



Guinness Clear

Why Guinness dared to tell everyone to drink water when we reclaimed the Six Nations Sponsorship.

Brand: Guinness

Category: Brand Communications

Words: ~2800

[CONFIDENTIAL INFO – FOR JUDGES’ EYES ONLY] – ON PAGES 3 & 26

SUMMARY

Guinness Clear is the template for brave, responsible marketing.

It's the story of how, during our biggest sales moment of the year and first year of Six Nations sponsorship, Guinness set the agenda for responsible drinking in sport.

Of how we rebranded ordinary tap water as a cool 'new' product, which – packaged with humour and wit – turned ordering water **from** embarrassing **to** a positive and popular bar call (just ask all the pub owners who took orders in droves).

And of how we drove wholesale behavioural and attitudinal change, became the #1 beer brand associated with responsible drinking and achieved the highest PROI of any 'Made of More' campaign ever.

And we won Gold at the Cannes Festival of Creativity, too.

It was a risk: we had no precedent, and while Guinness and rugby have long been the perfect complement; competitors were stealing share and our association was dwindling.

We could have used the Six Nations to change that, to single-mindedly sell more pints. Or execute around the edges like other responsible drinking campaigns.

But we wanted the Guinness Six Nations to be enjoyable for everyone; which it's not if the revelry escalates to harmful or heavy binge drinking.

We needed an idea that would take the pressure off drinking while paying dividends back to the brand **and** triggering actual behavioural change.

Guinness Clear turned out to be exactly that.

The truth is: very few commercial organisations would run high profile marketing that lends their logo, name and precious distinctive assets to a product that is freely and widely available at zero cost.

But it wasn't a stunt or a marginal PR joke.

It was the main push, for the most important multi-million pound sponsorship property Guinness had ever invested in.

This campaign is **the** definition of brave.

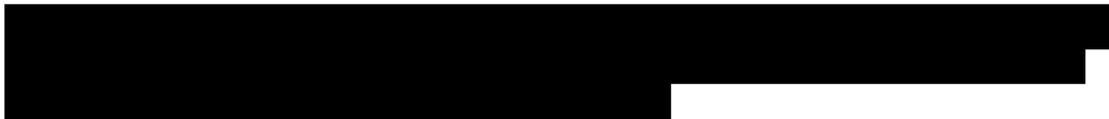
Words: 298

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What was the scale of the challenge you faced?

The connection between Guinness and rugby runs deep: built on shared values, the game and brand are the perfect complement.

Whether the Six Nations, Autumn Internationals or Rugby World Cup; rugby is a sales peak we need to protect.

By 2018 it was clear we'd been playing on the side lines for too long; struggling to stand out in a competitive sponsorship environment alongside RBS, Heineken and O2.



In late 2018 a rare opportunity arose: the elusive Six Nations title sponsorship.

We pulled off an audacious bid landing a 6-year deal; but with 50 working days from sponsorship sign-off to launch, we had to move fast.

We had no brief, no creative, no media plan.

But this was our golden chance to reassert our relationship with rugby, in a way that was undeniably Guinness and made us sponsors in more than name.

There would be ample opportunity to sell pints.

Great Britain and Ireland have strong beer-drinking cultures, and rugby is a pivotal moment for hanging out and drinking with your mates that people look forward to every year.

But we observed how unenjoyable the game became if you or someone in your group had too much to drink:

"I always want to be on my A game and fit in with my friends, but when I'm drunk, I don't act like myself and risk falling out of the pack."²

When people get caught up in the rugby revelry, they can underestimate the amount of alcohol they've consumed – which can lead to harmful or binge drinking³.

Yet: as a beer and brand of character and substance, we wanted every pint to be savoured, and **everyone** to enjoy the camaraderie and spirit of the Guinness Six Nations.

The title sponsorship was our chance to put a stake in the ground.

1 Kantar 2018 Competitor Tracking

2 Diageo; Qualitative Verbatim Insights Research 2018

3 Diageo; Qualitative Verbatim Insights Research 2018

To grow responsibly we needed to increase Guinness share of existing occasions, while sowing the seeds for more responsible drinking behaviour.

We had two key objectives for the campaign:

ONE

Maximise share of existing drinking occasions, by positioning Guinness as the natural choice when the sales opportunity is bigger than norm.

- Contribute 5-7% to volume uplift across GB and Ireland, with a return on marketing investment equal to, or surpassing, our previous 'Made of More' rugby campaigns.

TWO

Crucially, take a category leadership position around responsible drinking by driving actionable and meaningful behavioural change throughout the Six Nations.

- By positively shifting attitudes toward alcohol consumption in a way that would directly impact drinking behaviour.

A new 'Made of More' campaign is what everyone would expect.

The success of our previous rugby campaigns has been detailed in our successive gold-winning IPA Effectiveness papers⁴.



Above: Previous 'Made of More' Guinness Rugby Campaigns, (L-R) Shane Williams, Gareth Thomas, Ashwin Willemse, Jonny Wilkinson, 1978 Munster Victory, Bill McLaren.

⁴ IPA Effectiveness 2018: 'Guinness Made of More 2012-2018'.

But we wanted to put responsible drinking up in lights: rather than merging it with our broader rugby comms two interconnected pillars powered our marketing campaign.



Above: How the two-sides of our Six Nations marketing campaign worked together.

While we would breathe new life our 'Made of More' story (which would result in the award-winning [The Purse](#)) – bravery is the subject of this paper.

So: we turn to the story of how, during our biggest sales moment of the year and our first year of Six Nations sponsorship, we set the agenda for responsible drinking in sport.

What did you do differently? How did you push boundaries?

They say pressure makes diamonds.

With 50 working days to launch we needed a unique point of view on responsible drinking that would drive behavioural change and pay back to 'Made of More'.

For the most part, responsible drinking campaigns have become a category trope.

Characterised by low quality production, more often than not they are relegated to low cost channels and supported with minimal spend.

These campaigns tend to come in two guises, they:

1. Lack a meaningful point of view, lean on celebrities, default to didactic shame or blame tactics or anchor the brand to drink driving (as though that's the only time you should moderate your drinking!), or
2. Encourage people to drink their no-alcohol alternative.

It's therefore no surprise that consumer cynicism is high, causing people to switch off and making it incredibly difficult for your message to cut through.

The thing is, non-alcohol alternatives do not exist to moderate consumption.

They are built on a market demand for choice.

A genuine responsible drinking marketing campaign **is** about encouraging moderation in a way that *may* cannibalise your sales.

There is always a fiscal risk posed in responsible drinking campaigns: and it's down to each brand to determine how far they are willing to push their message.

To make a genuine difference, we had to push the boat right out.

To make a genuine difference, we needed people to feel comfortable ordering something other than alcohol – and do it on a large scale.

We would do it as part of (not an addendum to) 'Made of More' – and with our characteristic twinkle in the eye.

A proven (and practical) way to moderate alcohol intake is to consume water.

But people don't like ordering water in a bar or pub.

Generally speaking, people (notably men) are too embarrassed to order anything other than an alcoholic drink at the bar.⁵

Social pressure drives anxiety around how they'll be perceived – regardless of whether they felt like drinking.⁶

This feeling is exacerbated during sporting events when the revelry is high.

Unlocking this insight was our vital leap off point to an approach which challenged and changed behaviour.

We turned Guinness' celebration of 'more' on its head:

'Sometimes less is more'

Having the confidence to carve your own path, rather than follow convention, is at the very heart of 'Made of More'.

When everyone was shouting drink more, we said drink more of another drink altogether.

⁵ Diageo; Qualitative Research 2018

⁶ Diageo; Qualitative Research 2018

We rebranded ordinary tap water as an exciting new drink:

Guinness Clear



Image Source: AMV BBDO

It was a cool 'new' product which – packaged with humour and wit – helped remove the stigma of ordering water at the pub.

We turned ordering water into a positive (and popular) bar call.

What risks did you take?

During our biggest sales peak of the year we encouraged people to drink more water, not Guinness.

It was a bit nuts.

But we believed it had the power to pay dividends back to the brand and lead to actual behavioural change.

To make the Guinness Six Nations a more enjoyable experience for everyone.

To take the pressure off drinking.

To make it acceptable – fun, even – to order water at the bar.

We promoted it just like a beer.

Tone and humour were key to overriding consumer cynicism.

In every channel and touchpoint, we treated Guinness Clear as though we were launching an entirely new product.



Source: Guinness Website

And we introduced it to the world in all its beer-y glory.

Parodying all the beer marketing book clichés (including our own) – but dialled up to 11.

