

TOUGHENED BEER GLASSES

Organisation	AlphaBar
Trigger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Largely brought about by numerous incidents of 'glassing' attacks in Manchester.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise awareness of the benefits of toughened glass products in reducing effects of glassing. To effect cultural change in the way toughened glass products are perceived by bars, pubs and clubs etc.
Tools/Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working closely with Greater Manchester Police, manufacturers and customers. Highly committed sales-force promotes the benefits of toughened glass products.
Enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to draw upon the vast expertise of manufacturers. Personal commitment to reducing effects of glassing.
Tensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toughened glass products are perceived to be inferior in quality. Products are more expensive than normal glasses. Bar owners are not fully aware of the benefits of toughened glass products.
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many city centre bars and clubs using toughened glass products. Significantly contributed to the success of SafeGlass/SafeCity campaign. Helped reduce incidents of glassing attacks in Manchester. Generated a greater awareness of the benefits of toughened glass products.
Lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe products can make a difference to the seriousness of alcohol related violence. Campaigns can raise awareness of the issues.

Synopsis

This case study focuses on the impact of new technologies in the development and manufacture of toughened glass products, in particular toughened beer glasses. It documents the role of AlphaBar, a leading glass supplier based in Warrington, in promoting a city-wide campaign to reduce incidents of 'glassing' attacks in Manchester. The 'SafeGlass-SafeCity' campaign is a collaborative project between Manchester Evening News, Greater Manchester Police and numerous other agencies, all working towards making Manchester city centre a safer place for people to visit and enjoy its vibrant nightlife.

Background to AlphaBar Toughened Beer Glasses

The vast majority of pub drinkers behave sensibly. The tiny minority who may not, and may resort to violence, will resort to using any weapon that comes to hand to harm someone. In addition, figures for the twelve-month period leading up to September 2000 show that violent crime, which comprises 14% of reported crime or 716,519 cases, rose by 8%. Although still a concern, it should be noted that the rate of climb has eased off (Home Office, 2001). Newspaper reports in 2000 were claiming that violent crime was up by nearly one third compared to 1997, with 880,000 people violently assaulted by strangers – many of them drunk (Jones, 2000).

It was suggested that one way to minimise the consequences of aggression was through the use of toughened glass. While the safety arguments were still being debated in the late 1990, the Brewers and Licensed Retailers Association (BLRA) announced in 1997 that it wished to take all reasonable action to meet these concerns. It therefore recommended to its members that they use toughened glass, although this only applied to straight pint and half-pint beer glasses. Other forms of glasses were not available at that time and the Brewers and Licensed Retailers Association hoped to see product development in this area. UK glass manufacturers were encouraged to take advantage of the growing market in this area (BLRA, 1997).

The quality, range and durability of toughened had helped encourage progress. As a result, around one third of pubs were using toughened glasses and this was proving acceptable to drinkers. A BLRA (1997) spokesperson said:

“The pub industry is acutely conscious of its social responsibilities, and is second to none in working constructively with the Government and the police. This new initiative on toughened beer glasses underlies how we reflect concerns in practical action”

A campaign by Greater Manchester Police and the Manchester Evening News (M.E.N.) to promote the use of toughened glass in Greater Manchester was initiated in June 2000 after a horrific glass attack on a young woman in a local bar. Rachel Franks was nearly blinded in an attack where a broken glass was thrust into her face.



Figure 1: Rachel Franks after the attack
© Manchester Evening News

Max Perez, Director of AlphaBar, a major supplier of toughened glass products became directly involved in the campaign to reduce incidents of 'glassing'. This case study is based on an interview with the owner of AlphaBar, Max Perez and was chosen because it demonstrated how a simple change in design can prevent serious injury resulting from alcohol related violence.

Design Process

The Concept

The distinct qualities that separate toughened and non-toughened glass lie in the manufacturing process of the final product. As a result of its strength and the way in which it breaks, toughened glass will shatter into many hundreds of tiny pellets. Conventional glass, by contrast, serves as an offensive weapon because it leaves large and potentially lethal pointed edges.

These have been can be used to inflict horrific facial injuries. The only discernible difference between the two types of glass products is that toughened glass is slightly more opaque, but this is often unnoticeable.



Figures 2 and 3: Toughened beer glasses
©AlphaBar

Manufacture

To provide glass with extra strength and durability, the specially formulated glass is slowly heated, and then quickly cooled one or more times. The process, which is similar to tempering of steel in the manufacturing of quality knives or tools, produces multiple layers within the glass. This strengthens the glass, increases its impact resistance by more than five times and eliminates stress points allowing it to withstand temperature extremes. The glass is manufactured in France, where the use of toughened glass for beer and wine glasses is more widespread. Such glass is simply considered more durable by bar owners, rather than being a matter of legislation.

Implementation

Drawing upon his own experience of having been glassed, Max Perez began promoting the benefits of the products to local bars and clubs. As a result, many of the city centre and surrounding bars started to use the glasses, signifying the fact to their customers with notices displayed in the premises stating that toughened glass products were in use.

