

THE
MUNICIPAL
LIQUOR STORE

Volume 74, Number 4, 2015

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MINNESOTA MUNICIPAL BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION
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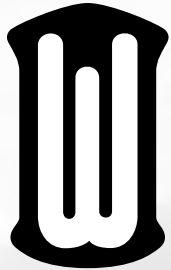


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ON THE COVER

At their recent Midwest Expo, the Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association (MLBA) presented Lakeville Liquor's Brenda Visnovec the *Friend of the Industry Award* for her successful efforts in competing against new big box competition.

She is an positive example and leader to both municipal and private operators.

Congratulations Brenda!!

Well deserved!

Pictured with Brenda is your editor (left) and MLBA executive director Tony Chesek.

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MMBA President's Message



GARY BUYSSE
President

If the rhythm's not right, do you change the drum or do you change the drummer?

If you read the opinion piece in the Star Tribune on November 28 you now understand municipal liquor is an antiquated concept and should be disbanded due to lack of interest and expertise.

If you missed it, the article stated: [Municipal liquor operations} raise questions about the proper role of government, as well as the influence wielded by munis to help block popular proposals that would make it possible to buy a bottle of wine on a Sunday or grab a six-pack of beer at the grocery store.

More important, as even private brick-and-mortar stores struggle for their place in an increasingly digital economy, Minnesota should find a way to shed an anachronistic system that either loses sales to more competitive private enterprise or relies on its monopoly powers to hold off competition and bring in outsized profits that are little more than implicit taxes.

I believe everyone is entitled to an opinion. Public opinion should be fact based, it should be comprehensive and it should be unbiased, to the degree it can be. If John's Liquor fails it's an indictment on John, not on private liquor in general. The same could be said for municipal liquor.

If one of our members falters it is not an excuse to abolish the entire system.

If you have an agenda and wish to publicly air it, please allow us the opportunity for rebuttal. Double standards exist as forms of prejudice and tunnel vision. If you don't deal in the truth don't speak or write publicly. At least don't assume we should pay to read it.

The concept of municipal liquor was established post prohibition. Control comes first; revenue generation is second; always. Millions of dollars in tax reduction generated with a focus on public safety and control. I'm proud to say I do that!

These facts don't indicate the need to abolish the system, they support further perpetuation of it!

Most of the profits generated by big box liquor leave our state and end up in Maryland or Maine, that's a fact. When they donate \$10,000 to the community in which they're located, the local television station is there to commemorate the glorious event. Our millions in profit go quietly into our local coffers without any fanfare at all!

Bang the drum people!

There's discussion on Capitol Hill concerning the free market. We readily support the concept of a free market as long as it is fair, unbiased and doesn't

provide benefits that conflict with state liquor law.

Our municipal liquor stores face competition at all levels and our perceived monopoly hasn't existed for many of us for a long, long time. Our pricing, customer service and product selection position us for success!

If you turn your backs on cities that have made it easier for you to balance your annual budgets, shame on you! The free market concept that is being sold to you benefits the few and not the majority.

I was contacted yesterday by an advertising salesperson for a major local newspaper. I informed him his publication was of the opinion my business shouldn't exist and my enterprise fund should be abolished and this was a contradiction I was having trouble understanding. I politely thanked him for his time and hung up the phone.

We all need to think carefully about who is the recipient of our dollars, our display space and quite frankly our votes.

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Just Do It – Part Two

Getting Employees to do the things you want them to do

By MMBA Conference Presenter
Tom Shay

Last month, we began a discussion on the occasion of a manager or owner telling a staff member to “Just do it.” And while being an owner or manager may entitle you to give instructions, followed by a “just do it”, we have all found from experience that this simple instruction rarely provides you with a job well done.

I mentioned that from my years in business that there was a piece of paper that was taped to the wall next to my desk, and it outlined each of the 16 sections of a book by Ferdinand F. Fournies entitled, “Why employees don’t do what they’re supposed to do, and what to do about it.”

I also mentioned that as I had read the book, all I needed was that small reminder as I would give assignments to my team members. I made a point to always take a quick look at the list to make sure I was not giving instructions which had a very good chance of failing. My suggestion was that you would take last month’s column and this one, highlight the points of value to you, and tape the two columns on the wall next to your desk. Here are reasons nine through sixteen as to why employees don’t do what they are supposed to do, and what to do about it.

