

How to Sell Something Else, which is Actually the Same – Beer to Women?!

Mónika Fodor Dr.Ph.D.

senior lecturer, Budapest Business School, Faculty of International Management and Business, fodor.monika@kkfk.bgf.hu

Szilvia Mészáros-Pintér

master student, Budapest Business School, Faculty of International Management and Business, szilpinter@gmail.com

András Medve Dr.Ph.D.

Dean, College Professor, Department Head, Óbuda University – Keleti Károly Faculty of Economics, medve@uni-obuda.hu

Abstract: The thesis for the beer industry is an “eternal” theme and it is up to date according to the trends observed in Hungary during the last three years. Due to the current spread of flavored, non-alcoholic and sugar-free beers the opportunity to sell beer to women is not just an actual but also an exciting question which is waiting for an answer by marketing experts. In the present paper we would like to analyze the beer consumption and purchasing habits of women in Hungary with the help of primary and secondary examinations carried out in the course of 2012. Our main objective was to advise the players of the Hungarian beer industry how to reach the segment of women in a proper and effective way. During the primary research we used qualitative and quantitative methods: paired interviews and standardized questionnaires too. In this study we present the main subresults of our primary country-wide survey and our proposals for different communication devices which help to achieve the target group properly. Our present study shows partial results of a preliminary research with the aim to reveal the main outlines of female beer consumption habits and thus lays the base for the next phase of the research which serves a deeper understanding of potential target markets’ characteristics.

Keywords: consumer behavior, integrated marketing communication, primary research

1 Introduction

During the 1990's the beer consumption per capita exceeded 100 liters in Hungary, nowadays, by contrast, this figure hardly reaches 60. Since the dominant players of the domestic beer industry payed close to HUF 61 billion in taxes directly to the Hungarian state and contributed to the employment of 1700 people directly and 26 300 indirectly in 2011, it is not allowed to let the industry decline (Magyar Sörgyártók Sz., 2011).

The crisis started in 2008 is made a deep pressure on the consumption. According to Csiszarik-Kocsir (2011a, 2011b) we can state, that the food consumption, and the consumption of excise goods is the last one, where the consumers make changes, instead of the buying of durable good, healthcare products, etc.

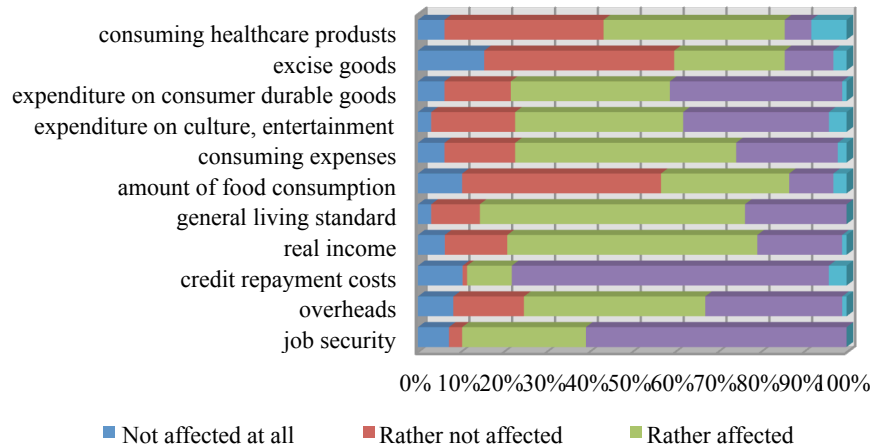


Figure 1
 The effects of the crisis
 Source: Csiszarik-Kocsir, 2011a

Moreover concentrating on different innovations it is obvious that the solution could be to target new groups of customers – beside the traditional 25-35 year-old men - namely women and elder people.

1.1 Women and the 21st century

The role of women and social expectations set for them have changed significantly in recent decades. Since women are more likely to appear in the labour market even in leadership positions (Lazányi, 2005) and have own earnings, they strengthened as consumers (Pongrácz, 2005). Today we can say that women are the engines of economy and they have become more important members of the consumer society than men. They are responsible for the majority of spendings

and much of the purchasing decisions are also made by females (Marketinginfo, 2011).

