

**Distilled Spirits Council's Guidance Note
on
Responsible Digital Marketing Communications**

Introduction

This Guidance Note for responsible digital marketing communications is an integral part of the Distilled Spirits Council's Code of Responsible Practices for Beverage Alcohol Advertising and Marketing and should be read in conjunction with its provisions.

The members of DISCUS recognize the increasingly important role of digital marketing and believe it provides valuable and appropriate tools to reach adult consumers. As an extension of our commitment to market our brands responsibly to adults and to respect their privacy, we have developed additional principles relevant to digital marketing to reach users of legal purchase age.

Digital marketing activities are in a stage of evolutionary development, where new trends are likely to occur rapidly. This Guidance Note will therefore be reviewed on a regular basis and updated whenever necessary.

Scope

The Guidance Note applies to branded digital marketing communications (paid and unpaid) of DISCUS member companies, including but not limited to communications on websites such as social network sites and blogs, as well as mobile communications and applications.

Basic Principles

1. Digital marketing communications are intended for adults of legal purchase age.
2. Digital marketing communications should be placed only in media where at least 71.6% of the audience is reasonably expected to be of the legal purchase age.
3. Digital marketing communications on a site or web page controlled by the brand advertiser that involve direct interaction with a user should require age affirmation by the user prior to full user engagement of that communication to determine that the user is of legal purchase age.
4. User-generated content on a site or web page controlled by the brand advertiser must be monitored and moderated on a regular basis.
5. Digital marketing communications that are intended to be forwarded by users should include instructions to individuals downloading the content that they should

not forward these materials to individuals below the legal purchase age.

6. Digital marketing communications must respect user privacy.
7. Digital marketing communications and product promotions must be transparent as brand marketing by being identified as such.

Definitions and Guidance to Implement Principles

1. **Direct interaction** is a two-way communication between the user and the brand advertiser on a site or web page controlled by the brand advertiser. It occurs when the user affirmatively interacts with the brand advertiser, such as responding to a direct communication from the brand advertiser.
2. **Age affirmation** is a process or a mechanism by which users provide their full date of birth (month, day and year) and, when appropriate, country of residence to affirm they are of legal purchase age. Age affirmation mechanisms may vary depending upon available technology and examples could include, among other things, an age affirmation page, an email or instant messaging age affirmation, or the use of a site's "registered user" database of users of legal purchase age.

If a user enters a date of birth that indicates they are under the legal purchase age, access to a member-controlled website should be denied and visitors should be given an appropriate message and/or directed to an information website on responsible drinking, such as those found at The Century Council's website (<http://www.centurycouncil.org>) or on the site itself.

3. **User Generated Content (UGC)** is material (including text, pictures, audios, and videos) that has not been created by the brand advertiser, but by a user. UGC that appears on a site or web page controlled by the brand advertiser should be monitored each business day or, at a minimum, every five business days. When content is determined to be inappropriate, the inappropriate material should be removed promptly. A disclaimer should appear saying that all inappropriate content generated by users will be removed from the site or web page over which the brand advertiser has control.
4. **"Forwardable" content** is any branded digital content placed on a site in a manner that is designed or enabled to be shared, such as with a share, download or email "button click." Such content should include instructions to individuals downloading the content that they should not forward these materials to individuals below the legal purchase age.
5. **Social Responsibility Statements** should be included in all digital marketing communications where practicable.

6. **Privacy policies** govern the collection of personal information from adults of legal purchase age and encompass any direct digital marketing or advertising whether conducted through a social networking site, website or other digital channel and must ensure the following:
- Prior to the collection of any information, the brand advertiser will require that individual to affirm that they are of legal purchase age and user information only can be collected from those individuals who are of the legal purchase age.
 - The brand advertiser shall employ a mechanism for a user to “opt-in” before receiving a direct digital marketing communication and to “opt-out” to discontinue receiving such direct communications.
 - Clear information must be provided about collection and use of personal data. Under no circumstances will the information collected be sold or shared with third parties unrelated to the brand advertiser.
 - Users should be encouraged to read the privacy statement before submitting their information.
 - Measures will be taken to keep user information secure and protected from loss or theft.

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