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FOOD & SNACKS NEWS

Hangover Pills Create Sobering Sales

Convenience store operators are always looking to grow sales in their tobacco, beverage, and foodservice categories. But what about the smaller profit centers like general merchandise, for example. Their have been many successful launches in this category, including energy pills and vitamins, that have grown in consumer popularity and profit potential. The latest such new introduction is hangover prevention pills, which can add a whole new subcategory and additional profit margins to your general merchandise category while appealing to a younger audience.

College students are a huge demographic to "tap into" due to the fact that they drink more heavily than do older adults. Studies conducted by one hangover prevention manufacturer show that 29% of college students interviewed had missed class at least once the week before because of a hangover. According to the same study, women participants who said they would enjoy a glass of wine at dinner, felt they couldn't because even one glass gave them a hangover the next morning. The same goes for the entire American working population. Hangovers are said to cause over \$148 billion in lost revenue to corporate America because of absenteeism or poor performance in the workplace.

Whether it is a small headache caused by a few glasses of wine or a major hangover from drinking too much, the fact is that many consumers over the legal drinking age would benefit from a hangover remedy that could prevent the way they feel after a few drinks. But feeling bad isn't nearly as serious an issue as one's ability to think effectively the morning after. A newly released study commissioned by the Royal Auto Club in the UK, indicates that drivers do not believe "morning after driving" is as dangerous as driving after "same-day

drinking," even though their cognitive functions are still partially impaired. The study has launched a new initiative throughout the United Kingdom urging the hang-over not to get into their



cars. According to research from Sweden's National Road and Traffic Institute, a driver's reaction time is slowed by 20% when hungover—even up to eight hours after the last drink is taken.

The idea that driving with a hangover is a dangerous practice is not a new concept. The University of Florida's Dr. Patrick J. Bird made a public warning about morning-after driving more than a decade ago. "The decrease in driving ability occurs even when blood alcohol concentrations have returned to zero," warned Dr. Bird. "And, although about half of the people who drink too much don't get hangovers, non-sufferers are just as likely to show reduced driving ability as folks who feel awful."

The ingredients in some hangover prevention pills are proven, not only to lessen the physical effects of a hangover, like headache and dry mouth—they are also designed to improve cognitive function the morning after drinking. Several manufacturers have tapped into this idea and now realize the profit potential for convenience stores due to success in other retail outlets. Hangover Prevention Formula, manufactured by Perfect Equation Inc., contains a patented herbal extract, Tex-OE®, proven in a clinical study to aid in preventing symptoms from alcohol hangovers.



The clinical study, performed by the distinguished medical research team that published a comprehensive report, presented in the Annals of Internal Medicine in July 2000, was performed among 55 graduate medical students at

Tulane University. In the study, conducted at college barbecue parties on campus at Tulane, the patented extract, Tex-OE, derived by a special process from the skin of the fruit of the Prickly Pear cactus, was found to be the first product ever deemed to be 'statistically significant' at preventing hangover symptoms when taken before ingesting alcohol. In addition the study found Tex-OE to provide improved cognitive function the morning following drinking. Other companies include First Call, RU-21, and Chaser, all leading manufacturers that offer different hangover prevention formulas.

Liquor stores have seen huge popularity when stocking hangover prevention pills, and convenience stores are the next best fit. C-store operators can benefit from adding hangover prevention pills to their general merchandise offering, especially when grouped with other popular healthcare products like vitamins and energy pills. These products also make perfect point-of-sale candidates, as consumers who don't spot them on your shelves would be inclined to purchase them at the register. While other categories are dwindling, it is key to look to alternative profit centers for additional margins. Adding hangover prevention pills to the mix may be just what you need to add sobering sales to this growing category. ●

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