Reason #9: They are rewarded for not doing it. We covered a similar situation last month. You pay your staff members on an hourly basis. There are staff members that are your star performers, and most of us have had staff members that have lagged far behind in the quality of their work. Not only do you know who these individuals are, but so does every staff member. If a staff member does a poor job, or does not complete the task at all, as owners and managers we rarely discipline that individual. Something as simple as a notation, signed by the staff member and manager, noting the

problem can help to solve this problem. By stating that these notations will be placed in the staff member’s employment file, and discussed at their semi-annual job review, you may correct the situation.

Depending on the severity of the situation, you may want to have a policy where an employee is placed on probation or terminated when too many notations are received in a certain time frame.

Reason #10: They are punished for doing what they are supposed to do.

“You should have known”, is a phrase which may have a place in a manager’s vocabulary. However, it should be used with great discretion. Imagine the manager or owner who has been in this industry for their entire working life, and the employee who had previously sold other products, or worked in a service industry. Understandably, there should be a world of difference in the knowledge and interpretation of the experiences in day to day work.

Asking a question of how a staff member saw a situation and what they were thinking can enlighten the owner or manager to how the staff member saw a situation. A staff member who has been told to build a display, and is then chastised for failing to wait on a customer, is going to be even more confused when the next situation occurs.

Reason #11: They anticipate a negative consequence for doing it.

This reason ties into the last one. Give a staff member a situation where they are afraid to act because of their fear of being chastised, and you are on the road to developing a staff member who is learning to just “stay out of the way and look busy”. Fear of a manager or owner does not create a positive work place where staff members can excel.

Reason #12: There is a lack of negative consequence for poor performance.

This reason is similar to reason #9; if there is a reward for not doing it, or a lack of negative

consequence for poor performance, we are cultivating employees who can best be described as “slackers”. Combining the reason from last month, as well as reasons #9 and #12, the healthy work environment will have rewards for those who do the job, and penalties for those who do the job wrong, poorly, or do not do the task at all.

Reason #13: There are obstacles

beyond their control. Perhaps before you left for a meeting today, you gave a staff member the assignment of building a display. When you arrive the next day at work, the display is not completed. Someone may have called in sick. The necessary shelving for the display that you thought was in the store room, was not there. Maybe, and fortunately for your business, there were just too many customers to get to it. The valid reasons for the incomplete assignment could go on and on. The important point is for the manager or owner to consider, and validate these situations when deciding how to penalize an individual, as well as providing the necessary insight when making the next assignment.

Reason #14: Their personal limits prevent them from performing.

I remember years ago speaking to a vendor about a problem we were experiencing with his company with regard to the shipment of goods. I explained that there had been several conversations with his dispatcher, driver, and warehouse personnel. His response, while blunt, did have a truth within it. “We didn’t hire them to work in those areas because they were rocket scientists.”

Not everyone is management material; not everyone wants to be. Hopefully, all of the sales team in your business is not making the same hourly wage. Hopefully, the main guideline for a raise during the semi-annual review is not longevity. Skill, both natural and acquired, knowledge, and desire should be some of the strong considerations for pay raise and job assignments.

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Reason #15: There are personal problems. Probably all of us have hired an employee who would fit into the category of “professional victim”. It seems that nearly every day they come to work, they are experiencing some type of personal problem or emergency. And we usually feel better when we have terminated this employee, or they have moved on to another job.

This reason is to call our attention to the situation where a staff member is having, just as every owner or manager does, a personal problem that is preventing the staff member from giving their full attention to the situation.

It has been the experience of this writer when such a situation has been detected, that a conversation on a personal basis goes a long way. An offer of “I would be glad to listen or help where I can” has helped in creating a friendship and better working relationship between staff member and owner or manager.

Reason #16: No one can do it.

Consider a manager who has a vision of how they want something within the business to look. It may be a display; sometimes it is needing a report from computer. This manager was very good in envisioning what he wanted for the business, but there were those occasions where a staff member needed to ask how to complete the task. A possible problem was seen by the staff member even before starting the task. The manager was unable to clearly answer the request for directions or additional information. And with a sound of frustration in their voice, the manager would say, “I do not know exactly how. That is what I pay you to do. Just do it.”

