

Product Information for consumers

Ever-increasing levels of detail in product information which must be communicated to consumers across many product categories presents some unique challenges for our industry. Not only is the volume of information required increasing but greater complexity is being added in terms of local language requirements and a myriad of formats through which the information must be presented. These requirements which will continue to become more onerous in the future have already had a significant impact on packaging development in the confectionery & fine food category in duty free and travel retail and are now impacting on the Wines & Spirits and Beauty categories.

The Duty Free World Council (DFWC) fully supports the principle that consumers should have complete access to relevant and meaningful information on the products they wish to purchase and consume. We, alongside our regional association members, are working on alternative ways in which this information can be communicated which considers the specific characteristics of our industry while meeting regulatory requirements.

For example, channel specific products Travel Retail Exclusives are very important in our industry. Their viability requires volumes which disappears if the same format cannot be sold across many markets.

A very significant part of sales in our industry are to travellers buying gifts for others and often in premium or luxury packaging. Overloading such packaging with content information will have a negative impact on the aesthetic qualities and perceived value of this packaging and product, without necessarily being relevant for the final consumer located in a different country.

Most major retailers in our industry operate in many jurisdictions and simply cannot carry separate sku's for each market to satisfy different mandatory requirements. A solution up to now has been to squeeze more and more information on a pack in as many languages as possible which often results in packaging which is legally compliant but is hardly legible for most consumers.

A member of DFWC, the European Travel Retail Confederation (ETRC) is developing a pilot project to create a digital platform through which product information is communicated to consumers in the duty free and travel retail environment off-the-label. Accessible after screening the barcode on the packaging with a mobile device phone or instore devices, the solution aims at providing consumers with required regulatory information in multiple languages and in a user friendly manner.

ETRC advocates for the European Commission to amend EU legislation to formally allow for mandatory information to be provided off-the-label, to relieve from the current obligation to label on-pack. DFWC fully endorses this initiative and if accepted by regulators the project could roll out across multiple categories and beyond the European Union.