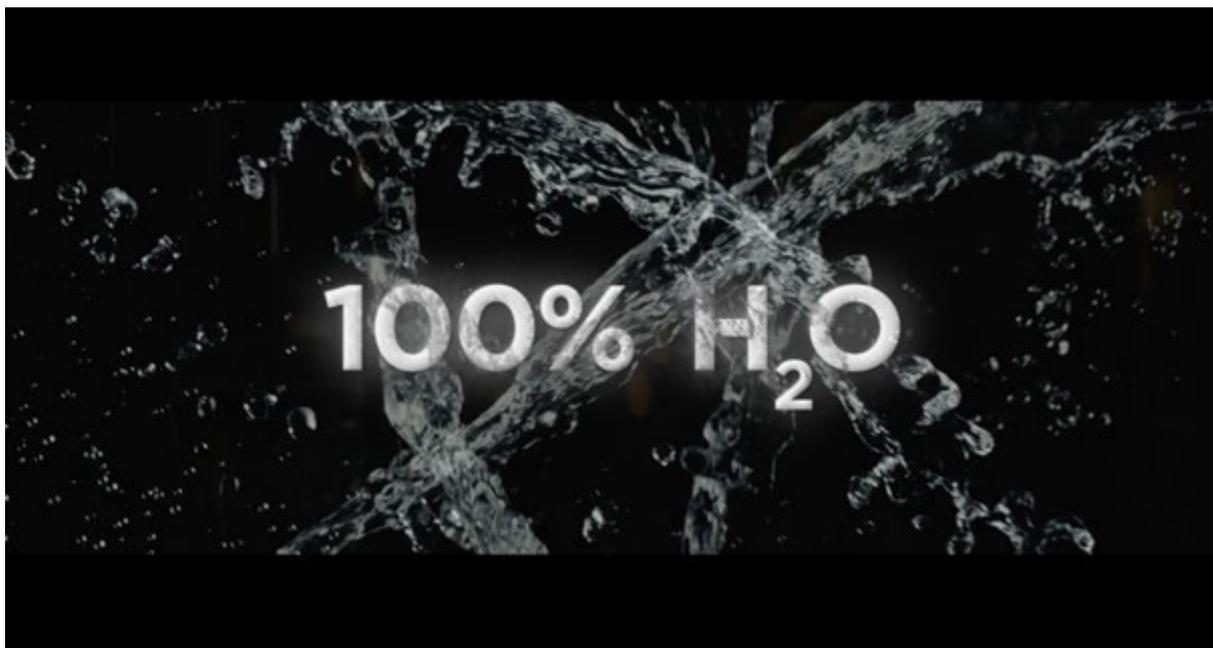


Image: Guinness Clear AV ad, AMV BBDO, watch here: <https://youtu.be/jAOIODdyYRQ>

Complete with a provenance story, list of ingredients (100% H2O) and even a master brewer.



Image: Guinness Clear AV ad, AMV BBDO

Telling everyone that Guinness Clear – available from all good taps nationwide – was the key to ‘Make it a Night You’ll Remember’.

Our film advertising had all the high production values you’d expect.



Image: Guinness Clear AV ad, AMV BBDO, watch here: <https://youtu.be/jA0IODdyYRQ>

In social we showed how to master the Guinness Clear two-part pour (both at home and in the pub).



Image Source: AMV BBDO social media film

We introduced product extensions (extra cold with ice).



Image Source: AMV BBDO social media film

And showed how to ease into the bold new taste.



Image Source: AMV BBDO social media film

There were celebrity endorsements.



Guinness Clear Endorsements (across channels): (L-R) Taupe Falatau (left) and Mako Vunipola (right); Tommy Brady (*influencer*); David Alorka (*Influencer*); Brian O'Driscoll (left) and Lawrence Dallaglio (right); Owen Farrell

Plus influencers and Michelin star chefs.



Image: Richard Corrigan

We “replaced” the River Liffey with Guinness Clear on St Patrick’s Day.



Image: Guinness parody Facebook post announcing the Liffey Stunt

We offered product sampling, such as Hydration Stations, at the games.

This was pivotal: delivered with the same dry wit, we made 'Guinness Clear' visible - we needed to act, not just tell, people to drink water.

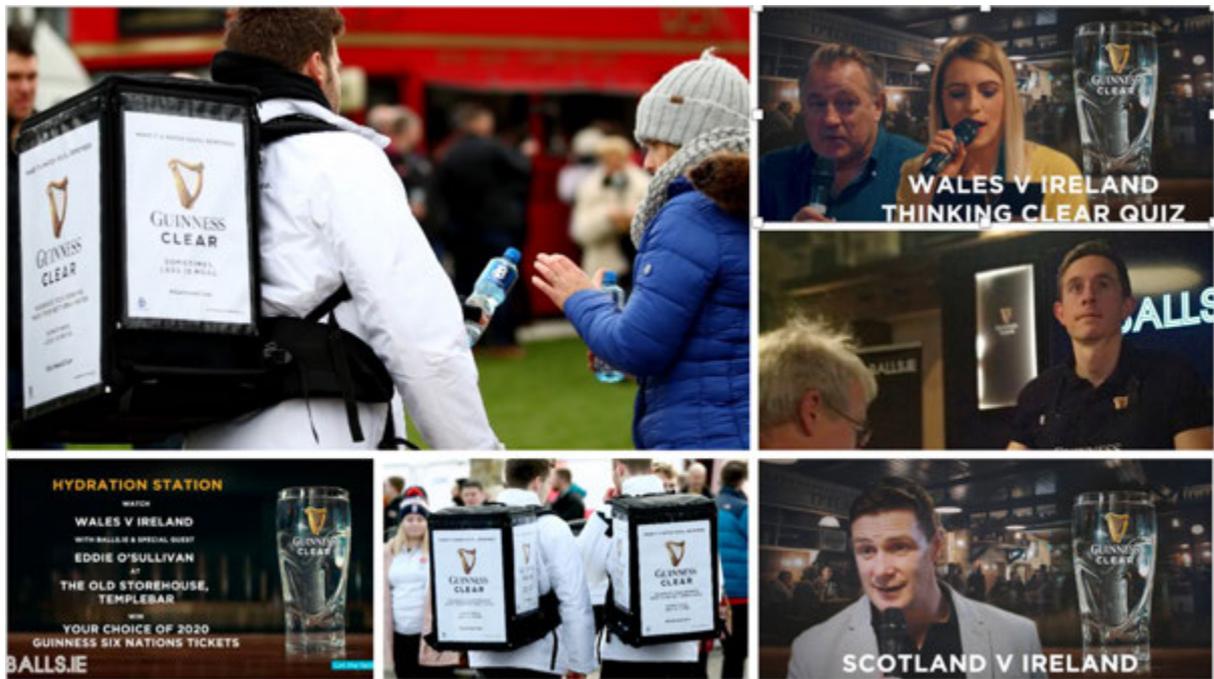


Image: Hydration Station events and product sampling

And we created Home Brew Kits – so you could make Guinness Clear at home.

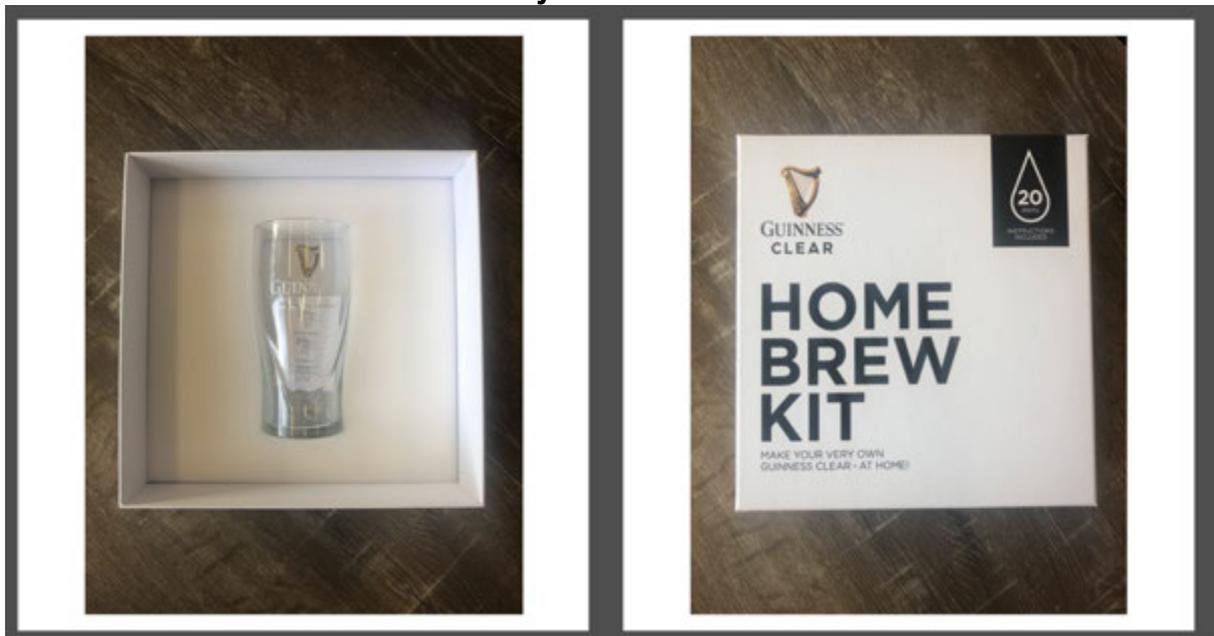


Image: AMV BBDO

And – before every match – reminded people of the joy of a night they'd remember.