And thus, we complete the two columns with the same issue we began with. Just do it was a great slogan by Nike, and it may have worked well for Mom, but it does not have a place in your business.

- Today we more often work with employees instead of their working for us
- Extra efforts by employers can produce exceptional results from employees
- Post a copy of these two articles next to your desk

“Not My Department” Costs Stores Dearly

By The Associated Press

According to a recent survey, half of all shoppers encounter ‘multiple problems’ on typical visits to stores, and nothing aggravates customers like shoddy customer service.

In fact, a salesperson with a bad attitude, or one who is not around, drives shoppers away and ultimately hurts a company’s revenue.

Encountering problems while shopping is extremely common -- on average half of shoppers polled encounter multiple problems on any given shopping trip, said Paula Courtney, president of The Verde Group, the Toronto market-research company that presented the study.

Younger shoppers and women over age 40 are the most likely to have problems in stores, the survey found.

Problems at brick-and-mortar stores can lead to a significant decline in a

customer’s perception of a company, according to the survey of 2,200 U.S. and Canadian shoppers by The Verde Group and the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School Jay H. Baker Retailing Initiative.

While store-based problems such as parking can present an annoyance, “the problems that matter most and degrade loyalty the most are with salespeople,” said Courtney.

Common issues with salespeople include having a “that’s not my department” attitude or not being around at all, being too aggressive and being insensitive to long checkout lines.

On the other hand, if salespeople seem authentic and knowledgeable about the products they are selling, they can create an experience that consumers will remember and make it more likely they will return to the store, Courtney said.

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Fun & The Bottom Line

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- 2) *Fun improves communication.*
- 3) *Fun eases conflict.*
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- 5) *Laughing at yourself is the highest form of humor.*
- 6) *Laughter has a natural healing power.*
- 7) *Humor helps lighten the load.*
- 8) *Fun unites people.*
- 9) *Fun breaks up boredom and fatigue.*
- 10) *Fun creates energy.*

We Live in a World of Cycles

Editor's Note: My father taught me "We live in a world of cycles" – meaning issues of the past often re-surface in the present. The following speech was made in 1978 by then MMBA president Alec Parkin, at a League of Minnesota Cities Mini-Convention.

While some of the details of his speech have changed over the years, the concepts he addresses remain an issue today in some cities. It is also important to note many of these issues also occur in the private sector. However, municipal liquor operations have developed a culture of addressing these concerns head on.

The League staff asked me again this year to participate on this panel and gear my remarks to Marketing Techniques. I don't consider myself an expert; that is, that I have all of the answers to your problems, but I do have 27 years experience behind me as a Municipal Liquor Store employee. I managed combination outlets for many years, but have spent the past ten years mainly operating package stores.

You should be aware that since repeal of fair trade some years back, the profit picture has changed dramatically, as has the method in which we operate our liquor stores. It happens to be a fact, ladies and gentlemen, that there are still Municipal Liquor Stores in this state that are still operating exactly the way they did some 20 years ago. There are city councils that will not leave enough money in the Liquor Fund in order for the Manager to buy sufficient inventory when the time is right. There are managers that will not carry a proper inventory, even if the funds are available.

I recently, by the request of a city council, went out to make an analysis of their liquor operation, which had been failing badly for the past several years, and was in fact, on the verge of going broke. After spending 20 minutes in the store, I could easily see why. This store was actually operating 30 years

behind the times and was the poorest excuse for a package store, in this day and age, I have ever seen.

This store, just outside the metropolitan area, believe it or not, carried only 4 different brands of 12 packs of beer, 6 brands of six packs and six brands of case beer. They had a beautiful new walk-in cooler, but just didn't want to expand the selection.

The liquor selection wasn't much better. Dozens of fast selling, nationally advertised brands and sizes were absent from the shelves and many of the brands being carried were nearly depleted. I found brands on the shelves that had been discontinued by the wholesalers as long as five years ago. Labels were old, dirty and even part missing, but there they sat, gathering dust at the old fair trade price.

The wine selection was almost nil. They carried Mogen David, Port, Muscatel, two Vermouths, two types of Champagne and a few assorted dry wines. It was a complete disaster!

