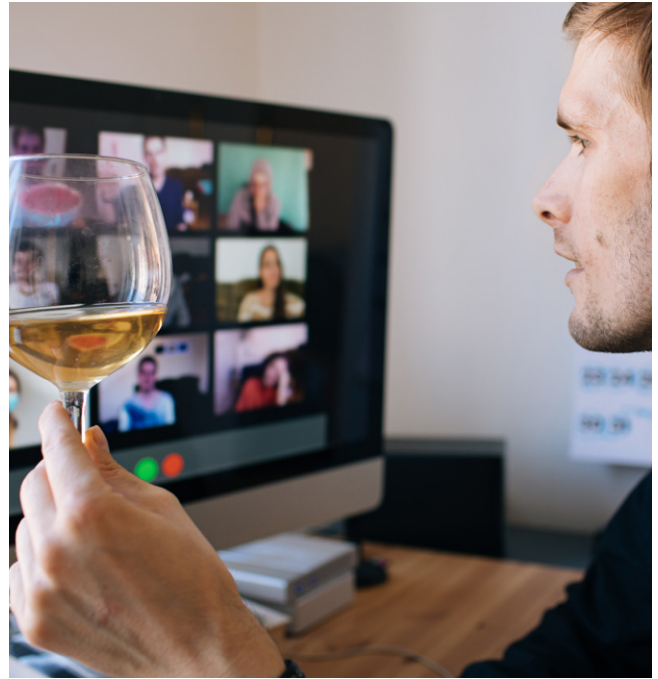
TT Liquor's online masterclasses were "Inspired by the Lockdown Era"

Consumer Insights:

In both the US and the UK, our survey showed that when at home, 62% of consumers experiment with making cocktails for themselves at home.

Creativity is on the rise – 70% of consumers surveyed in the UK, and 48% in the US, said they have been more adventurous with their drinks choices during lockdown.

Integrate e-commerce – When shopping online, 61% of consumers said they used their smartphones and 26% said their purchasing is influenced through social media links.



What Do the Experts Say about Consumer Education Online?

Online education offers the opportunity to provide a steady stream of At Home entertainment for consumers and a means for people around the world to come together.

The drive for content may well be present, but a whole year on, a level of saturation and widespread 'Zoom fatigue' pose barriers to online events.

With that challenge comes the opportunity to observe and learn what tactics drive consumer engagement, so that online education tactics post-Covid-19 can be optimised and refined.

We have collected some Top Tips from our industry experts.

1. DELIVER SOMETHING DIFFERENT

It's very easy to get lost in the clamour of social media, so it's important to find ways to make digital content and events distinct and personal, heroing a brand's unique value.

Hosting a cocktail class or tasting are logical and easy options to go for, but it is essential to deliver extra value: entertainment, activities or brand partnerships can all help build allure.

The more distinct and personal the theme of an event, the more likely it is that consumers will connect and better understand the brand.

Consumer Insights:

Within our consumer survey, 54% of consumers had looked for ways to enjoy drinks with friends through an online experience during the pandemic, but only 36% had taken part in one.

"Everybody's at home, everybody is bored, everybody is looking for some sort of entertainment and engagement..."

Claire Warner, Co-founder of Æcorn

"People have almost got masterclass fatigue... it's important to offer something different, something extra."

Dan Wilks, Co-founder & Director at Create Cocktails

2. UTILISE EXPANDED ACCESS

Brands can create a sense of travel and adventure for consumers by sharing a taste of the culture and setting of a brand's home; it can be as simple as offering a live video tour of your distillery.

Access to distillers, master blenders, renowned bartenders and brand ambassadors allows personal interaction with brand experts, with individuals sharing deeper and more valuable knowledge in their own ways – assets that would normally only be available to select groups or at events.



'Chivas The Blend Pack' from Chivas' virtual whisky masterclass

“A key takeout is a global audience has access to our Master Distillers and Blenders from their own home.”

