

AB InBev

& Smart Drinking

An Analysis of How the
World's Largest Beer
Company Contributes
to the Reduction of
Harmful Alcohol Use

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Attributions

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Introduction

The Problem

Public health leaders estimate that harmful consumption of all forms of alcohol such as beer, wine, and spirits contributes to more than 3 million deaths annually and more than 5% of the global burden of disease and injury.¹ WHO estimates that 2.3 billion people are current alcohol drinkers; levels of consumption vary across countries.² More than a quarter (27%) of all young people ages 15 to 19 are current drinkers, and an even larger proportion of this age group drink in Europe and the Americas. As societies become more affluent, levels of alcohol consumption tend to increase, as the alcohol market is freed up in a context of economic development. For example, in Vietnam, alcohol production increased by 50% over the course of a decade, and the proportion of adult drinkers rose from 46% to 77% among men and from 2% to 11% among women between 2002 and 2016.³

Alcohol has been identified as an important risk factor in different types of injury. Alcohol misuse contributes to the occurrence of both unintentional injuries (road traffic injuries, drowning, burns, poisoning, falls) and intentional injuries (suicide, interpersonal violence). In the U.S. alone, alcohol-related fatalities represented 31% of all traffic-related deaths in 2014. A significant proportion of alcohol-related death and injury is due to underage drinking; in 2019, almost 25% of 14- to 15-year-olds reported having had at least one drink, and the evidence suggests that underage drinkers are the most frequent binge drinkers. More than 90% of all alcohol consumed by minors is through binge drinking, which is defined in the United States as

WHO SAFER Framework (2018)

Strengthen restrictions on alcohol availability

Advance and enforce drink driving countermeasures

Facilitate access to screening, brief interventions, and treatment

Enforce bans or comprehensive restrictions on alcohol advertising, sponsorship, and promotion

Raise prices on alcohol through excise taxes and pricing policies

alcohol consumption that results in a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level above .08%.⁴

In recent decades, public health, NGO, and government leaders worldwide have grown increasingly concerned about the burden of disease and injury related to harmful alcohol consumption. In 2010, delegations from all 193 WHO member states agreed to develop a coordinated global strategy to confront the harmful use of alcohol. Recognizing that ministries of health alone could not sufficiently address alcohol-related health harms, WHO leaders called for action by whole governments, civil society organizations, academia, and the alcohol industry to reduce harmful drinking by 10% by 2025. WHO encouraged companies across the alcohol value chain – from brewers and distributors to marketers and sellers – to take action to prevent and reduce harmful use of alcohol, including self-regulatory actions and other approaches.⁵ Specifically, WHO called on commercial operators to make changes

in areas such as product reformulation, marketing, and health guidance labeling. WHO also asked commercial stakeholders to refrain from direct public policy involvement due to potential conflicts of interest between public health and vested economic interests among alcohol industry stakeholders.

Notable progress in combating harmful drinking was made after WHO launched its global strategy. For instance, between 2010 and 2016, rates of alcohol-related deaths per 100,000 people were reduced by more than 10%, as were rates of episodic (or binge) drinking among underage and all drinkers. Commitment to further combat alcohol use harm was catalyzed in 2015, when the new United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 17 specific targets were established. Alcohol was specifically mentioned under health Target 3.5: “Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance use, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.”⁶

While some positive global trends in alcohol-related mortality and morbidity were evident by 2018,⁷ the global burden of disease attributable to alcohol continued to be unacceptably high. In the fall of 2018, WHO released SAFER, a framework with five strategies to help governments reduce the harmful use of alcohol through policy and regulatory measures; several strategies focused specifically on restricting commercial alcohol industry activity in areas such as pricing, marketing, and sales. (See Appendix 2 for additional information on SAFER.)

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals



SMART AGRICULTURE



WATER STEWARDSHIP



CIRCULAR PACKAGING



CLIMATE ACTION



SMART DRINKING

The Company and Its Commitment

Anheuser-Busch InBev (AB InBev) is a global company based in Leuven, Belgium, with a reported \$46.9 billion USD revenue in 2020. It produces more than 500 beer brands sold in 150 countries. Prominent brands include Aguila, Budweiser, Carling, Corona, Leffe, Jupiler, Michelob, O'Doul's (a non-alcoholic beer), and Stella Artois. AB InBev was formed in 2008 when InBev acquired U.S.-based Anheuser-Busch, becoming the world's largest brewer. It grew further in 2016 when AB InBev acquired British multinational competitor SABMiller. Today, AB InBev employs more than 170,000 people worldwide and houses teams at the firm's global corporate headquarters in New York City and at regional headquarters in London, Mexico City, São Paulo, St. Louis, and Johannesburg, among other cities.

AB InBev has a long-standing commitment to reducing and preventing harmful drinking. The company's vision includes aspirations for "dreaming of a better world" and "improving the communities [they are] a part of and playing a positive role within them."⁸ In 2013, AB InBev joined with other alcohol producers in signing the International Alliance for Responsible Drinking (IARD) "Producer Commitments" as a key part of a joint industry effort to contribute to reducing harmful drinking. That same year, AB InBev began planning its Global Smart Drinking Goals (GSDGs) initiative. AB InBev has since devoted significant resources aimed at promoting "smart drinking" and reducing the harmful use of alcohol.

In 2015, AB InBev committed to invest at least \$1 billion USD by the end of 2025 to achieve a new set of four GSDGs, which were aligned with the global target set by WHO to reduce the harmful use of alcohol by 2025. AB InBev approached achieving its goals by employing evidence-based practices and developing innovative programs designed to change consumer behaviors, shift societal norms, and measurably decrease the harmful consumption of alcohol while empowering consumers to make "smart drinking" choices. These goals were intended to be implemented globally while developed locally to address the unique cultural, social, and economic situations across various markets.

1

Change social norms around harmful drinking through social norms marketing campaigns

2

Create guidance labels on all eligible product packaging to enable consumers to make more informed choices

3

Reduce the harmful use of alcohol by at least 10% in six cities by the end of 2020, and implement the best practices globally by the end of 2025

4

Diversify the company's product offerings to include more no- and lower-alcohol beers (NABLAB)

These four goals comprise the focus of this case analysis.

Global Health Context

The relationship between the alcohol industry and the public health community is dynamic and complex, with variations across different social, political, cultural, and economic contexts. Historically, there has been a concern among public health leaders that "...an inherent conflict of interest ...exists between the economic objectives of the [alcohol] industry, which are concerned with maximizing profits ... and public health objectives to reduce the harms caused by alcohol, which generally require reductions in alcohol consumption."⁹ Public health advocates have been particularly skeptical when alcohol companies engage in philanthropy, social norms marketing, and policy advocacy through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs, which in the past had not been proven to impact harmful drinking. "There is no robust evidence that alcohol industry CSR initiatives reduce harmful drinking. There is good evidence, however, that CSR initiatives are used to influence the framing of the nature of alcohol-related issues in line with industry interests."¹⁰

At the same time, there has been growing recognition among leaders at WHO and other international public health institutions of the need for multi-sector collaboration between government, civil society, and industry to solve complex global problems like harmful drinking.

Proponents of public health are coming to realize that just as industry contributes to the problem of harmful drinking, it might also play a constructive role in solving it. However, few good models exist.

It was in this dynamic context that AB InBev launched its ambitious and pioneering Global Smart Drinking Goals (GSDGs) initiative, with full recognition that members of the public health community were doubtful of any company's ability to positively influence harmful drinking. While other alcohol producers remained largely disengaged from public health, and some took combative postures, AB InBev broke away from many of its industry peers when it embarked on its journey to launch a global initiative and committed to support the WHO target of reducing harmful drinking by 10% by 2025.

AB InBev continues to put its ambitious goals into action today by funding and operating programs at the community-level while also transforming its core business model by mounting social norms marketing campaigns, publishing health guidance labels on its packaging, and by investing in product innovations to give consumers more smart drinking choices. In so doing, AB InBev goes beyond traditional corporate social responsibility and creates shared value for society and the company.¹¹ AB InBev is creating shared value through reconceiving products by creating no- and lower-alcohol beverages that give consumers healthier and "smarter" drinking choices, and the company is driving systems change in local communities to reduce alcohol-related harm through programmatic interventions, policy advocacy, and cross-sector collaborations worldwide. Through these efforts, AB InBev is harnessing the power of both its business model and philanthropic resources to contribute to positive health outcomes.

Case Study Approach

In conducting the research for this case study, team members from Georgetown Business for Impact and Brands on Mission joined together in 2020 to assess AB InBev's progress toward achieving its GSDGs, understand what the company has accomplished since the creation of the initiative, identify successes and challenges, and provide recommendations for initiative's next phase. In the course of conducting this research, the team explored how AB InBev navigated the complex terrain between public health and the private sector and attempted to forge more effective public-private partnerships to achieve positive societal impact. We highlight specific examples across the four GSDGs, analyze AB InBev's efforts to date, and conclude with recommendations for how the company might strengthen its approach for the next five years.

When conducting this research, a business sustainability lens was employed with the understanding that successful business strategy involves addressing the needs of multiple stakeholders, including consumers, shareholders, employees, suppliers, governments, nonprofits, and local community members, and the natural environment. To compete in the 21st century, AB InBev must meet heightened societal expectations for corporate social and environmental responsibility while acting to reduce alcohol harms.

Our purpose in writing this case was twofold: first, we hope this case study provides useful insights for AB InBev as it embarks on the next phase of its pioneering journey toward reducing harmful drinking worldwide; second, the lessons revealed here are intended to help other companies achieve positive societal impact while

attempting to navigate the "triple bottom line" by balancing the needs of people and the planet with the drive for profit.

The case begins with a brief history of the creation of the GSDGs initiative and an overview of the four goals AB InBev initially developed. The following sections examine AB InBev's progress toward achieving each of the four GSDGs during the first five years. The case concludes with cross-goal insights and recommendations which AB InBev can consider as it advances the GSDGs over the next five years.

A Brief History of AB InBev's Global Smart Drinking Goals

Early Years

For more than three decades prior to launching the Global Smart Drinking Goals, AB InBev had forged partnerships and invested in initiatives to prevent and reduce harmful drinking. Despite these efforts, AB InBev CEO Carlos Brito knew that his company – and the alcohol industry at large – could do more in response to the long-standing concerns among public health and government leaders about rising levels of harmful alcohol use. As the head of the world's largest brewer, Brito recognized that AB InBev was in a unique position to exert influence on the problem, and he was determined to take meaningful action.

One of Brito's first steps was an unprecedented move among beer industry leaders. In 2012, he reached out to public health experts – including some of the alcohol industry's biggest critics – and asked them to help AB InBev understand how the company could more effectively encourage smarter drinking attitudes and behaviors.

His decision to invite the public health community to advise AB InBev was rooted in Brito's deep desire to understand how the company could contribute to reducing and preventing harmful drinking in more meaningful ways. And it reflected Brito's perspective that he and all of his AB InBev colleagues were part of the community.

"We don't just 'operate' in a community and then leave," Brito stated. "We are members of the community. We drive on the same roads [as our customers]. Our children walk on the same streets to school. If something doesn't work for the community, then it doesn't work for us." ¹²



AB InBev CEO Carlos Brito



Dr. Scott Ratzen

Brito also recognized that to make real progress, industry leaders needed to build partnerships with NGOs and public health experts. The decision to engage directly and closely with public health demonstrated Brito's clear-eyed view that AB InBev was at risk of heightened scrutiny by consumer and public health advocates who were anxious to reverse harmful drinking trends. "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu," Brito explained. Brito realized that most societies had given AB InBev and other alcohol companies a social license to operate. Harmful use of alcohol was one of the biggest risk factors to retaining that license.

The move to collaborate more closely with public health experts ushered in a higher level of commitment to reducing harmful drinking than at any other time in the company's history. To lead the charge, AB InBev set out to recruit a seasoned executive with significant global and public health experience who could transform Brito's vision into action. In 2013, AB InBev hired Dr. Scott Ratzan, in the role of vice president of global corporate affairs. A globally-renowned expert in health communication and health literacy, Ratzan had served in leadership roles across the public, private, and academic sectors. He most recently had served as vice president of global health at Johnson & Johnson and previously held leadership roles with the United Nations, World Economic Forum, the United States Agency for International Development, and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Ratzan also had extensive academic expertise; he was editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Health Communication: International Perspectives* and co-authored the definition of health literacy that serves as the basis for all U.S. efforts.¹³

Charged with the mandate to design an implementation strategy for the GSDGs, Ratzan began by building out the GSDGs leadership team within the company while also establishing mechanisms for AB InBev to receive guidance from global public health experts. Ratzan recruited Allison Goldberg, a former Abt Associates consultant with an interdisciplinary doctorate in public health and political science, to serve as AB InBev director of corporate affairs. He subsequently hired Ginny Gidi, who also has a doctorate in public health, as director. Ratzan established a Global Advisory Council (GAC), which included experts in sustainable development, public health, and other sectors to guide the development of the GSDGs and help more clearly define the goals and ensure that the GSDGs activities aligned with both public health and corporate priorities. Members of the GAC included former prime minister of Canada Jean Chrétien, former chief medical editor of NBC News Nancy Snyderman, and executive director of Vitality Institute Derek Yach. (See Appendix 1 for a complete listing.) Ratzan also consulted with international public health and medical experts in alcohol-related harms who were unaffiliated with AB InBev.

Working with guidance from members of the GAC, the AB InBev Board, and other global experts, Ratzan and the leadership team developed the GSDGs and publicly announced the four goals in December 2015. During this period, AB InBev also completed the acquisition of SABMiller, and later announced an expanded Global Corporate Affairs team, which included former SABMiller employees Catalina (Cata) Garcia and Andrés Peñate. Garcia joined AB InBev in 2017 as global director of corporate affairs, leading social impact, community affairs, social norms marketing, and partnerships across five regions (or "zones"): Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America. She

had previously held leadership positions in technology, communications, mining, and other industries. Peñate joined AB InBev as global vice president of regulatory and public policy; he brought extensive global public affairs experience in multiple industries as well as senior government experience in defense and national security. As senior executives within AB InBev, Garcia and Peñate worked closely with Ratzan, the Foundation team, and the GAC to oversee the development and implementation of the GSDGs. (See Exhibit 1 for a complete timeline.)



*Catalina (Cata) Garcia,
Global Director of Corporate
Affairs at AB InBev*



*Allison Goldberg, Executive
Director of the AB InBev
Foundation (2018-2020)*

TACKLING ROAD SAFETY

At the January 2014 World Economic Forum in Davos, global leaders determined that road safety would be a sustainable development priority. Recognizing the opportunity to have an immediate impact on harmful drinking behaviors while the GSDGs were being developed, Ratzan and the AB InBev leadership team catalyzed a new initiative, Together for Safer Roads, joining with 10 other companies representing alcohol, automotive, and other industries. By fall 2014, Together for Safer Roads was established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and Ratzan was named as chair

of the governing board. The coalition was officially launched at a United Nations meeting in November 2014, thus aligning the private sector's road safety efforts with the United Nations "Decade of Action for Road Safety." In 2015, Together for Safer Roads members convened at Davos and agreed to underwrite a scientific study on how to reduce deaths and injuries on the world's roads and what role the private sector should play. Multiple commercial enterprises joined the effort, including AIG, PepsiCo, and Walmart, as well as alcohol or automotive industry leaders.

Global Smart Drinking Goals

"It takes the same amount of energy to dream big as it does to dream small," said Carlos Brito. In 2015, channeling the spirit of Brito's vision, AB InBev's leadership team set out four bold and ambitious goals for AB InBev:

Change social norms around harmful drinking through social norms marketing campaigns

AB InBev committed to investing at least \$1 billion USD across its global markets in dedicated social norms marketing campaigns and other programs designed to influence social norms and consumer behaviors, thereby reducing the harmful use of alcohol. Working in close collaboration with public health and social marketing experts, the company developed a Smart Drinking Toolkit to guide its marketing teams and enlisted those experts to provide constructive feedback on the campaigns and programs as they were being developed.

Create guidance labels on all eligible product packaging to enable consumers to make more informed choices

AB InBev recognized it was important that consumers understand why and how alcohol should be consumed within limits as part of its commitment to advancing alcohol health literacy. Over the past five years, AB InBev has collaborated with public health partners to identify and implement evidence-based ways to increase alcohol literacy among consumers using guidance labels on its products and packages.

Reduce the harmful use of alcohol by at least 10% in six cities by the end of 2020, and implement the best practices globally by the end of 2025

Six City Pilot initiatives were established with the aim of reducing harmful alcohol use by 10% in these locations by the end of 2020. The City Pilots were intended to serve as laboratories for testing evidence-based initiatives to reduce harmful drinking and identifying promising efforts that could be brought to scale. The interventions developed in the six cities were designed to address drinking and driving, underage drinking, binge drinking, and other related issues of local concern.

Diversify the company's product offerings to include more no- and lower-alcohol beers (NABLAB)

In setting the goal that no- or lower-alcohol beer (NABLAB) products would comprise at least 20% of the company's global beer volume by 2025, AB InBev sought to motivate its legal-age customers to integrate NABLABs with 3.5% alcohol by volume (ABV) or lower into their current drink choices and thereby reduce their overall total alcohol intake.

Launching Six City Pilots with Public Health Guidance

With the introduction of the GSDGs in December 2015, AB InBev announced its first City Pilot location in Zacatecas, Mexico. AB InBev subsequently announced its intention to establish City Pilots in five additional cities after the sites were selected. In determining where to locate the pilot sites, AB InBev requested input from public health experts to determine where the company could have a significant impact. Along with public health guidance, AB InBev considered a range of criteria to inform the selection of the six City Pilots:

- Evidence suggested that progress toward reducing harmful drinking was lagging.
- Local politicians were ready to implement programs to reduce harmful drinking.
- Local organizations had relevant technical expertise and willingness to engage in private-public partnership.
- AB InBev had a presence in the city (such as a brewery).
- The six cities would collectively reflect a diverse range of communities across low-, middle- and high-income countries.

Based on these factors, AB InBev selected the remaining City Pilots by the end of 2016; the six City Pilots locations were:

1. Brasilia, Brazil
2. Columbus, Ohio, U.S.
3. Jiangshan, China
4. Johannesburg, South Africa
5. Leuven, Belgium
6. Zacatecas, Mexico

Working with guidance from public health experts, AB InBev established Steering Committees in the six cities. The Steering Committees included at least one AB InBev employee, and were formed with input from local stakeholders representing government, academia, NGOs, and other community-based organizations. In most of the cities, Steering Committee members were selected based on AB InBev's familiarity with them from prior collaborative efforts to address harmful drinking. The roles of the Steering Committee were to establish the direction for the City Pilot, select and implement intervention programs that met local needs, coordinate local partner activities, and equip each with an evidence-based toolkit to assist in the development of local programs designed to reduce harmful drinking awareness, attitudes, and behaviors.