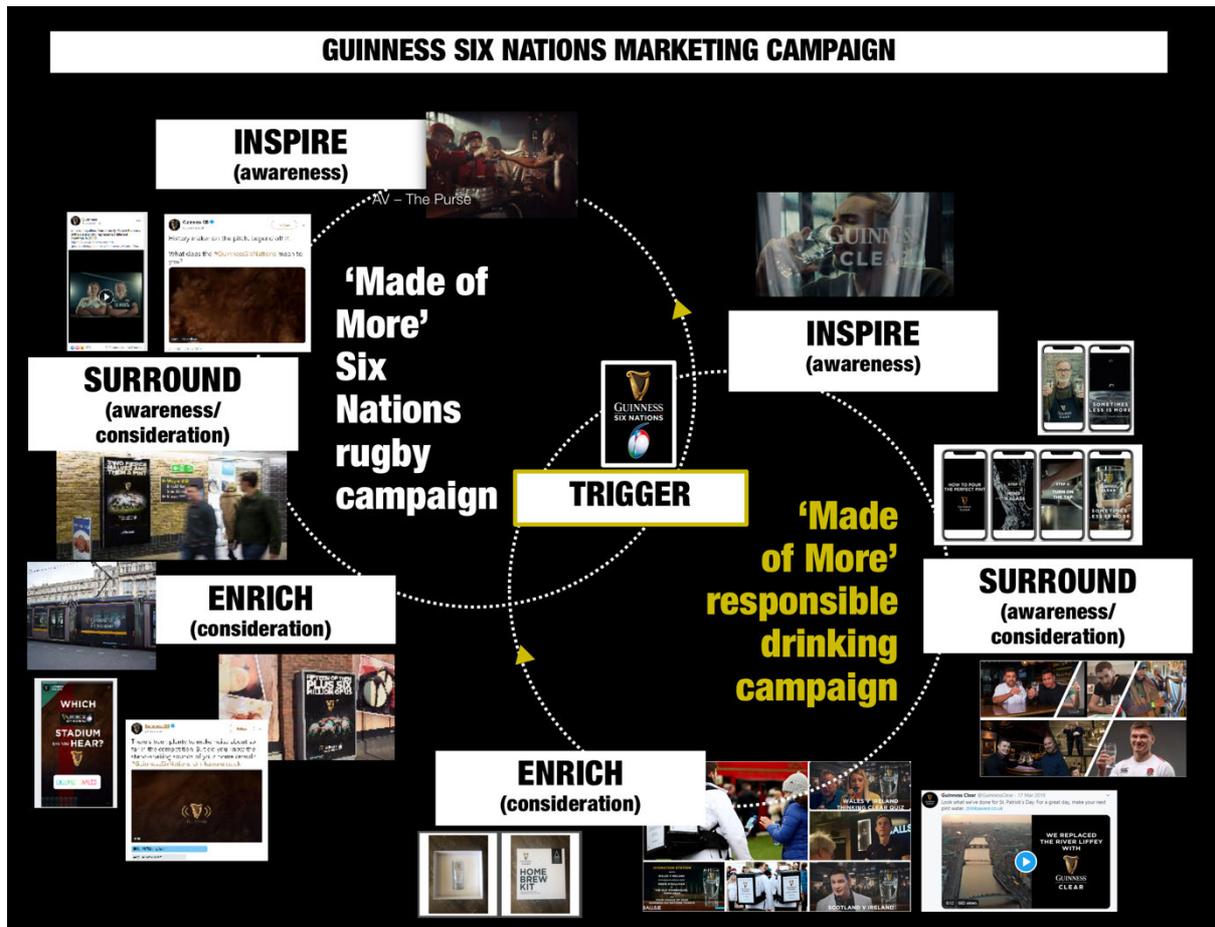
Image source: AMV BBDO

It was a genuine, 360 campaign that enabled everyone to get involved.



Source: Carat Media Agency

And which paid back to, and was a complement for, our overall Guinness Six Nations marketing campaign.



Source: Carat Media Agency

Ultimately, it meant that when people did choose to drink (and we encouraged them to do so responsibly), our whole campaign was engineered to ensure Guinness was top-of-mind.

**The Results:
Guinness Clear was a resounding success.**

We'll demonstrate this by revisiting our objectives.

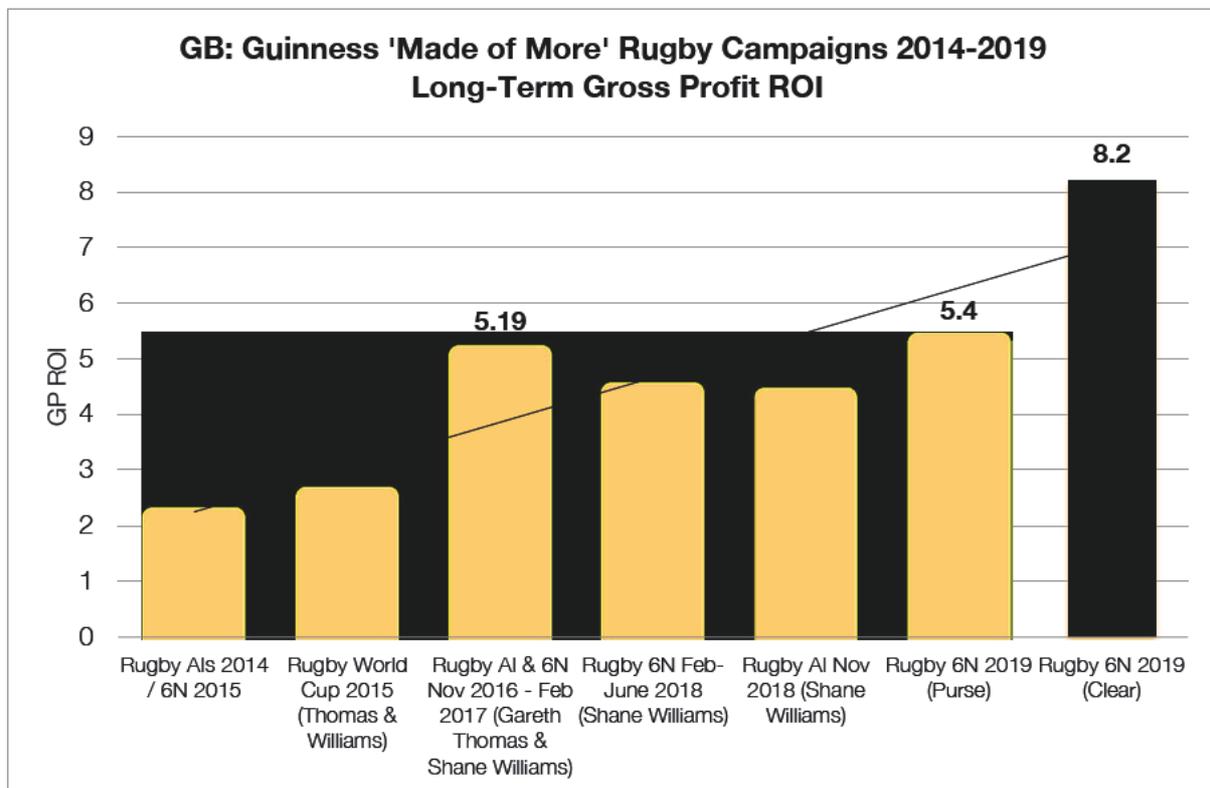
Our **first** objective relates to our specific, measurable results:

Maximise share of existing drinking occasions, by positioning Guinness as the natural choice when the sales opportunity is bigger than norm.