During the hour I spent in the store, there were four customers who walked out because they did not carry the popular products they wanted.

This store today, under new management, is doing a terrific business. The location was excellent, the potential was there. So was complacency - the manager simply did not want to change or keep up with the times. It is against my nature to criticize other people or the way they operate their stores, however, the store I mentioned here, I hope, was an isolated case.

A municipal liquor store is in your community to control the sale of liquor, to make a profit for your city and to make available to the consumer the products he desires to purchase. The purchaser believes he will get satisfaction from the exchange of his dollars for the store's goods. This means

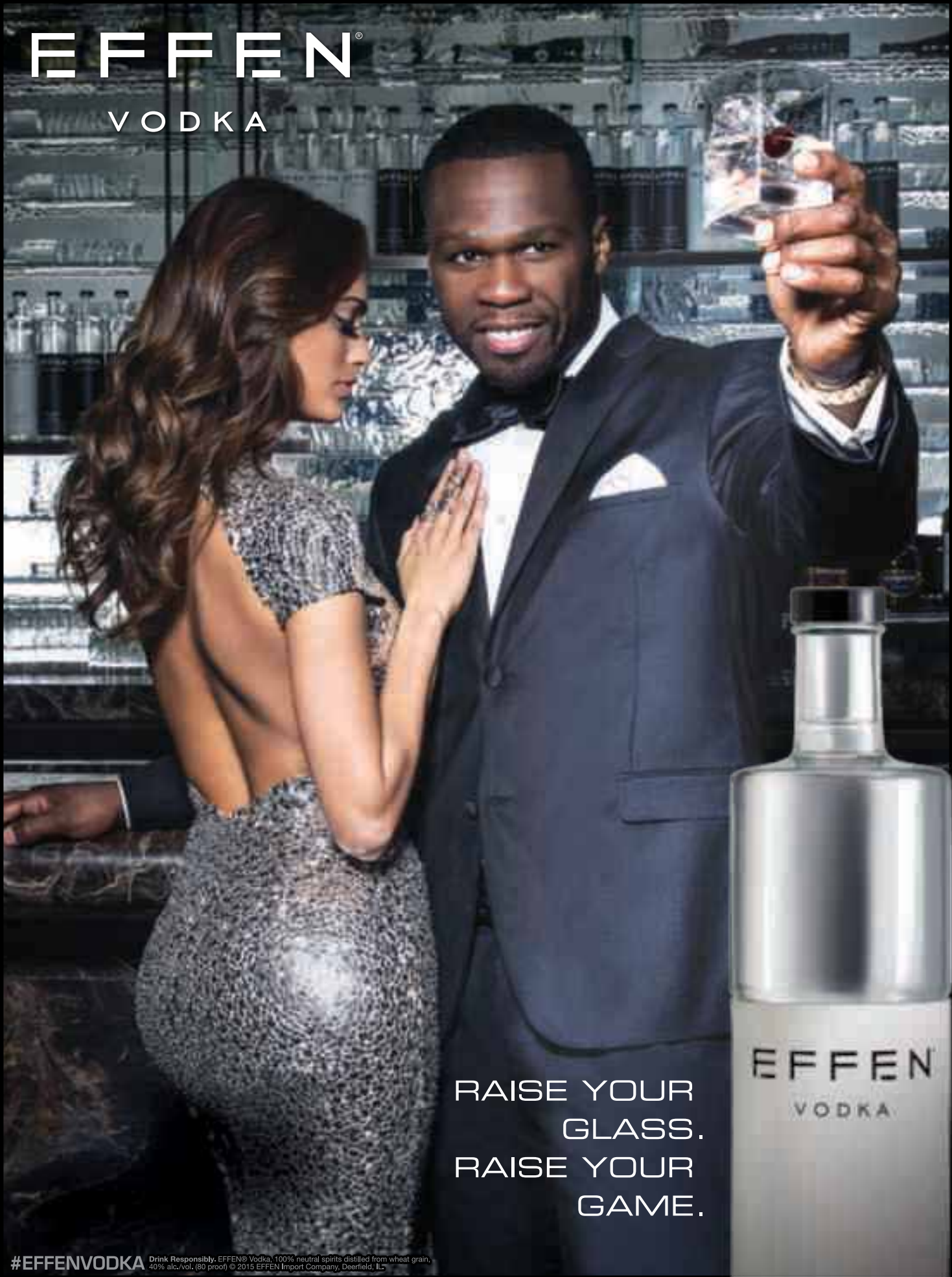
the person must believe he will derive more satisfaction from purchasing the liquor than he will from keeping the money. Now, to carry this one step further, he believes he will receive more satisfaction from exchanging his dollars at your location than at any other for the same product. Since you are in competition, not only with other municipal stores in the same area, but with private as well, the level of satisfaction must be greater when he does business with you.