In 2016, AB InBev established the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) composed of renown experts in alcohol

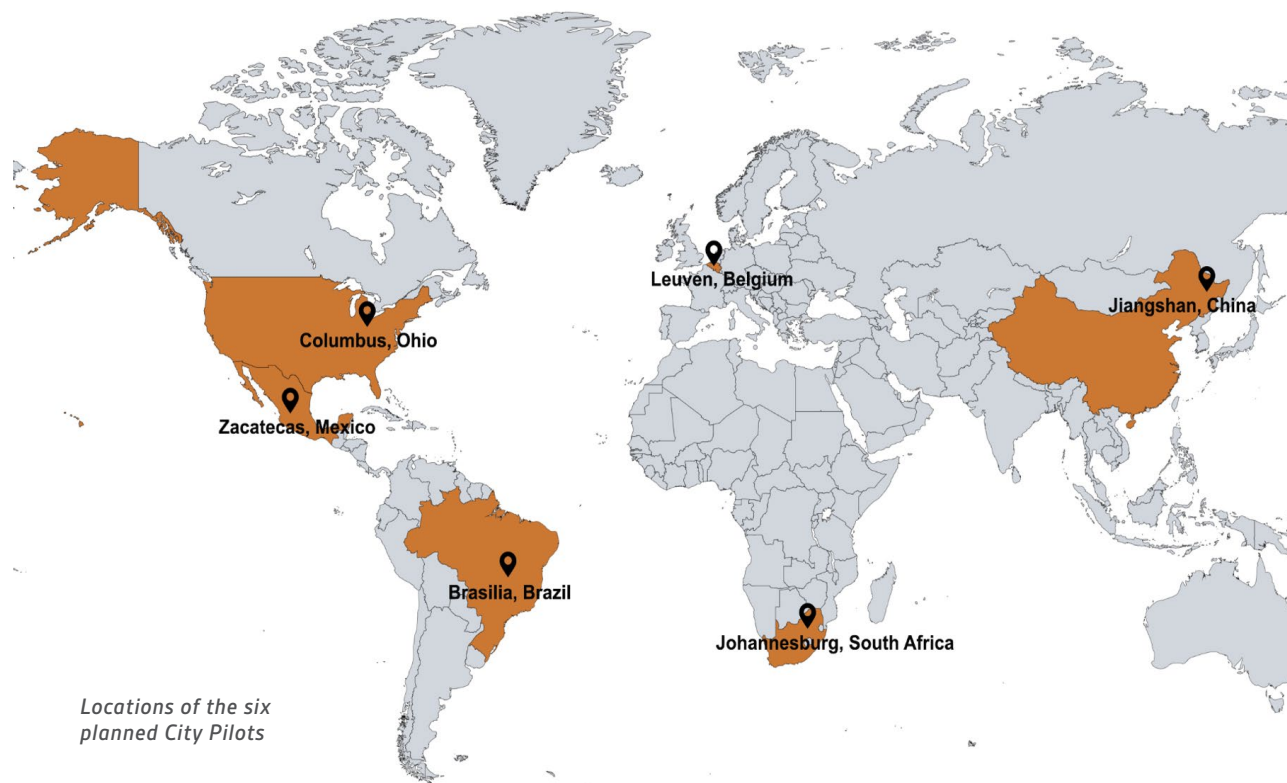
science, health communications, measurement and evaluation and other related areas. Members of the TAG were charged with advising both the Foundation and AB InBev on developing evidence-based approaches to achieving the GSDGs. TAG members provided guidance on operational policies governing the technical and scientific work. They focused especially on how AB InBev could ensure that all activities followed the highest scientific and ethical standards, and were evidence-based and conducted transparently. Dr. H. Westley Clark served, and still serves, as TAG chair; Clarke was Dean's Executive Professor of Public Health at Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, California. (Current TAG members are listed in Appendix 1.)

AB InBev Foundation leaders also developed a network of collaborating partners to help support the implementation of the City Pilot programs and consult

with City Pilot Steering Committees members. These collaborating partners included HBSA, a supporting organization of the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE), to serve as the primary evaluators of the City Pilots and their respective interventions. The Foundation also established a Scientific Partners Task Force (SPTF), whose members were charged with helping the City Pilots implement interventions on the ground and fostering alignment, collaboration, and shared learning across the network. Select SPTF members were employed as consultants to advise City Pilots on specific projects.

The SPTF included William (Bill) DeJong, a recognized expert in health communications and alcohol and other drug prevention, who had previously served on the AB InBev TAG. DeJong provided social marketing technical assistance to the City Pilots, as well as to AB InBev's social norms marketing, guidance labeling, NABLAB initiatives, road safety programs, and responsible beverage service programs. Other SPTF members included Dr. Jim Lange, executive director of the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Drug Misuse Prevention and Recovery; principals at PIRE; and experts from The Ohio State University, Tufts University, University of Chicago, and University of Miami.

Georgetown University principals were also represented on the SPTF, including Distinguished Professor of the Practice Bill Novelli and Business for Impact Executive Director Leslie Crutchfield (who contributed to this case study respectively as co-author and editor). Georgetown Senior Project Director Gael O'Sullivan provided social marketing and behavior change expertise to AB InBev and the AB Bev Foundation, including to the City Pilots and social norms marketing initiatives. (See Appendix 1 for a complete listing of SPTF members.) (In full disclosure, Georgetown University's Business for Impact initiative received financial support from AB InBev Foundation



Locations of the six planned City Pilots

to provide expert guidance on the City Pilots and other AB InBev Global Smart Drinking Goals initiatives from 2017 to 2019; and AB InBev provided financial support to produce this case study.)

Beyond the SPTF, to further guide the City Pilot Steering Committee efforts, AB InBev Foundation engaged experts from the University of Southern California, The Ohio State University, and San Diego State University, as well as principals from McCann Global Health. These experts developed evidence-based alcohol harm prevention toolkits, which provided methodologies for effective behavior change strategies and guidance on designing evidence-based programs. McCann Global Health also developed a toolkit to support the Social Norms Marketing GSDG addressed later in this case study.



Members of the Brazil City Pilot's Ambassador Program

Soon after selection, four out of the six city pilots launched, first in Zacatecas, then in Leuven, Columbus, and Brasilia. The remaining two City Pilots experienced launch delays. Negotiations with new city administrators delayed the Johannesburg City Pilot initiative for almost three years. The initiative ultimately was launched in the nearby township of Alexandria. The Jiangshan City Pilot was never officially launched due to political and legal barriers and activities there were put on hold as of March 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan. Within five

years of the launch of the City Pilots initiatives, the goal of 10% reduction in harmful drinking had been achieved in one city, Zacatecas. Analysis and lessons learned from several of the City Pilot initiatives are addressed later in this case study.

Establishing the AB InBev Foundation

As AB InBev was launching the City Pilots and developing strategies to achieve each of the GSDGs, AB InBev leaders determined how the company could best organize its efforts. AB InBev leaders knew that scientifically-based guidance from public health experts would be required to achieve each goal, and they would need a mechanism for AB InBev to transparently collaborate with NGOs and community and government partners. A common approach that other companies had employed was to form a foundation, which could operate either within the company or as an independent nonprofit entity. In early 2016, Ratzan commissioned an independent assessment to determine whether and how the creation of a foundation could help advance the GSDGs.



Based on the results of that study, the AB InBev Foundation was incorporated in September 2016 as

an independent 501(c)(3) with a mission "to accelerate the reduction of the harmful use of alcohol globally." The mission would be achieved by supporting collaborations between academia, governments, the private sector, and civil society organizations in order to "identify, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of programs and policies designed to reduce the

harmful use of alcohol."¹⁴ By early 2017, AB InBev pledged \$150 million USD over ten years to support the Foundation's work.

The Foundation was established as an independent nonprofit for a key reason: It created a bridge between AB InBev and the public health community. As noted at the outset of this case, many public health advocates and government leaders perceived alcohol producers to be focused solely on advancing commercial interests, and most public health experts would not work directly with an alcohol company. As an independent organization, the Foundation was transparently funded by AB InBev but governed and led by scientists and public health experts. It represented a mechanism through which the company could achieve the GSDGs by collaborating with public health and community-based leaders, and aligning around the goals of reducing and preventing harmful drinking.

The Foundation was initially led and managed by Ratzan, Goldberg, and Sabine Chalmers, AB InBev's chief legal & corporate affairs officer and company secretary, who were named as the Foundation's three officers. A year later, Ratzan was appointed president of the Foundation and Goldberg became vice president. Founding members of the Foundation's board of directors included Jimmy Kolker, the board chair, who brought health diplomacy experience as the former head of global affairs at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Other board members included Dr. Ken Moritsugu, former acting and deputy U.S. surgeon general; Dr. Jo Ivey Boufford, clinical professor of global health at NYU; Dr. Robert Orr, dean of the University of Maryland School of Public Policy; and Tembela Kulu, chief of projects for the Thabo Mbeki Foundation. AB InBev executives also joined the board, including Andrés Peñate, Cata Garcia, and John Blood, chief legal and corporate affairs officer and corporate secretary, who replaced his predecessor on the board. (See Appendix 1 for a complete listing of the board.)

By October 2020, the AB InBev board of directors had approved a new governance structure and expanded the mission of the Foundation. While continuing its commitment to the GSDGs, the Foundation board elected to focus on also advancing a broader set of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals upon which AB InBev could have an impact, including in the areas of clean water, sustainable agriculture, entrepreneurship, community engagement and women's empowerment. The Foundation's new governance structure included a change in the composition of the board, including adding more company executives as directors. And while still an independent 501(c)(3) entity, going forward the Foundation would operate as part of the company, providing greater resources and access to executives with technical skills across the commercial side of AB InBev. The Foundation currently is guided by a Board of Advisors, which includes some former members of the SPTF and the TAG.

The First Five Years: Assessing the Implementation of the GSDGs from 2015 – 2020

The following section of this case study includes analysis of AB InBev's implementation progress during the first five years of the GSDGs. First, we review specific campaigns and actions that AB InBev, the Foundation, and its network of partners undertook across each of the four goals, and we identify successes, challenges, and opportunities within each. We then offer cross-goal insights that build on each individual goal analysis. These insights were guided by the learning goal of understanding what worked, what did not work, and eliciting recommendations for AB InBev going forward as it embarks on the next phase of its journey to achieve the GSDGs by 2025.

Social Norms Marketing Campaigns and Programs

To reduce harmful use of alcohol, AB InBev committed to investing at least \$1 billion USD across its markets in dedicated social norms marketing campaigns and other approaches designed to influence social norms and individual behaviors. Achieving this goal involved the implementation of evidence-based marketing campaigns and programs grounded in the science-based disciplines of social norms marketing and social norm change.

AB InBev executives within various brand marketing teams worked to develop the campaigns and programs in collaboration with public health and social marketing experts who were affiliated with AB InBev through the Global Advisory Council (GAC), Scientific Partners Task Force (SPTF), or the Technical Advisors Group (TAG). Launching these campaigns also required the engagement of the company's brand marketing teams.

Initially, the company intended to earmark at least 3% of its brands' combined media marketing budgets for social norms marketing campaigns, but some brand managers were reticent and continued producing traditional product-driven campaigns. At this point, Cata Garcia developed the idea of staging an internal competition to increase the number of social norms marketing campaigns. Leveraging the competitive nature of the commercial brand marketing teams, she established a competition which would be judged by public health and social marketing experts Bill DeJong and Jeff French to determine which brands had the most successful social norms marketing campaigns. The winning teams' efforts would be rewarded with a higher marketing budget. This spirit of competition spurred the commercial creativity



Public meeting for Johannesburg City Pilot's Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) program

and motivated additional brand teams (although still a minority) to dedicate themselves to social norms marketing programs.¹⁵

By 2018, AB InBev had invested a total of \$197.1 million USD across its markets in dedicated social norms marketing campaigns and programs to influence social norms and individual behaviors linked to reducing the harmful use of alcohol. AB InBev also invested in creating a Smart Drinking Toolkit with input from Bill DeJong and Jeff French to inform the marketing teams' efforts with public health expertise. The marketing competition is now held annually, and when combined with financial investments, it has spurred more than 80 social norms marketing campaigns. It also has demonstrated that competitive advantage can be gained through social marketing of healthy behaviors. As one competition participant said, "Smart Drinking is a new way of engaging the consumer, and it is different [from] the competition."

For the purposes of this case study, we chose to focus on three social norms marketing campaigns from the more than 80 campaigns that had been launched by 2020. We describe and analyze each campaign, and assess effectiveness to date as well as potential to reduce harmful drinking as part of the Global Smart Drinking Goals initiative in the future.

Background on Social Norm and Behavior Change Approaches

To provide context for how we analyzed AB InBev's social norms marketing campaigns, we offer here some of the fundamental, scientifically-grounded principles involved in changing societal norms and individual behaviors.

When designing social norms marketing campaigns, it is important to recognize that the practice of social marketing is informed by social norm theory. Social



The Carling Black Label #NoExcuse Campaign in South Africa

norms are "the rules of the game" in society that set the expectation for what is considered "normal" and acceptable or unacceptable behavior. Norms are typically set by reference groups, which consist of the most influential and powerful individuals in a particular community or culture. There are two primary types of social norms: **descriptive** and **injunctive**.

Descriptive norms consist of observable behavior, e.g., motorcycle riders wearing helmets, people wearing masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19, or bar patrons alternating one alcoholic drink with a non-alcoholic beverage. **Injunctive** norms are linked to values and people's *perceptions* of what is acceptable or unacceptable behavior. For example, the "friends don't let friends drive drunk" social marketing message invokes a moral responsibility to drink responsibly and to ensure friends (i.e., members of the reference group) do too.

Another key concept in social norms marketing relates to the nature of individual behavior. A behavior can be

either **independent** (the person does it regardless of what others are doing) or **interdependent** (the behavior is influenced by others). Changing an independent behavior is usually accomplished in one of two ways: either by communicating or even increasing the benefits to the person, or through persuasion that a particular action is morally right based on the reference group's values. **Interdependent** behavior change is most often promoted either by sharing information that many other people *are already* doing it, or that others *expect* individuals to do the behavior.

For instance, a social norms marketing campaign focused on **interdependent** behaviors could show individuals that most of their peers do not drink and drive, which could potentially persuade them to avoid this harmful behavior. Campaigns designed to change social norms are particularly effective at enforcing a desired behavior when it is costly to the individual, but beneficial to a larger group, such as avoiding alcohol-impaired driving.

Analysis framework for the AB InBev social norms marketing campaigns

Social norms help to enforce behaviors that are either unrewarding for an individual to do or that require a costly change in practice. Social norms specify that not only do others in society expect an individual to do a certain behavior, they would actually “punish” the individual for not doing it – even if that punishment is only frowning at or shaming them.

To promote acceptance of a new social norm, both the behavior and the reference group of people who would punish non-conformists need to be identified. The behavior needs to be clearly defined, such as, “We want [whom] to do [what] [when].” The reference group could be friends, co-workers, family members, or even the general public.

Depending on the behavior, there could be several different audiences and related reference groups to consider targeting. Regarding alcohol-impaired driving, the most influential group might be friends who are out drinking with the individual. In that case, a mass media campaign could reinforce the prevailing norm that impaired drinking is wrong, and then encourage people to speak up if a friend intends to drive after drinking. Friends should not only communicate their disapproval but also convey what actions

can be taken to avoid being impaired before heading home. These could include alternating non-alcoholic and alcoholic drinks, eating food before and while drinking, and stopping drinking alcohol early enough to give their body time to process the alcohol they’ve consumed.

Norms emerge from three key steps:¹⁶

- Communicate expectations (to trigger social norms with potential punishment)
- Increase observability (to strengthen social norms)
- Eliminate excuses (so punishment becomes unavoidable)

Communicating expectations means that everyone knows what is expected of them by their reference group—what the target behaviors are and how and when to do them. A mass media campaign can communicate such expectations effectively, perhaps with celebrities, leaders, or even just everyday people talking about what is expected and what they themselves do. In general, people often think that a higher percentage of people engage in unhealthy behaviors than is actually the case. Telling people the true percentages (based on demonstrably valid survey data) can be a very effective way of changing behaviors.

Increasing observability is key; a behavior cannot become a social norm if no one sees it happening. Marketers can do this either by making the behavior observable in the moment (e.g., by making performance public) or by suggesting it might be observed later (e.g., through social media). For example, a “smart drinking squad” could praise people for ordering food with their drink, or criticize them for drinking too much too quickly, and thus communicate expectations publicly. A campaign could also remind people that future employers will know about any arrests or criminal charges related to impaired driving.

Finally, marketers must eliminate excuses. People sometimes think they can avoid being punished if they offer “reasonable” excuses for acting against a social norm. For example, if a rideshare service isn’t available, or low or no-alcohol products aren’t sold in a convenient place, those who become too impaired to drive could justify their decision to drive by pointing out that they lacked the options for making better choices. Eliminating excuses usually involves overcoming the resource constraints that operate in any given situation, whether in available products and services or in time or knowledge.

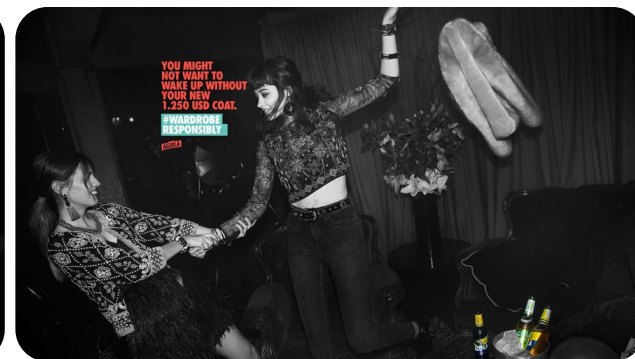
Aguila – Live Responsibly, Colombia

Aguila is a century-old brand and the most valuable brand in Colombia.¹⁷ Aguila is not just the largest beer brand in the country, but also the third largest in Latin America, and one of the top 10 most valuable beer brands globally. Its digital communication reaches more than 1.8 million people. Aguila's connections to soccer, fairs, and national holidays are its biggest assets.

Aguila helps people “enjoy life with authenticity,” but recognizes that binge drinking prevents consumers from bringing out the best versions of themselves. Earlier campaigns focused on drinking and driving, but the marketing team recently shifted to binge drinking. Studies suggested that a third of all fights and 20% of rapes in Colombia started because of binge drinking. Overall, 61% of violent events at home involved at least one person affected by alcohol, while more than 80% of murders in Bogota started with a fight caused by alcohol.

In response to these harmful behaviors, Aguila created a platform for campaign development to support positive social norms to counter binge drinking. Through various social norms campaigns, Aguila promoted three specific behaviors: eating before and during drinking, drinking non-alcoholic beverages in-between alcoholic drinks, and returning home safely.

The specific campaign platform we analyzed was called “Live Responsibly,” which took place from December 2019 to February 2020. It is important to note while three months is an insufficient amount of time to drive long term behavior change, examining this campaign reveals important insights to inform AB InBev's future social marketing efforts.



Images from Aguila's Live Responsibly Campaign

The Aguila Live Responsibly platform for promoting behavior change included a set of sub-campaigns. The December 2019 campaign was divided into two phases. In the first phase, Aguila sought to raise awareness of the risks of binge drinking. Targeted to young people, this multi-media campaign illustrated embarrassing situations that could result from binge drinking and then presented a set of “smart drinking” messages.

In the second phase, Aguila created promotions to incentivize prevention behaviors. The campaign targeted out-of-home partygoers by providing, on the underside of bottle caps, coupons for free food, bottled

water, or cab services through partnerships with KFC, Uber Eats, Hard Rock Café, Aguila Cero, Cabify, and Uber. The objective was to offer these incentives at the right moment. To that end, the coupons could be redeemed only during evening hours when people choose to go out.

In a follow-up campaign in 2020, “Craving Packs” presented the same smart drinking tips on Aguila's packaging, a marketing strategy that broke through the communication clutter and generated high levels of customer awareness. These “craving packs” included beers packed, for example, in a KFC delivery box, in order to create cravings for food during drinking time.



Aguila Live Responsibly Campaign "Craving Packs"

In 2020, the "Crash Campaign" from Poker, another Colombian brand, included bottle caps featuring a car, and when the caps were removed with a bottle opener, the car looked as if it had been in a crash. This drunk driving prevention campaign emphasized "not harming those you least want to harm – your friends – through drunk driving." Importantly, since the Poker brand was positioned as a beer to be enjoyed with friends, this theme was designed to resonate with Poker's target consumers. The campaign included some creative visibility approaches such as friendship medals, badges, and social media taglines. We observed positive results from the "friends don't let friends kill friends" message, which is a better articulation of not letting friends drive drunk, with attractive offers of the free cab ride.

Aguila's Live Responsibly campaign was measured on four metrics:

1. Brand affinity and favorability
2. Knowledge (about drinking and driving, losing consciousness, fighting)
3. Social norms (checking unacceptability of friend's behaviors, such as drinking and driving)
4. Behaviors (eating before drinking)

From the internet panel survey conducted immediately after the campaign ended, the Live Responsibly campaign seems to have performed well across three of these metrics among the group of consumers exposed to the campaign versus a control group. However, it fell short on changing social norms.

The overall success of the campaign can be attributed to the fact that Aguila team started with developing sound consumer insights. Its creative translation of those insights into campaign messaging was relatable for the target audience. One effective element of the campaign was that it successfully cut through the communication noise and was consistent in reminding consumers through the smart drinking tips on packaging.

However, the internet panel survey results showed that while good behaviors spiked up during the campaign, these may have been associated with the increased incentives. There was no investigation done after the free offers ended to see if the desired behaviors continued. New behavior usually sticks only if it is itself pleasurable, or it has become a habit or a new social norm. As noted earlier, sustained behavior change is not typically achievable in three months.

