GUIDE: Appropriate Representation of Māori and Māori culture in the Brewing Industry

- Are you confident that your business is appropriately reflecting Māori and Māori culture?
- Do you know what cultural appropriation is?

This Guide aims to provide high level advice to help ensure an appropriate reflection of Māori and Māori culture in beer labelling, sales and markets and at beer events.

The Context

The Aotearoa/New Zealand brewing industry has seen significant growth over the last 10 years. Our brewing ingredients, and breweries and beer have global reach. This is a great achievement for a growing industry. However, there have been a range of instances where Māori and Māori culture have been used as sales and marketing tools causing offence to Māori. Use of Māori and Māori culture without the appropriate approval and without understanding or respecting the original culture and context is cultural appropriation.

Being proud that your product or business is from New Zealand is great and there are many ways to promote that fact in ways that will not result in offense or cultural appropriation.

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Key Lessons

- Māori are tangata whenua (people). They are the first people of Aotearoa/New Zealand.
- Māori culture is taonga (sacred). It is owned by Māori. Non-Māori people should not create false connections appropriating Māori and Māori culture.
- The Māori people and their culture are not a sales and marketing tool.
- Tā moko, a traditional Māori tattoo, is highly personal and belongs to an individual – it can not be replicated.
- In Māori culture it is not appropriate to associate the dead with the living, or the dead with food or beverages.
- The tiki is a representation of fertility, and should not be associated with alcohol.
- The māhunga (head) is considered sacred and should not be linked with beverages, especially alcohol.
- If your business does intend to use any aspects of Māori culture in your business – ensure that you have obtained specific advice from an appropriate representative, or local iwi.

Further Information & Guidance

You can find details of iwi in New Zealand here: http://www.tkm.govt.nz/

Karaitiana Taiuru offers free initial advice on Māori branding and culture issues: https://www.taiuru.maori.nz/contact/

Helpful recent articles appear in Karatiana's blog and The Pursuit of Hoppiness:

- Karatiana's blog : https://www.taiuru.maori.nz/blog-2/
- https://www.soba.org.nz/…/december-2018-pursuit-of-hoppine…/ (pg 24)
- https://www.soba.org.nz/august-2018-pursuit-of-hoppiness-n…/ (pg 4)

The Detail

Māori culture is taonga (sacred) to, and owned by, Māori. Using images of Māori or from Māori culture to sell or market beer, or promote beer events implies that the beer is a Māori product, or that the beer event is endorsed by Māori. Implying Māori endorsement of a beer or a beer event is incorrect and misleading, unless specific advice has been sought from an appropriate Māori representative, or local iwi if using iwi landmarks and icons.

It is essential to remember that Māori are tangata whenua, they are people – the first people of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Māori are not fictional characters to be used as a sales or marketing tool.

The Māori culture, and representations of it, are generally regional. Images and waiata (songs) will generally belong to a specific iwi (tribe), hapū (kinship group) or whānau (family group). Permission needs to be sought from the correct people before any Māori cultural representations can be used. Māori culture is not a sales and marketing tool open to all for use.

Tā moko is especially sacred in Māori culture. This is because it is specific to an individual and is a graphical representation of a person's genealogy and life's achievements. Using tā moko in the sales and marketing of alcohol is being disrespectful to the person's whole genealogy. It has the potential to be offensive to Māori generally, and particularly the whanaunga (relatives) of the person from whom the tā moko is taken. If a representation is not a true tā moko, it is, cultural appropriation.

It is a further breach of tikanga (custom) to associate a stolen tā moko with a person who is dead. It is not appropriate to associate the dead with the living, or the dead with food or beverages.

The tiki is a representation of the Māori deity of fertility. It is a customary belief that is still practiced by some, that images and carvings of deities are used for worshiping the deity. Images and carvings of tiki were placed around the neck of couples who were trying to conceive a baby. The tiki is a sign of fertility and should not be used to promote alcohol, especially considering its harmful effects during pregnancy.

The head (māhunga) has special significance to Māori and should not be linked with food or beverages, especially alcohol. The head should not be touched, so having a Māori face or head on any beer marketing materials or packages that might be touched is highly offensive. It has the connotation of squeezing blood and biological material from a head. It also has the further, negative historical connotation of the time where Europeans collected and traded Māori heads.

The historical relationship between Māori and alcohol is also important to understand. Prior to the European occupation of New Zealand – Māori had no experience or association with alcohol. The introduction of alcohol has created issues that were previously unknown Māori.

About this document
The advice about Māori culture and custom in this document was received from **Karaitiana Taiuru**. Karaitiana is a Māori cultural advisor with diverse experience and a diverse whakapapa via Ngāi Tahu.

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