

#WeChoose campaign to help hundreds of liquor traders rebuild

Diageo South Africa has launched its #WeChoose campaign, which will help on-premise liquor traders rebuild their businesses affected by the Covid-19 lockdowns and related bans.



Credit: rawpixel via Pxabay

The alcohol company is assisting more than 400 selected on-premise establishments – including bars, taverns and restaurants – across Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. A total of R200m in stock replenishments, cash and marketing support is being provided, and the beginning of a new movement to promote responsible drinking initiated.

“We want to see businesses thrive again and people to be able to come together, but we aim to do this responsibly in terms of both trading safely and consuming responsibly,” said Diageo SA’s marketing director, Zizwe Vundla.

Stock injection, marketing support

“The country’s extended alcohol bans have heavily impacted businesses and the families behind them not to mention the wider supply chain, and millions in lost taxes. Many small businesses have not survived, and jobs have been lost, causing people to slide into poverty.

“By providing stock injections, formal on-premise outlets can use the revenue generated to help get their establishment back up and running – such as renewing liquor licences and replenishing other stock. Many of these outlets have exhausted their funds during lockdown and are unable to purchase stock to reopen. So this is the difference between reopening and not,” Vundla added.



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Each outlet is receiving stock of up to R6,000, depending on its size. In addition, Diageo SA is providing marketing support to help generate publicity for on-premise outlets. “Many consumers might have forgotten their favourite local places during lockdown, so we are helping to remind them, while at the same time encouraging responsible drinking.”

Diageo will provide the chosen liquor traders with retail and ‘Business of Bars’ tender training, menu design and production, branded collateral – such as umbrellas and glassware and small-scale activations to help them drive their volumes, “all of which will be in-line with Covid-19 regulations, helping to ensure customer safety”.

Issues such as underage drinking, binge drinking and driving under the influence of alcohol will be tackled as part of the campaign.

Wendy Alberts, CEO of the Restaurant Association of South Africa, said many restaurants had closed their doors because they could not trade through the restrictions. “It is imperative that all parts of industry come together – the consumer needs to play their part and the public needs to take responsibility – not only in the restaurant sector, but in public drinking in completion.”

Lucky Ntimane, convenor: The National Liquor Traders Council, added that the lockdown restrictions have been dire for 34,000 taverns which had about 250,000 jobs linked to them. “Liquor traders must take a leading role in promoting the responsible consumption of alcohol.”

Diageo is calling on consumers and traders to remain vigilant about observing Covid-19 health and safety protocols. “Diageo’s goal is an alcohol-safe South Africa and not an alcohol-free one. We truly believe that if properly and healthily regulated, the alcohol industry can be a positive force for South Africa,” concluded Zizwe Vundla.

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