Further, the data collected does not demonstrate whether the campaign impacted social norms, and if so, which campaign drove that impact, since Aguila implemented several "Live Responsibly" sub-campaigns. The campaign focused initially on highlighting embarrassing situations from binge drinking, which could be an effective approach if getting drunk was frowned upon by the target audience's reference group. It is also not known whether the positive behaviors continued through each wave of the campaign or beyond the campaign.

The main concern related to this campaign is its

over-reliance on extrinsic motivation, i.e., providing financial rewards and coupons to drive behavior change. Normally, extrinsic motivation is not proven to drive long-term behavior change. However, by providing people with the minimum incentive to try a new behavior, they can then discover their own intrinsic benefits for self-reinforcement of the new behavior. From the data provided for the purposes of this case study, evidence of long-term behavior change resulting from this campaign was lacking. Our assessment suggests that the Live Responsibly platform does have the potential to meaningfully change behavior, but only if appropriate activities are implemented over longer periods of time, and appropriate behavior and norm change measurement processes are put in place.

Next we evaluate the campaign on creative execution, model for change, and the three steps for creating social norms (communicating expectations, increasing observability, and eliminating excuses):

- **Creative execution:** Live Responsibly targeted party-going youth. From that perspective the insights of the campaign were well-aligned to the target audience and how members behave while partying. The humorous use of hashtags gave the campaign a modern and urban feel. The campaign also conveyed everyday risks posed to anyone while partying with friends, and the message was consistent across various media channels.
- **Model for change:** The campaign targeted binge drinking at parties and among younger audiences, which is a major public health problem. The glossy look, dynamic visuals, and black-and-white imagery was developed to attract the attention of the key target audience. The insights on embarrassing situations after binge drinking are very relevant to the target audience.

However, the promotion is not likely to change social norms as reflected by the internal panel study. Consumer behaviors shifted during the campaign, but the data does not show this would translate into sustained behavior change because the campaign is based on short-term financial incentives. It also does not reflect the transition from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation (i.e., the extrinsic reward of a free ride versus an intrinsic motivation, “I don’t want to be caught by the police and the record on my job application”). The redemptions just made it easier to eat some food, include a non-alcoholic beverage, and get a cab home.

Changing norms takes time and requires regular appeals to internal motivations, which could be activated by additional partnerships such as with faith-based organizations or even NGOs that promote anti-drunk driving campaigns.

An important part of the “Live Responsibly” campaign included opportunities to sample no-alcohol beers during parties. People tend to make negative assumptions about the taste of no-alcohol beers, and providing these types of incentives can help consumers overcome taste barriers.

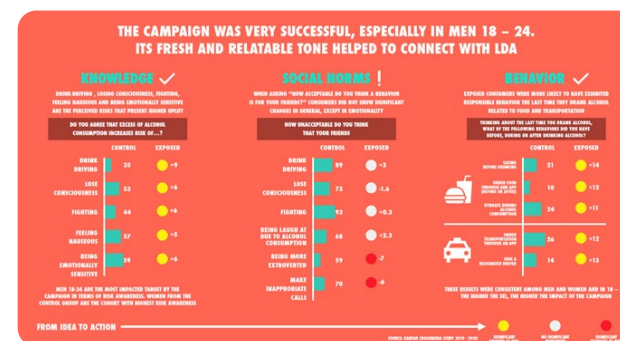
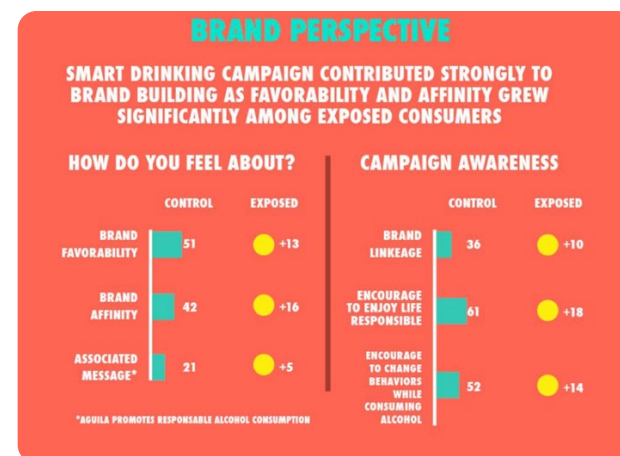
- **Communicate expectations:** The campaign clearly identified the three expected behaviors while drinking. It did so through the awareness campaign on digital, through out-of-home media, and at the consumption sites. The campaign also used social

influencers to talk about the three behaviors and how to redeem the incentives. They emphasized expectations that may not be part of the reference group. The norm mechanism depends on referring to individuals likely to be in the relevant reference group, and that those individuals will find getting drunk unappealing behavior.

- **Increase observability:** The awareness campaign highlighted everyday embarrassing situations in a humorous way, and therefore emphasized the potential unintended consequences of harmful behavior while drunk. The redemption of caps also increased observability, since peers would know if other consumers had redeemed the beer bottle cap food coupon. However, the campaign does not appear to have used the beer caps as well as they could have to reinforce norms. The campaign was limited by being linked only to the redemption, and there was no social (or “normalizing”) aspect of redemptions, such as praise by peers for engaging in redemptions. Therefore there was no mechanism for those around the consumer to clearly observe and enforce the desired behavior. For example, the campaign could have encouraged social media exposure of consumers that showcased them doing the redemptions.
- **Eliminate excuses:** The campaign was designed to eliminate excuses for bad behavior by providing redemptions of food, non-alcoholic drinks, and taxis. This made it easy to reduce harmful drinking and its consequences. However, the campaign employed momentary incentives that were effective at promoting a trial of the behavior, but might have proven difficult to transform into a long-term habit, which requires more than short-term reinforcement. It would have been good to look at systemic changes (such as establishing relationships with pub owners

that continued to encourage the target behaviors), which would have kept resources available at the right moment at the right time for the right behavior to be observed.

The Live Responsibly platform provides a good opportunity for future sub-campaigns to drive behavior change to embed habits.



Budweiser – Drink Wiser, U.S.

Budweiser is the largest beer brand in the United States. In 2018 and 2019, it ran its “Drink Wiser” campaign with commercials at the Super Bowl and other major sporting events. “Drink Wiser” was an ongoing, multi-channel campaign to promote responsible drinking by encouraging beer drinkers to perform two simple behaviors:

- Hydrating between Buds
- Planning for safe rides home

Since its launch in 2018, the Drink Wiser platform has been implemented via a comprehensive approach, leveraging key moments throughout the year. It included TV ads during the Super Bowl and National Basketball Association (NBA) games, communications on packaging during holidays, public service announcements on radio, and out-of-home advertising.

As part of the campaign, hydration stations were set up during Major League Baseball All-Star games, where 15,000 water bottles were distributed. Over 450 distributors received guides with campaign ideas and assets to activate in the field. On Global Beer Responsible Day in 2018, various stakeholders, including employees and retailers, received an educational message to become ambassadors for responsible drinking commitments. Budweiser also created The Drink Wiser Challenge. The Challenge gives NBA fans who pledge to hydrate between Buds a chance to win prizes such as tickets to the NBA Finals presented by YouTube TV, autographed memorabilia, and Budweiser swag.

Campaign measures included brand favorability, campaign awareness, and intended behavior, with the following results:

- Campaign awareness increased from 41% to 85%.

BUDWEISER CELEBRATES THOSE WHO HYDRATE BETWEEN BEERS.



Budweiser Drink Wiser Campaign images

- Consumers planning to always or most of the time drink non-alcohol beverages between beers after taking the Drink Wiser Challenge increased from 41% to 66%.
- The respondents held more favorable views towards Budweiser (+95.2%).

The [Budweiser]campaign was not measured on how it impacted long-term behavior or social norms. It would have been valuable to learn if any new social norms had been created as a result of this campaign over mid- and long-term timeframes.

Here the campaign is evaluated on its creative execution, model for change, and the three steps required for creating social norms:

- **Creative execution:** Drink Wiser's clever pun on the product name made it highly memorable. It also had many good connotations, although it was difficult to measure how engaging it is relative to other Budweiser marketing. The messaging itself was straightforward and educational. It was focused on sporting events, which were popular with the central audience, with some campaign extensions to other drinking occasions, such as clubs, parties, game nights and holidays, including Halloween, where unhealthy drinking occurs.



Budweiser THIS BUD'S FOR YOU.

ENJOY RESPONSIBLY
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- **Model for change:** The expectation was that the awareness campaign, along with free water giveaways at a few sporting events, would change consumers' behavior and their perceptions of social norms. These alone would likely be insufficient for this substantial task.

- **Communicate expectations:** The campaign had a single-minded focus on a key smart drinking behavior and was well-executed for the target audience for specific binge drinking occasions. However, being explicit about campaign expectations doesn't always translate into action. The communication should therefore attempt to provide a rationale for urban youth so they believe that their peers will expect them to do these things – for example, because it is considered “cool” or what “experienced drinkers” do. For the specific binge-drinking occasions targeted, the behavior change was incentive-based, which does not reference or rely on the possibility of social pressure to drink responsibly.
- **Increase observability:** There is some observability through the online Drink Wiser Challenge, mainly by showing people drinking water during the games and showcasing superstars drinking water.
- **Eliminate excuses:** Wholesale promotion of free Lyft rides and distribution of water bottles during sports events made hydration and avoiding drink driving easier. These offerings could have had even more impact if they were thought through as part of the campaign.

Carling Black Label – #NoExcuse, South Africa

Carling Black Label is the biggest beer brand in South Africa, with a focus on male consumers who are among the heaviest drinkers on the continent. The brand's messaging has evolved with, and contributed to, changing meanings of masculinity. Just as AB InBev was buying Carling's owner, SABMiller, in 2016,



Images from Carling Black Label's #NoExcuse Campaign

CHAMPION MEN: IT'S TIME.

IT'S TIME FOR US TO COME TOGETHER. TO STAND UP FOR WHAT IS RIGHT.
IT'S TIME FOR US TO MAKE A CHANGE. BECAUSE ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.
IT'S TIME TO SAY NO TO THE EXCUSES. EACH AND EVERY ONE.
IT'S TIME TO PROVE YOU'RE THE CHAMPION MAN WE KNOW YOU ARE.
IT'S TIME TO TAKE ACTION AND SAY NO TO WOMEN ABUSE.

NOEXCUSESA.COM

researchers were raising alarms about the country's drinking problem and its connection to high rates of domestic abuse. The brand needed to address how to maintain its strong sales position with men while keeping South Africa's women safe.

In response, Carling created the #NoExcuse campaign to discourage gender-based violence (GBV). Over the years, it has had several sub-campaigns targeting GBV:

- The campaign included messaging on television advertising, on social media, and at sporting events focused on gender-based violence. Carling

sponsored a men's march that drew 8,000 spectators, released five million cans of beer with the #NoExcuse imagery, and called on South African men to pledge to combat violence against women. Carling also worked with Ogilvy and with indaHash, an influencer marketing firm, to spread the message at the 2018 Soweto Derby soccer series. The campaign was the winner of the Radio & Audio Grands Prix at Cannes Lions 2018 for its #NoExcuse "Soccer Song for Change".

- “Smart Drinking squads” were sent to taverns in poorer communities to train owners and patrons in modeling responsible alcohol consumption. Carling then worked with a social entrepreneur, Craig Wilkinson of the nonprofit Father a Nation, to extend this concept to local soccer associations and colleges. The goal was to train “Champion Men” who would become influencers and lead workshops in their communities on men’s roles in society, including preventing violence.
- In 2019, the campaign introduced a WhatsApp line for the people to seek help, either for men who are struggling with their masculinity or women who are suffering abuse from their partners. The WhatsApp number was also printed on secondary packaging to further increase accessibility and awareness.
- In its latest rendition in 2020, it featured a campaign called “Renew All” that urged men to renew their vows to their partners. They could also show their support by wearing campaign rings and wristbands. The campaign team was invited to present their involvement on GBV at the South Africa Parliament. Men got free access to Father a Nation’s “Champion for Change” course, which educates men on what they and society can do to prevent gender-based violence.

The campaign started in 2017 and is still ongoing, so it is too early to assess its impact on social norms. Indications from AB InBev research suggest that the campaign has managed to break through the silence on domestic abuse, particularly for 18 to 24-year-old South Africans, and there has been a rise in the proportion of men speaking out against domestic abuse and also a decrease in men giving excuses for domestic violence.¹⁸

Currently, there is no evidence of a reduction in alcohol-related harmful behaviors that resulted from the campaign, as measurements of campaign impact were limited to surveys of attitudes towards domestic abuse. Tracking responsible drinking behaviors are not part of what the marketing team was trying to check. In the Champion Men values, there is no mention of drinking alcohol and behavior around drinking alcohol. There was also no evidence of tracking data on violence against women or creating new norms of masculinity. To be fair, it would be very difficult to attribute reductions in gender-based violence directly to the campaign, given all of the other factors that can contribute to behavior change, such as education in schools, law enforcement levels, employment status, and more. And even if it were possible to track causality, it would be very expensive to do such a study, and there would also likely be ethical issues associated with it.

Rather than tell men what responsible drinking means, the campaign targets the root cause of gender-based violence: men who are “broken” or “wounded” and believe that gender-based violence is a way to establish dominance over their partner and is approved of by their peers. A focus on responsible drinking would seem to be a natural addition to the existing campaign because it might reduce gender-based violence, which is a frequent consequence of intoxication. As the program is already teaching men values for eating, friendships, and other habits, then it would be an opportunity to add responsible drinking as part of the Champion Men values.

Here the campaign is evaluated on its creative execution, model for change, and the three steps for creating social norms:

- **Creative execution:** #NoExcuse used a variety of

messages and channels to connect to its target audience. The Soweto Derby is perhaps the most watched annual sporting event in the country. Having the players on both teams wear “NoExcuse” armbands kept the message prominent throughout the series. Giving new lyrics to the familiar soccer anthem was also a creative addition. The campaign graphics and slogans were bold, stark and sharply-worded, creating a sense of heaviness and importance. They were likely to grab attention even in a busy media environment.

- **Model for change:** The campaign assumed that men engaged in GBV because it was a way of affirming manliness and alcohol gave them the excuse to take their frustrations out on women. The goal was to change men’s attitudes toward abuse and to create a social norm against this behavior through a new model of masculinity. Their model was the Champion Men workshops, which needed to be assessed against behavior change and uptake of the values that a “Champion Man” should hold. While admirable in its intention, the campaign did not provide an explicit rationale to make such a fundamental shift in identity beyond simply education on six virtues that underlie the brokenness of men in South African societies. For instance, it is not explicit enough about what is right and what is wrong.¹⁹ It also does not address the underlying influence that abuse of alcohol has on men committing some of these crimes.
- **Communicate expectations:** The campaign did not address specific smart drinking behaviors, as Aguila’s Live Responsibly and Budweiser’s Drink Wiser did. Rather than giving out five million #NoExcuse cans of beer, the message could have perhaps been stronger if a no- or lower-alcohol product or a Carling Black Label plus water bottle combo was distributed instead. The campaign communicated

clearly that gender-based violence is unacceptable. But it did not delve into responsible drinking and what it means to be a responsible drinker. The campaign could also think about a wider range of partners to make responsible drinking widely observable, acceptable, and the norm.

- **Increase observability:** The campaign broke through the silence on GBV but included only two elements to increase the observability of commitment: the rings and wristbands for men who renew their vows to their partners, and certificates for men who complete the “Champion for Change” courses. Secondary packaging was used to promote the WhatsApp hotline.
- **Eliminate excuses:** The campaign has been communicating that GBV is unacceptable and inexcusable but does not explicitly address binge drinking – although this could be taken as implicit, given that the campaign is led by Carling Black Label. One of the excuses could be that men really do not know their limit and do not have knowledge of how to avoid the level of intoxication where they are out of control. The campaign does not eliminate that excuse and does not give practical tips for avoiding binge drinking.

Cross-Campaign Insights

In implementing these and other social norms marketing campaigns and programs, AB InBev has experienced both successes and challenges.

AB InBev successfully promoted creativity and enthusiasm within its marketing teams and sparked the company's spirit of competition to advance the Global Smart Drinking Goals. However, there was significant variance in the ways that social norms

marketing campaigns were developed and delivered, which in some cases hindered their efficacy.

Developing campaigns that are grounded in a proven model of behavior change is critical. Changing norms takes consistent, long-term effort, and adoption of a longer timeframe than those we reviewed for this case. Even though several promising social norms marketing campaigns had the potential to change social norms, when examined in the context of the entire company's marketing approach, these campaigns were neither fully integrated nor funded for full amplification. For instance, several smart drinking campaigns struggled to get their mass media campaigns funded.

Looking ahead, as AB InBev brand teams become more familiar with social norms marketing approaches and success stories are shared across the brands, it is anticipated that fuller integration will occur. By 2020, more than 1,000 AB InBev employees had received social marketing training based on the evidence-based best practices in the Smart Drinking Toolkit, including through workshops led by Bill DeJong and Jeff French and one-to-one coaching. We observed more positive attitudes to Smart Drinking approaches as more marketing team members have come to value social norms marketing campaigns as an effective way to persuade consumers to drink responsibly while also improving brand equity and financial sustainability. As a result, AB InBev campaigns are being designed to both address harmful drinking and differentiate the brands in the crowded alcohol market, with Smart Drinking as a key differentiator.

AB InBev has opportunities to improve on some of these challenges, and specific recommendations are included in the latter parts of this case study. It is worth noting here that most campaigns fell short when it came to partnering with nonprofits and NGOs. And the partnerships with other private sector actors could

be challenging to sustain. For example, Aguila cannot subsidize safe rides home for most of its Colombian consumers for an indefinite period of time.

The credibility of social norm campaigns is still very much debated by public health leaders and also within business communities. The support from the AB InBev global corporate team is impressive in pushing these campaigns forward, but they must be embedded more fully into marketing departments and across more of the brands. They must be evaluated in ways that meet public health research standards. And for the campaigns with demonstrated success, they need to be mounted over longer periods of time and multiple markets to drive sustained social norm and behavior change. Since social norms form and shift over generations, not months, social marketing campaigns must run over a longer timeframe than standard campaigns. To achieve this, AB INBEV brand teams can push for support from global marketing for extended campaign continuity, so that any positive effects don't disappear the following year. The winner of the global competition, for example, should have backing for a multi-year campaign, supporting the same behavior change over this longer period.

In summary, AB InBev's social norms marketing campaigns have successfully changed individual drinking behaviors in the short-term, but they have not yet been shown to impact long-term behavioral and social norm shifts. The social norms marketing campaigns are also helping build brand equity and demonstrating the business case for Smart Drinking across the company. And importantly, social norms marketing campaigns are catalyzing engagement with employees, who feel proud to contribute to making a positive difference on consumer behavior.

Guidance Labels

One part of WHO's Global Strategy to reduce harmful drinking focuses on encouraging alcohol producers to provide on-pack labels with health guidance. Specifically, WHO has asked commercial operators in the alcohol industry to include easy-to-understand consumer information on product containers, in marketing campaigns, and at the point of sale, while complying with regulatory frameworks. The intent is to protect the health of consumers by facilitating informed purchase choices. In response, AB InBev is the only alcohol company committed to providing clear guidance labeling on *all* beer products to increase health literacy through actionable tips and informed choice.

AB InBev recognized that specialized expertise was required to lead this effort, which needed to be grounded in research and implemented uniformly across brands. Accordingly, the Foundation engaged Susan Koch-Weser, associate professor of public health and community medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine, to advise on the development of its consumer guidance labels. Koch-Weser approached the challenge with the understanding that AB InBev's



Smart Drinking Icons

labeling goal had the potential to provide critical information that consumers need to empower healthy choices. "This labeling strategy, with the rotating messages, will address critical aspects of alcohol health literacy, and, if supported by coordinated social norms marketing campaigns to increase awareness and use of the labels, holds great potential to improve

public health."²⁰ The initial proposal was for the team to develop a two-centimeter by two-centimeter label that could be used globally as a consumer guidance label.