Alex Robertson, Head of Heritage and Education at Chivas Brothers

3. MAKE IT INFORMAL AND FUN

It can feel like there's a lot riding on streamed events, but with online content it's more important than ever that the people leading the experience are having fun, driving the energy and enjoyment. Bartenders or BAs are perfect hosts as they've developed a rapport and understanding of how to communicate with consumers.

Fundamentally, social media is about socialising – it's important to remember that.

“There's one video where I drop the orange peel on the floor and just said, “Well, that's gone! I'll have to make another one!” – and I left that in because that's what you do when you make drinks at home. You drop things.”

Kirsten Jarin, UK Brand Ambassador for Bulleit Bourbon



TT Liquor virtual cocktail classes

“Occasion is where your brand shows up for the consumer and becomes relevant for their life.”

Claire Warner, Co-founder of Æcorn

4. BUILD AN ONLINE CULTURE

This is a particular lesson that can be learned from Low and No alcohol brands. Stepping beyond the alcohol categories which have centuries of cultural ritual and occasion, they have had to build cultural relevance – and have done so in the era of social media.

Many brands have aligned to trends of mindfulness, wellness and expanding social occasions by leaving behind alcohol. They understand their consumer and their needs – engaged in living their life to the fullest and open to discovering new drinks that can enhance that lifestyle, making particular use of the power of occasion.

When all your social media posts and online events can align to and bolster the culture that is relevant to your audience’s needs, you will develop a far more purposeful and engaged online community.



Mermaid Pink Gin & La Maison Wellness workshop

“It’s important to offer people new opportunities, providing new, fun ways they can enjoy drinks.”

Camille Vidal Founder of La Maison Wellness and creator of Mindful Cocktails™

5. MAXIMISE INTERACTION

In many ways, getting people tuned in is the hardest part. Once consumers have reached that stage, they have dedicated the time to attend, so it is essential to engage with them.

Maximising interaction, getting consumers involved and having fun maintain the drive and energy that online education can lack.

Delivered drinks boxes are a fantastic way to achieve this, but even something as simple as having someone dedicated to managing the comments section and creating a conversation is extremely valuable.

“When someone does log on [for an online drinks experience] one thing we can say is we’ve already got a engaged customer.”

Alex Robertson, Head of Heritage and Education at Chivas Brothers



“Once people have the tasting kits in their hands, they’re immediately ready to go and excited to start the session.”

Kirsten Jarin, UK Brand Ambassador for Bulleit Bourbon

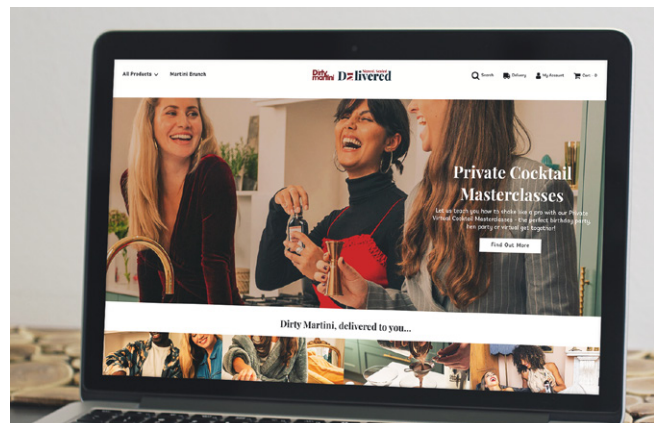
6. GET THE PRODUCT INTO PEOPLE’S HANDS

Getting drinks in hand is never an issue in traditional face to face education experiences. But when the education is delivered digitally, one of the biggest barriers is ensuring that the audience have the product to actually taste – let alone any additional products or tools to create drinks with.

This is where digital delivery is less convenient than traditional, but it is still essential to encourage consumers to interact with a product while learning about it. There are several ways to overcome this barrier however, targeting both active and passive education opportunities:

ATTACH A VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE

Delivering an extra experience when purchasing a product can not only help to boost sales, but also allows customers to gain a deeper appreciation of the product while they sip. Bottle neck collars to redeem a virtual distillery tour, QR codes that take you to a guided cocktail recipe video or even using Augmented Reality to animate the bottle can all be fantastic tools to boost engagement and deliver education.