I don't care where you're located, whether it's in the metropolitan area, Bird Island, or Tim-Buck-Too, you have to create a clean, pleasant and enjoyable atmosphere in your store, that is going to attract the consumer to your place of business rather than your competitors. Once that customer is in the store, then it's up to the manager to satisfy not only his needs by making sure you carry the brands and sizes he wants, but to suggest other items that he might be in need of. If a person buys gin, suggest that he might need Vermouth or mix or ice. Always without pressure; try to make that extra sale. At any rate, when that customer leaves your store with what he came in for, at a favorable price and was treated with courtesy and respect - then that customer is going to come back. If you didn't have what he wanted, and had a negative attitude toward that person, chances are that you'll never see him in your store again.

This is where I'd like to talk briefly about the public relations aspect of your liquor store. This is one of the most important parts of any business, and I'm sure all of you have at one time or another, been in a business place where you weren't treated the way you felt you should have been. Chances are that you resented that fact and probably never went back again. It takes effort on the part of the employee, but it's a must, that each customer that walks thru your doors is greeted with a warm, friendly and sincere greeting. If that customer is known by name he should be greeted

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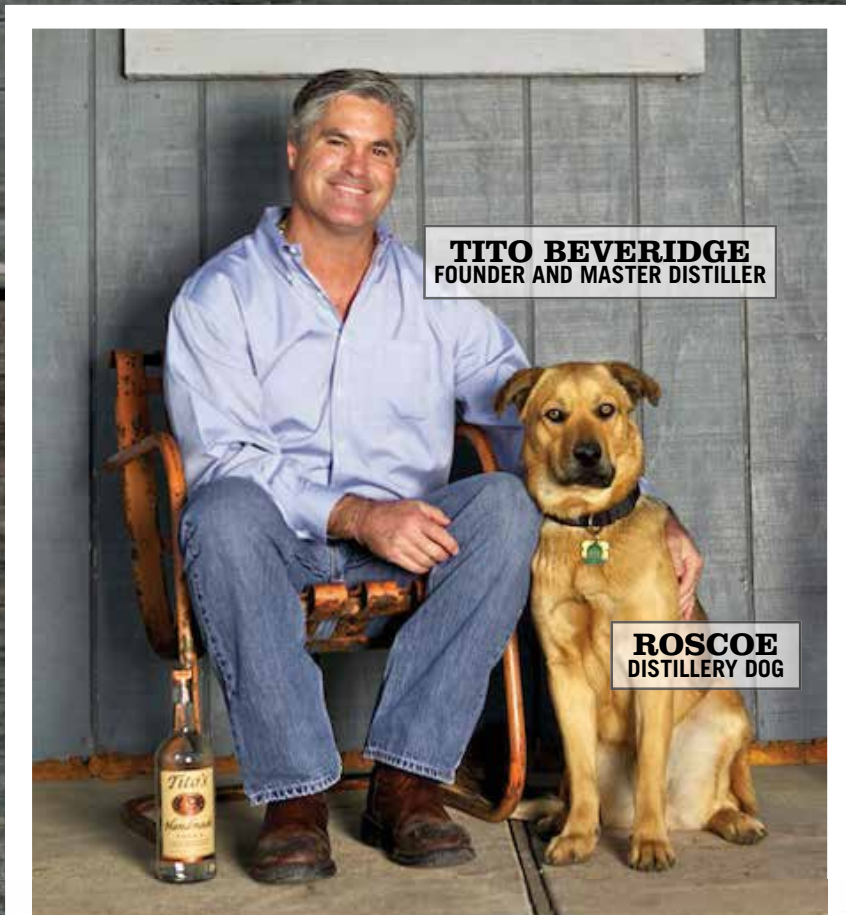
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known by name he should be greeted by his name. Everyone likes to be recognized and it makes him feel good when he is. It's so much easier to smile at a person and be pleasant, than it is to frown and have a negative attitude.