In 2018, as part of this work, Koch-Weser and her Tufts research team conducted a literature review and hosted a consensus conference to process the current research and develop recommendations. The consensus conference was attended by external experts, representatives from Tufts, the TAG, and non-participating observers from the AB InBev Foundation. The consensus among the scientific researchers was that guidance labels can generate or reinforce awareness, if noticed, but they have not been shown to have a clear and consistent impact on consumer behavior. Researchers also noted that many challenges existed in the implementation of guidance labeling, particularly when it was voluntarily applied by industry.²¹ The main challenge faced by previous labeling initiatives was that the labels were not consistently applied across brands. For instance, the UK government attempted to improve labeling through voluntary agreements with producers in 2007, with enhanced messages addressing serving size and warnings about unsafe consumption. "However...just 15% of drinks were found to be properly labelled," according to one published evaluation.²²

As a result of the consensus conference, the Tufts team developed the *Implementation Manual for Pilot Lower-Risk Drinking Guideline Labels*. The labels are intended to provide consumers with information and messaging that will serve to increase their ability to make informed decisions about safe product use. The manual recommended a twofold strategy:

- First, all existing product description labels should always include, or be modified to include: (1) the percent alcohol by volume, and (2) the number of standard drinks in the container.

- Second, a separate consumer guidance label should be placed on all containers. A series of labels should be designed so that they can be rotated. First among these labels would be a guidance label informing consumers of their country's low risk drinking guidelines and the alcohol content of the container in relation to those guidelines. In addition to the low risk drinking guideline label, labels with messages about the diseases and harms associated with alcohol should be developed. Message content will be identified using a set of ranking criteria.

To increase potential impact, AB InBev prioritized its labeling rollout by focusing first on products in markets without mandated labeling requirements. Using the implementation manual, AB InBev began by confirming the country-level lower risk drinking guidelines to be communicated on the initial labels. In many of these countries, however, AB InBev found that the governments did not want an alcohol company providing such specific health advice. Additionally, each market had different local laws and regulations, different brands had varying color and space mandates, and many markets had different production timelines that made the rollout less coordinated than originally envisioned. As AB InBev pushed ahead with its labeling initiative, the Tufts team was challenged to provide feedback and guidance about additional labels that met the company's ambitious timeline. Working from a guidance document that Koch-Weser and her colleagues prepared, several AB INBEV brands proceeded to develop labels on their own and then requested feedback from the Tufts team. "[The] timeframes...were very tough to hit," noted one team member.



Tanzania's Kilimanjaro Beer includes Smart Drinking Icons on the label.

The initial efforts targeted “primary pack” labeling (the label on the bottle or can), where a guidance label measuring two-by-two centimeters would be placed. The labels could also be applied to secondary packaging (cardboard cartons or other containers for groups of cans or bottles) and resized accordingly. For each market, the products were required to have a guidance label message based on the following considerations:

- Type of message: Messages providing 1) specific behavioral advice such as “Eat before or while drinking alcohol” or “Alternate your drinks with non-alcoholic drinks” or, 2) warnings such as “Don't drink and drive”.

- Visual icons: Labels should have icons to match the specific advice or warning.
- Link to consumer information website, e.g., TapIntoYourBeer.com, a resource where consumers can learn more about Smart Drinking and AB InBev products
- Legibility requirements: Local laws or policies about text orientation, font size, contrast, frame, size, relative positioning, place, and iconography
- Standard drink size definition
- Guidelines on daily and weekly limits, tailored for women and for men

By the end of 2019, the market teams submitted their guidance label roll-out plans. One year later, AB InBev achieved its goal of placing guidance labels on at least 81% of eligible beer products consumed in countries that did not already have a legally-mandated health guidance policy.

Accomplishments

In rolling out the guidance labeling, the Foundation was able to further its collaboration with public health experts, quickly execute and meet one of its GSDGs at scale, and develop labeling criteria that go well beyond current government mandates in many countries.

First, AB InBev Foundation team members and public health experts collaborated on this initiative. As noted in previous sections, developing a more open and direct relationship between AB InBev and public health experts is one of key successes of the entire GSDGs initiative, and one which the Foundation was able to help facilitate. The researchers were careful to adhere to the science and evidence in providing labeling guidance to AB InBev, and through working

with the Foundation, the research team gained insights into the company's internal processes and logistical constraints. This process allowed the researchers to provide advice that was actionable and the company to draw on behavioral research that combines text with iconography and legibility criteria. In Ukraine, for example, the company recognized that the labeling was illegible, so they improved the font and put the label in a box to draw consumers' attention to it.

Second, rolling out the guidance labels in 28 countries should be considered a success. Brand marketing teams are protective of their marketing “real estate,” including airtime on television, social media exposure, and space on packaging and bottles. In this case, AB InBev effectively devoted high-value real estate on its bottles and cans to these new guidance labels. Moreover, the rollout was fast paced; the time from the initial Boston conference to guidance labeling on over 80% of eligible beer volume was less than three years.



Colombia's Costeña Beer includes Smart Drinking tips.

Third, AB InBev acted as an industry leader in regions where labeling was neither required nor regulated by the government. Importantly, the company developed a unique set of labels that provide actionable “smart drinking” advice (e.g., drink a glass of water in between alcoholic beverages) and developed criteria for deciding which health warning labels should take priority in individual markets. Also noteworthy is that, unlike many government-mandated labels, AB InBev’s labels combine text and iconography, which not only increases the labels’ salience, but also helps low-literacy readers better understand the messages.

In interviews with public health experts, it was acknowledged that it would be preferable if there were government-led mandates for labeling, but in the absence of these, AB InBev deserves credit for going beyond both what was legally required and what other industry producers were willing to do.

Before



After



Mexico's Victoria Beer before and after the addition of the Smart Drinking icons

Challenges

Several challenges emerged during the implementation of the guidance label goal over the GSDGs initiative's first five years. One major hurdle was the difference in perspectives between the public health experts and the commercial teams. The different requirements for unique brands sold in specific markets made the implementation of uniform company-wide labels impossible. In response, the public health experts set about to develop, test, and revise market-specific labels that would have the greatest potential to help reduce harmful drinking. This step-by-step process was time-intensive and the public health researchers often moved at a slower pace than the company's commercial teams, which were incentivized to act quickly to meet their performance objectives. As a result, the brand managers used the guidance outlined in the initial playbook to develop their own labels. In many cases, however, the labels deviated significantly from public health guidance. Unfortunately, those labels were seldom reviewed ahead of time by the public health expert before they were printed and shipped.

A second challenge relates to the fact that AB InBev does not have data to demonstrate the impact of guidance labels on reducing harmful alcohol use. Without a randomized trial, which would be both logistically complicated and expensive, it was very difficult to systematically measure the guidance labels' impact on consumer behavior. The argument could be made that, at a minimum, guidance labels would do no harm. However, the labels came with a significant cost, and in some instances, they could have backfired. For example, one of AB InBev's labels that reminds consumers to drink a glass of water in between alcoholic beverages had the potential to encourage consumers to drink more alcohol because they

believed drinking water enabled them to drink more beer, rather than drink alcohol in moderation. Any guidance label should be pre-tested with qualitative research to ensure that the wording, image, and behavioral message will resonate with the audience – and achieve the intended health impact.

A third concern from a public health perspective is that when the source of a message is the company brand, consumers may misinterpret the message. Communication researchers have demonstrated that a message's persuasiveness depends on its perceived source. For example, the “friends don't let their friends drive drunk” message would likely be perceived very differently by a young person if it was coming from a police officer in uniform instead of a peer. It is a difficult line for AB InBev to walk; for labeling to be effective, it should be supported by social marketing efforts, but if the social marketing and public health messages appear too closely aligned with brand interests, public health experts worry that the labels may be serving a commercial purpose.

In this vein, when messaging is perceived by the consumer as coming from the brand rather than as a message from a government official, such as the U.S. Surgeon General or another authoritative source, it can be confusing to consumers. Pro-health messages disseminated by a brand could have less credibility as consumers may dismiss them as not being science-based. On the other hand, if consumers see that alcohol companies are recommending moderate use of their product, this could be perceived positively. Another concern is that consumers may disregard these messages if they suspect the company's motivations are commercial, rather than to promote public health and safety.²³ The counterpoint to this is that the CSR framing, which positions the company as being a responsible corporate actor, may in fact build

brand equity, especially among Millennial consumers who express higher expectations for corporate responsibility than previous generations.

A final concern among the public health experts working with AB InBev was that over the course of the GSDGs effort, certain brands increased the production value of the guidance labels and started mimicking the “look and feel” of the labels to other AB InBev marketing materials that were not on the packaging. This blurred line between the brand’s marketing content and public health messaging. It might have signaled to consumers that the guidance label messages were created by the company itself, rather than by public health experts or a government agency, thus undermining their impact.²⁴

AB InBev partially addressed this through its legibility requirement. The guidance label messaging had to be separated from the commercial messaging, either by placing the label in a box or using different font colors. In a study conducted in Canada by the Tufts team, participants did not respond negatively to the labeling, which they knew was an AB InBev initiative. This finding suggests that, in the case of AB InBev, company-driven labeling may be effective.

Importantly, one public health expert involved with the AB InBev labeling effort stated that the labels themselves should identify the company as their source. That would require additional “real estate” on the bottles and cans, of course, and therefore may not be practical. The Tufts team has recommended that, to maximize consumer awareness, the labels should be introduced through a vigorous social marketing campaign. This would likely provide a related benefit by highlighting that the company worked with public health experts to develop the messages.

Opportunities

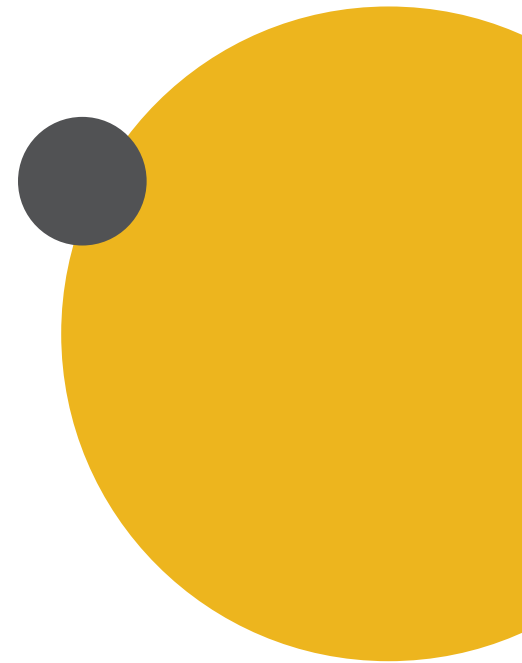
Guidance labeling efforts hold the potential to reduce and prevent harmful drinking if they are developed and delivered in the right ways using evidence-based methodologies. To do this most effectively, public health researchers must be closely involved in the development of the labels. Moreover, they should be leading the effort by developing and testing the efficacy of feasible labels in the markets in which these labels will be deployed. There is a subtle but important distinction between researchers developing guidance labels from scratch and researchers reacting to company-generated labels that are already primed for implementation.

The challenge for AB InBev was rooted in the fact that the speed of health research and the speed of business are different. The labeling rollout would have been delayed if meticulous testing were conducted for every market. AB InBev prioritized moving ahead right away since the company was willing to base its rollout on the best evidence available at the time and remained open to making adjustments in the future. Both the public health experts and AB InBev wanted to reach the same endpoint, but their expectations for how the work could – or should – proceed were very different.

One way these two perspectives could be reconciled would be to bring public health experts into the company, including into the marketing teams themselves. In the view of one public health expert, AB InBev could demonstrate its commitment “to public health [by] hiring ... people with public health training to be integrated into [their] marketing teams.” The potential for increased integration was raised by many people within and outside of AB InBev and will be revisited later in this case study. No matter how public health expertise is brought to bear going forward, it

will be critical to design pre/post research to measure the impact of labels on harmful alcohol use. AB InBev could play an important role in adding to the evidence base to document which messages work, with whom, and for which behavioral objectives.

AB InBev deserves recognition for going beyond government mandated labeling requirements. Hopefully, in the near future, more government agencies will begin to require health warnings and behavioral guidance on alcohol containers and packaging. If and when governments consider taking this step, AB InBev should actively support those efforts. Further discussion of the company’s role in policy advocacy appears in the recommendations section of this case study.



City Pilots

AB InBev launched several City Pilots initiatives to meet the GSDG, “Reduce the harmful use of alcohol by at least 10% in six cities by the end of 2020, and implement best practices in all markets by the end of 2025.” The intended City Pilot locations were: Brasilia, Brazil; Columbus, United States; Jiangshan, China; Johannesburg, South Africa; Leuven, Belgium; and Zacatecas, Mexico. According to leaders within the AB InBev Foundation and across AB InBev, the City Pilots were designed to serve as laboratories for testing a mixture of program interventions, local policy advocacy, and best practice replication to reduce the harmful use of alcohol. The hope was that the City Pilots would serve as a place to test different interventions and actions, see what works, what does not work, develop insights and share lessons learned with the rest of the GSDGs community. A key part of the City Pilot program design was that AB InBev was willing to commit significant resources to community-based interventions, with the realization that not all investments would necessarily produce positive results.

The Foundation used the following criteria to determine which City Pilot initiatives to support:

- Conform to evidence-based practice (i.e., published peer-reviewed literature that exists in support of the interventions, which includes either meta-analysis, descriptive narratives, a randomized control trial, a time-series case study, a non-equivalent comparison group study or a case study with key references for the evidentiary basis)
- Demonstrate the potential impact on reducing the harmful use of alcohol

- Be adapted to the local context and culture for implementation
- Have buy-in and support from the local community
- Be selected using data that are associated with the burden of harm related to alcohol in the City Pilot (either to specific harm areas or to the overall burden of harm in the community)
- Align with the objective of the Global Smart Drinking Goals’ focus on reducing the harmful use of alcohol

Beyond these formative criteria, interviews with AB InBev Foundation and City Pilot stakeholders confirmed that City Pilot locations were also chosen somewhat opportunistically. For example, other factors included where it would be easy to launch a City Pilot program quickly, due to the buy-in of the local community, and where the company had previously established relationships. It should be noted that these relationships caused challenges in certain instances that may have hindered the Pilots’ ability to serve as truly “experimental” labs.

The monitoring and evaluation partner, HBSA, oversaw baseline surveys among youth and adults in each of the six cities. The plan was to repeat these surveys each year to monitor and measure progress. Each intervention city was paired with a control city, in which the same surveys were conducted, to add another level of rigor to the study design. One of the major metrics measured was Healthy Life Years (HLY), a composite measure representing the number of years that a person is expected to live in a healthy state. The HLY lost was calculated as a compilation of harm variables related to alcohol use, drawing from both survey research and institutional statistics from

local governments (e.g., police data on drunk driving arrests) and medical institutions such as hospitals.

The Foundation committed from the beginning to share all lessons learned through its research and evaluation activities. This had two purposes: to disseminate learnings with the broader community, and to reinforce the Foundation’s and the company’s commitment to transparency. To date, more than 20 peer-reviewed papers and academic presentations have been generated through the program, underscoring the Foundation’s values of rigor and dissemination.²⁵



Brasilia City Pilot: Mapping key locations as part of the Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) program

In the case of Johannesburg, South Africa, HBSA's quantitative research was complemented by formative qualitative research to understand the situation regarding underage drinking. Georgetown University (publisher of this case) oversaw a qualitative study among adolescent girls and boys in Alexandra Township, which was the intervention community in South Africa. The focus group and individual interview findings revealed some of the reasons why underage drinking was such a significant problem in Alexandria. When analyzed in conjunction with the quantitative data, the qualitative study results painted a robust picture of the risks and harms faced by adolescents. It also provided insights that could be used to guide the development of the City Pilot interventions.

Each City Pilot was governed by a Steering Committee, which was composed of key stakeholder groups in the community and a representative from AB InBev. Once the Foundation began directly managing the City Pilot program in 2018, Steering Committees were supported in the following ways to strengthen local ownership of the City Pilot and stakeholder-decision making around local programming:

- **Direct support in developing a more coherent governance model and operational framework.** This included establishing by-laws that outlined ways of working, including committee structure, meeting cadence, and member terms. Steering Committee Coordinators were hired to support the Steering Committee members by organizing meetings, preparing briefing materials, and planning training workshops.



The Management Practices for Safer Roads Tool Kit

- **Additional staffing support.** Program officers were hired for four of the City Pilots to support the planning, implementation, and management of the chosen interventions and program partners in their city. Program officers were also invited to attend local Steering Committee meetings to provide updates and receive feedback on program activities and share any Foundation-related updates.
- **Technical assistance to help adapt evidence-based approaches to local conditions and provide tools to help implement effective local programs to reduce harmful alcohol use.** This included the Smart Drinking Toolkit, the Intervention Selection Tool, and hands-on training and technical guidance from external partners on programs to reduce harmful alcohol use as well as strategies to enhance their functioning as a community partnership.

Across all of the City Pilots, the AB InBev Foundation played the role of a “backbone organization” to support the City Pilot teams and build their technical capacity. For instance, the Foundation convened city-level training workshops; organized and hosted an annual in-person “All Hands Meetings” for the City Pilot teams and partners globally; and facilitated provision of tailored technical expertise through members of the Scientific Partners Task Force with expertise in public health and social marketing to support Steering Committee members on an ongoing basis. The Foundation also developed resources to assist the City Pilots in following global best practices. The company contributed to the development of toolkits, such as the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) “Management Practices for Safer Roads Toolkit.”

It is important to note that while brand-driven social norms marketing campaigns, product and on-pack guidance labeling, and product reformulation were led primarily on the commercial side of the business, the City Pilots which were led primarily by the Foundation and key stakeholders such as local City Pilot Steering Committee members, and members of AB InBev's SPTF and TAG, among other constituencies. Furthermore, implementation of the City Pilots involved many activities that were not under the direct span of control of either the company or the foundation. The City Pilot implementation required AB InBev work in collaboration with cross-sector leaders at the local, national, and global level while providing philanthropic support to local NGOs. The City Pilot activities are more closely associated with traditional corporate philanthropy approaches; whereas the activities on the commercial side that involved brand-driven social norms marketing campaigns, product guidance labeling and recipe reformulation represented shifts in AB InBev's core business model as it moved toward creating shared value.²⁶

In the following sections, we focus our analysis on sample activities in three of the City Pilot sites: Zacatecas, Mexico; Brasilia, Brazil; and Columbus, Ohio. We describe programs that were offered in each of these cities and draw out insights and lessons from these experiences. We also reference activities in other City Pilots which were at different stages of development when the COVID-19 pandemic commenced. All City Pilot interventions were paused in 2020; the Foundation aims to resume City Pilot activities in 2021.

Zacatecas, Mexico

The pilot program in Zacatecas had multiple initiatives that proved to be successful, including the Mystery Shopper program, road safety initiative, and policy advocacy to close bars earlier.

The Mystery Shopper and policy advocacy activities were part of a Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) effort. RBS is a community-based approach to reduce the risks associated with the sale of alcohol off- and on-premise. There are four main elements of RBS: national, state, and local laws; establishment policies and procedures regarding the sale of alcohol; administration and training of personnel involved in

the sale of alcohol (e.g., managers, waiters, vendors, bar manager, and security); and compliance checks (undercover purchases and closing times checks by law enforcement).

The Mystery Shopper program was an effort to limit accessibility of alcohol to underage individuals. The RBS intervention in Zacatecas included Mystery shopping activities, which involved attempted purchases of age-restricted beverages by young, legal-age shoppers in order to provide feedback on age-restriction compliance. For instance, in 2016, the local AB InBev company Grupo Modelo piloted a Mystery Shopper program to improve Modelorama convenience stores' compliance with not selling alcohol to minors.



Breathalyzer machines were distributed as part of the Zacatecas City Pilot's road safety program.

The initiative included replacing operators at stores who were discovered to habitually sell beverages to minors. Heineken was also involved in training operators and launched a Mystery Shopper program at its Oxxo stores.

In 2019, the Mystery Shopper program was enhanced to include clerk training, an extension of training for staff of other small retailers, and additional sanctions for non-compliance. Based on the number of stores likely to participate, it was estimated that the reduction in stores selling to minors would increase from 12.7% to 40%.

The second area of successful intervention focused on road safety. Members of the Zacatecas City Pilot team successfully worked with the local police department to set up breathalyzer checkpoints. Sobriety checkpoints are interventions carried out by the Road Safety Police of the State Government which aim to reduce alcohol-related crashes by preventing drivers from driving under the influence through a perceived and actual increase in enforcement. In Zacatecas, the AB InBev company Grupo Modelo provided breathalyzers and bodycams. It promoted their regular use in random roadside breath tests starting in 2016. The roadside breath testing program in Zacatecas included an average of three to four sobriety checkpoints weekly and more intense campaigns during holidays.