Dirty Martini’s At Home shop offers several experiences from Brunch to Masterclasses crafting Chocolate Martinis (pictured above)



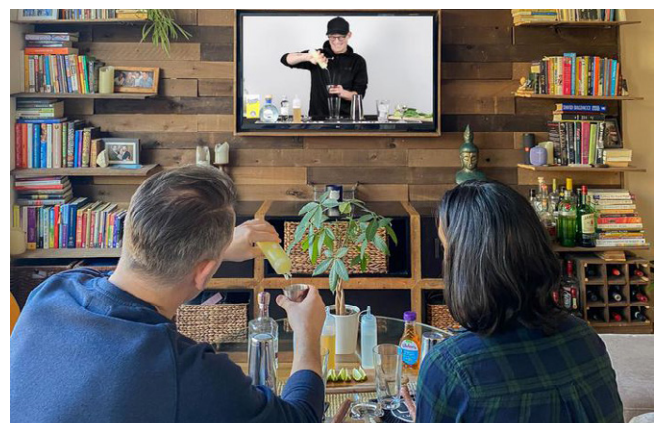
Hayman’s Virtual Gin Experience

MAKE THE EXPERIENCE THE PRODUCT TO PURCHASE

A particularly useful approach in the e-commerce channel. When selling online ‘Tasting Experiences’, include samples, cocktail kits, or even pre-batched cocktails as part of the purchase, sending a box of liquid, ingredients and tools to the consumer at home ahead of the class. Experience apps like Fever now boast a wide range of branded online events that show the power of providing a convenient drink with purchase.

CREATE A COMMUNITY FROM YOUR EXISTING CONSUMERS

Don’t forget about existing customers that already have your product in their house! Inviting them to then take part in digital masterclasses, or be a part of an online tasting is then a great way to drive advocacy and repeat purchase. Creating a community of loyal consumers through delivering digital education is a win on many levels.



Identifying Our Key Categories of Online Consumer Education Events

CONTENT TO EDUCATE

A mix of regularly shared bite-size educational pieces, larger online education events and value-added POS in e-commerce combine to drive awareness and upskill consumers.

Examples:

- DIY cocktails and masterclasses
- Social media recipe content
- Value-added guides with purchase

Suited to:

Home bartenders - upskilling the engaged home drinker to help hone their skills.

EXPERIENCES TO ENTERTAIN

High-energy events delivered directly into people's homes get consumers excited as they interact with the product, working to recreate that bar atmosphere.

Examples:

- Nights out at home
- Drinks delivered
- Retail experiences

Suited to:

Bar-goers - more casual consumers who are looking to bring the bar experience home.

E-Commerce:

Underpinning both groups of tactics is the need for a more advanced and integrated use of retail, e-commerce and delivery to get glass in hand and give people that all-important first taste when visiting a bar is not an option.

Consumer Insights:

The importance of getting drinks in hand - 74% of our survey responders said they would buy a more expensive drink brand they know rather than a cheaper alternative they hadn't tried before.

70% said they were more likely to buy a product they hadn't tried if offered in as a miniature.

66% of consumers said they got their drinks supplies from supermarkets/grocery stores.

The potential for cocktail kits - 37% said they had used cocktail kits at home, but 63% would be more willing to buy one if they came with a virtual experience like a drinks class or distillery tour.

The Future of Packaging - 70% of the people we surveyed said they would use an on-pack QR code.

Stand out at home brand education experiences:

CONTENT TO EDUCATE

DIY DRINKS AND ONLINE MASTERCLASSES

World Class x Cocktail Porter’s London Cocktail Week VR Boxes

To mark **London Cocktail Week**, World Class and Cocktail Porter collaborated to deliver weekly cocktail kits to consumers around the UK to create classic cocktails with brand ambassadors in online masterclasses and learn how three competition-winning bartenders created twists on those drinks.

This initiative’s power is that it made accessible personal advice from top tier bartenders and BAs who passed on valuable skills and nurtured playful discovery, removing that mixing stigma.