I just can't stress enough how important it is to your business to treat every customer with every bit of respect and courtesy you can master. Also most important - when that customer leaves your store, be absolutely sure to offer a sincere "thank-you" and offer him a pleasant day. Always treat other people like you prefer to be treated.

Municipal liquor stores out-state are sometimes the only store for several miles around, so a lot of times the attitude is; they can either buy what we have on hand, or go somewhere else. This is exactly the reason many small stores are in trouble or have already closed their doors. Times have changed and those that haven't changed with them and kept pace with today's wants and needs are going to be out of business.

Wine sales in Minnesota have increased something like 400% in the past six years and this is your big profit item. Have the wine sales in your stores shown anywhere near that increase???? If they haven't, then ask yourself why? Chances are, when the salesman offers you a new product, you tell him you don't have room for any more wines.

It's true that none of us can carry all of the new products offered, but if that item is going to be highly advertised on radio or television, then you can

bet your butt that item is going to sell.

I'm firmly convinced that if someone advertised cow dung on TV, it's going to sell. When the consumer sees something advertised that looks pleasant and delicious, he's going to be in your store asking for it.

If you haven't got room, **MAKE ROOM**. Cut down on your facings on other items, or get rid of dogs that aren't selling. Why tie up your money and space in inventory that is collecting dust on your shelves? Get rid of slow movers and try the new ones. I don't care how crowded your store seems, there's always room for more. Remember, if you don't have the selection your customer wants, you've lost him! Why not take a drive around and look at other liquor stores that are successful - maybe you'll see where you're missing the boat - don't wait too long or your boat might sink. Remember, he who hesitates is lost.

I'd like to make one more point, and that is concerning prices and what should your mark-up be. Some years back when fair trade was on, all we had to do was to look in the Beverage Journal each month, and that told us exactly what we should sell our product for. Well, there is no one to publicize our prices anymore, we have to figure them out ourselves. For the life of me, I don't know how some stores figure their percentages of mark-up. I have actually visited some of your stores and found three different brands of Canadian Whiskey, in quart sizes, that cost exactly the same price per bottle, yet prices will vary from \$5.69 to \$6.50. They were not on

special, they were all bought at the same time, yet three different prices. It just doesn't make sense!

I can't tell anyone what kind of a mark up they should use, but I can tell you this, that we cannot and very likely never will again, make the profit we did when fair trade was here. There are different factors involved in your various operations such as freight rates, rent, wages, insurance, etc., so you have to decide what kind of profit you must have, and go from there.

I have taken a number of surveys of municipal stores in the suburban areas and their percentages seem to run pretty much the same. The majority of the stores surveyed start with the **net** bottle cost, before the discount is taken for prompt payment, which is usually 2% within 7 days. Liquor is generally marked up 25% - Cordials from 30 to 35 percent - Wine 50% and beer, 25% on returnables and 30% on non-returnables. I'll repeat those mark-ups for you in case you wish to make a note of them - I realize that many of you that are in the outlying areas, pay some ridiculous freight rates, so you will probably want to add those onto your retail prices **after** you figure your percentage on markup. You certainly can't be expected to absorb them. It would be too costly.

I'm afraid, I've rambled on here longer than I should have, but I hope that what I've said here may have been some help to you. If there is time, I would be happy to answer any questions if I can - if not, I will be available when this workshop adjourns. Thank you.

Missing Two Footers?

By Jeffrey Gitomer

In 1960, at age 14, I met a college basketball coach on the court and asked him for his best, niftiest pointer. He took the ball, walked under the basket, and shot an easy lay-up.

"See that shot?" he said gruffly. "Ninety-nine percent of all basketball games are won with that shot. Don't miss it." And he walked away.

I felt cheated that day. But, 20 years later, I realized it was the best business lesson I ever got.

The science of serving and selling in business has nothing to do with nuclear physics or brain surgery. It's about asking questions, helping others, and believing in yourself, your product, and your company. It's about establishing long-term relationships, and having fun. It's all fundamentals.

