



**Coronavirus (Covid-19) Addendum
to the aware.org Code of Commercial Communications**



PURPOSE

- ❑ The purpose of this addendum to the Code of Communication is for the industry to demonstrate its firm commitment to continue to market responsibly during the time of Covid-19 National State of Disaster and the National Lockdown.
- ❑ This commitment is to ensure high standards of responsibility and ethical conduct during this period where the country and the industry is operating in 'unchartered territory'.
- ❑ It is issued further to ensure that all members of aware.org act in unison at all times.
- ❑ This is not a question of what is allowed within the aware.org Codes which we comply with in terms of the letter and the spirit, this is a question of what is ethical conduct within the context of COVID-19.

BACKGROUND

- ❑ Brands will become more active on social media to compensate for reduction in formal above the line channels, and more consumers being active on social media during COVID-19.
- ❑ Brands will seek to leverage the newsworthiness of COVID-19.
- ❑ Research from China shows more than 35% of people in lockdown experienced significant psychological disorders – anxiety, depression, panic attacks. Brands that are playing to these trends by offering mood solutions to counteract these conditions would be in terrain of unethical conduct.
- ❑ Social distancing including self-isolation rules require that brands don't overtly promote social gathering of friends, family, etc.
- ❑ The challenge we face as brand owners is how do brands meaningfully engage consumers during this time of crisis, whilst remaining sensitive to (i) the impact of the health risk on consumers; (ii) governments stance on alcohol to reduce consumption during this time.

UNETHICAL COMMERCIAL PRACTICES (NOT SUPPORTED)

- ❑ Alcohol product branded face masks / product branded thermometers / product branded hand sanitisers. This excludes corporate brands that are producing sanitisers as part of their offering to government to provide these much needed resources to fight COVID – 19.
- ❑ Alcohol brands claiming consumption of alcohol lowers the risk of being infected.
- ❑ Alcohol brands that encourages drinking as a coping mechanism to the isolation/ lockdown period.
- ❑ Alcohol brands co-promoting with vitamins, health supplements.
- ❑ Alcohol brands overtly promoting consumption with friends and / or family (counter social distance principles). This, for obvious reasons, excludes brand television advertisements scheduled pre-COVID 19.
- ❑ Special product / events promotions for funeral ceremonies / alcohol product gifting targeted for people sick with Coronavirus.
- ❑ Alcohol brands which tag health topic search terms to brand names on digital ⁴platforms e.g. sick, ill, Corona, COVID19, flu, fever, etc.
- ❑ Alcohol brands co-promoting with online gambling activities (the latter will rise significantly with self-isolation in a lockdown scenario).

IF WE DO THIS WELL...

- ✓ Customers will remember brands that responded in a proactive and responsible manner during this time and will be quick to bounce back .
- ✓ Positive well-framed communication will strengthen bond with consumers.
- ✓ Assuring our customers will reinforce trust and integrity and create long-lasting relationships
- ✓ We could benefit from long term spikes in ecommerce and online content consumption.
- ✓ We could use this “pause” to plan comprehensive long-term strategies.

ASK OURSELVES...

- Are we helping consumers and their community?
- Are we being supportive and providing reassurance to our brands?
- Are we focused on healing and rebuilding?
- Are we making consumers feel better while being realistic?
- Are we coming off as self-serving?
- Are we being good corporate citizens for the sake of being good corporate citizens or are we 'walking the talk'?
- Are we being empathetic and transparent
- Are we being agile and adaptive?
- Are we coming off as credible and fully engaged in the details?