According to those involved in the execution of the road safety initiatives, part of the success of this program was due to the aligned motivations of the City Pilots team and the law enforcement. Working together with local law enforcement, the team was able to generate improvements. For instance, the effectiveness of the check point interventions was increased by extending the hours during which they

were operating on the streets, as well as by operating checkpoints at random locations and times.

A third area of focus was policy advocacy to tighten regulations governing how late bars could stay open. In December 2016, City Pilot team members met with representatives of the Government of Zacatecas' Ministry of Health to advocate for passing a state law which would establish a 10 p.m. curfew on alcohol sales for off-premises consumption and make the "last call" at bars and restaurants earlier, changing from 4 a.m. to 2 a.m.

In the first nine months that the law went into effect, results from the Mystery Shopper program showed that 42% of stores had closed at 10 p.m. or remained open but refused to sell alcohol. The AB InBev Modelorama stores had almost all closed by the curfew, accounting for 40% of all vendors that closed. It was anticipated that additional store closings and sales refusals would occur with other interventions planned by the City Pilot effort: increased publicity and signage to raise consumer and employee awareness of the new curfews; instructions to lock or rope off the alcohol section or cooler case for stores that remained open; enhanced operator and clerk trainings, and increased enforcement by management and police.

This combination of interventions in the Zacatecas were highly effective. The AB InBev Foundation estimates that the City Pilot efforts made a significant contribution to reducing harmful drinking in the city by 10% by 2020. This includes reaching the targeted goals with regard to underage alcohol use prevention and youth harm reduction.

Brasilia, Brazil

The Brazil City Pilot in Brasilia launched in 2016, and included programs in road safety, Screening and Brief Interventions (SBI), Responsible Beverage Service (RBS), and a Strengthening Families initiative. The UNITAR 'Management Practices for Safer Roads Toolkit', mentioned above, was based on research and best practices in the Brazil City Pilot. The Brazil road safety work focused on 'hotspots' where accidents, including those related to drunk driving, occur most frequently in Ceilândia and Taguatinga. These are densely populated, low-income areas of Brasilia with more than 700,000 residents. In addition, the City Pilot developed specific interventions to reduce drunk driving through 'saturation patrols', or increased police presence. A police force working group was established in 2017 with a focus on aligning and synergizing actions to reduce harmful alcohol consumption and traffic fatalities. After the program implementation, the number of deaths decreased 35% in 2017 and 29% in 2018.²⁷

The Screening and Brief Intervention program worked with 17 public sector primary care units and 200 SBI-trained health workers in Ceilândia with a goal of conducting 400,000 SBI screenings to address heavy episodic drinking. This program was originally implemented in-person, and due to the COVID-19 pandemic it transitioned to a telemedicine model. As of mid-2020, nearly 7,000 screenings were conducted.



Brasilia City Pilot: Technical support home visits for the Screening and Brief Interventions (SBI) program

The Brazil City Pilot adapted worldwide best practices to promote Responsible Beverage Service techniques in Ceilândia and Taguatinga. The program planned 1,000 training sessions for alcohol servers to improve their ability to ensure that alcohol is not served to underage customers and those who have already had too much to drink.

To address the need for effective prevention efforts with young adolescents (ages 10-14), the Brazil City Pilot adapted an internationally-proven model, the Strengthening Families Program, to the local context. This program focuses on the risk and protective factors that can lead to underage consumption of alcohol. Based on a series of seven meetings, the program involves the whole family, and strengthens socio-emotional skills, intra-family connections, and mitigating risk factors that can lead to alcohol consumption.



Facilitator training for the Brasilia City Pilot's Strengthening Families Program

Columbus, Ohio, U.S.

In Columbus, the City Pilot team launched a Safe Rides program in 2017. This program intended to reduce the burden of alcohol-related car crashes in the community by offering consumers at high risk of alcohol-impaired driving free round trip transportation when consuming alcohol. AB InBev funded this campaign, which had three elements: Lyft coupons, increased enforcement, and an associated media campaign.

An external evaluation of the Safe Rides program funded by the AB InBev Foundation showed that harm from drinking was reduced by 0.3%, but alcohol consumption rose by an average of nearly one drink per ride. The net reduction in the harmful use of alcohol was 0.02% during 2017, with no reduction carrying over to 2018. In essence, while reducing some harmful outcomes such as drinking and driving, the Safe Ride program licensed consumers to drink more, given the guaranteed safe – and free – ride home. Once the program ceased, the effectiveness of the intervention also disappeared.



The Columbus, Ohio City Pilot featured the Safe Rides Program.

Our research team concluded that the outcomes of the City Pilot programs in Columbus were mixed. The program successfully reduced harmful outcomes of drinking, but failed in that it led to increased overall alcohol consumption. Furthermore, the positive effects of the program vanished after the incentives were removed and free ride coupons were no longer available. (AB InBev executives closely involved in the City Pilots program noted that they did not expect this outcome.)

The events in Columbus provide an unfortunate example of the boomerang effect, which is often seen in alcohol consumption research.²⁸ The boomerang effect occurs when an intervention is created to promote a desirable behavior, such as avoiding drinking and driving, but produces unintended consequences that undermine the original intention of the intervention. In the case of Columbus, though drunk driving was reduced, the Lyft coupons provided people with a license to consume more alcohol and increased the likelihood of binge drinking.

In its ongoing commitment to using evidence-based approaches, learning, and continuous adaptation, the Foundation commissioned FSG in December of 2019 to facilitate a convening in Columbus, Ohio to discuss whether, and how, safe rides programs can play a role in advancing public health goals. The convening was attended by global experts on alcohol prevention and road safety; stakeholders who supported a specific safe rides program executed in Columbus, Ohio in 2017; and staff from the Foundation and AB InBev. The convening's objectives were to: 1) Review the current evidence base on the impact and cost-effectiveness of safe rides programs; 2) Generate suggestions about how to redesign safe rides programs in order to balance short-term injury prevention (i.e., drink driving) and long-term public health goals (i.e., reduce harmful alcohol use); and 3) Distill lessons about safe rides programs that could be applied to program and research development in other settings. This engagement resulted in the publication by the AB InBev Foundation in August 2020 of the *Safe Rides Implementation Guidelines*.²⁹

Other City Pilots

The timelines for establishing Steering Committees, planning City Pilot activities, and implementing interventions in the other three cities varied; some were up and running by 2017, while others experienced delays for various reasons. A snapshot of the other City Pilot activities includes:

- The Leuven City Pilot in Belgium was among the first pilots to launch, and it built on the momentum of a longstanding collaborative effort between several governmental departments, law enforcement, and the Belgian beer industry to raise awareness of the dangers of drunk driving through the BOB campaign, which launched in 1995. This social marketing campaign encouraged consumers to identify their "BOB" (Bewust Onbeschonken Bestuurder), i.e., their designated driver.



Leuven City Pilot event at the Health House, a partner in the Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) program



The BOB Campaign in Belgium

- The "I Love Alex" City Pilot in the Township of Alexandra in South Africa officially launched in 2019. As noted above, Georgetown University oversaw the development of the qualitative research in Alexandra, which involved formative research to inform interventions to address underage drinking.



Working with local law enforcement as part of the Johannesburg City Pilot

- Preliminary work to establish the Jiangshan City Pilot in China commenced in 2018, including formative research conducted by HBSA and the control site, Lanxi, to identify the primary harms associated with harmful alcohol use in these communities, among other preparatory activities.

As of 2021, the AB InBev Foundation had pivoted to a new governance and leadership structure. AB InBev and Foundation leaders reviewed the work of the City Pilots to date to identify best practices and lessons learned. Actionable insights emerged in three key areas – RBS, SBI and Road Safety – which AB InBev plans to replicate globally by 2025. Catalina (Cata) Garcia, AB InBev's global director of corporate affairs, noted that replication plans were underway as of March 2021, with 43 cities across 28 countries under consideration for potential roll-out of programs drawing on some or all these three best practice areas. Meanwhile, plans were also underway to close the Brasilia and Zacatecas City Pilots in 2021 and to close the Leuven and Alexandra pilots in 2022 and 2023, respectively. The Columbus City Pilot closed in 2020, and the Jiangshan City Pilot never officially launched. The Foundation published a detailed account of progress by 2020 across the six City Pilot locations.³⁰

Cross-City Pilot Insights

The City Pilots initiative provides a notable example of how AB InBev successfully engaged public health leaders and developed collaborative approaches to advance the GSDGs. By 2020, Zacatecas had achieved the goal of contributing to a 10% reduction in harmful drinking in the region, and Brasilia was close to reaching the 10% goal. The other two City Pilots had made partial progress toward that goal. In addition, there were other accomplishments and learnings that could be applied to future efforts to reduce harmful drinking and related behaviors. For example, several City Pilot local program officers highlighted the fact that they benefited greatly from having the opportunity to work directly with and receive guidance from the global public health and social marketing experts on the Foundation's Scientific Partners Task

Force (SPTF). These experts helped them develop their local initiatives, and members of the Foundation's public health and evaluator networks also helped City Pilot team members review their programs to understand what worked, what did not, and what lessons could be applied going forward.



A local dance group supports the Johannesburg City Pilot

The City Pilot initiatives also faced challenges, including issues related to measurement and learning; organizational and role confusion; and local partnership development.

Measurement presented perhaps the most challenging aspect of the City Pilot work. The City Pilots were intended to function as experimental laboratories in which interventions could be developed, launched, and if proven successful, replicated and scaled. However, effective experimentation relies on rigorous measurement. The City Pilots would have benefited from establishing baseline outcome data from the start and clearer progress measures along the way in order to validate each program's effectiveness over time. The ability to learn what works, what does not work, and

why is made possible through having access to results which can be examined and evaluated. At the same time, the Foundation demonstrated its commitment to rigorous study and dissemination of learnings, as more than 20 peer-reviewed papers and academic presentations were generated through the City Pilot efforts, as noted above.³¹

Another challenge related to organizational issues and confusion of roles across the many actors involved in the City Pilots, which included AB InBev and Foundation staff, Steering Committee members, SPTF and TAG members, and evaluators. For instance, some stakeholders noted a lack of clarity, and some tension, between the Steering Committees and the Foundation. This tension arose in relation to the governance role of the Steering Committee and its ability to make independent program and funding decisions, while receiving global guidance and direction from Foundation staff. And despite AB InBev's intention to promote and strengthen local leadership, at times some City Pilot stakeholders felt that AB InBev was too prescriptive. As one local leader noted, "[When] our budget is usually approved, it's usually a bottom-up type of thing ...But this time it's top-down."

In addition, the local staffing assignments across City Pilots varied, which sometimes caused confusion. While all cities had a Steering Committee Coordinator who was employed by the Foundation and managed Steering Committee communications and meetings, some City Pilots also had a Program Officer, who was employed through the Foundation and led the technical work of the Steering Committee. Further, the lead Program Officers selected for each City Pilot each had different backgrounds and skill sets. Some were skilled in project management and others had public health backgrounds. A clear and consistent view of the

correct skill set for this role had not been established, which led to variances in performance. This was further complicated by the fact that each pilot had a different set of local relationships, which made it impossible to identify if, and which, project manager had the right type of skills to drive a successful pilot. In the future, identifying personnel with the right skills sets and relationships right at the local level could be an important improvement.

Further complicating matters, while some public and community-based leaders in certain regions of the world were willing to work in partnership with a beer producer, many were hesitant to join forces with industry. Some program officers noted that numerous government agencies and nonprofits were not willing to work with their City Pilot because it was affiliated with AB InBev. Understandably, the original structure of the AB InBev Foundation as a nonprofit led by public health and medical experts provided a level of distance from the commercial interests of AB InBev, which enabled program officers to broker a public-private partnership more easily.

Meanwhile, AB InBev employees faced challenges and learned new ways of working at the City Pilot level, which involved engaging in community-based collective activities. And while the company's executives were being held responsible for meeting AB InBev's ambitious impact goals by 2020, they did not have direct control over designing and implementing the programs and interventions at the City Pilot level; they instead needed to partner and collaborate with multiple stakeholders. Achieving social impact at the community level takes time, and no single actor can alone solve a complex societal challenge like harmful drinking.

As the Foundation pivots under the new governance structure established in 2020 and phases out the

initial six City Pilots, work is underway to replicate best practices and lessons learned to other cities and countries, as noted above, in 2021. This presents an opportunity to clarify issues related to governance, reporting, and what levels of involvement the company and the Foundation will have in the implementation of new programs based on the City Pilot experiments in this next phase of the GSDGs' journey.

Opportunities

Given the successes, challenges, and learnings that developed during the first five years, numerous opportunities exist to increase the effectiveness of AB InBev's local programs in the next phase. These include opportunities related to how the current City Pilots are structured and led, as well as how new geographies will be determined and which interventions will be scaled.



Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) training for the Leuven City Pilot

First, AB InBev should consider structuring its approach to governance differently in its next phase of work at city and regional levels. The Foundation can consider: 1) how local leadership teams and

accountability mechanisms are established, 2) what the reporting relationships are, and 3) how responsibilities and skill sets of the AB InBev and Foundation staff complement those of potential partners on the ground at community level.

Second, AB InBev can approach scaling best practices that emerged from the City Pilot experiments and replicating them in new cities using different criteria than those employed in the first five years. As noted above, cities were primarily selected opportunistically. What if they could be selected more intentionally in the next phase, such that all four GSDGs could be implemented and leveraged to full effect in specific geographic regions? For instance, replicating City Pilot best practices in cities that already have some momentum toward the other three Global Smart Drinking Goals would be beneficial because those communities are poised to make change. Evidence of momentum in various markets could be ascertained by evaluating the success of AB InBev branded social norms campaigns in those markets, NABLAB product launches, and labeling guidance surveys, among other company efforts.

Third, AB InBev team members working with community-level stakeholders should plan carefully how they intend to work together. While there was value in the experimental mandate of the City Pilots, the efficacy with which the various initiatives were launched could be enhanced by allowing public health experts to engage from the start and having them lead the development of local interventions and programs. Operational teams which include both strong project managers and public health experts can ensure local community efforts have the necessary knowledge, skills, and tools to succeed. Involving public health experts directly will also help reduce potential concerns at the local level about partnering with an alcohol company. Embedding public health experts

at local levels should make this achievable. This would also allow for better replication of successful programs in other cities and potentially even in other markets where mainstream campaigns could support such activities.

Finally, it is critically important that all community-based initiatives have a clear and defined measurement plan, as well as established program outcome indicators in place, so that results can be tracked from all initiatives – even those that may fail. To date, the Foundation has supported a GSDGs Data Library, which is an open data repository where all data that are collected through the Foundation's funding are archived. HBSA, as the independent evaluator, is managing this data repository and independent researchers can request these data to replicate the results or use them for different aspects of public health research. This type of transparency and sharing of learnings should be continued.

No- and Lower-Alcohol Beer (NABLAB)

One of the company's Global Smart Drinking Goals is to ensure that no- and lower-alcohol beer (NABLAB) products constitute at least 20% of its global beer volume by 2025. AB InBev's ambition is for consumers to integrate no-alcohol beers and beer with 3.5% ABV or lower into their current drink choices, reducing their overall total alcohol intake. Providing consumers with attractive NABLAB options is an important part of the overall effort to reduce harmful drinking.

As part of the GSDGs initiative, NABLAB presented an opportunity for the company to respond to shifting consumer preferences while also contributing to reducing harmful outcomes of alcohol. Setting a 20% of volume goal in ten years was highly aggressive, but the real purpose of the goal, as indicated by AB INBEV senior leadership team members, was to push the company to go as far as it could with NABLAB. In their view, it would be acceptable if the firm did not reach the 20% goal in the allotted time, because every added dollar earned from NAB or LAB products would be considered directionally-positive progress. Following the launch of the GSDGs in 2015, this percentage rose slightly from 6.66% to a high of 7.4% in 2018, then fell back to 6.58% in 2020.



CEO Carlos Brito promotes the no-alcohol Jupiler 0.0 on Global Be(er) Responsible Day.

Looking ahead, leaders within AB InBev see a growing opportunity to market and sell NABLAB products more successfully. Consumers in developed markets are trending towards products that provide superior taste over maximum ABV. Furthermore, consumer trends towards ketogenic diets and lowering their carbohydrate and sugar intakes provide a strong business case for NABLAB products. In one interview with an AB InBev employee on the commercial side, it was noted that while NABLAB may not be a large priority today, growth is envisioned over the next five years. AB InBev can leverage this momentum to build more excitement across the commercial teams in those coming five years. This individual believes that consumers are looking for "sophisticated adult-tasting solutions that can be part of...adult social occasions" without requiring the need to consume alcohol.

In this process, it is critical that NABLAB products are engineered to balance taste, texture, and other attributes while reducing the alcohol content. If the products don't meet consumer preferences for factors like these, then they will not sell, and the opportunity for impact will be missed.

"If it is called product reformulation, it is going to fail; if we call it recipe optimization, it is going to succeed," stated a member of the leadership team. In other words, market positioning is a critical component to success, along with the actual reformulation of the beer. Furthermore, a path to reaching the 20% sales volume share for NABLAB products is to market products that are lower in alcohol, but also have other health benefits and are positioned around a healthy lifestyle.

The company is already making encouraging progress toward its goals with new no-alcohol beers launched in Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Mexico, South

Africa, and the UK, as well as lower-alcohol beer products in a number of countries including Canada, South Africa, and multiple European markets. In the next section, we highlight two top-selling AB InBev products, Michelob Ultra and Jupiler 0.0, with the intention to demonstrate how focusing on satisfying consumer preferences and coordinating across goals is critical to success.

Michelob Ultra, United States

Michelob Ultra, launched in 2002 and currently produced at 4.2% ABV in the United States, now accounts for 10% of AB InBev's U.S. business. As noted by a senior executive, the key to this success was in taste and market positioning. AB InBev developed a lower carbohydrate, lower calorie, and lower ABV (than traditional U.S. beers) product that consumers enjoyed drinking. For these types of products to succeed, recipe optimization is critical. It's not enough to simply lower the ABV. The no- or lower-alcohol products must deliver on taste and quality, and fulfill the brand promise. Only then will consumers buy it. Moreover, as one senior leader noted, AB InBev does not market Michelob Ultra as "a lower-alcohol beer [but rather as] a lifestyle beer for the ones that want to work out and go out." Michelob Ultra is an example of executing on this goal effectively, even if it means rising above the 3.5% ABV cutoff for a lower-alcohol beer. To further the effort, in export markets, Michelob Ultra will be launched with a 3.5% ABV to adhere to the lower-alcohol threshold.

Jupiler 0.0, Belgium

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, AB InBev planned to launch a seven-week marketing activation in Leuven, Belgium that brought together social norms marketing campaigns, the City Pilot programs, and Jupiler 0.0, a no-alcohol beer. Leuven is a university city, and therefore has a relatively high rate of alcohol misuse by college students. The goal of this program was to build a campaign for a no-alcohol product using Jupiler, a well-established brand. AB InBev worked with a variety of community groups to create a campaign that made Jupiler 0.0 part of the brand culture and the social experience. The consumer positioning emphasized that people could get the refreshment and taste they enjoy without the alcohol.



Promotional event for the no-alcohol Jupiler 0.0 in Belgium

NABLAB: Analysis and Insights

AB InBev's NABLAB goal is promising for several reasons. First, increasing market share of NABLAB products is one way AB InBev can directly align its Global Smart Drinking Goals with commercial growth goals. While successful implementation of the other three GSDGs could involve lower harmful alcohol

consumption through reduced sales, the NABLAB goal aims to reduce alcohol consumption by replacing sales. Moreover, if marketed effectively, it is very likely that these products can command market prices that are comparable to higher ABV products. Given their lower alcohol content, the taxes on these products might be reduced, depending on the country. In these cases, lower taxes could potentially increase profit margin while moving consumers to lower-alcohol products. To this end, there is also promise in exploring recipe optimization with an eye to reducing ABV. Research demonstrates that reducing ABV by up to 1.5% is not easily noticed by consumers,³² so efforts to optimize recipes can include reductions in ABV. If a lower-alcohol product is marketed correctly, consumers do not increase their consumption volume to offset the reduction in ABV.³³

However, there are some aspects of the NABLAB goal that must be carefully examined, as they may lead to a boomerang effect. As noted earlier, the boomerang effect occurs when an intervention is created to promote a desirable behavior, such as avoiding drinking and driving, but produces unintended consequences that undermine the original intention of the intervention. In the case of NABLAB, if consumers are aware that they are drinking a lower-alcohol beer, this could create a "licensing effect" in which consumers over-consume because they do not recognize the additive impact of each beer, even though the beverage is lower in alcohol. Moreover, some of the AB InBev marketing of lower-alcohol beer suggested new "use cases" for a lower-alcohol product, e.g., drinking beer at a working lunch or during mid-day breaks. Without access to lower-alcohol products, consumers would normally refrain from drinking on these occasions. It's possible that, when given a choice to consume a product with a lower ABV, this may result

in more frequent drinking in different settings and at different times compared to traditional drinking habits. While the intention may be to move a consumer away from a higher ABV product, this strategy might result in the boomerang effect.

