Study Shows U.S. Bartenders Spirited about Sales Potential

Contributed by Synovate
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New Study Shows U.S. Bartenders Spirited about Sales Potential for 2006; Expect high growth in domestic beersNews

If bartenders and bar managers' "spirits" about their business is correct, 2006 may prove to be a stellar year for all sectors of the alcoholic beverage industry, according to a recent study conducted by Synovate among 250 bartenders and bar managers. "Head"ing the lift in sales according to national bartenders, is the increased interest in domestically-brewed beers, which are showing remarkable growth and could achieve a sizable increase in sales. In fact, nearly half of all bartenders (45%) see domestic beer sales beating last year, while only one in 25 forecast a flat to light year for beer!

This is good news for domestic beer manufacturers who have seen stagnant sales in the past, while wines and harder spirits have experienced record growth. "Bartenders may be reacting to the domestic beer industry's renewed focus to appeal to a wider range of consumers and their innovative strategies to make beer consumption more palatable!" said Jim Forrest, Ph.D., Vice President of Consumer & Business Insights for the beverage category at Synovate.

The study, conducted by Synovate's Bartender Monitor, asked bartenders about their perceptions of seven different types of alcoholic beverages â€“ beer, wine, flavored malt beverages, premium rum, tequila, vodka, and scotch. The study showed that bartenders believe they strongly influence brand and category choice when on the job. On average, bartenders report that when asked for a recommendation about a wine, two-thirds of customers are likely to order the recommended wine. The impact is even greater with spirits and mixed drinks â€“ bartenders say that more than three in four customers are likely to order the drink recommended by the bartender. When asked which brands they recommend, bartenders most often cited Budweiser, Kendall-Jackson, Bacardi, and Grey Goose in their respective categories.

Although the study points to a positive outlook overall for alcoholic beverages in 2006, national pride could be contributing to the downfall of one prominent sub-category of wines! French wine, long a passion to the American consumer, is not making the list according to Synovate's panel of bartenders. In its recent study, four in five bartenders expect to sell the same or less French wine than last year. Speculation for the "boycott" centers around many highly publicized boycotts of French products in the U.S. Forrest, however, feels that much of the demise could also be due to a longer term problem with the marketing of French wines in the U.S. The research clearly shows that "French wines in the U.S. typically do not have strong brand awareness and appeal to the average American consumer" meaning that few recognize or appreciate its brands.

In contrast, "Australian wines followed a similar marketing strategy to that of the California wineries, such as creating highly recognizable brands with unique positioning," said Forrest. For example, Australian wine Yellow Tail was the only brand not from California to make the top five most recommended wines by bartender.