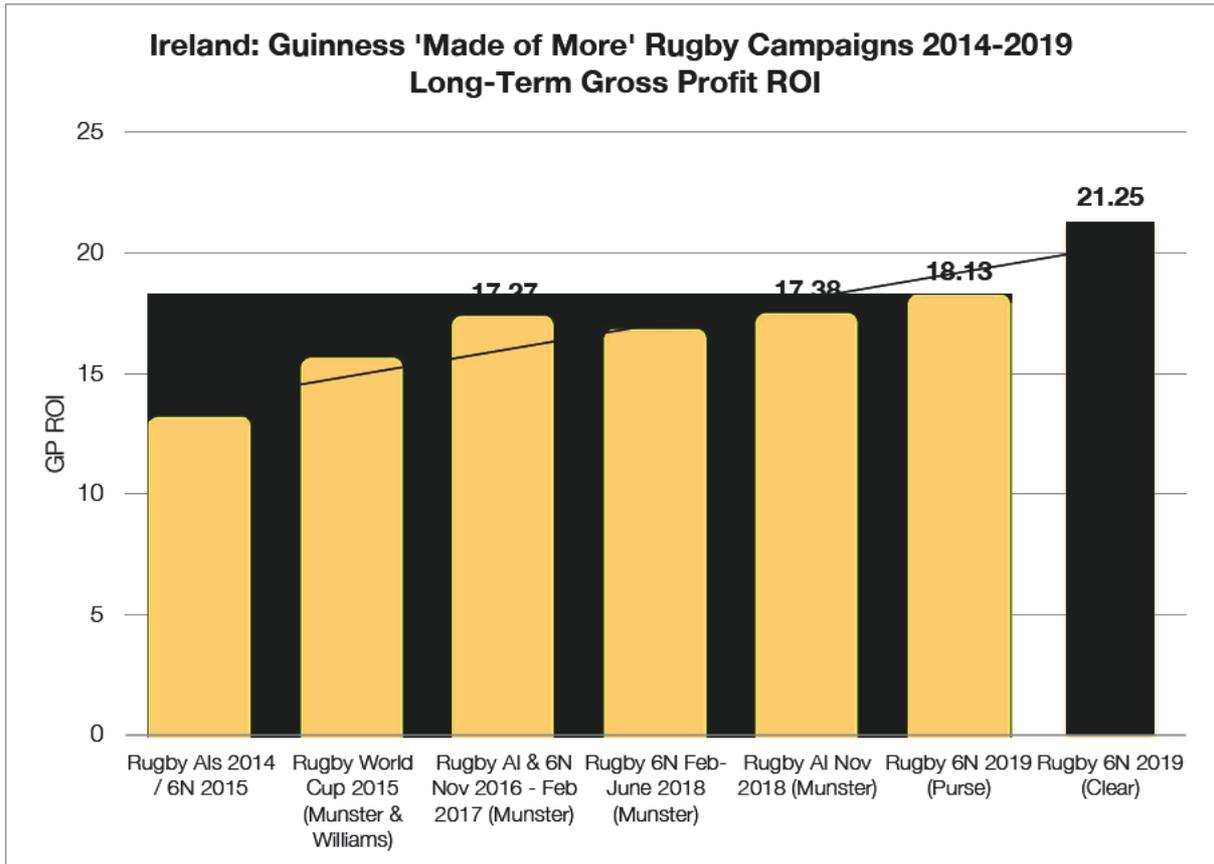
- Contribute 5-7% to volume uplift across GB and Ireland, with a return on marketing investment equal to, or surpassing, our previous 'Made of More' rugby campaigns.

We proved that responsible drinking campaigns are worthy of production and media investment.

Guinness Clear provided the highest PROI of any Guinness rugby campaign in GB and Ireland.



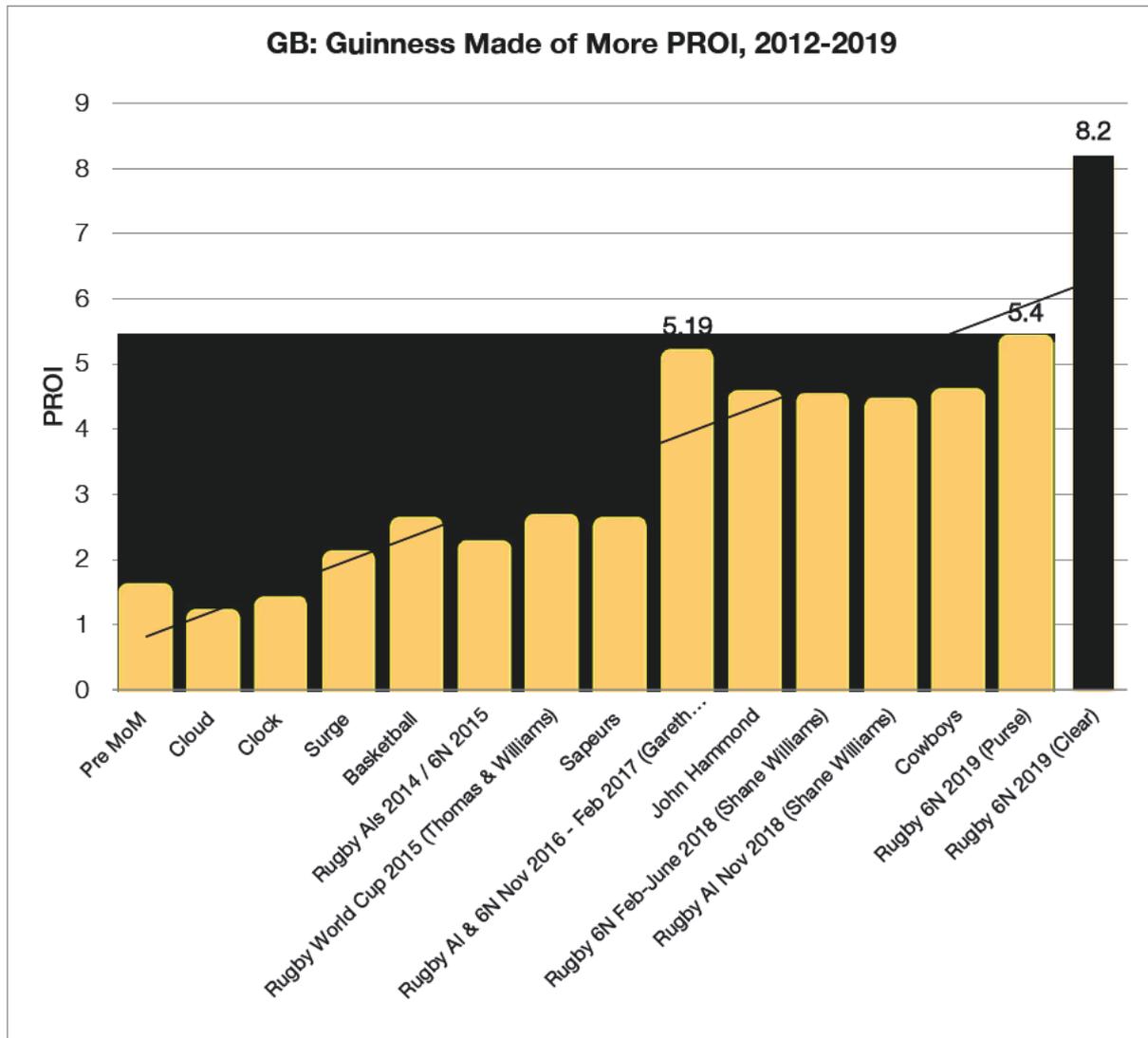
Source: Data 2 Decisions Econometric Modelling 2014-2020.



Source: Data 2 Decisions Econometric Modelling 2014-2020.

