

All organizations depend a lot on the quality of the products they manufacture, their distribution system and their revenue models. But the most tricky and visible aspect of managing a business is marketing. Marketing, advertising and communicating the value propositions and features of the products and services becomes the backbone of the business. Businesses use celebrities, social networking media, product usage through TV ads etc for reaching out to their target customers. But this privilege doesn't exist with certain products like liquor, cigarettes etc. For such products a special marketing strategy to reach out to its customers is adopted- surrogate advertising.



Surrogate advertising can be defined as duplicating the brand image of one product extensively to promote another product of the same company. Surrogate advertising focuses on the use of well established brands and mediums for the promotion of another product, for which direct display on TV, print ads is prohibited. Surrogate advertising of products is done by promoting other products under the umbrella of the original brand. It includes promotional products like audio cds, cassettes, apparels etc.

This technique of advertising is primarily marketing and showcasing 'harmless' products to create awareness of their product which might be 'harmful'.

A few major brands which have adopted surrogate marketing for promoting their products are discussed below. Liquor brand Bacardi promotes its products by music cds as direct marketing of alcohol beverages is prohibited. Similarly, Seagrams, a leading liquor brand distributes audio cds for marketing.

Beverage market leaders UB group promotes its brand Kingfisher by associating itself with sponsorship of tennis tournaments and [Formula One](#). More, the supermodel and star studded Kingfisher calendar is another form of surrogate advertising for this line of UB group beverages. Another UB group liquor brand Royal Challenge promotes itself through golf tournaments and recently through IPL cricket team Bangalore Royal Challengers. On the other hand, Smirnoff markets itself under an apple juice product and White Mischief associates itself with [tourism and hospitality](#) for its marketing.

Apart from liquor brands, cigarette companies also have to undertake surrogate advertising. Godfrey Phillips and Red & White are two major cigarette brands which associate themselves with bravery awards. Cigarette brand Wills has totally diversified into a new [market segment](#) for marketing its main products through Wills Lifestyle apparels. Surrogate marketing is also done by gutka and pan masala giants Manikchand by hosting the Bollywood Filmfare awards.

Liquor, cigarettes, pan masala, gutka etc are all harmful products. But these products cannot be abolished from the market as they not only have tremendous demand, but they also generate huge amounts of revenue for the state. Rs.60,000 cr is the estimated size of the beverage industry in India which operates under a restricted environment. This generates Rs.22,000 cr revenue for the Govt. Hence, balance out the situation, surrogate marketing plays an important role.

Liquor and cigarette are products which are associated with providing ways to celebrate and enjoyment to people. But despite being harmful products with severe side effects, there exists a strong demand for the same. As a toss-up between revenue and responsibility, the Govt. allows such businesses only one way to glorify their products- Surrogate advertising.