A 2020 study of lower-alcohol beer consumption behaviors in the United Kingdom found that over a three-year period, even though the availability of lower-alcohol beer had almost doubled, there was no consistent evidence of increased consumption; further, at times they found even a small decrease in overall grams of alcohol purchased.³⁴ This is encouraging data at the market level, but it would be important to study this at the individual level as well. The boomerang effects described above can be more pronounced in populations that are less health literate, so further study is required to understand these effects on the individual decision-making process.

There is some concern that NABLAB products have not been fully embraced internally by the business units. A sentiment brought to our attention by people on the commercial side is that, “We’re really just pushing for something that consumers are not really wanting.” Moreover, business units are reluctant to lean into NABLAB products because they “will require a significant amount of consumer education, retailer education, and internal education.” This does not align with the need to meet specific sales targets.

To address the need for consumer education and build synergy across the GSDGs, AB InBev should coordinate the launch of NABLAB products with social norms campaigns. Placing these two goals in the same market at the same time with coordinated messaging could create a multi-faceted campaign that successfully educates consumers, shifts norms, changes individual behaviors, and ultimately, reduces harmful drinking.

Cross-Goal Insights

In this section, we step back from analyzing progress toward each of the four GSDGs to examine the initiative as a whole, highlighting both successes and challenges as of 2020. Whether a company strives to implement a traditional corporate social responsibility (CSR) program, or it aspires to create shared value by solving societal problems through its business model, the financial investment can be significant.³⁵ Within the first five years, AB InBev had invested \$335 million USD within and across the four GSDGs (2016 - 2020).³⁶

From the outset, AB InBev's Smart Drinking initiative was ambitious in design, geographic scope, and scale of intended impact. Achieving the goals required changing operations on the commercial side of the business – including reforming brand marketing campaigns, packaging, and product design – while developing and launching a new foundation with operations across six target cities, among other activities. There is enormous complexity in implementing four major goals across a global company that owns more than 630 brands sold in thousands of markets populated by diverse communities which are governed by varied local, state, and national policy and regulatory environments.

Given these immense complexities, AB InBev's efforts and outcomes amounted to a significant achievement for a pioneering market leader.

And at the same time, the company has opportunities to do more. We discuss here the ambition of the GSDGs initiative, the company's internal commitment, the efforts to work with public health experts, and the willingness of the firm to test and learn from its efforts.



Partners in Colombia's Aguila Live Responsibly campaign

Ambition + Strategic Alignment

The GSDGs were ambitious from the outset. One individual involved in the City Pilots recounted how public health experts who joined the effort early on would commonly say, “It’s unbelievable that you are trying to do this in five years.” While AB InBev is actively striving to meet its ambitious goals, senior corporate executives readily acknowledge that the goals themselves may not be achievable. However, they argue that even if the goals are not fully reached, any progress made toward reducing harmful drinking can still be considered a success. Several of the company's leaders also noted that the level of ambition embedded in the four goals has inspired AB InBev to achieve more than it likely would have if lower targets had been set. The level of ambition also indicates how high the top management's level of dedication has been to the reduction of harmful drinking. However, our analysis reveals the importance of setting achievable impact goals, and research has shown that realistic goals are actually more successful in spurring change than over-ambitious goals.³⁷

The ambitiousness of the initial roll-out also created some challenges that hindered progress at the implementation stage. Big change can only be made

at scale, but such a pioneering effort needs to be strategically focused. The scope of the GSDGs at the start was too large. There were too many programs and interventions implemented across too many markets involving different branded marketing campaigns, which were not always coordinated with the City Pilot interventions and NABLAB roll outs.



Co-creation workshop as part of the Brasilia City Pilot's Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) program

Commitment from the Top

AB InBev employees, from the very top down, have dedicated significant time, energy and financial resources to achieving GSDGs. And the company is committed to continuing its investments for many years to come. "As a business, it is the number one thing that we need to make sure we do right," said one member of the AB InBev leadership team. The commitment was made from the top by AB InBev CEO Carlos Brito and his leadership team, and the company has put its words into action by engaging a renowned public health expert to drive the initiative through the Foundation and by engaging a range of external public

health experts.

Moreover, while traditional CSR efforts are often compartmentalized and led at lower levels of a firm, the GSDGs were established as a priority across the global senior leadership team. Incoming CEO Michel Doukeris has affirmed his strong support for the GSDGs.

It's also important to note that AB InBev has not framed its "smart drinking" initiatives as one-time public relations campaigns; rather, the company is dedicated to reducing harmful drinking over the long run through multiple campaigns and approaches. Even before the GSDGs initiative, AB InBev was working to reduce harmful drinking and its outcomes, and in the past five years they have built on and strengthened their approach. It is important that AB InBev is committed to reducing harmful drinking over the long term, because solving complex challenges and driving positive social change can take decades – sometimes generations. So consistent and persistent effort is required.

Another important aspect of the GSDGs initiative is that it has involved multiple levels and numerous parts of the company. AB InBev has made the GSDGs a part of its product development, marketing, and community outreach. Through its "smart drinking" initiatives, AB InBev employees have worked directly with NGOs and public health experts to educate and train brand teams how to design and deliver social norms marketing campaigns and programs.

While there is substantial commitment to the GSDGs, sometimes the best intentions of senior management did not translate down and across teams, due to the size of the company and the global scale of the initiative. For instance, many top AB InBev leaders commended the momentum and commitment to the

GSDGs, but some who worked on various brand teams or in local markets did not reflect that same level of energy or commitment. Some colleagues felt that while GSDGs were important, they had to prioritize hitting sales targets and achieving KPIs that did not always align with the goals.

Public Private Partnerships: Reconciling Cultural Differences for Better Alignment

The GSDGs initiative was successful in bringing together public health and commercial enterprise leaders to work toward common goals of reducing harmful drinking outcomes through the AB InBev Foundation. Public health experts were deeply involved in all aspects of the GSDGs. For example, they advised local City Pilots leaders on their activities, conducted research on guidance labels, and provided technical assistance to brand teams on designing social norm marketing campaigns. So whereas in the past, public health and alcohol producers had been pitted against one another or worked in isolation, AB InBev has demonstrated that it is possible for a company and public health leaders to collaborate toward common solutions. One member of the AB InBev management team observed that this type of approach would never have happened at the company where they had worked prior to joining AB InBev. Credit must be given to AB InBev for its efforts to partner with NGOs and public health experts.

At the same time, when interviewing different stakeholders from both the corporate and public health side, it was clear that participants on both sides felt the strain between the corporate and nonprofit cultures. Marked differences exist between the speed of operationalizing brand marketing plans and the

pace at which public health research can be conducted to build conclusive evidence of efficacy before action is taken, and ultimately the rate at which widespread social change can happen. In our experience, business leaders – including many executives at AB InBev – operate with a “fail forward” mentality. They are comfortable with taking risks, sometimes succeeding, other times failing, but always learning and quickly adapting. On the other hand, many public health experts might be characterized as more circumspect and cautious. They are driven by the desire to have proven positive impact and hold concerns that failures can cause material harm. For these and other reasons, public health leaders therefore proceed at a more deliberate pace.

Another reflection of the difference in perspectives between commercial and public health leaders was in how they viewed the purpose of setting goals. AB InBev executives saw the GSDGs as “aspirational” targets to spur progress forward, whereas public health experts viewed the GSDGs as a firm commitment to achieve certain targets within a specific timeframe. AB InBev leaders viewed any progress toward achieving the GSDGs as a success, if it was a step forward toward reducing harmful drinking and as long as it contributed to continuous learning. On the other hand, some public health leaders would classify those same efforts as a failure to meet the stated goals.

Another contrasting perspective between the private and public sectors is that commercial marketers have short term targets and timelines, whereas public health researchers focus on careful testing to find the best intervention, prove efficacy, and thus are comfortable with making progress over longer time horizons. These different perspectives created



The Budweiser Drink Wiser Campaign encouraged people to hydrate.

challenging working relationships at times. For example, the decision-making speed of the company with regard to the roll-out of the guidance labels often left the researchers at Tufts University in a “reactive mode,” rather always helping to prospectively develop and test best practices.

While sometimes challenging, contrasting perspectives can also be harnessed to create win-win solutions. Businesses have certain assets which can be leveraged for the common good, such as financial resources and political influence, while nonprofit and public health leaders have the issue expertise and trust of community members. Public health has the depth of understanding of the struggles of communities and a proven ability to address societal needs; business has the proven ability to implement quickly and scale effectively. (See Exhibit 4 for more on these differences.) While AB InBev should be lauded for inviting the public health community to partner on the GSDGs, it also has a chance to make that involvement more impactful by more effectively leveraging the assets on both sides. Toward that end, when asked which partnership he was most keen to nurture, CEO Carlos Brito mentioned AB InBev’s partnership with WHO.

There also appeared to be a disconnect between AB InBev executives leading the GSDGs initiative and many of the commercial teams within the company. Some comments from individuals on both sides note that there was not a unified view of the initiative and its centrality to the company and its goals. For instance, while the GSDGs were embraced by corporate affairs leaders, the priority did not always transfer to the marketing and commercial teams. Some working on commercial teams at AB InBev noted, for instance, that the GSDGs initiative sometimes felt secondary or ancillary to the main targets that they are expected to reach. Going forward, it is critical that KPIs and targets for commercial teams include GSDGs-related metrics to ensure they remain a focal point – and that they account for the amount of time and collaborative skill required when working in partnership with public health and community-based leaders.

A Willingness to Test and Learn

AB InBev’s progress toward implementing the GSDGs is evidence of the company’s willingness to learn from both successes and failures. The example of the Safe Rides in the Columbus City Pilot has been noted by many as a learning opportunity for the firm. The very conception of the City Pilots as experimental “learning” laboratories demonstrates this trait as well. However, learning is only possible when there is reliable data to measure at the end of an experiment.

While AB InBev established some useful measures to track some of the social norms campaign programs, they could have gone further to track pre- and post-campaign changes in social norms and individual behaviors. For instance, in the social norms marketing

campaigns, the data collected included standard metrics that marketers collect. Measurement of impressions and other brand metrics are important, but if the goal is to understand reduction in harmful alcohol use, the metrics must match the goals. For a social norms campaign, the metrics should measure the shift in consumer perceptions about peer behaviors and attitudes. More importantly, these measures should be regularly collected over time to measure long-term norm and attitude shifts. For some of AB InBev's larger social norms marketing campaigns, attitudes, behavior, and norms data were collected immediately following the campaign or intervention. And while attitude and behavior changes happened, they often were in response to direct incentives. It is important to continue to track changes in attitude and social norms over time, to see if the changes endured after the incentives had been removed.

It's also helpful to acknowledge that most social norm campaign results cannot be isolated from traditional advertising campaigns. More measurement data around affinity and brand equity (i.e., brand love) is needed, which is likely to be a better measure from a public health perspective than increased sales. Admittedly, comprehensive measurement and evaluation efforts can be expensive and time consuming, and therefore often out of reach for many companies. But extended assessments would be required for only a few campaigns, provided the science behind other campaigns is the same. Implementing several extended assessments would go a long way toward winning over the public sector and would become a solid basis of proof for advocacy. And, most importantly, cross-campaigns learnings on each harmful behavior should be shared quickly across all key markets and key brands so AB InBev improves year on year.

A framework is also needed for measuring social norm shifts, not just behaviors that change in response to time-bound incentives. For example, measurements for the #NoExcuse campaign focused on attitudes about gender-based violence; but it seems likely that a major way to ultimately reduce gender-based violence is to improve responsible drinking behavior. For social impact, are the specific goals reducing car crashes, changing attitudes, changing behaviors, and/or other outcomes? For business impact, is it brand love or better equity?

AB InBev also invested significant resources to measure the impact of interventions in the City Pilots, but there were challenges with those measurement approaches as well. For instance, to demonstrate that a City Pilot program had contributed to curbing drunk driving, more robust collection of baseline data *before* the intervention and as well as post-intervention data on arrests, accidents, and deaths would have been necessary. AB InBev had collected this kind of

information for some interventions, but for others, the data was incomplete.

Measuring the impact of NABLAB innovations presented another set of challenges. When a lower-alcohol product is released into a new market, measuring market share is not enough. Additional studies should be put in place to track changes from pre-release to post-release of the product, in order to assess the impact of this product on reducing harmful drinking. To this end, a more deeply embedded and cohesive partnership with public health experts would provide AB InBev with measurement tools and guidance to establish the correct metrics and processes that matched the intervention and the intended effects.

Moreover, with public health leaders more closely involved in the implementation of each of the GSDGs, a more holistic method of data collection could be put in place. Changes of the kind AB InBev is attempting to make can take years to occur, and data must be collected both during an active intervention or campaign and also for longer periods of time.

Cross-Goal Recommendations

In this section, we offer recommendations based on the insights derived from the first five years of the GSDGs, with a focus on cross-goal analysis and recommendations with implications across the four goals. We conclude with some reflections and thoughts as AB INBEV looks ahead to the phase of its Smart Drinking journey.



Billboard from the Aguilera Live Responsibly Campaign

Coordinate Across Goals

To drive lasting behavior change across the GSDGs, better coordination between the four goals is needed. Each of the GSDGs can have an impact in reducing harmful drinking, but if they are coordinated more strategically, it is possible for there to be multiplicative effects in driving “smarter drinking.” As described by a City Pilots team member, “Industry...is very important because...marketing is their thing [and] it has been nice to use their expertise in marketing our programs.”



Planning meeting for Brasilia City Pilot's Screening and Brief Intervention (SBI) program

Unfortunately, these types of synergies often went unrealized. For instance, social norms marketing campaigns were launched in numerous markets, but these did not always coincide with community-level efforts occurring across the City Pilots. This was a lost opportunity. As one City Pilot team member said in reference to the success of a social norms campaign,

“Now there was a way to talk about drinking behavior... this made our society ready for more.” Or consider guidance labels: Consumer labeling guidance has been added to the packaging of AB InBev beer products, but in many places these efforts were not accompanied by a social norms campaign or community-based City Pilot initiatives.

For durable social norms and behavior change to occur, consumers must be presented with the “smart drinking” message in numerous ways at the same time. For instance, NABLAB product launches could be coordinated with social norms campaigns to strengthen the impact on reducing harmful drinking and increase the visibility required to drive the change. The coordination of the various goals is the key to creating this long-lasting change, and coordination can only be achieved with a tractable scope that focuses on specific markets and brands. With the new Foundation governance and leadership structure embedded within the company, integrating social norms marketing campaigns with the roll out of best practices emerging from the City Pilots will be easier.

To successfully change behavior, focus is also key. Behavior change efforts tend to be less effective when multiple goals are embedded in one campaign. For example, in South Africa, Carling Black Label is focused on gender-based violence and has invested in multi-year efforts with workshops that focus on values that underlie the brokenness of South African men; it is tackling the same issue from different angles, making it more likely that lasting impact will be achieved if the right behaviors are tackled.

Design Social Norms Marketing Campaigns that Drive Social Norm and Behavior Changes that Stick

AB InBev's social marketing campaigns can drive normative and behavioral changes that last – *if* they are designed and implemented based on scientifically-proven social norm change approaches. As noted by a public health expert involved in the GSDGs, “You can't simply say ‘do this.’” It is not enough to provide information or change beliefs, consumers “have to feel as if they are going to be socially reinforced” to follow a more responsible drinking script.

When developing campaigns, AB InBev should consider launching year-round initiatives, delivered over multiple years, to drive lasting impact. AB InBev should also ensure that campaigns do more than just create observability and surprise the customer; they must articulate the key assumptions and clarify what causes unhealthy behaviors (e.g., drinking on an empty stomach or drinking and driving). Moreover, campaign designers should carefully consider the segments that they are targeting, and choose segments to target that are more receptive and more likely to make long-lasting behavioral changes. For example, binge drinking campaigns should target younger drinkers but not ignore the older target audiences (over 45 years), for whom changing behavior is harder.

Increase Internal Buy-In and Cohesion

The energy to drive ambitious social impact initiatives starts at the top of a company, but AB InBev must also ensure it also gains horizontal support across the corporate departments and brands. Business units such as the commercial marketing departments at AB InBev and across its brands should be more directly included in planning, execution, and evaluation of the GSDGs. Marketers are adept at evaluating gaps in the market, positioning of new products or brands (especially relevant for NABLAB products), and using consumer insights to build relevant social norms campaigns. Including marketing and business heads from the start is key, and demonstrating the business benefit is the way to win their buy-in. Should AB InBev move to align the geographic focus of all the GSDGs in common markets, the potential increase in impact can generate internal excitement to further pursue the goals. This can also yield expanded opportunities for external partnerships.

Additional solutions to increase internal buy-in and commitment up and down the company include creating new positions for employees with public health and social behavior change expertise to join and support the brand marketing teams. That way all messaging will be more consistent with the GSDGs. AB InBev can also more explicitly include GSDGs-focused KPIs across its markets and brands to ensure that commercial teams have incentives that align with the Smart Drinking goals – again, that take into account the need to act in partnership with public health and community leaders.

Looking ahead, internal investment by AB InBev in social norm campaigns can be further strengthened. Currently there is not enough “above-the-line” support; most marketing focuses on traditional commercial advertising, because performance is still measured mainly on sales by brand differentiation and does not incorporate social impact measures. Further, social norms campaigns have still not been infused fully throughout the culture of the company. While more than 80 social marketing campaigns have been mounted since the GSDGs were launched, AB InBev

has more than 630 brands which collectively mount thousands of campaigns in a given year. AB InBev can also take more risks, such as investing in social norms campaigns in December, which is the highest sales period – but also when harmful drinking spikes in many markets. Finally, the most successful approaches include provision of training and public health partnerships that spread across the commercial side of the company, which will help create the marketing competencies of the future.



Brasilia City Pilot's Strengthening Families Program



Carling Black Label #NoExcuse Campaign in South Africa

Continue Public Health Collaboration

AB InBev has done a commendable job including public health experts to provide insight and guidance on developing interventions across the four goals. However, the blending of the two different perspectives between the private and public sectors has come with challenges. As noted, both sectors possess strengths that, if harnessed well, can work together to create change faster and more effectively than either sector alone.

AB InBev can consider hiring public health experts to work within commercial teams or to play the role of public health advisors to make sure that marketing efforts for the GSDGs are consistent with research, prior learnings and best practices.

In these five years, the company and public health experts have learned much with respect to building a collaborative and productive working relationship. AB InBev should continue to empower their public health partners and leverage the strengths of these individuals.

One area in which the public health collaboration can and should increase is in the rigorous and long-term measurement of behavior and norms change. Large-scale societal changes to reduce harmful drinking can take years to occur, so data must be collected and analyzed not just during an intervention, but for extended periods of time. By collecting more reliable data for measurement and evaluation over a longer time horizon and on a broader set of key performance indicators, it can inform wiser investment decisions over the long term.

Build Partnerships to Increase Impact

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." An African proverb aptly applies to the opportunity AB InBev has to bring other alcohol producers together to make industry-wide changes that can reduce harmful drinking. Working with industry peers alongside public and private partners can create a multiplier effect and drive greater efficiency and breadth of impact. Below we discuss the steps AB InBev has already taken toward building industry partnerships, and then we identify global NGOs and more local and specific groups and coalitions with whom AB InBev can explore opportunities to partner.

Initial progress could be made by leveraging the existing framework and relationships based on the International Alliance for Responsible Drinking (IARD). Though some prospective partners will not want to associate with an alcohol company, AB InBev should strive to partner with organizations that actively work to reduce the harmful effects of alcohol misuse. Working alone will make these efforts significantly harder for AB InBev.