There are numerous product categories in which gender differences of consumption are visible, although these products are not especially dedicated to the given gender. However nowadays these differences are smaller and smaller as gender roles are not so strictly defined in western societies. For example in the 80's the typical consumer of environmentally friendly products were women, but in the 21st century this hypothesis cannot be proven in studies any more (Majláth, 2009).

1.2 Women and beer

Several surveys have been carried out analysing value systems and consumption habits (Szira-Lajos, 2005). Despite the fact that during history dating back thousands of years beer was consumed by both men and women, the “drink of men” indicator stuck to it and we think this statement is still strongly alive (Vétek-Eipl, 2003). In our opinion it is a big mistake that women are ignored by the brewing industry so it is about time to consider them as an ideal target group.

That is why we decided to analyse the beer consumption and purchasing habits of Hungarian women with the help of primary research methods.

2 Methodological background

The main objective of our research was to identify the beer consumption and purchasing habits of Hungarian women older than 18 and to reveal factors that can be barriers of beer drinking. We also investigated the awareness of domestic beer brands and commercials.

Our research contains 2 steps:

- Secondary data analysis
- Consumer surveys, within the framework of which qualitative and quantitative researches were made.

In this study we would like to show the main findings of the consumer surveys, carried out in the second stage of our research project so we described the methodological background of this stage in details. The first part of the research study process targeting consumers was a qualitative research, in the framework of which 5 paired interviews – participants: a woman who likes beer and drinks it within a month, a woman who does not like beer but drinks other kind of alcohols - had been conducted in Budapest from 17th to 25th of September. There were carried out with the help of a semi-structured guide.

The topics of the semi-structured interview sketch were the followings:

Warm-up questions about spirits (collect information on alcohol consumption patterns)

Women's relationship with beer (what they think of beer, in comparison to other alcohols, why they like or dislike it)

Stereotypes connecting to beer and beer consumption of women (beer is fattening, opinions about women drinking beer)

Beer consumption habits (place/frequency/quantity of consumption, favourite beer type/brand, non-alcoholic/flavored beers)

Beer purchasing habits (place/frequency/quantity/purpose/criteria of purchase, influencers and incentives)

Creative questions (projective techniques: brand personalisation, beer of the future, brand recognition)

On the basis of the results of paired interviews we created the topics of the standardised questionnaire - containing 35 questions - we used during the quantitative phase. Beside the above mentioned subjects we examined socio-demographic characteristics, the possible causes of non-consumption, brand loyalty and the awareness and popularity of beer commercials.

As we were interested in the opinion of younger and also elder consumers and non-consumers we combined the traditional paper-based personal survey with the method carried out via the Internet.

113 valuable questionnaires were filled out during the quantitative phase from 13th to 20th of October.

3 Findings

3.1 Conclusions of the qualitative phase

During the course of paired interviews the members were asked to let us know why they like or dislike beer and what they think of stereotypes attached to the beverage.

The non-consumers do not like the bitter taste and bubbly character of beer and the smell of the drink is also unpleasant to some of them. In contrast the beer consumers think it „tasty”, „refreshing”, „good for thirst” and say „I'd like to drink one, it feels good.”. There were no differences between the opinion of participants concerning stereotypes connected to beer. Everybody thinks that it is not more fattening like a soft drink and the phrase „beer is the drink of men” is

outdated. According to women interviewed, the majority of men do not deprecate beer drinking of females, while women look at each other rather strange if one of them drinking a pint.

It came out that beer consumers take a drink more often than non-consumers, and the chosen beverage is mainly beer because of low alcohol content.

The role of beer changes with the ages, for younger women it means entertainment and parties but at upper age groups the beverage is connected to rest and relax.

Women stated they mainly buy canned beer but when we asked them about gifts preferred they desired glass and bottle opener. We assume they are subconsciously prefer bottled or draft beer but do not choose them because of convenience and quality consideration.

All of the respondents confident that the beer of the future will be of traditional taste, this is sure to be preserved.

The interviewees have seen most of the beer commercials presented on TV, but none of them inspired them for purchase because they think all appeal to men. They would be glad if there were ads for women which they think does not interfere with men in beer consumption.

