

*Mr. Owen is using the Year 11 PSHE lesson to look at the role of alcohol in society. The discussion gets around to the way in which alcohol is MARKETED.*

**Mr. Owen**

“The alcohol industry is BIG business. They’re selling a product and they have to PROMOTE it in different ways to ATTRACT a range of customers.”

**Tom**

“Sir. Isn’t it true that ALCOPOPS were DESIGNED to appeal to YOUNG people? I read an article that said a few years ago the alcohol industry was LOSING money because young people were going out and buying ECSTASY, instead of DRINKING.”

**Mr. Owen**

“Well, it’s true that ecstasy was very popular at the time. But I DON’T think that brewers and distillers, would see DRUG DEALERS as COMPETITION.”

**Sarah**

“But, Sir. I saw a documentary a while ago that said up to a half a MILLION people a week take ecstasy. If they each spend £10 on one tablet instead of drink, that’s 5 million pounds a week LESS being spent on alcohol. Surely the brewers must have REALISED that?”

**Mr. Owen**

“Yes, I suppose they might have thought about that. But what’s ALCOPOPS got to do with it?”

**Tom says**

“Well, Sir. They must have thought, ‘HOW can we get these young people to buy our product?’ So they manufactured sweet alcoholic drinks, and launched alcopops as a completely NEW product.”

**Saleem**

“Yes, Sir. They make new customers. It’s good BUSINESS. Anyway, the product they sell IS a DRUG, isn’t it? So aren’t THEY drug dealers TOO?”

**Mr. Owen**

“I WOULDN’T call people in the ALCOHOL business ‘drug dealers’. They’re HONEST people. They pay TAXES. The public WANTS a variety of quality products in every shop and it’s their JOB to provide that. Alcohol is no different from any thing else on sale. No-one is FORCED to buy it. And now there’s a pan-industry organization called The Portman Group. They’ve put together a Code of Practice on marketing and they give advice about the naming and packaging of alcohol. The industry’s really cleaned up its act.”

**Sarah**

“But Sir. It’s OBVIOUS that alcopops are aimed at kids. You wouldn’t get my DAD drinking alcopops down the pub. They’re designed to appeal to YOUNG people and encourage them to drink MORE alcohol.”

**Mr. Owen**

“Let’s see. What’s the most popular drink with young people around HERE? Is it ALCOPOPS, or is it super strength lager and cider?”