Examples of coalitions, agencies and NGOs that AB InBev can create or strengthen partnerships include:

- Large Global NGOs
 - Oxfam
 - CARE International
 - Mercy Corps
- Road Safety Leaders
 - Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)
 - Governor's Highway Safety Association (GHSA)
 - Reacciona por la Vida ("React for Life")
 - Road Safety Partnership South Africa
 - Vias Institute
- Anti-Gender-based Violence groups
 - Promundo
 - UNFPA

AB InBev has already established some partnerships, which it can further expand. In South Africa, for instance, the #NoExcuse campaign partnered with NGOs such as Father A Nation, LifeLine, and Forgood. The City Pilot in Zacatecas, Mexico, partnered with government and educational institutions. In the Johannesburg City Pilot, AB InBev partnered with the South African National Council on Alcoholism.

Partnerships with complementary brands could also be expanded. Most importantly, a way needs to be found to sustain them. For example, there is a limit to how long free rides for people can be sustained, as in the Aguila campaign. For #NoExcuse, Carling could add other brands that also seek to reduce gender-based violence and even scale up their workshops, all tackling the root causes of violence (toxic masculinity). Finally, partnerships at the point of sale need to be more prominent, as Budweiser has done with wholesalers for Drink Wiser.

Lend Voice to Policies Supported by Public Health Experts

In our discussions with public health experts involved with the GSDGs, many leaders stressed that the most impactful actions AB InBev can take relate to policy advocacy. They recommended that the company support – and at the very least not oppose – evidence-based policies that have been proven to have a positive impact on public health. Moreover, the company should actively oppose any policies that are not supported by the public health sector. Companies like AB InBev have established relationships with governmental agencies and an influential voice. By using this voice to support public health policies, the firm can reduce harmful drinking through a channel outside of the GSDGs. AB InBev is clearly acting on these recommendations from public health leaders. For instance, AB InBev has stated that it will not oppose



Argentina's Blasfemia wine with Smart Drinking Icons on the label

efforts to reduce the legal drinking Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) limit to .05% anywhere in the world. As noted in the AB InBev 2019 annual report, "We believe that when you drive you should not drink, so we fully support all targeted legislation and enforcement measures to reduce impaired driving, including strict Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) limits and enforcement."

AB InBev is the first and only alcohol company to take stands like this (to our knowledge). The potential positive impact of a global market leader like AB InBev playing this kind of leadership role is enormous. It's also proof that AB InBev is genuinely committed to improving public health, not just mounting a CSR public relations campaign. At the same time, AB InBev can do more. It could proactively lobby for the policies and recommendations that public health proposes based on evidence of impact – recognizing that companies taking active policy positions can

create complications. WHO and its SAFER framework explicitly call for industry to *refrain* from engagement on public policy because WHO asserts that industry's commercial interests are not aligned with public health. "In the view of WHO, the alcohol industry has no role in the formulation of alcohol policies, which must be protected from distortion by commercial or vested interests," stated Dr. Margaret Chan, former director general of WHO.³⁸

This conflict of interest is real, not just perceptual. Alcohol companies have a vested interest in policies that pose the least restrictions on drinking, so that they can maximize revenue through expanded sales. Those vested interests often contradict the science-based proposals of public health experts, which often seek to restrict access to alcohol and reduce drinking occasions or marketing to key audiences. For instance, public health evidence shows that closing



AB InBev Foundation's 2019 All Hands Meeting at Georgetown University

bars earlier and having police strictly enforce laws banning underage drinking at retail shops can curtail harmful drinking. Even for a company as dedicated to reducing harmful drinking as AB InBev, asking a company to actively lobby for policies that contradict their commercial interest is unrealistic. This is even more unrealistic for companies that have not shown the same commitment to “smart drinking” as AB InBev.

AB InBev can support policy initiatives that align AB InBev's commercial interests with its public health

goals. For instance, proposals that base taxation by unit of alcohol per serving can benefit brewers like AB InBev. Because the company that primarily sells beer, taxes would be lower on beer than wine or spirits, because beer has lower levels of alcohol per serving. And taxes on NABLAB products would be even lower. By advocating for unit-based taxation policies, AB InBev could potentially create a pricing advantage, while shifting consumption to lower alcohol products and further reduce harmful drinking.

AB InBev would also benefit from greater advocacy in partnership with competitive brands. This type of advocacy communicates a company's purpose so consumers understand how they make a difference to the world, and the company's stakeholders understand how to contribute. Global Beer Responsible Day is a promising way to introduce NABLAB in new countries and tie it into anti-drinking and driving campaigns.

Looking Ahead: The Next Five Years

As AB InBev looks toward the next phase of its GSDGs, we offer these final thoughts for consideration.

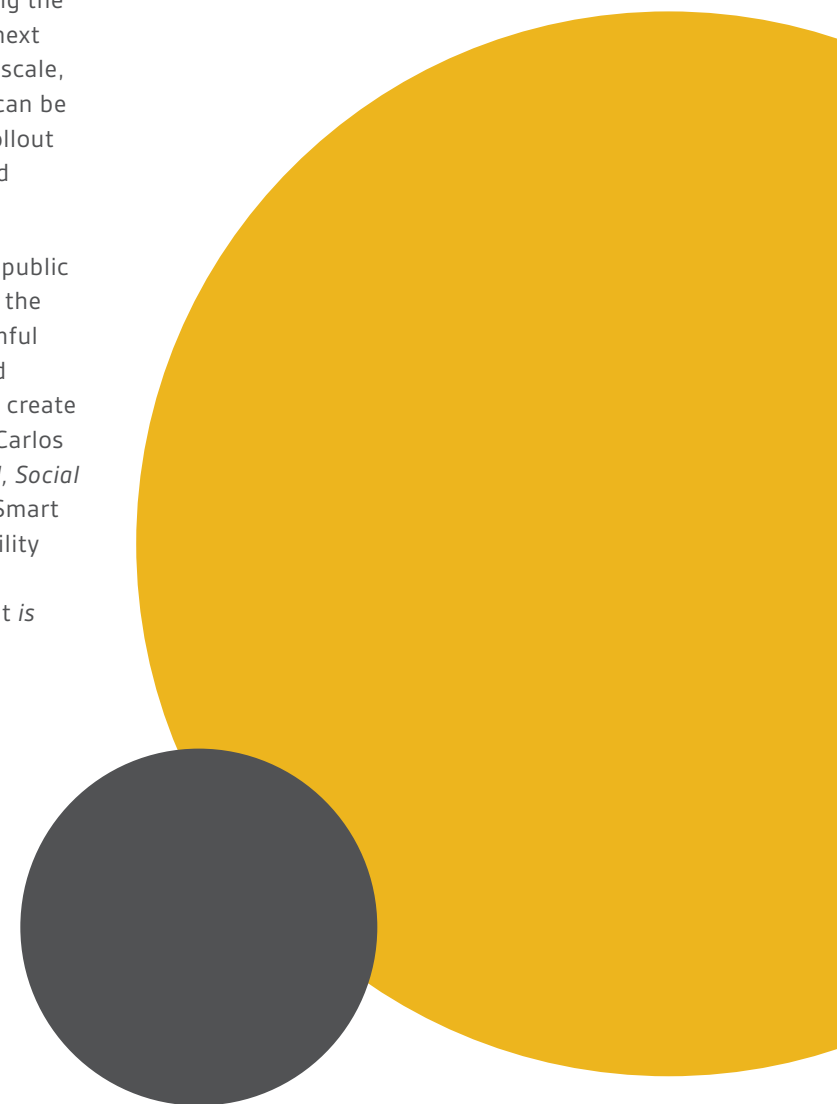
First, we recognize AB InBev for making noteworthy progress toward delivering on its Global Smart Drinking Goals. With its initial investment over the first five years of more than \$335 million USD across the four goals, AB InBev has demonstrated that it's possible for an alcohol company to have a positive impact on harmful drinking. And AB InBev is earning recognition as an industry leader for its pioneering efforts. In the 2021 sustainability report by Jeffries, for instance, AB InBev was highlighted as an exemplar of sustainable business practices: "AB InBev has the most comprehensive, technology-driven strategy on alcohol consumption, using data to drive policy on harmful drinking, as well as investment into start-ups and growing the no/low alcohol business."³⁹ The report reflects the belief common across AB InBev's many stakeholders that addressing responsible drinking is not just important for the sustainability of the business but also can be a valuable competitive differentiator going forward.

In our review of the first five years of implementing the GSDGs, we have seen it as a learning phase: A period during which the goals were first established and then embraced across the company, starting at the very top and extending out to the country-level and brand teams as well as through the Foundation.

The process of embracing the GSDGs has required adaptation, learning, and a commitment to upskilling and cross-training into areas that are generally not

part of commercial employee job descriptions. AB InBev has long recognized that reducing harmful drinking globally requires building partnerships with multiple stakeholders and constituencies. Though there have been successes and challenges during the first five years, continuing these efforts in the next phase is critical. The opportunity to have large-scale, long-lasting impact exists, and much progress can be made as the company transitions from initial rollout of the GSDGs to harnessing its power inside and outside of the firm.

Harmful drinking is one of the most significant public health issues facing societies globally. Through the GSDGs, AB InBev has shown that reducing harmful drinking is a priority for the company today and beyond. AB InBev is also demonstrating how to create shared value for both business and society. As Carlos Brito noted in the *AB InBev 2020 Environmental, Social and Governance Report*,⁴⁰ achieving the Global Smart Drinking Goals – and all of the firm's sustainability objectives – is central to the business model. "Sustainability is not just part of our business, it is our business."



Appendices

Appendix 1: Key Collaborators Across the GSDGs

The Global Advisory Council (GAC)

Formed in 2014, the GAC was created to advise AB InBev on the development and management of the GSDGs. The council is composed of experts across private, public, and nonprofit sectors with special attention to the role of business in society, effective public and private partnerships, shared value initiatives for responsible drinking, sustainability and community building, and emerging health and societal trends.

- Jean Chrétien – former Prime Minister, Canada
- Cherie Blair – Founder, Cherie Blair Foundation for Women
- Gilberto Dimenstein – Journalist, Folha de S. Paulo and CBN Radio
- David Jones – Co-Founder, One Young World
- Nancy Snyderman – former Chief Medical Editor, NBC News
- Derek Yach – Executive Director, Vitality Institute

The Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

Created in June 2016, the TAG was created as an external panel of advisors to ensure that the GSDGs conducted objective, transparent, and effective activities supported by scientific and ethical standards. The TAG's membership includes scientific, independent experts to provide technical and overarching guidance to the implementation of the GSDGs.

- H. Westley Clark – TAG Chair, former Director of the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment within the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- Michael Wolf – Associate Vice Chair for Research in the Department of Medicine at Northwestern University
- Holly Massett – Senior Advisor on Clinical Research Recruitment and Engagement at the National Institute on Aging
- Kenneth Warren – former Deputy and Acting Director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)
- Joseph Lau – Associate Director of the JC School of Public Health and Primary Care, the Chinese University of Hong Kong; Head of the Division of Behavioral Health and Health Promotion; and the Director of the Centre of Health Behaviours Research

Scientific Partners Task Force (SPTF)

Members of the SPTF are charged with implementation and evaluation of the AB InBev Foundation's efforts, as well as fostering alignment, collaboration and shared learning; select SPTF members were employed as consultants to advise on relevant issues.

- William (Bill) DeJong – Adjunct Professor at Tufts University School of Medicine
- Jim Lange – Executive Director of the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Drug Misuse Prevention and Recovery (HECAOD), an academic center of The Ohio State University
- National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago – Project led by Jim Fell (Principal Investigator), Julie Kubelka and Jenni Scolese
- HBSA (a supporting organization of the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation) – Project led by Ted R. Miller and Christopher Ringwalt (Principal Investigators) with Deborah Fisher, Joel Grube, Elizabeth Lilliot, and MJ Paschall, among others
- Tufts University – Project led by Susan Koch-Wester and Margie Skeer
- University of Miami – Project led by Eric Brown

Previous members of the SPTF included a co-author and the editor of this case study from Georgetown University: Bill Novelli, Distinguished Professor of the Practice, and Leslie Crutchfield, Executive Director of Business for Impact at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business. AB InBev Foundation provided funding to Georgetown University for Business for Impact team members to perform work on the GSDGs from 2018 - 2020.

AB InBev Foundation Board of Directors (*Dissolved September 2020*)

Responsible for organizational oversight of the AB InBev Foundation, the Board's diverse members brought together a robust cross-section of perspectives on how best to reduce global alcohol harms. At the time the Board was dissolved, the members were as follows:

- Jimmy Kolker – Chair, Retired U.S. Ambassador; Former Assistant Secretary for Global Affairs of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Kenneth "Ken" Moritsugu – Treasurer, Retired Rear Admiral, United States Public Health Service; Former Acting and Deputy U.S. Surgeon General
- John Blood – Chief Legal and Corporate Affairs Officer and Corporate Secretary, AB InBev
- Jo Ivey Boufford – Clinical Professor Global Health, NYU School of Global Public Health
- Tembela Kulu – Chief of Projects for the Thabo Mbeki Foundation; Former Group Executive, Manager of the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa

- Robert C. Orr – Dean, University of Maryland School of Public Policy; Under Secretary-General and Special Advisor to UN Secretary General
- Andrés Peñate – Global Vice President of Regulatory and Public Affairs, AB InBev
- Scott Ratzan – AB InBev Foundation Board Director; Senior Strategic Advisor to AB InBev; Former President, AB InBev Foundation. Remains as a consultant of the SPTF

Previous Board Directors include Sabine Chalmers (Chief Legal Officer), David Kamenetzky (Chief Strategy and External Affairs Officer), and Derek Yach (Chief Health Officer, Vitality Institute).

Appendix 2: World Health Organization's (WHO's) SAFER Initiative

In September of 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched its SAFER alcohol control initiative with the intention of reducing harmful use of alcohol by 10% globally by 2025. With it, they included an action package of "proven interventions to reduce the harms caused by alcohol, and a new partnership to catalyze global action." The SAFER initiative also called on governments to put in place effective measures and policies to reduce harmful drinking. "SAFER" is an acronym:

- S: Strengthening restrictions on alcohol availability
- A: Advancing and enforcing drinking and driving countermeasures
- F: Facilitating access to screening, brief interventions, and treatment
- E: Enforcing bans or comprehensive restrictions on alcohol advertising, sponsorship, and promotion
- R: Raising prices on alcohol through excise taxes and pricing policies

Within this framework, WHO offered ten policy options and interventions that can reduce outcomes of harmful drinking.

1. Leadership, Awareness, and Commitment by Policy Makers
2. Improved Health Services Response
3. Community Actions

4. Drinking-Driving Policies and Countermeasures
5. Reducing Availability of Alcohol
6. Changing or Restricting the Marketing of Alcoholic Beverages
7. Developing New Pricing Policies
8. Reducing the Negative Consequences of Drinking and Alcohol Intoxication
9. Reducing the Public Health Impact of Illicit Alcohol and Informally Produced Alcohol
10. More Diligent Monitoring and Surveillance by Governmental Institutions

As the National Disease Council (NDC) notes, "Many of the recommended interventions are population-based measures that restrict the affordability, availability, and accessibility of alcohol. Given their broad reach, the expected impact of these measures on population health is relatively high. For this reason, these measures have been prioritized in the form of the WHO SAFER recommendations on policies that are effective, evidence-based and in many cases inexpensive to implement."⁴¹

This framework was and is an important step in the global effort to reduce harmful drinking and can be used as a set of guiding principles for AB InBev and the alcohol industry at large during the next phase of the GSDGs initiative. However, it is also worthwhile to consider the work AB InBev has done to date and how many of the initiatives the company has executed touch on these ten policy options and interventions. The City Pilots have worked within various communities to tackle drinking-driving countermeasures and reduction in the availability of alcohol to underage individuals. In the Zacatecas, Mexico City Pilot, AB InBev worked with the police to set up random checks and identify drunk drivers as part of the Road Safety, including Driving While Intoxicated facility intervention. In Zacatecas, they also set up a Mystery Shopper Program that was intended to test whether clerks and servers were appropriately turning away underage customers. The guidance labels and social norm campaigns work towards changing the way alcoholic beverages are marketed. And the push to make no- and lower-alcohol beers 20% of the company's global beer volume works towards ensuring a reduction in the negative consequences of drinking and alcohol intoxication. The company has also taken a leadership role in the industry by being the only alcohol company to openly state that it will not lobby against a reduction in the legal limit for drunk driving.

Appendix 3: Additional Information about Social Norms

There are many different ways to change behavior, including using education, mass media campaigns, and new product and service innovations. The most effective approaches are directly tailored to the target behavior. A fundamental question is whether the behavior is independent (the person does it regardless of what others are doing) or interdependent (the behavior is influenced by others).

Independent behaviors fall into two categories:

- Customs – the person does it because it benefits him or her
- Moral norms – the person does it because it is right

Creating a custom involves promoting the benefits and reducing the costs of a product or behavior. This could be through product reformulation, introducing other benefits (such as Aguilá's campaign to incentivize eating while drinking), or even changing the price of a product. Creating or promoting a custom is a straightforward way to drive behavior change, but it can also be expensive and unsustainable. When a campaign ends, if the benefits or costs are reset, behaviors may return to initial levels.

Moral norms are powerful. A person with moral conviction will do what is right, even if no one is watching. These norms drive many important actions and will be sustained – but they are very hard to create or promote. It's difficult to change what a person fundamentally believes is right, and he or she will intensely scrutinize the source of any appeals for change. For AB InBev, moral norms may be something to promote through partners such as UN organizations or aligned non-profit organizations. But this is a difficult approach, as consumers' suspicions will be high. AB InBev is therefore better suited to trying to change interdependent behaviors.

Interdependent behaviors fall into two categories:

- Descriptive norms – beliefs about what other people do
- Social norms – beliefs about what many people do, plus that there would be punishment for violating the norm

Descriptive norms can be effective because people don't have time to investigate everything relevant to their lives, so they are influenced by what their friends or colleagues, or even just the general population, are doing. For behaviors that are private or stigmatized, people may not really know what most people do. For example, many American college students think that binge drinking is practiced by almost all of their fellow students. Revealing the actual percentages may correct students' perception of this descriptive norm and help change their behavior.

Descriptive norms have limited effectiveness in other situations, though. If few people actually do a behavior, such as drinking NABLAB products, telling others of this low proportion might backfire. In this particular case, communicating benefits (customs) or emphasizing what is right (moral norms) would be more effective. Or we might use perhaps the most powerful tool for driving behavior change: social norms.

Social norms go beyond descriptive norms. People believe not only something about what many other people do (a descriptive norm), but also that those other people would actually punish them in some way for violating the norm. This punishment can take many forms: gossiping, exclusion from a group, or in some cases legal sanctions.

There are two good reasons for using social norms to change behaviors. First, the punishment can be quite costly to the person violating the norm. For example, by itself, hiring a rideshare and returning the next day to drive your car home might be more expensive than trying to drive your car home when you're not sure how intoxicated you are. But social norms might kick in and lead to ostracism or even prosecution.

Second, some behaviors are done subconsciously, where the person doesn't deliberate on the benefits and costs. Telling someone the benefits or costs of a behavior might not work, because the person is not really thinking about these factors. But people's brains care in a sub-rational way about what others think of their actions. While people can rationalize what is right or wrong, or debate what proportion of people do a certain behavior, they instinctively want to avoid disappointing their parents, partners, children, or friends. Emphasizing or creating a social norm is a way to encourage the desired behaviors in challenging circumstances.

Social norms are only one tool for driving behavior change, but they can be highly effective for routine or costly behaviors. It matches the broad media reach of AB InBev and can lead to sustainable change at scale. Targeting social norms will allow AB InBev to keep its thought leadership position as well.

