

# The State of Drinks Industry Social Media

**How drinks producers are using social media to grow their brands and sales**

Written by John Newton FCIM, director of marketing, just-drinks

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## Executive summary

- Social media has gone through three ages: the battle of the networks (the **where**); the brands war for followers (the **who**); and now, in the third age, the fight for relevance (the **what**) and resonance (the **why**).
- Drinks producers are having to balance the consumer demand for authentic brands with the relentless appetite for innovative content and the need to hit commercial targets.
- Our research has identified four key social media campaign types in use by drinks manufacturers today: Cause-led, Events-led, Community-led and Promotion-led.
- Events sponsorship has been central to drinks marketing plans for decades. The desire for more control over the events themselves, plus the need to develop more original content that can be shared on social media, has led many drinks producers to also become promoters and publishers.
- The comparatively long lifespan of many drinks brands, and consumers' thirst for authenticity, has led to the development of social media content designed specifically for brand loyalists.
- Consumer disillusionment with corporate culture, apathy towards discussing brands on social media and an increased understanding of consumer drivers within drinks manufacturers has resulted in a number of cause-led social media campaigns.
- The requirement for accurate return-on-investment (ROI) data, previously a constraining factor on social media advertising for some drinks manufacturers, is now being addressed.
- Brands need to consider regional variations in both the penetration of individual social networks, and local sensibilities, when constructing international social media campaigns.



## John Newton FCIM

John Newton is the director of marketing for drinks industry website just-drinks and a chartered marketer. After graduating from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, John spent a decade in London in media and marketing roles in companies including Yahoo!, Carlton Television and TNS Global, during which time he was part of the *Media Week* and *Campaign* sales team of the year. More recently, he held the post of chief operating officer at a digital marketing agency.

In 2014, John published *Nurture*, winner of Best Management Book of 2015 in the Small Business Book Awards. He is a Fellow of the CIM and ISMM, and a business leader within the Marketing Society. John has edited two books on search marketing, and is a regular reviewer for the Marketing Society's book club.