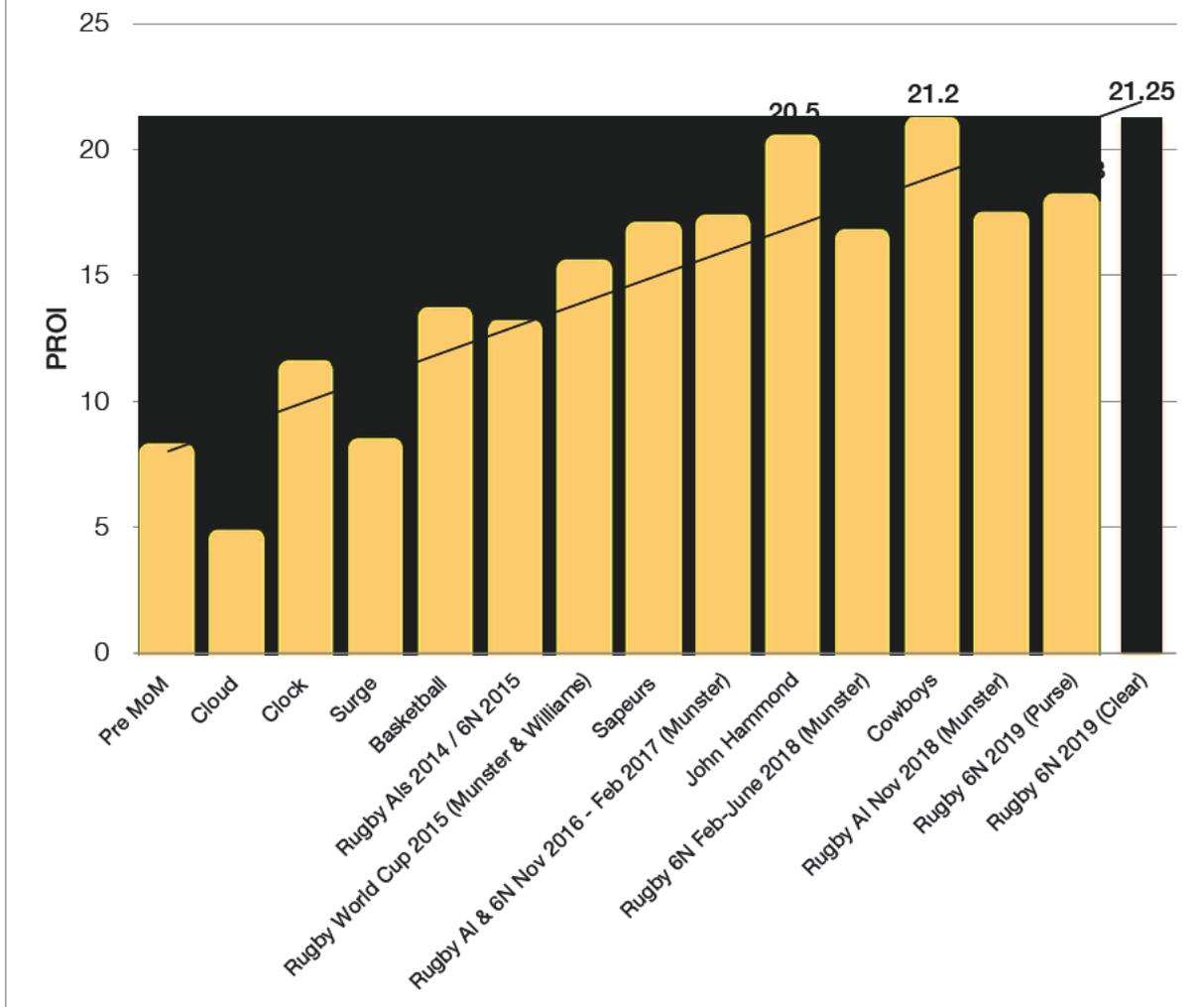
And, delivered the highest PROI of any Guinness ‘Made of More’ campaign in GB or Ireland, EVER.

The results surpassed, and built on, those featured in our Gold IPA Effectiveness Paper (2016 and 2018).



Source: Data 2 Decisions Econometric Modelling 2014-2020.

Ireland: Guinness Made of More PROI, 2012-2019

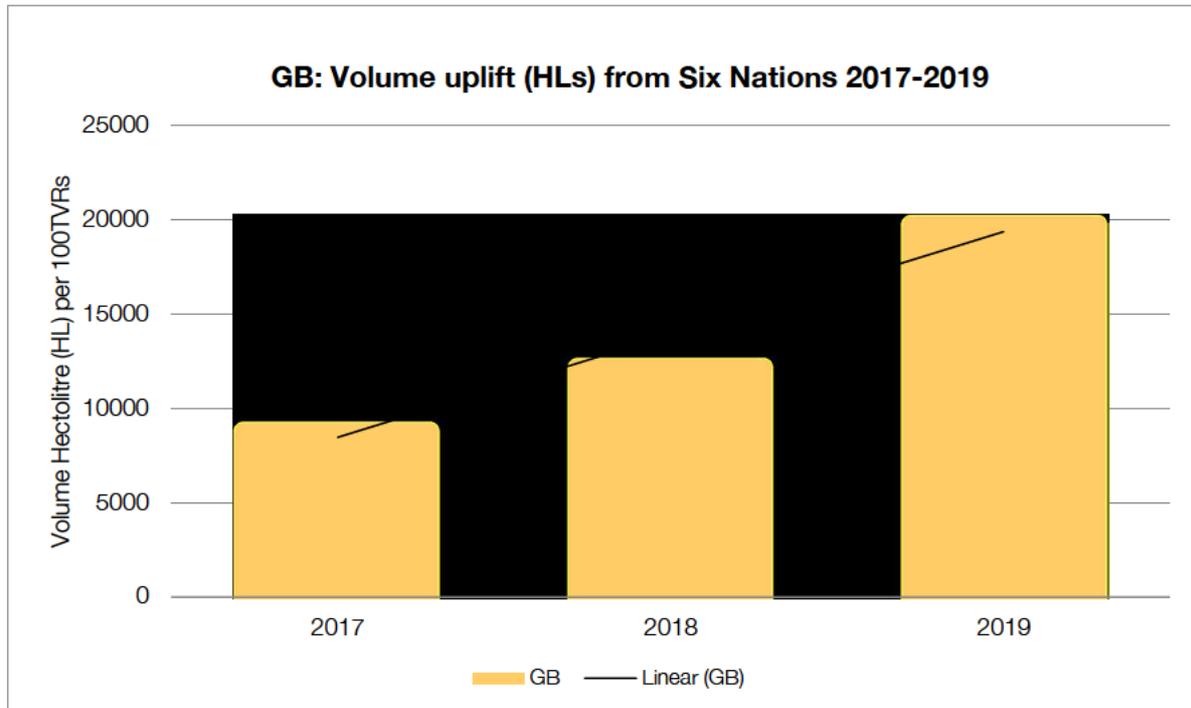


Source: Data 2 Decisions Econometric Modelling 2014-2020.

We surpassed our targeted 5-7% to volume uplift across GB and Ireland⁷.

In fact, we exceeded this in GB alone: on- and off-trade was up an extraordinary 10% during the Six Nations.⁸

The impact of our double-pillared marketing campaign was evidenced through a significant leap in **Six Nations volumes** in GB and Ireland.⁹

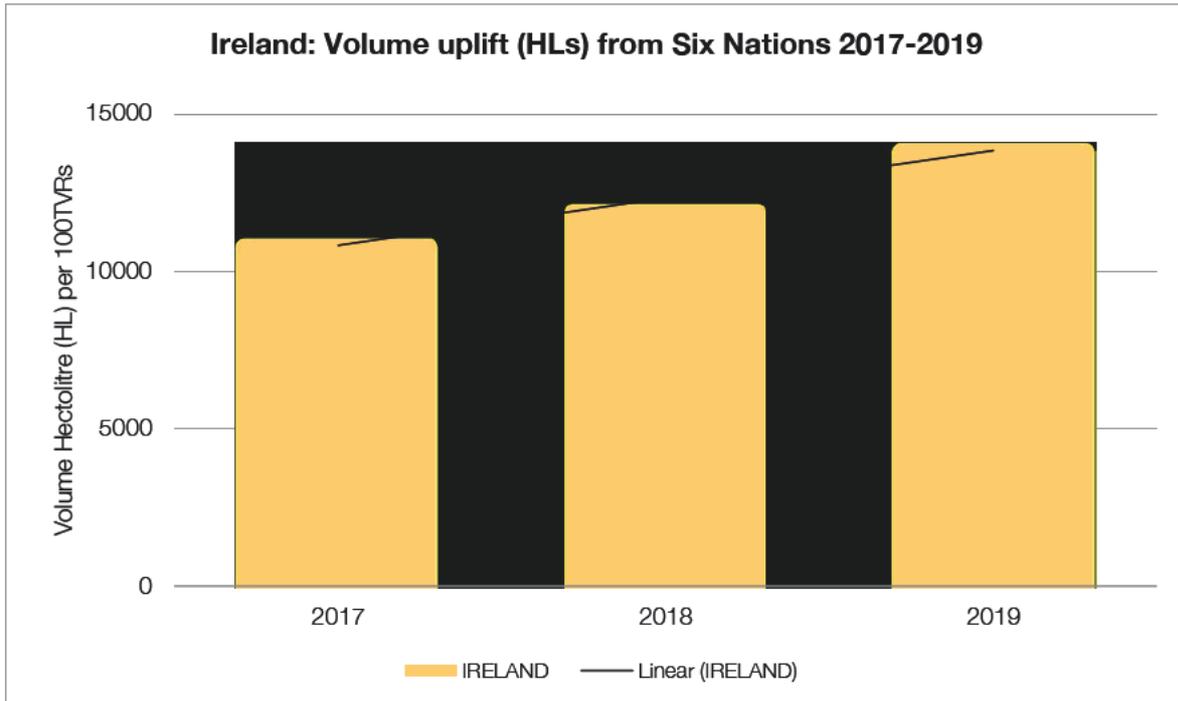


Source: Data 2 Decisions Econometric Modelling 2014-2020.

⁷ Source: Data 2 Decisions Econometric Modelling 2014-2020.

