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How Impactful Are Celebrity-Backed Brands?

by The IWSR Drinks Market Analysis, www.theiwsr.com

IWSR data shows that while celebrity-backed brands tend to outperform their total category, celebrity involvement doesn't always guarantee success.

The past ten years have seen a ramping up of the relationship between celebrities and beverage alcohol with a growing number of stars actively involved in creating, marketing — and profiting from — their own drinks brand.

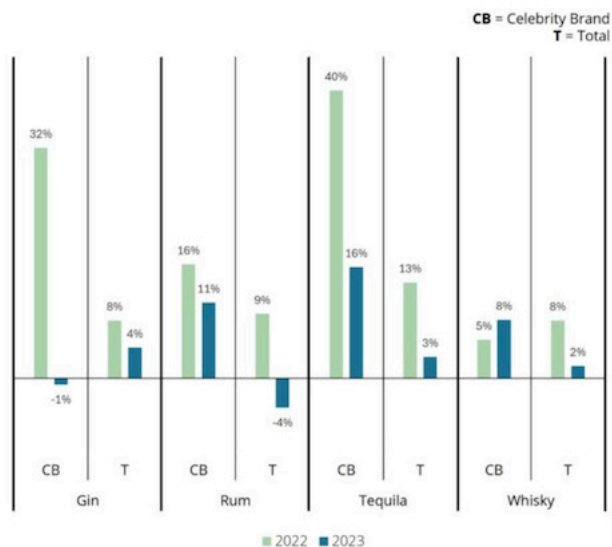
Celebrity brands continue to grow and enter the global market, but the rate has slowed from 2022. Nevertheless, celebrity-backed brands do tend to outperform the overall market.

In 2023, celebrity whiskies grew 8% by volume, compared to 2% for the whisky category as a whole. In the same year, celebrity rums grew 11% — majorly outperforming a category that declined by 4%.

But the category where celebrity drinks appear to have the biggest impact is tequila. In 2022, celebrity tequilas grew at 40% (three times the category growth rate of 13%); last year the figures were 16% for celebrity tequilas against +3% for the category as a whole.

Global Growth of Celebrity Brands¹ by Category

Volume Growth vs Global Category Growth (%)



¹Celebrity-owned or highly backed brands

This is partly down to timing. The renaissance of the tequila category has coincided neatly with the rise of celebrity spirits. The category is attracting large numbers of new drinkers who are looking for something premium but reassuring — two things which celebrity endorsement can provide.

But IWSR consumer data also reveals that consumers of tequila and mezcal tend to be discovery oriented. Typically younger LDA drinkers, they are happy

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Lost Lantern Expands Availability in Massachusetts & Vermont

Lost Lantern in Vermont, an independent bottler of American whiskey co-founded by Nora Ganley-Roper and Adam Polonski, has expanded distribution into Massachusetts and Vermont, alongside existing availability in New York and California. This expansion marks a significant milestone for the brand, which initially began as an online-exclusive offering.



“Since its first release in 2020, Lost Lantern has been dedicated to curating a diverse collection of exceptional American whiskeys, offering whiskey enthusiasts the opportunity to discover hidden gems from distilleries nationwide,” according to a company statement. “By shining a light on unique and hard-to-find whiskeys, Lost Lantern has become a trusted guide for exploring the evolving American whiskey landscape and giving deserving distilleries much-needed attention. Their releases, which include single casks, single-distillery blends and multi-distillery blends, are released with full transparency.”

Originally, Lost Lantern’s whiskeys were available exclusively online through LostLanternWhiskey.com and select digital retail partners. However, recognizing the value of a traditional retail presence, the brand expanded into brick-and-mortar distribution last year, starting with New York and California through Park Street Imports. With the addition of key distribution partners, Lost Lantern is now available in Massachusetts through Burke Distributing Corporation and in Vermont via the Division of Liquor Control.

“Lost Lantern debuted in late 2020 when whiskey enthusiasts were increasingly turning to online shopping during the pandemic,” said Polonski. “As consumer behavior shifts back toward purchasing from trusted local retailers, we want to meet them where they are. This expansion will make it easier for whiskey lovers

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