

## Case Study

*How implicit research helped revitalise an iconic drink's on-trade presence*

### Overview



- Mindlab's implicit research gave Guinness the insight needed to execute a dramatic turnaround in Guinness Draught's on-trade presence.
- Mindlab was briefed to study consumer response to new Guinness Draught bar tap ('founts') designs intended to reverse a dramatic decline in on-trade presence in UK bars and pubs.
- A two-stage study was used to fully explore and understand consumer implicit and explicit response to a first phase of designs. The insight from stage was used to inform the designs for Stage 2 testing.
- The final design, the Hero Harp, was an instant hit, smashing targets in the UK, Ireland and globally.
- The Hero Harp was awarded Gold and the much coveted Grand Prix Award at the DBA Design Effectiveness Awards.

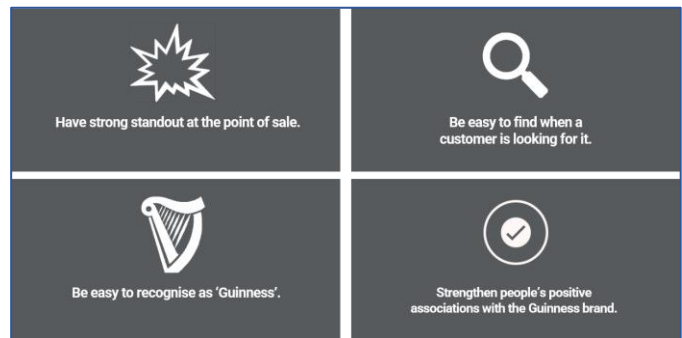
### Background – a worrying decline for an historic brand

**Guinness Draught** is undoubtedly an iconic beverage, but by 2018 its presence at UK bars had been steadily diminishing as changing tastes and new competitors progressively displaced the historic drink. In the two years alone prior to this study, Guinness Draught branded on-bar tap units had been reduced by a massive 23%. Diageo, the global owner of Guinness, had to draw a line and reverse this trend.

To revitalise the Guinness presence at bars, Diageo wanted to create a highly visible, premium-feeling and very characterful tap unit (known as a 'fount'). Not only did the new design have to be compelling enough to convince bar owners that installing it would significantly increase Guinness sales, but it also had, of course, to excite drinkers to ask for a glass of the dark ruby stout.

### The Brief – four contender designs

Guinness briefed Mindlab to use our proprietary digital implicit platform to help them understand consumer perception of their new fount designs. The key measures that most concerned them were that the new design should:



### The Study – monadic and implicit

Mindlab recruited nearly 1,000 UK participants for the study, aged 20 – 50. The sample was divided evenly between regular and occasional Guinness drinkers, to better understand the nuances of how brand loyalty impacted perceptions.

The sample was divided into four monadic cells – one for each new fount design – to determine how each design influenced consumers' implicit responses for visual salience (using a virtual bar counter that simulated a typical UK pub counter), brand recognition, preference and positive associations.

The study was structured in two stages; the results of stage 1 were used to optimise the fount designs for validation against the same measures in Stage 2.

All implicit tests were undertaken under time pressure to ensure that we gathered only System 1 data.

## Key Insights

Stage 1 of the study indicated that the Guinness harp has powerful implicit resonance with consumers.

The lead design both cued strongly for a range of essential implicit associations and received strong explicit feedback.

The strong results, combined with concerns for a lack of visual salience amongst competitor founts, formed Mindlab's brief to Diageo for Stage 2 and enabled some bold creative decision making.

The Hero Harp emerged as the most appealing and popular of the Stage 2 designs. It stood out well (resolving a Stage 1 concern), was eye-catching, iconic and immediately recognisable as 'Guinness'.

Better yet, the design resonated particularly well with occasional Guinness drinkers, giving the business a great platform to recruit them back as brand loyalists.

The Hero Harp fulfilled its potential with a successful, and award-winning, global roll-out.

### Stage 1 – insight points to an iconic design

Insight from the first stage of the study was clear and highly directional for the client, as one fount design emerged as the leading, most resonant choice for consumers:

- ✓ Very positive uplift for perceiving Guinness as appealing, distinctive, proud, high quality, well-crafted.
- ✓ Strong implicit appeal.
- ✓ Distinctly 'Guinness' looking.
- ✓ Very positive explicit feedback for its iconic looks, a graceful design that echoed the famous Guinness harp.

*But:*

- » Lacked visual salience, hard to locate at a busy bar.

Stage 1 results gave our client a clear brief and a mandate to confidently explore new designs that reflected both the positives Mindlab uncovered *and* to address the salience concern.

### Stage 2 – using research to build the brand at the bar

Our Stage 1 results gave our client a clear brief and mandate to create new fount designs to reflect the very positive feedback regarding brand iconography, *and* to address the salience concern of the most resonant Stage 1 fount with a more distinctive design.

After testing the new designs against the same measures as Stage 1, one particular fount emerged as the clear favourite with consumers, producing strongly resonant implicit and explicit responses. Here is the **Hero Harp**:



- ✓ 33% increase in visual salience in a busy bar environment.
- ✓ Strong implicit appeal.
- ✓ Strong implicit brand recognition.
- ✓ Very positive uplift in key brand associations, especially with occasional Guinness drinkers.

The strong uplift in scores for occasional Guinness drinkers was especially pleasing. It gave the brand confidence in the power of the new fount to help persuade this cohort them back to the brand more regularly, and to help drive recruitment.

### A global success – driven by insight

The Hero Harp was an instant hit in UK and Irish bars and pubs. Fount orders nearly doubled target, and the design also convinced 5,000 bars to stop plans to put Guinness on a shared T-bar and install the new standalone fount instead.

The fount is now an international hit, too, with global orders of nearly 50,000 and, in 2020, being awarded Gold and the much coveted Grand Prix Award at the DBA Design Effectiveness Awards.



**DIAGEO**