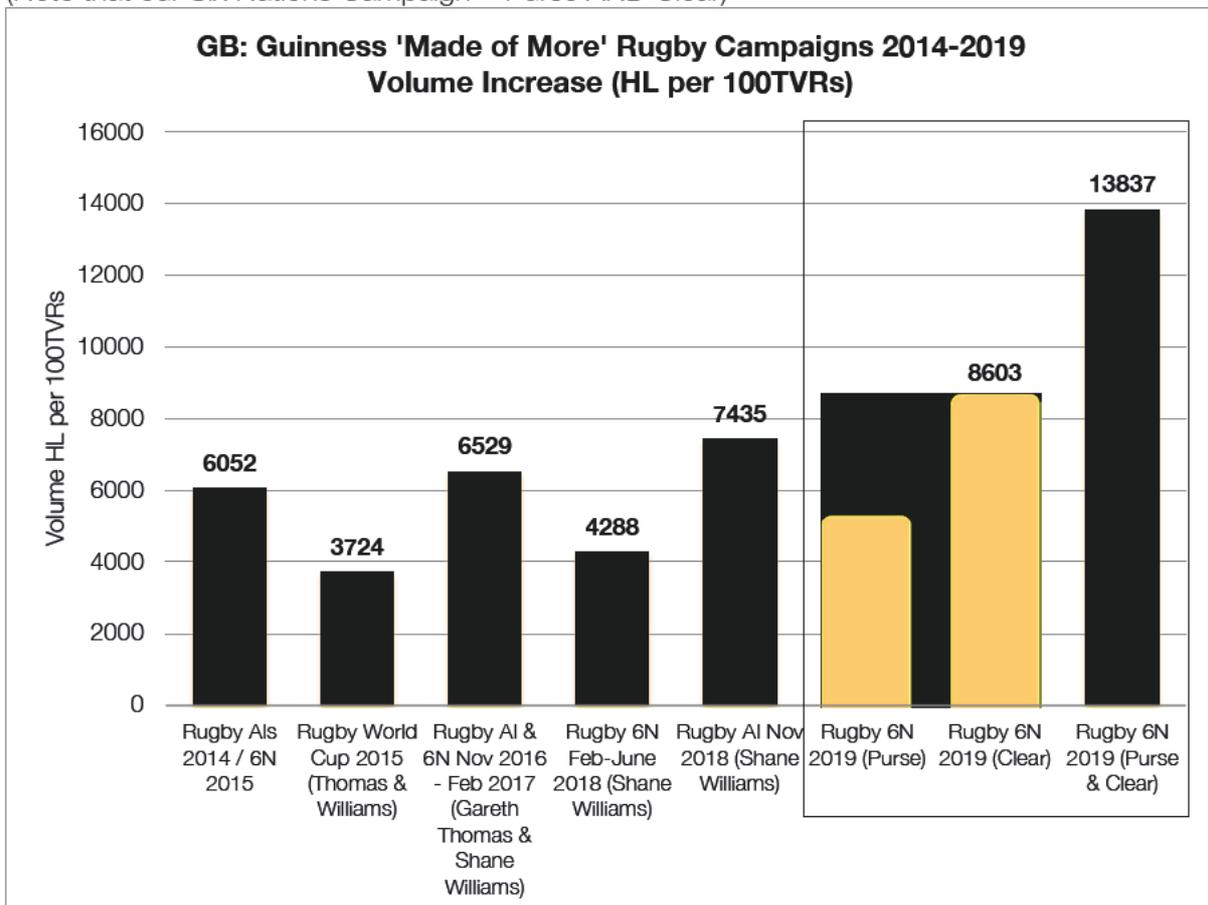
⁸ Source: Data 2 Decisions Econometric Modelling 2014-2020.

⁹ Source: Data 2 Decisions Econometric Modelling 2014-2020.



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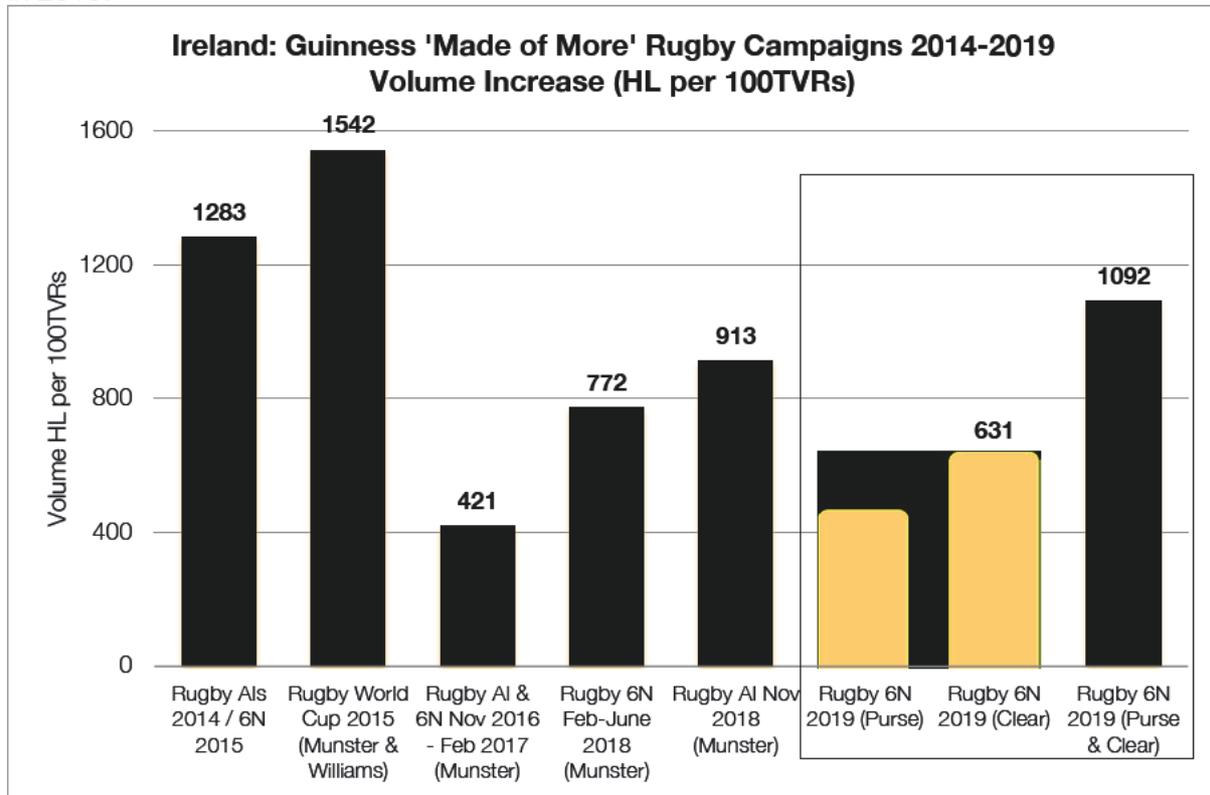
We drove the **highest volumes from a rugby campaign ever in GB.**¹⁰
 (Note that our Six Nations Campaign = Purse AND Clear)



Source: Data 2 Decisions Econometric Modelling 2014-2020.

¹⁰ For reference; Als = Autumn Internationals; 6N = Six Nations

And we hit our **highest volume sales levels in Ireland** since the home nations' Rugby World Cup in 2015.



Source: Data 2 Decisions Econometric Modelling 2014-2020.

Our **second** objective talks to the scale of the impact we wanted to make: Take a category leadership position around responsible drinking by driving actionable and meaningful behavioural change throughout the Six Nations.

- By positively shifting attitudes toward alcohol consumption in a way that would directly impact drinking behaviour.

