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# THE TASTING PANEL

## Partnership Launched to Expand Education WSWA Convention & Exposition

*U.S. Drinks Conference focuses on providing WSWA attendees information to be successful in the U.S. beverage alcohol market.*

The Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA) has expanded its educational track to its upcoming 68th Annual Convention and Exposition, April 10-13, 2011, in Orlando. The U.S. Drinks Conference (USDC) is being coordinated by Brand Action Team, MHW, Ltd., and Next Level Marketing. The USDC in its entirety will be co-located with WSWA at their convention in Las Vegas.

The USDC has established a reputation for providing practical information that suppliers and distributors can use to introduce and grow their business in the market. The four programs that USDC will host are slated to be coordinated by experts and veteran influencers offering key takeaways that wholesalers and wine and spirit suppliers can put to work in their business.

Sessions will be offered on Tuesday, April 12 from 12:30 - 4:00 PM in a multi-track format and will include:



- **Social Media as a Marketing Tool:** Attendees will hear a panel of experts on how suppliers and on- and off-premise wholesalers are leveraging social media to make sales happen.
- **How Brand Ambassadors Can Help:** Suppliers may be paying for the services of distributors can also benefit from this dynamic resource by reaching consumers at the point of sale.
- **Brand Builders: Case Histories of Successful Brand Launches, Expansions and Initiatives**



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Tune in for a summary "distillation" of the latest industry trends, from the retail, on- and off-premise and consumer perspective.
- **Navigating Brand Entry: Understanding the Three-tier system.**  
Perfect for attendees who are new to market, this seminar will cover the basics of control versus open states and how to navigate the complexities of the unique three-tier system.

"Aligning our convention with WSWA allows us to reach a much broader audience," said Steve Raye, Managing Partner of Avon, CT-based Brand Action Team, one of the organizers of the USDC. "WSWA attracts 2,000 attendees; people who most benefit from the type of information that we provide at the USDC, along with those people implementing practical information on the front lines."

"We are thrilled to collaborate with USDC to bring added value and commercial substance to our convention program," WSWA President and CEO Craig Wolf said. "Our goal is to continuously improve the convention and introduce new and interesting elements for the attendees, and the business-related sessions offered this year do just that," Wolf added.

The partnership between WSWA and USDC efficiently brings new elements to the traditional WSWA convention programming. Noted Raye, "Our partners in USDC, John Beaudette, Mike Ginley and Jeff Grindrod, all agree that there is a tremendous need to provide practical information that wholesalers and suppliers can use to increase sales and margins in this rapidly changing marketplace."

Raye concluded, "Attendees have the opportunities offered by being at the WSWA convention and, simultaneously, have access to the information from USDC. They fit together very nicely."

WSWA has also established a special one-day fee of \$325 for individuals who want to attend the sessions, but are not able to attend the entire convention. Visit [www.wswa2011.org](http://www.wswa2011.org) for registration information.