



Resilient E-Commerce Channel Poised for Renewed Growth

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

Despite a poorer than expected performance during 2024, e-commerce beverage alcohol sales are expected to outperform the broader market in the years ahead driven by gains in mature destinations, beer, omnichannel and on-demand.

The value of e-commerce sales for beverage alcohol declined for the third successive year in 2024, but the channel is showing clear signs of resilience with a return to modest growth predicted in the years ahead.

According to IWSR's *E-Commerce Strategic Study 2025*, which covers more than 85% of global e-commerce value, the channel recorded a smaller decline in 2024 with value down by -1%, largely thanks to declines in China and the U.S., in turn caused by lower total alcohol sales brought on by macroeconomic weakness and uncertainty.

Those losses in China and the U.S. were the main drivers of the channel's underperformance in 2024, leading to a revision of IWSR forecasts for the years ahead. However, e-commerce's share of total beverage alcohol (TBA) value held steady at 3.5%, a level that IWSR predicts will be maintained in 2025 before growth returns, rising to a 3.8% share figure in 2029.

The relative stability recorded in 2024 follows a rollercoaster period for online alcohol sales from rapid growth during the Covid-19 pandemic (2019-21 value CAGR of +35%) to a subsequent correction (2022-23 value CAGR -5%), and then last year's smaller decline. For the 2024-29 period, IWSR is forecasting CAGR value growth of +3%.

"After two years of correction as channel dynamics normalized in the wake of the pandemic, e-commerce alcohol sales have stabilized and are set to return to modest growth over the forecast period," said Guy Wolfe, Head of E-Commerce Insights. "Our consumer research suggests that online usage dipped again in 2025, but to a lesser extent than the physical off-trade, indicating greater resilience of the digital channel. Frequency of use remains stable in most markets — although China is an exception — while volume and total basket spend still skew significantly higher in e-commerce than offline. As such, online growth is still expected to outperform the wider market, gaining modest share of total alcohol and the off-premise in the coming years."

Established markets spearhead growth

China, Brazil and the U.S. are expected to account for more than half of total online alcohol value growth between 2024 and 2029 — a reflection of consumer attitudes to e-commerce adoption and use, which are most positive in markets where online is already more mature.

Over the forecast period, China is expected to record a value CAGR gain of +3% compared to +6% for Brazil and +2% for the U.S.

But opportunities also persist in smaller markets: excluding China, Brazil and the U.S., the rest of the top 16 countries are expected to grow at a value CAGR of +3% over the same timescale. Significant absolute value growth will be supplied by the U.K. (CAGR +1%), Australia (+3%) and Mexico (+12%) with big CAGR rises in smaller markets such as Canada (+7%) and Colombia (+8%).

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USBG Spring 2026 Regional U.S. Cocktail Championships

The United States Bartenders' Guild (USBG) has set the host cities for the Spring 2026 Regional United States Cocktail Championships (USCC), a celebration of craft, community and the talent emerging from United States Bartenders' Guild communities across the country.

The 2026 Regional Competitions will take place:

- April 7: Dallas, Texas – Southwest Region
- April 14: West Palm Beach, Florida – South Region
- May 10: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania – Northeast Region
- May 19: Portland, Oregon – West Region
- June 2: Louisville, Kentucky – Midwest Region

Longstanding members, recently joined members and those who would like to join communities and participate in the competitions are all eligible.

Additional details on regional and national competition schedules, venues and sponsors will be revealed in coming weeks through USBG social media channels.

"Each host city is home to a USBG Community that has been recognized nationally for its achievements and for demonstrating a strong, ongoing commitment to the USBG Core Values of service, integrity, sharing knowledge, tradition and camaraderie," said USBG Executive Director Bo Shuff. "We can't wait to see all of this incredible talent come to life in a fun, inclusive competition format."

The Competitions

The United States Cocktail Championships is the national qualifying program through which the United States Bartenders' Guild selects Team USBG — the bartenders who will carry the flag for the United States at the World Cocktail Championship, an annual event produced by the International Bartenders' Association (IBA). The USBG is the official U.S. delegate to the IBA.

Throughout January and February, USBG Communities nationwide will select up to two Community Champions in flair and classic bartending categories. These champions advance to Regional Championships, where the top-scoring bartenders earn their place at Nationals and the opportunity to represent the U.S. as part of Team USBG.