3.2 Results of the quantitative research

During the quantitative research we asked the interviewees to describe their present beer consumption and purchasing habits. Cause we think non-consumers also buy beer for their family members and friends we start the research with questions concerning this topic.

76 % of the women surveyed buy beer with some regularity in contrast with the 70% who drink it, but it became clear that those buy beer more frequently who drink it as well ($Y = 0,84$). Concerning frequency we can say that half of the women drink and buy beer more often than monthly.

According to the results by age distribution there have been no substantial differences between the various age groups observed concerning beer drinking. We cannot say that one of the age groups is more likely to drink beer like the other (Csuprov $T = 0,14$, Cramer $C = 0,18$). But comparing the popularity of different kind of beers by age groups it came out that respondents below 40 rather mentioned flavored beer, while 40+ chose lager beer instead. Regarding non-alcoholic beer we can state that women do not like it, not even if they have to drive ($Y = 0,13$).

Most of the responders buy canned beer mainly at hyper -and supermarkets for less than HUF 1 000 at a time. They can be influenced with taste the best, followed by price and sales campaigns but women are not interested in alcohol content and traditional - ATL - advertisement.

Although the great majority drink beer with friends, there are some women who consume it alone after a busy work day to relax and be refreshed. It is important to note that at special occasions women prefer exclusive alcohols, for example spirits. The respondents usually consume beer not more than half a liter at once but it is a good news for brewers that they drink it in all seasons either spring or winter.

Draft beer sales declined mainly due to crisis and beer consumption at home is more likely as one gets older especially when a woman is in relationship.

3.2.1 Opinions about stereotypes and commercials

Most of the women interviewed said that beer is not just the beverage of men and they thought the civilized and moderate female beer consumption acceptable. The surprise is that consumers believe beer more fattening than non-consumers.

Respondents of the quantitative research also claimed that beer commercials has no effect on them, they think those are mostly about men. They know them but do not like them. They think an ad for women would not effect the beer consumption of men negatively.

3.2.2 Brand loyalty

As the secondary and also the qualitative research revealed that women tend to multi-brand loyal we were curious about the results of the questionnaire survey. The proportion of women who consume only one brand is very low (6%), 76% of the respondents buy from 2 up to 5 brands a year and 18% even more 5-10 or 10+. According to the results we can state that women usually do not buy those beer brands which are their favourites. It seems price factor affecting more than brand name.

3.2.3 Causes of non-consumption

There is no doubt the main cause of non-consumption is the (bitter) taste of beer. (64%). This conclusion is followed by that 15% of the respondents do not like alcoholic drinks. We identified that the rate of those women who think beer is not the beverage of female is enough high, 9%. But the fact that quarter of the non-consumers are willing to try new flavors is encouraging.

4 Suggestions

So how can we sell something else which is actually the same in other words the bitter taste beer which is the drink of men to a tasty, refreshing beverage to women. How could we make beer more popular among women and convince the non-consumers to try? Please find our suggestions below.

We have to convince women because if they are interested in a product they will buy it for ourselves and their family members and they are going to recommend it to their friends so we should take advantage of the word of mouth effect.

As women willing to experiment with taste even the non-consumers it is very important to familiarize them with the wide range of different flavors. Because most of the women identified the bitter taste of beer as the cause of non-consumption we have to emphasize that sweet tastes also exist.

Concerning package we recommend bottle - according to research results this is the subconscious desire of women - with unique design elements which helps the drink to stand out the crowd mainly in hyper –and supermarkets where women usually buy beer.

Emphasis should be given to sales campaigns primarily to price concessions.

4.1 Co-operation of brewers

Both the results of secondary and primary researches showed that women are characterised by multi-brand loyalty, some stereotypes connecting to beer are still alive and the main cause of non-consumption is the bitter taste of the drink. Therefore we think the best solution would be a co-operation between the players of beer industry to create a common communication strategy to make the beverage better known and more popular among women similarly like producers did it in case of Hungarian wine and pálinka.

4.1.1 Proposals for different communication devices

Before we start to give suggestions for different communication devices which could be effective to achieve target consumers especially women we have to emphasize that a very strict regulation exists in Hungary regarding advertising we cannot live aside.

We support the implementation of an integrated communication strategy which conveys the same messages through different media.