Exhibits

Exhibit 1: Timeline of GSDGs at AB InBev

- December 2012: Scott Ratzan meets with Sabine Chalmers.
- May 2013: AB InBev brings on Scott Ratzan as VP to lead Global Corporate Affairs (GCA) function.
- May - July 2013: GCA and Global Smart Drinking Goals (GSDGs) goals formed, linked to UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- August 2013: Scott Ratzan presents GSDGs plan to the AB InBev Executive Committee.
- September 2013: Scott Ratzan presents GSDGs plan to the AB InBev Board of Directors.
- September 2013: GCA function formed.
- October 2013: FTEs approved to join the team at Director Level; Allison Goldberg hired.
- January 2014: Creation of Global Advisory Council that included sustainable development and public health experts, and other thought leaders to inform AB InBev on priorities.
- January 2014: WEF Davos meeting convened with a focus on road safety, which was selected as a priority with global thought leaders.
- January - October 2014: Together for Safer Roads developed with 10 companies joining. A group of expert advisers convened. 501(c)(3) established with Scott Ratzan as chair of the Governing Board.
- July 2014: Ginny Gidi hired.
- November 2014: Together for Safer Roads private sector global coalition launched at United Nations.
- November 2014: GCA includes sustainability, organized under Scott Ratzan.
- January - November 2015: Together for Safer Roads convenes at Davos and supports expert study on how to reduce deaths and injuries on the world's roads, and how the private sector can help.
- February - August 2015: Multiple iterations of GSDGs with core team – Scott Ratzan, Allison Goldberg, Ginny Gidi – on design.
- September-October 2015: AB InBev announces SABMiller acquisition.
- December 2015: AB InBev announces four GSDGs.
- December 2015: First City Pilot is launched (Zacatecas, Mexico).
- Jan-August 2016: Global Affairs and Sustainability function integration and strategy led by S. Ratzan with McKinsey support.
- June 2016: AB InBev and Johannesburg Mayor announce a partnership to improve health literacy.
- August 2016: Johannesburg City pilot agreement signed. Johannesburg Mayor Parks loses reelection bid weeks later, which delays the City Pilot. Eventual renegotiation with new mayor in April 2018.
- September 2016: AB InBev Foundation was incorporated. Scott Ratzan, Sabine Chalmers, and Allison Goldberg are named as three officers.
- September 2016: Leuven, Belgium City Pilot launched.
- October 2016: SABMiller acquisition completed; new GCA organization announced including SABMiller team to join AB InBev. Catalina Garcia and Andrés Peñate joined.
- November 2016: AB InBev launches City Pilot program for reduction of harmful use of alcohol.
- December 2016: AB InBev Board approves Foundation and new organization of Global Corporate Affairs. Global Health and Social Impact to lead implementation of GSDGs with Scott Ratzan as VP, Allison Goldberg as director with the new SABMiller team.
- ~2017: Jeff French began working with AB InBev.
- February 2017: CEO Carlos Brito signs pledge for \$150 million USD for 10-years for the Foundation. Scott Ratzan was announced as president, and Allison Goldberg named VP of the Foundation.
- February - May 2017: Jiangshan, China and Brasilia, Brazil City Pilots launched.
- June 2017: External board members recruited with independently led majority established for the Foundation. Scott Ratzan seconded as president and director; Allison Goldberg named VP of the Foundation.
- January 2018: Social norms campaign introduced to brand teams.
- August 2018: Scott Ratzan leaves AB InBev; By-laws amended with AB InBev eliminating second position for a president, Allison Goldberg named executive director. Scott Ratzan remains on as director on the Foundation Board.
- September 2018: WHO launches SAFER.
- April 2019: Johannesburg, South Africa City Pilot launched.
- December 2019: Zones submit Guidance Label roll-out plans.
- July 2020: AB InBev launches Bud Zero in the U.S..
- September 2020: By-laws amended.
- October 2020: Board votes for new governance structure for AB InBev Foundation.

Exhibit 2: City Pilots Organizational Structure

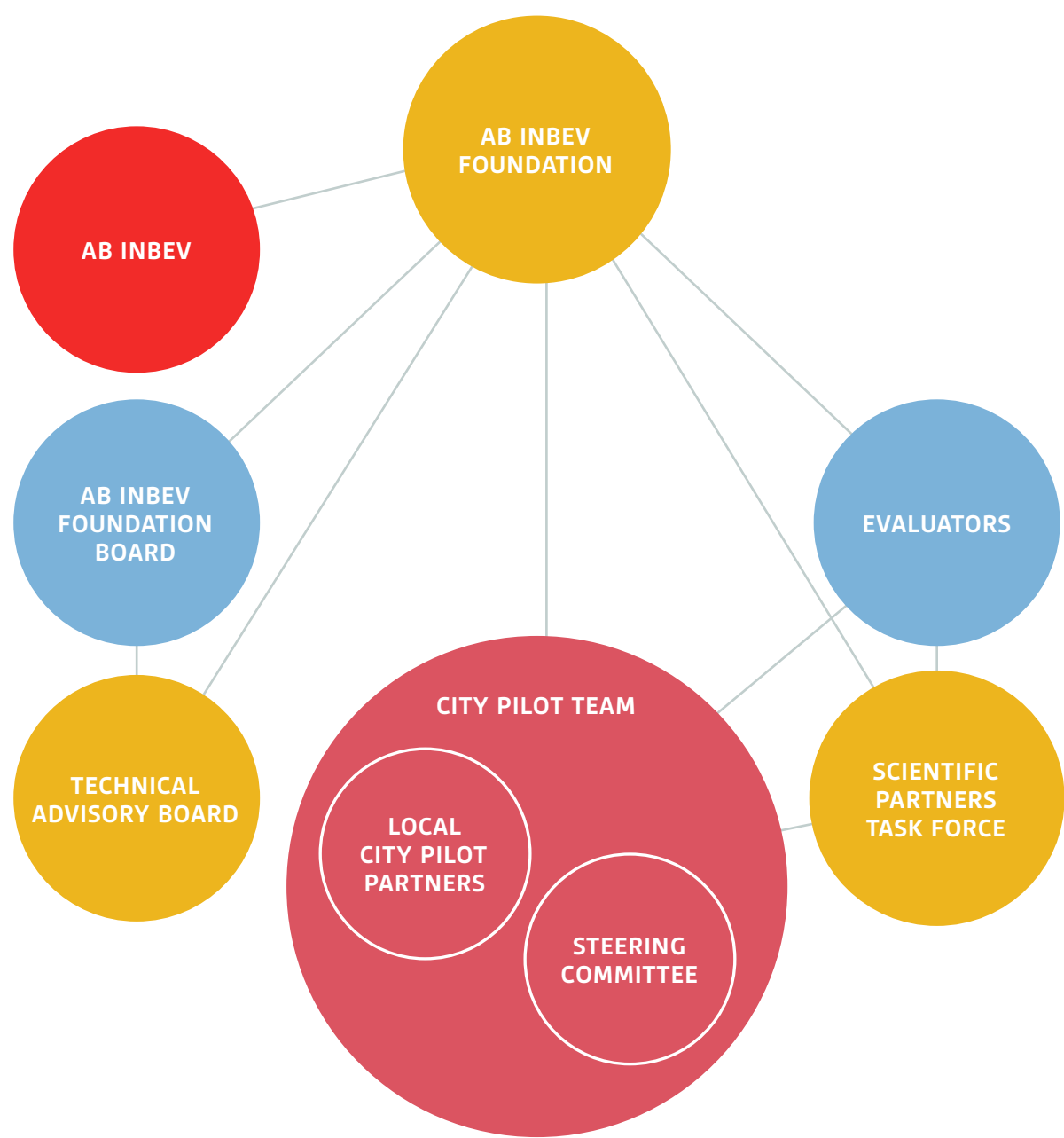


Exhibit 3: Effective CSR Balances Multiple Stakeholder Interests

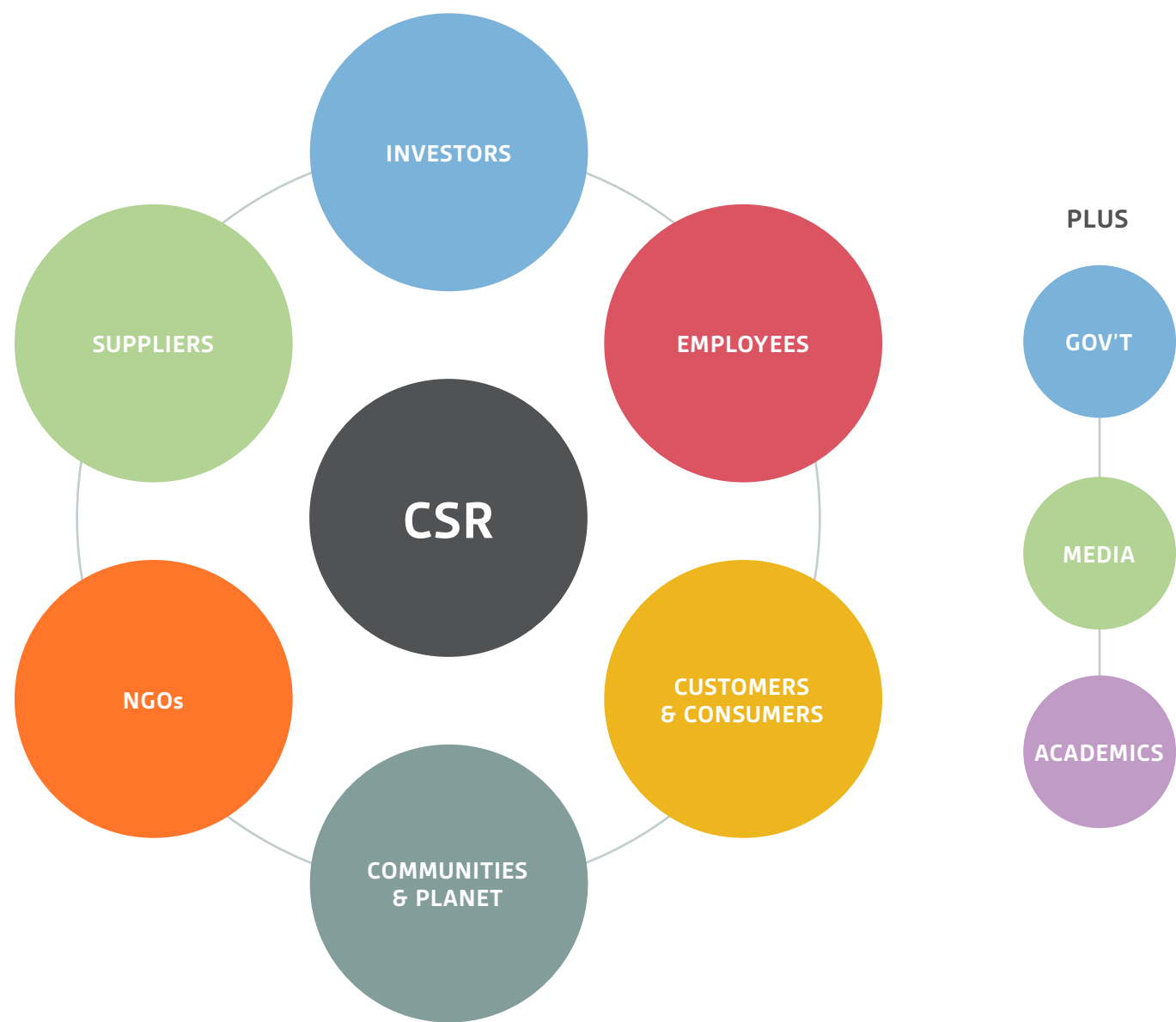


Exhibit 4: Creating Synergy between Public Health and Business

Commercial Sector	Vs.	Nonprofits and Public Health Sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operating, investment and philanthropic capital Global value chains Influential voice 	Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduits of philanthropic and government aid Trust of local community Influential voice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialized product knowledge Marketing and distribution skills Intellectual capital 	Know-How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of needs of poor communities Proven ability to address societal problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global customers Supplier networks Government leaders 	Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community members Trusted providers to communities Government leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Profitability that also generates societal impact 	Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Societal impact whether supported by earned income or donations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work quickly to create immediate impact 	Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work carefully to create maximal impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test in the market and learn from failure 	Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test in controlled contexts and learn to prevent failure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Profit, People and the Planet 	Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People, the Planet, Profit



About the Case Study Team

Business For Impact at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business

Business for Impact

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY McDonough School of Business

Business for Impact's mission is to unleash the power of the private sector to help people and the planet thrive. Business for Impact delivers world-class education, purposeful student work, and direct impact with companies, nonprofits, and government leaders to help solve the world's pressing issues. Guided by the belief that companies succeed by balancing the needs of all stakeholders – communities, customers, employees, suppliers, shareholders, and the environment – Business for Impact educates and works with students and executives to manage the triple bottom line – people, planet, and profit.

Bill Novelli is the founder of Business for Impact at Georgetown McDonough and oversees the initiative. He also serves as a professor of the practice in the MBA program at Georgetown McDonough. Previously, he was CEO of AARP, a membership organization of 40 million people ages 50 and older. Prior to AARP, Novelli was founder and president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, executive vice president of CARE, the international relief and development organization and co-founder and president of Porter Novelli, now one of the world's largest public relations firms. Presently, Novelli serves on several boards including Association of American Medical Colleges, American Cancer Society, Bipartisan Policy Center Advocacy Network, and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. In addition, he co-chairs the Care Culture and Decision-Making Innovation Collaborative of the National Academy of Medicine (NAM). Bill is the co-chair of the Coalition to Transform Advanced Care, a national alliance dedicated to reforming advanced illness/end of life care in the United States.

Leslie Crutchfield is executive director of Business for Impact and adjunct professor of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and nonprofit leadership in the MBA program at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business. Leslie's latest book is *How Change Happens: Why Some Movements Succeed While Others Don't*, noted in *The New York Review of Books* as a blueprint for groups inspired to take action on today's major causes. Leslie also co-authored the *Forces for Good: The Six Practices of High-Impact Nonprofits* – recognized by *The Economist* on its Best Books of the Year list – and *Do More than Give*. Leslie previously was managing director at Ashoka, the global venture fund for social entrepreneurs, and co-founded a national nonprofit social enterprise. Leslie has contributed to *Fortune*, *Forbes*, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, and *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, and has appeared on programs such as ABC, FOX, NPR and PBS.

Dr. Karthikeya Easwar is an associate teaching professor and faculty director for the Business Scholars Program in the McDonough School of Business at Georgetown University. Karthikeya's expertise lies in consumer psychology. His interests and research focus on the influence of affect, emotion, and prospection on consumer information processing and decision-making. Karthikeya has written cases for Harvard Business Publishing examining various global business challenges. At Georgetown, Karthikeya teaches principles of marketing, consumer behavior, and global business education in a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs. In 2018, he won the Joseph F. LeMoine Award for Undergraduate and Graduate Teaching Excellence.

Joe Weinstein is Managing Director at Business for Impact. Previously, he was senior director of operations and planning at Signal Vine, a technology firm that improves student outcomes in college attainment and persistence. At Arabella Advisors, a consulting firm working with philanthropic donors, Joe led client projects on strategy and evaluation. Joe also worked with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as an associate policy and program officer. He serves on the Leadership Council of The Posse Foundation's DC chapter and the Board of the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control.

Carson Roller recently completed her MBA with a certificate in sustainable business at the McDonough School of Business at Georgetown University. During her first year at McDonough, she served on the Net Impact (social impact club) student board, is a student leader for Business for Impact, and co-authored the Business for Impact Pathways to Purpose report. While pursuing her MBA studies, she also consults on digital advertising strategy for a boutique full-service marketing firm. She spent her summer within the MBA program interning as a senior consultant for EY's Business Transformation practice. Prior to Georgetown, Carson worked in the public health space within communications and marketing, having worked at the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and Truth Initiative.

Brands on a Mission

Brands on a Mission is a B Corp driving a movement to catalyze and generate an additional \$1 billion USD investment in sustainable business models that address health and well-being, contributing to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and improving the lives of 100 million people sustainably.

Using the Purpose Tree™ framework, Brands on a Mission work across three core axes: *inspiring* corporations and individuals that it is possible to merge business and public health goals, and deliver real social impact; *catalyzing* change through key public health issues and business models that will contribute to solving them; *sharing* knowledge, skills and capabilities.

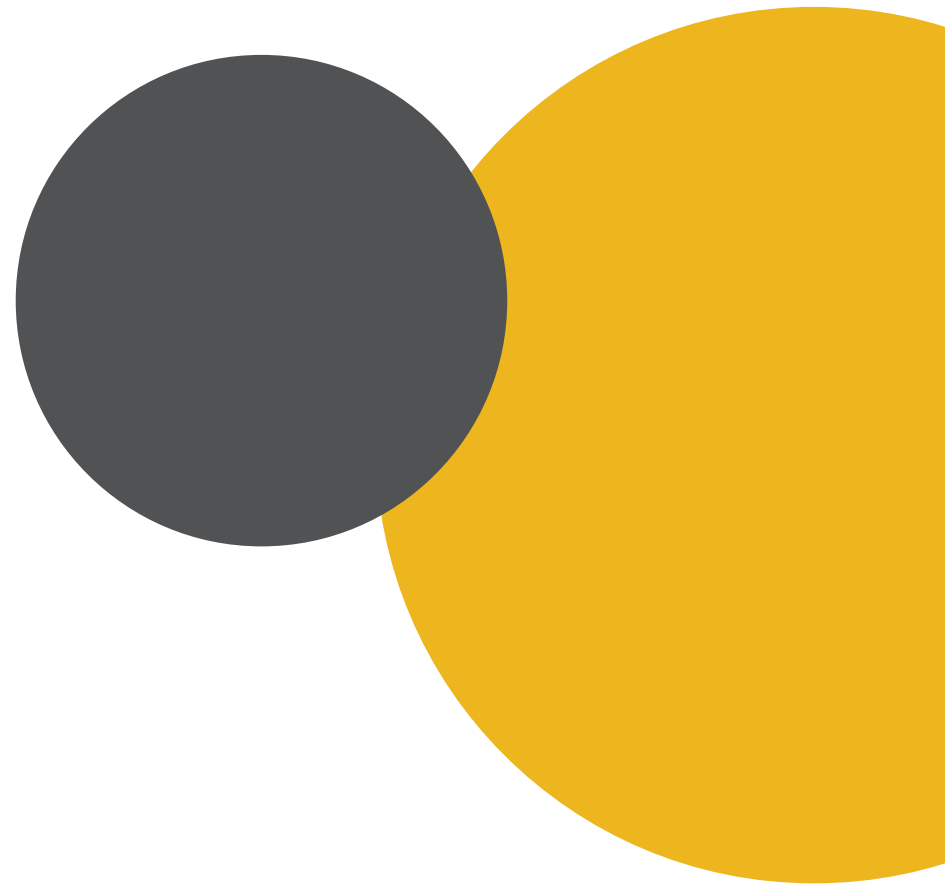
Professor Myriam Sidibe is the founder and chief mission officer of Brands on a Mission. She is also the co-founder and chair of the Kenya National Business Compact on Coronavirus and she conceived and helped establish the multi-award winning and UN recognized Global Handwashing Day, now celebrated in over 100 countries.

From within Unilever, Myriam created a movement to change the handwashing behaviors of one billion people, the single biggest hygiene behavior change program in the world. In addition, Myriam is a research fellow at the Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government of Harvard Kennedy School and an honorary professor of the practice at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

She is the author of *Brands on a Mission: How to Achieve Social Impact and Business Growth through Purpose* and her TED talk - *The Simple Power of Handwashing* - has been viewed more than 1 million times. She is regularly featured in the Entrepreneur, FT, Forbes, HBR, The Guardian, Huffington Post, Reuters and CNBC.

Avinish Jain is a founding member and COO of Brands on a Mission. Avinish has 18+ years of rich and diverse experience across Asia and Africa, right at the sweet spot between private enterprise and public health. He firmly believes in the power of brands to be great by doing good in the society. He has held leadership positions at some of the world's largest rural marketing agencies and FMCG companies including Danone and Unilever. He has won more than 15 international awards and recognition, creating and implementing some of the world's largest rural behavior change programs, helping social businesses become sustainable and creating brand purpose, and executing it, for some of the biggest consumer brands.

Harriet Woollard is a founding member of Brands on a Mission, where she focuses on communications and is the Europe lead. She co-edited Myriam Sidibe's 2020 book: *Brands on a Mission: How to Achieve Social Impact and Business Growth through Purpose*. Harriet has over 25 years' experience working for multinational corporations and global brands, including Dove, Lifebuoy and Wall's ice cream, in Europe, Asia and North America. Using effective communication and collaboration, her goal is to help enable and encourage positive behavior change – social and environmental - in every sector for a more sustainable and equitable society. She is currently an assessor for the Business Sustainability Management course at the Cambridge Institute of Sustainability Leadership and is on the steering committee for her local community's green living project, where she leads the waste program.



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