While Guinness volume sales increased in line with our dual-pronged approach:

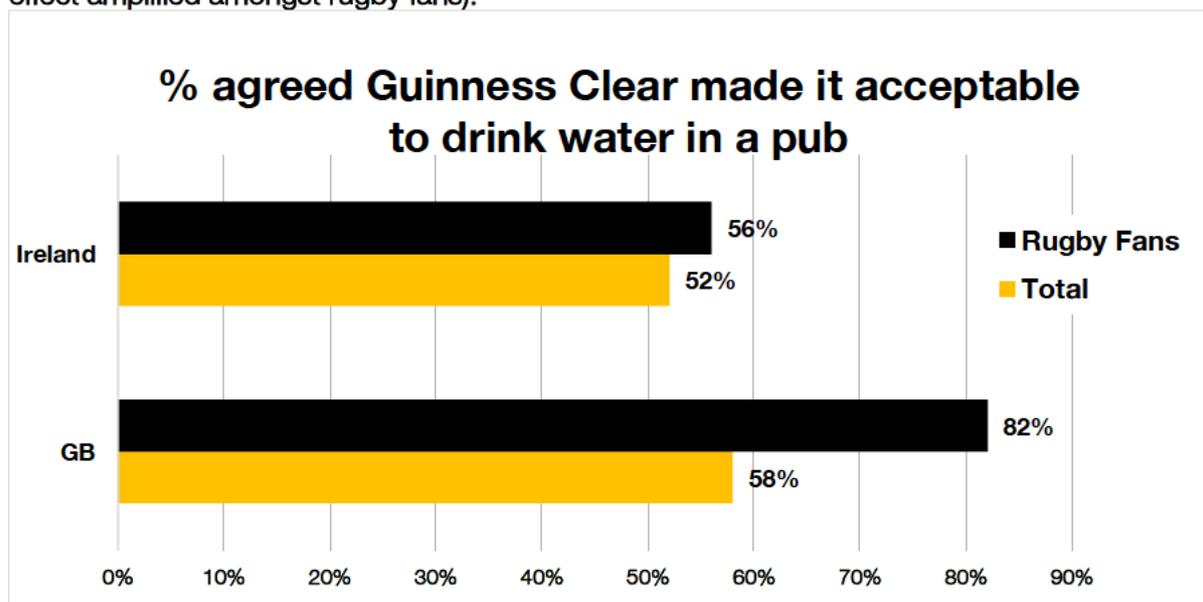


Most critically, attitudes toward responsible drinking AND behaviour around moderating drinking changed as a direct result of Guinness Clear.

Guinness Clear squashed the stigma of drinking water in pubs.

After seeing the campaign:

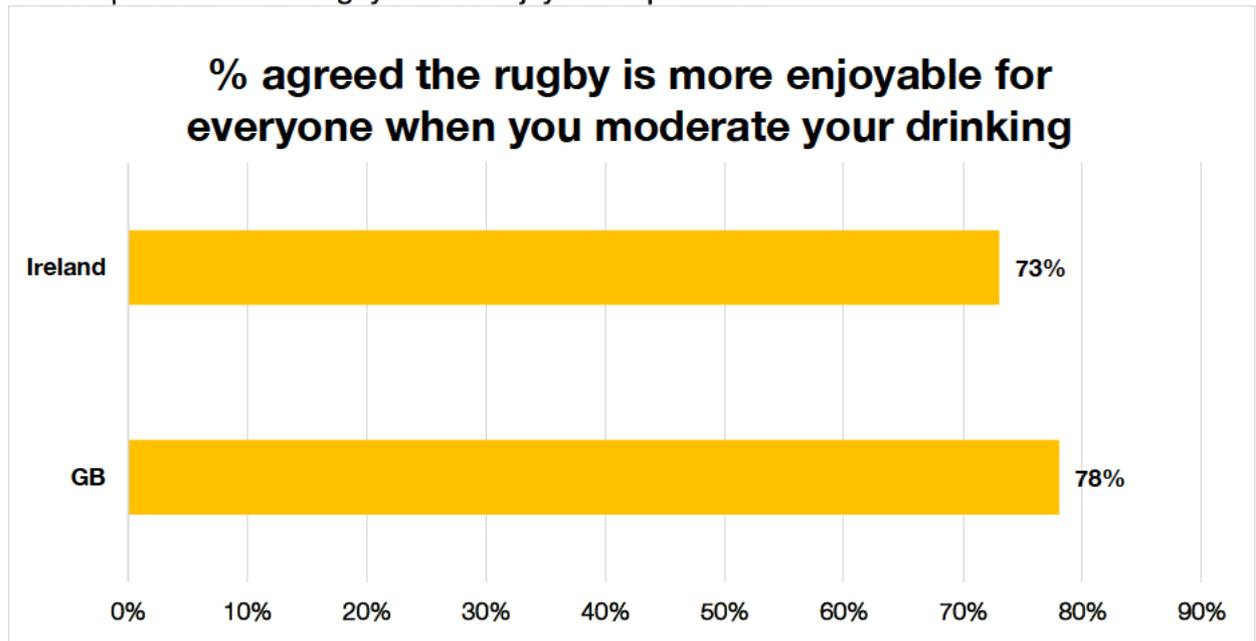
The majority of people agreed Guinness Clear made it acceptable to drink water in a pub (an effect amplified amongst rugby fans).¹¹



¹¹ Source: Kantar - Guinness: Responsible Drinking Fast Forward Lab – Omnibus, April 2019

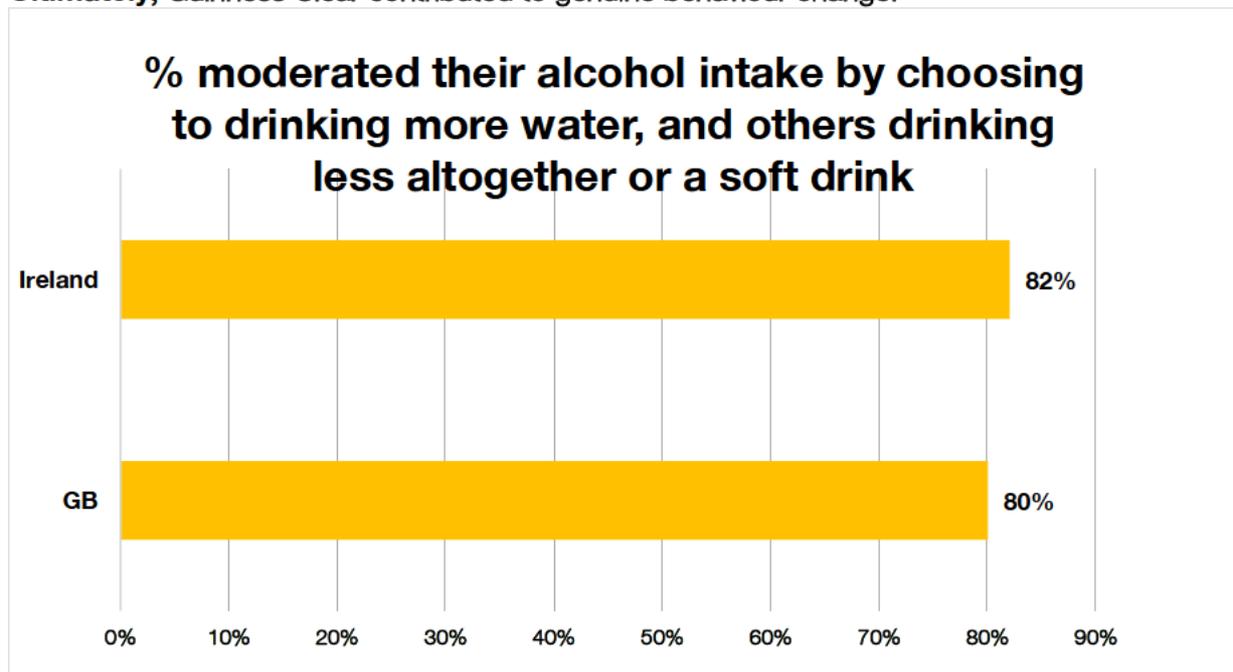
Source: Kantar - Guinness: Responsible Drinking Fast Forward Lab – Omnibus, April 2019

Guinness Clear changed attitudes: the majority of people agreed moderating alcohol consumption made the rugby a more enjoyable experience.



Source: Kantar - Guinness: Responsible Drinking Fast Forward Lab – Omnibus, April 2019

Ultimately, Guinness Clear contributed to genuine behaviour change.



Source: Kantar - Guinness: Responsible Drinking Fast Forward Lab – Omnibus, April 2019

The result was that Guinness Clear was asked for EVERYWHERE.

This was the most visible barometer of our success: you could order Guinness Clear at ANY pub in GB or Ireland, and the staff **knew exactly** what you meant.



Source: Twitter post and image collation

In fact, so impactful was our campaign that some Pub Owners weren't too enthused that 'Guinness Clear' was the order du jour.

We even saw an uplift in Guinness Clear glass demand.