Passionfruit Margarita Petit Kit



The Bar at The Happy Place Virtual Festival | Brought to you by CEDER'S

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

Ceder’s Bar at The Happy Place Festival

We have seen amazing social content throughout lockdown with **Diageo BAs’ home recipe videos**, podcasts like **Spritzing Hour** with Claire Warner and Chivas Brothers’ **Scotch Watch** YouTube Live series.

A standout example for us, however, was the **Ceder’s Bar** sponsorship of Fearne Cotton’s **The Happy Place Festival**. They adapted the bar to take place virtually, creating a series of cocktail recipe videos supported with at-home kits and celebrity guest DJ sets. The content streamed live across social media platforms, tapped into the star power of the wide selection of celebrity guests, and was followed up with virtual wellness trip events and giveaways to maintain the connection.

Each of these initiatives built a culture around their audience, tailoring content to be part of the lifestyle, delivering recipes and knowledge relevant to them.

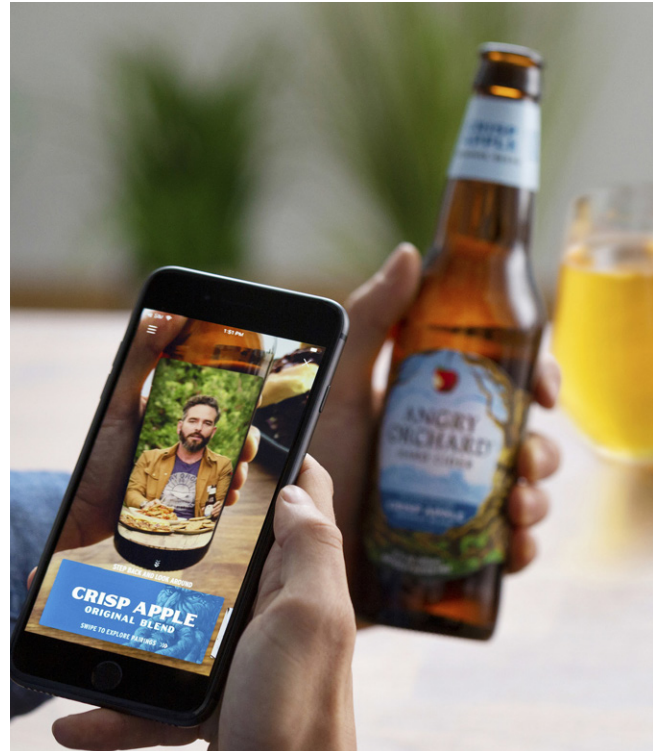
VALUE-ADDED GUIDES WITH PURCHASE

Angry Orchard's Augmented Reality Bottles

Recipe guides with purchase, such as **Fever-Tree's** pairing wheel and **CleanCo's** beautiful recipe swatch booklets, are powerful tools to help consumers make better drinks at home.

Recently **Angry Orchard** took recipe guides to a new virtual level using on-pack QR codes to create Augmented Reality experiences. When scanned, Angry Orchard's bottles come to life, with head cider maker Ryan Burk sharing recipes for food pairings for each of its ciders.

All of these examples show that providing useful knowledge with purchase can help consumers feel confident to play and experiment at home and promote consumption occasions.



The Angry Orchard Cider+Food App makes it simple to pair your favorite ciders at the table

EXPERIENCES TO ENTERTAIN

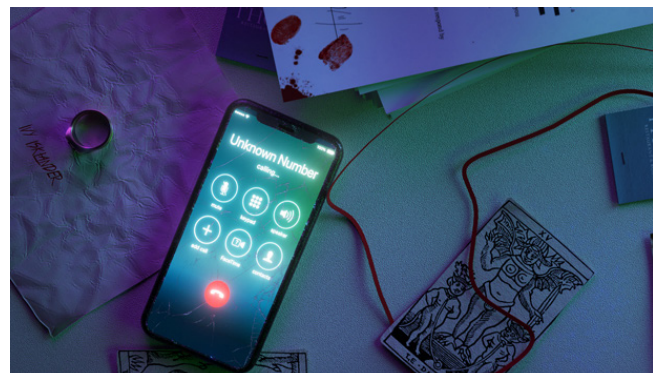
NIGHTS OUT AT HOME

Swamp Motel and Create Cocktails' Escape Room Experience

Local events Apps like **Fever** now have whole categories for 'Experiences at Home' as brands have sought to translate the essence of special brand events to work at home.