The main messages are:

- “beer is for everyone”, does not matter for male or female, everybody could find the taste of her/his own
- the cheerfulness and jollity connecting to the atmosphere

The media:

- Use all the ATL devices (TV spot, billboard, women’s magazine, Internet) – the main task is to make women appear in advertising

- Use BTL devices (sales promotion: gifts, samples, POS, POP, price concession, related sales, event marketing, sponsorship) – to make women to get into direct contact with beer and try it

As there is a change in media consumption habits and a continuous shift towards digital media can be observed we recommend the stronger use of activities offered by Internet and mobile devices in communication strategy.

Conclusions

Overall we can say that half of the Hungarian women consume and buy beer on a regular basis and a quarter of non-consumers are willing to try new flavors, they have not given up yet to find the taste they might love. That is why we think targeting new segments and concentrating on the needs of women can be a good strategy for domestic brewers to stop the decline of the sector. As women are characterised by multi-brand loyalty we suggest the players of beer industry to create a common communication strategy to make the beverage better known and more popular among women. Important to emphasize that we only support the moderate and responsible beer consumption. Our present research is preliminary in nature, in the light of the results we plan the continuation of the studies and willing to conduct a broader sampling in order to get a more accurate characterization of specific target groups. We believe the results of such a research may help the domestic beer industry to create marketing activities well-fitting to the new female target group.

References

- [1] Csiszárík-Kocsir, Á. (2011a): A gazdasági válság hatásainak vizsgálata életkor szerint egy primer kutatás eredményeinek tükrében, Erdei Ferenc VI. Tudományos Konferencia, Kecskemét, 2011. augusztus 25., Kecskeméti Főiskola, Kertészeti Főiskolai Kar, 203-207. pp
- [2] Csiszárík-Kocsir, Á. (2011b): A gazdasági válság hatásai az iskolai végzettség alapján képzett csoportokban egy kvantitatív kutatás eredményeinek tükrében, Erdei Ferenc VI. Tudományos Konferencia, Kecskemét, 2011. augusztus 25., Kecskeméti Főiskola, Kertészeti Főiskolai Kar, 208-212. pp
- [3] Lazányi, K. (2005): The impediments of Hungarian females becoming leaders, In: Nábrádi A, Lazányi J, Orbán I (szerk.), Agrárgazdaság, Vidékfejlesztés, Agrárinformatika Nemzetközi Konferencia Kiadványa: AVA 2, Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem Agrártudományi Centrum, 2005. pp. 1063-1074.
- [4] Magyar Sörgyártók Szövetsége (2011): Éves jelentés 2011: http://www.sorszovetseg.hu/images/eves_jelentes/annual_2011.pdf 2012.09.02. 16:00

- [5] Majláth, M. (2009): A pszichográfiai tényezők különbségei a környezetbarát és nem környezetbarát fogyasztók között Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem, Gazdálkodástudományi Kar, PhD program PhD. értekezés, http://phd.lib.uni-corvinus.hu/420/1/majlath_melinda.pdf
- [6] Marketinginfo (2011): Miről dönt a nő, és miről a férfi? Marketinginfo.hu, 2011.07.29.: <http://www.marketinginfo.hu/hirek/article.php?id=20954> 2011.11.06. 15:00
- [7] Pongrácz T-né (2005): Nemi szerepek társadalmi megítélése in: Jelentés a nők és férfiak helyzetéről, 2005. Nagy Ildikó, Pongrácz Tiborné, Tóth István György, (szerk.). Budapest: TÁRKI, Ifjúsági, Családügyi, Szociális és Esélyegyenlőségi Minisztérium, 2005.
- [8] Szira, Z. – Lajos, A. (2005): Health Consciousness in the Life Style and Scale of Values of the Hungarian Young People. In: Annals of the Polish Association of Agricultural and Agribusiness Economists. Vol. VII. No. 6. Warsaw-Poznan 2-16 pp. ISSN 1508 3535
- [9] Vétek-Eipl (2003): Göröngyös út, A vendég, 2003/5, p. 48.

MEB 2013 – 11th International Conference on Management, Enterprise and Benchmarking
31 May - 1 June, 2013 • Budapest, Hungary