Source: Twitter

Guinness became the

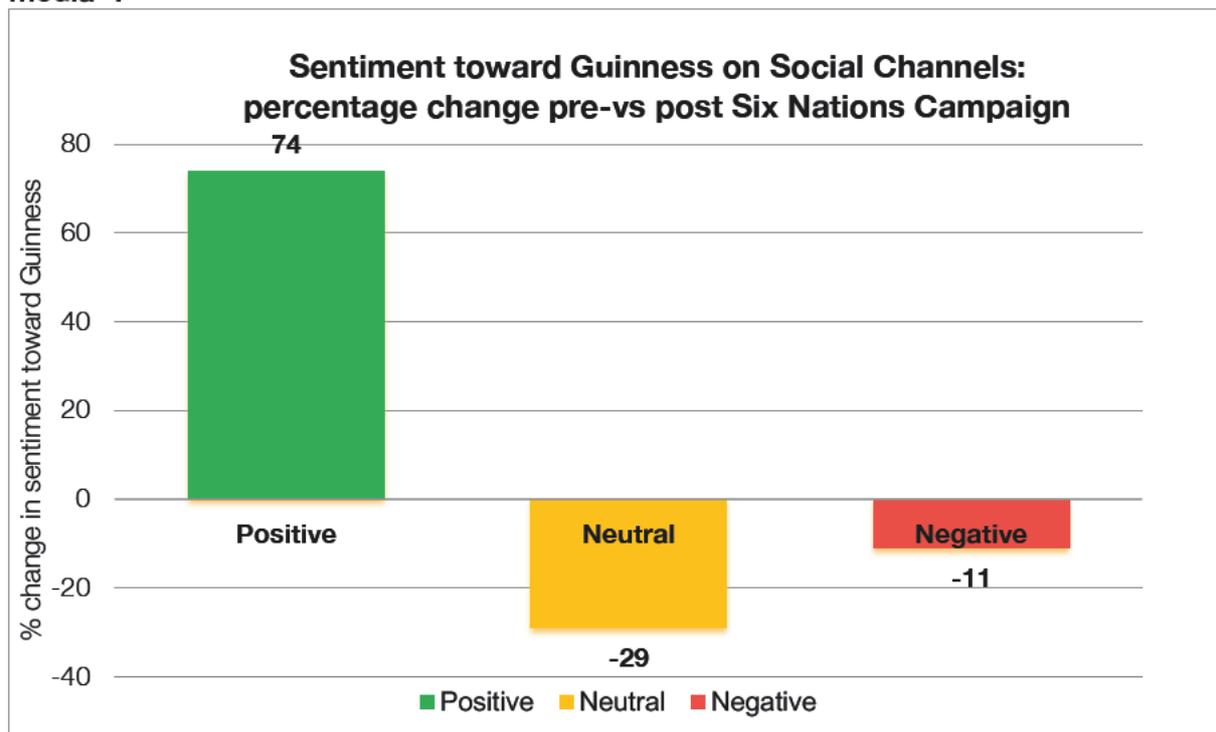
#1 beer brand associated with responsible drinking

Across GB and Ireland, Guinness Clear pushed us to top spot (on prompted and spontaneous measures).



Our campaign was so impactful that the statement “Guinness supports responsible drinking” received creative impact scores strongly above norm in GB & Ireland¹².

We saw a massive 74% increase in positive sentiment toward Guinness across social media¹³.



Source: Kantar GB and IOI Responsible Drinking Behaviour; AMV BBDO GB and IOI Earned Social Listening: 01/02 – 18/03

¹² Kantar: Guinness Clear Creative Impact Feb 2019 GB & Ireland

¹³ Kantar GB and IOI Responsible Drinking Behaviour; AMV BBDO GB and IOI Earned Social Listening: 01/02 – 18/03

Talkability was overwhelmingly favourable as people championed our campaign, seeing it as an entertaining, fresh way to tackle responsible drinking.



Source: Kantar GB and IOI Responsible Drinking Behaviour; AMV BBDO GB and IOI Earned Social Listening

Our social reach was immense (and positive)

We tallied more than 14M views across GB & Ireland, doubling the Diageo video view-through-rate benchmark at 21% on YouTube/ VOD - with an engagement rate 25% above benchmark¹⁴.

We clocked 68M impressions: 53M GB, 15M IOI – which is considerable given there are 52M adults in GB and 2.9M in Ireland¹⁵.

And 3K earned media impressions (2.2K GB, 828 Ireland)¹⁶.

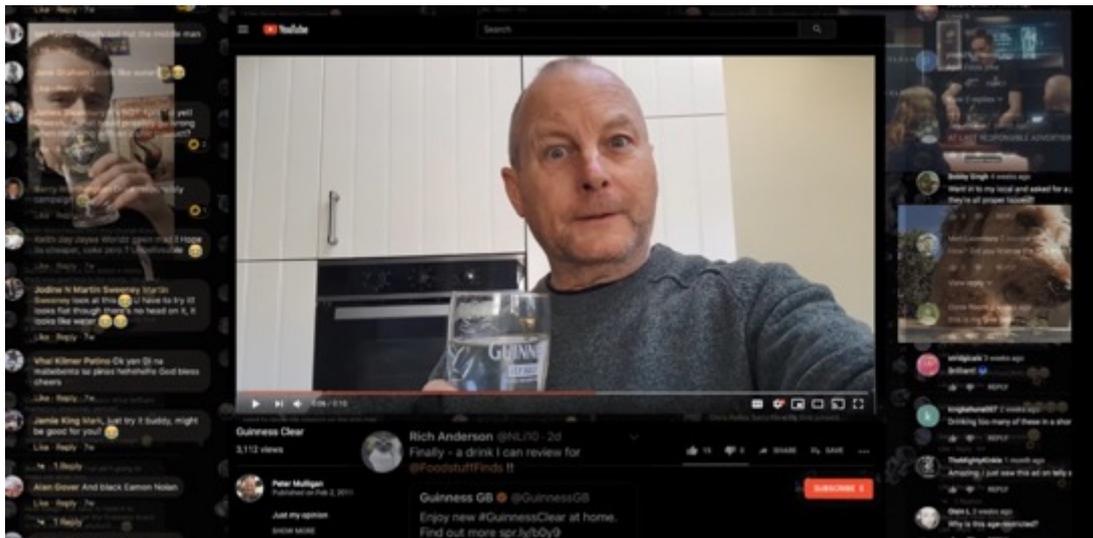
14 Nielsen/ Carat Media Agency

15 Nielsen/ Carat Media Agency

16 Nielsen/ Carat Media Agency

YouTube saw a surge of people joining the parody.

People filmed their own experience of drinking Guinness Clear.



Source: YouTube

Industry bodies were hugely supportive;

The British Beer & Pub Association Chief Executive repeatedly tweeted support for the campaign over the 6N.



Source: Twitter

Forbes dubbed us the “masters of the head-fake”¹⁷.



And we went on to win a Gold at the Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity.



Image Source: AMV BBDO and Cannes Festival of Creativity.

We made a genuine and important impact on responsible drinking when it mattered the most.

¹⁷ Forbes Website: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/willburns/2019/02/21/guinness-masters-the-art-of-the-head-fake-with-guinness-clear/>

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How does your work inspire others to be brave? 15 points

Guinness Clear offers a template for Brave, responsible marketing. If the industry is to thrive in the future, we must find interesting ways to combine care and commerce, purpose and profit. Being brave is never an end in itself, but is instead a path to extraordinary results.

Here's how others can learn from what we achieved.

Responsibility should be executed at the centre, not the edges.

It's too easy to run 'brave' campaigns when they are a small part of your marketing efforts. Maybe a 'viral' YouTube video here or there, or an event that sparks a few press releases that you celebrate for the 'earned media' you achieved. Whilst elsewhere your main marketing efforts do something very, very different.

Guinness Clear is undoubtedly a brave idea. Very few commercial organisations would run high profile marketing that lends their logo, name and precious distinctive assets to a product that is freely and widely available at zero cost. But it wasn't a stunt or a marginal PR joke. It was the main push, for the most important multi-million pound sponsorship property Guinness had ever invested in. That's the definition of brave.

Doing the right thing for your customers is never 'brave'. But it is.

Here's where we maybe jeopardise our chances of winning a Brave Award. Because for us, following the path of responsibility and leaning into not just what our drinkers wanted, but also what they and their friends needed never felt 'brave', because this is how brand marketing works isn't it?

But of course, if you do it without a strong relationship with those drinkers, if your brand lacks the depth, soul and substance of Guinness, then it can feel like a risk. For those counting the cost and profit, a more cynical sales driving marketing ploy looks and feels safer. When there's a more direct link to cash in the bank.

Guinness Clear involved a little fuzzier logic (if we told our drinkers not to drink us too often, they would appreciate it and choose us more often when they were drinking responsibly).

Brave marketers build brands with both clarity and complexity.

Simplicity is important in marketing, to develop and build distinctive assets and simple system one associations that create mental availability. But great marketers know that simplicity always runs the risk of becoming one-dimensional. And one-dimensional brands struggle to change with circumstances or to navigate and complex and changing world.

But that's not how Guinness has been built.

Guinness Clear has demonstrated that a brand with depth and complexity can encourage more people to drink it (when the time is right) and encourage people not to drink it (when the time isn't right). These brands can do both, without seeming insincere or inconsistent, because they respond to context and circumstance in a way that other brands can't.

It seems to us that the world is getting more complex, ambiguous and contradictory by the day.

Maybe it's time for everyone to Be More Guinness.