Standing out from the crowd can be hard, but **Create Cocktails** and **Swamp Motel's** collaborative online escape room managed this spectacularly. The experience brought guests together to solve riddles online while enjoying homemade cocktails provided through delivered kits and bartender-guided online masterclasses.

Creating 'night out' events At Home is extremely powerful, taking the work out of remote socialisation and using the power of e-commerce to get drinks in people's hands.



DRINKS DELIVERED

Nine Lives Drinks Boxes

Brands around the world have looked to capitalise on drinks delivery, with **Bacardi** investing £1.5 million in a partnership with **Deliveroo** and other brands partnering with services like **Uber Eats** and **Drizly**.

Taking things a step further, London's **Nine Lives** bar began delivering boxes, bottled and canned cocktails and even spirits and mixer kits. With each box, they also supplied bamboo straws, garnishes, snacks, incense, garnishes and a bespoke playlist to help people create the bar atmosphere At Home.



Nine Lives Ballers. Curfew Cocktail Kit

While bigger events can provide greater entertainment, often people are simply looking to enjoy a good drink and the social atmosphere that goes with that, so drinks delivery has become a vital way for consumers to experiment and treat themselves.

RETAIL EXPERIENCES

SingleCut's Big In Japan IPA

Cocktail boxes are fantastic tools for unique experiences at home, but technology has allowed brands to pioneer even more creative examples. For example, **The Glenlivet Spectra** uses QR codes and three fractal bottles of unlabelled whiskies to create a guided blind tasting experience at home.

Even more unique is the brilliant packaging of **SingleCut Beersmiths' Big In Japan IPA**. The brand created intricately decorated QR codes on the front of their beers with integrated pictures

and clues to guess rock songs that were big in Japan. By then scanning the codes, drinkers can find the answers together with curated Spotify playlists to go with their beer.

Smart retail sets and packaging are an amazing opportunity and technology has meant that the experiences that brands deliver can be more socially integrated and engaging than ever.



The playlists on Spotify received over 5,000 unique visits, more than three times the visits SingleCut's website typically receives in the same time frame.

WE WONDER

So what have we learned and what is the future for the Home Premise?

Drinks brands and bars have been experimenting with ways to interact more directly with the Home Premise for years.

The area has been a growing frontier and a huge opportunity to exploit, offering access to an even wider audience – but Covid-19 forced reliance on online communication long before a lot of brands had perfected their tactics.

As a result, the last year has been a teething period for the drinks industry, with brands seeking to find ways to translate the tactics of traditional Out-Of-Home consumer education into strategies that work At Home.

The need persists to balance education, entertainment value, brand messaging and providing skills. We've seen that, in many ways, core event models such as masterclasses, distillery visits and sponsored events, are still powerful when executed online. We've also seen that they continue to work best to deliver a more meaningful experience when done in collaboration with bars and bartenders, adding credibility and connection with consumers.

While Zoom fatigue has been an issue, creativity and a breakdown of the barriers between brand and consumer have allowed a more genuine connection to form. Brands can now develop an integrated community between themselves, the bartenders they work with and consumers – and this offers a whole new platform for education.

While the world is excited to get back into bars, there will inevitably be a recovery period as consumers regain confidence and as the On Trade adapts to their new circumstances. Home consumption has also fundamentally evolved to become a more established occasion, and so while a return towards normal is on the way, consumer education in the Home Premise is here to stay.

As the industry recovers, we look forward to seeing how this new integration and blurring of the lines can create exciting opportunities for brands and bars to work together.

Do pick up the phone if you want to continue the discussion: we'd love to hear from you if you want to delve deeper.

See you in the next one!





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