The use of toughened glass products within a bar/club environment forms part of a more holistic approach to reducing the potential for violent crime to occur. The types of actions proving effective include: creating more space around the bar area in order to reduce overcrowding and accidental spillage of someone's drink; careful positioning of comfortable seating away from primary circulation routes. Through a deeper understanding of the circumstances that lead to anger and potentially violence, the designer can therefore reduce anti-social and criminal behaviour.

Impact

The take-up of toughened beer glasses in Manchester was relatively quick and Max Perez was impressed "...it shows that they care". Although toughened glass products are more expensive, such costs are apparently recouped, as its lifespan is five times longer than conventional glass:

"The cost is recuperated due to the longevity of the product and its extra durability in use" (Max Perez, Alphabar).

Although a scientific investigation of the impact of toughened glass has yet to be completed, it would appear that it has had a positive impact on levels of crime. In February 2001, Manchester Evening News announced 'Glassing' attacks are down to zero".

11 MANCHESTER EVENING NEWS

M.E.N. and police campaign beats thugs

'Glassing' attacks are down to zero




CRUSADING for a safer city: Rachel Franks, who nearly lost an eye in a clubland glassing attack, and Chief Insp Garry Shewan

BY CARL PALMER

SAFEGLOSS

SAFECITY

More forces want to copy our success

A CAMPAIGN by police and the M.E.N. to rid the city centre of horrific glass attacks has achieved an amazing success, it was revealed today.

In the last 12 months, there wasn't a single reported incident of broken bottles or glasses being used as weapons.

Today our campaign is praised for helping police turn a rising tide of glass attacks.

It was launched last year when young mum Rachel Franks nearly lost an eye after a broken glass was pushed in her face at a night spot. We convinced all pubs and clubs in the city centre to boost the use of safety glass and lobbied MPs, including Home Secretary Jack Straw, over the issue.

Technology now exists to manufacture bottles using safety glass

that will not produce dangerous shards when broken. Greater Manchester Police, who encourage businesses to help make city centres safer as far as possible, have been inundated with requests from other forces for help to try to match their success.

Chief Insp Garry Shewan, based at Booth Street police station, said: "We want to continue our work with the M.E.N. and build on

that partnership. While there is a national eight per cent rise in glass attacks, Manchester has seen no increase.

"Working in partnership with other agencies using strategic policies and initiatives all go towards making everybody in the city centre a safer place, and that hard work is paying off."

After we contacted Home Secretary Jack Straw, he backed our

campaign which is heralded as one of the best in the country. Key parts of the wider police strategy to tackle the problem include the 40 camera city centre CCTV system.

Our main glass supplier, Alpha Bar, offers a toughened wine glass and has provided to make more available if customers request it.

The Worcester-based company supplies many of the independent bars, clubs and restaurants in the city.

Managing director Max Perez said: "We have been very impressed by the number of pubs and clubs who have chosen direct in the toughened glasses because it shows that they care."

In Manchester's Gay Village police have just launched a campaign to break the chain of homophobic hate crime. Working with a number of other agencies, victims can even report crime via the internet.

Comment: Page 8

Figure 4: Manchester Evening News
© Manchester Evening News

Toughened glass products and their use within bars and clubs play a vital part in a citywide campaign to reduce incidents of glassing and violence against the person. Wider initiatives to make Manchester city centre a safer place for its visitors include the 'Safeglass-Safecity' campaign promoted by Greater Manchester Police in partnership with the Manchester Evening News.

Lessons Learned

The benefits of safer products far outweigh cost considerations, as toughened glass prevents serious injury and is more robust and longer lasting. Such products need to be combined with a more holistic approach where other environmental factors are considered, if alcohol induced violent attacks are to be reduced. This case study shows that suppliers, the media, police and many other groups will back campaigns to reduce the types of horrific injuries resulting from 'glassing' incidents.

References, Related Case Studies and Further Reading

BLRA (1997) Toughened Glass. Press Release. Brewers and Licensed Retailers Association, 42 Portman Square, London, W1H 6BD.

Home Office (2001) '*Crime Statistics*'. Crime Reduction Unit.
www.crimereduction.gov.uk

Jones, K. (2000) '*Street Crime Rockets 30%*'. News North-West. 17th October, pp1.

Manchester Evening News (2001) '*Glassing attacks are down to zero*', 13th February. pp.2.

Contact Details

Max Perez
Director
Alphabar Limited
1 Prestwood Court
Leacroft Road
Birchwood
Warrington
Cheshire
WA3 6SB
Tel: 01925 820334
Fax: 01925 827784
Email: info@alphabar.com

Classification Index

Ekblom's crime classification	Misbehaviour (violence against the person).
BCS crime classification	Violence against the person
DAC	Protecting people
Primary motivation	Social – concerned to protect people
Type of designer	Supplier
Approach	Application to UK
Sector	Leisure
Location	Public Houses and bars
Author	David Hands

DAC – Alphabar toughened glass