

Launching a Multi-Brand Whisky Experience for Airport Travellers



Whisky Festival 2024 was created to bring multiple whisky brands together under one retail campaign across six major UK airport locations. The task was to design, build, and operate a programme that gave each brand equal visibility, ensured consistency across sites, and delivered a modern, education-led experience for travellers.

CHALLENGE

The campaign required simultaneous execution in Heathrow Terminals 2, 3, 4 and 5, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, each with different passenger flows, operational constraints, and stock management processes. A full team of trained whisky brand ambassadors had to be deployed and maintained across all sites, hitting a 95% staffing coverage target throughout the 12-week period.

Operational delivery covered sourcing and delivering tasting stock airside, managing sampling equipment and GWP materials, and coordinating communications across multiple brand partners. A single festival identity needed to bring the campaign together while still allowing each participating brand to retain its individuality.

Commercial and engagement targets added further complexity, with ambitious goals of delivering £250k in total sales, driving 4,000 microsite scans, increasing brand awareness, and building stronger understanding among new and occasional whisky drinkers. The challenge was to build a scalable, structured retail festival that blended live experiences, digital tools, and consistent frontline delivery across six airports.

SOLUTION

ABM Experience Solutions delivered Whisky Festival 2024 as a multi-site retail experience built around clear structure, strong operational control, and consistent frontline delivery. The campaign was shaped to reflect how travellers move through airport retail—short dwell time, high curiosity, and strong willingness to sample when supported by accessible education.

A fair framework for brand rotation was established using YOY sales data and flight demographics to match each whisky to the right audience and avoid overcrowded messaging. Sampling estimates were produced for the full campaign, and stock from each brand was consolidated, packed, and delivered airside following weekly counts from on-site team leaders. This ensured uninterrupted sampling across all location.

A central microsite served as the digital hub, offering brand information, festival schedules, and an augmented reality walkthrough of the whisky-making process. Travellers accessed this via in-store QR codes, giving novices simple entry points while still providing depth for enthusiasts. In-store activity combined sampling with live daily experiences including a traditional Scottish bagpiper, bottle engraving, and rotating brand spotlights. These elements created a distinct festival identity without overwhelming the retail space.



All ambassadors were trained on customer engagement, whisky knowledge, Challenge 25, and hands-on use of the microsite and AR tools. This allowed staff to support both physical tasting and digital education. Throughout the festival, stock flow, sales patterns, and staffing performance were monitored, and a feedback loop between stores and central operations ensured quick adjustments and consistent delivery across all six airports.

BENEFITS

Whisky Festival 2024 exceeded its commercial target, achieving £257,000 in sales against a goal of £250,000. More than 2,000 hours of sampling were delivered with 98% staffing coverage, and 3,694 units were sold through ambassador-led engagement.

Heathrow Terminal 2 was the strongest performing site, accounting for 30% of overall sales (£57k). Digital interaction also surpassed expectations, with 5,530 scans of the microsite and AR experience against a target of 5,000.

The campaign strengthened awareness for all participating brands, introduced travellers to the whisky category in an approachable way, and delivered a structured festival format that balanced brand individuality with a unified in-store experience. By combining education, sampling, live theatre, and digital tools, Whisky Festival 2024 set a new benchmark for multi-brand activations in airport environments.



ABM helped the client launch the Whisky Fest 2024 campaign
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