*You don't need to be a professional ballplayer. You just need to know how to shoot lay-ups and **NOT MISS THEM.***

Increasing Beer Tap Profits

With an average per keg cost of \$50.00 for a bar that uses around 15 kegs per week, this means that \$7,800.00 of the potential beer profits per year are going down the drain.

How can you reduce draft beer costs and recoup those lost profits?

Here are a few tips:

Train your staff on proper pouring

Watch your staff and see if they could make a small adjustment that would make a huge difference to your bottom line. Though your bartenders already know how to pour beer from a tap, they may be making simple mistakes that are hurting your draft beer profits.

When serving draft beer, the beer doesn't need to run before it is poured into a glass. Bartenders should slightly tilt glasses until the glass is half full and then straighten the glass to pour the beer into the center of the glass so it forms a 1 inch head.

The beer spigot should never come in contact with the beer in the glass. Train bartenders to pay attention when pouring draft beer to reduce spillage.

Fix problems when they arise

Is your beer too foamy? Does it have an "off" taste? Is your beer cloudy looking?

If you're having any of these problems, there is something wrong with your

beer system. It may be as simple as cleaning the lines, adjusting the temperature or checking the CO2, but you're losing money until you get it fixed.

Control the head size

If you take the time to control the size of head for your draft beer, it can really make a difference in reducing costs. Are you currently serving beer with a ½ inch head or a variable amount depending on the bartender working?

Add more foam on each glass by as little as ½ an inch and get up to 20 more glasses for each keg in your inventory. Train your bartenders to serve 1 inch heads on every glass of draft beer that they serve.

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Recognize What Turns Off Your Customer

By Paul R. Timm, Ph.D.

50 Powerful Ideas You Can Use to Keep Your Customers

Research in customer service repeatedly indicates that 60-70 percent of lost customers leave because of problems other than product quality or price. They get frustrated by the experience of doing business with the company. They feel they are not valued.

Get a few people together and ask them to describe some pet peeves about their experiences as customers and you get some very emotional reactions. Everyone can recall situations where they were treated poorly, inconvenienced, or bought products that just didn't measure up.

THREE CATEGORIES OF CUSTOMER TURNOFFS

The *customer turnoffs* that trigger negative emotions and cause dissatisfaction arise from three categories: *value, systems and people*.

Value Turnoffs

Customers are turned off when they receive poor value from a shoddy product or sloppy work.

Value is defined as *quality relative to price paid*.

If you purchase an inexpensive, throw-away item at a discount store – say a

79-cent pen – you may not be upset if it doesn't last very long. But buy a \$79 fountain pen that leaks in your shirt pocket and you are furious.

The purchase of an automobile, appliance, or professional service that quits working or fails to meet our needs, will create a value turnoff.

Systems Turnoffs

The term systems is used to describe *any process, procedure, or policy used to "deliver" the product or service to the customer*.

Systems are the way we get the value to the customer, including such things as:

- Employee training and staffing
- Facility location, layout and parking facilities, and phone lines
- Record keeping (including computer systems for handling customer transactions)
- Policies regarding guarantees, returns, and so forth
- Delivery or pick-up services
- Marketing and sales policies
- Customer follow-up procedures, and so on

When a company does a poor job in any of these system areas, it creates unhappy customers.

People Turnoffs

People turnoffs arise when employees fail to communicate well, both verbally (with words) and non-verbally (without words).

Some examples of people turnoffs are:

- Failure to greet or even smile at a customer
- Inaccurate information given, or lack of knowledge conveyed
- Talking to another employee, or allowing telephone interruptions while ignoring a customer
- Rude or uncaring attitude
- High-pressure sales tactics
- Inappropriate, dirty, or sloppy appearance (of the employee or the work location)
- Any communicated message that causes the customer to feel uncomfortable

It ain't the rain, the snow, the boss, the competition, the spouse, the money, the car, the job or the kids – IT'S YOU!! AND IT ALWAYS HAS BEEN.

How To Get The Most From Your Employees

Getting the most out of employees begins with hiring the best people you can afford and.....

- *Training them properly*
- *Providing the equipment and work spaces they need to do their jobs well*
- *Letting them know you care about how things are done and are aware of what happens*
- *Soliciting ideas for improvement and making them aware they are important to the organization*
- *Supervising them carefully*

94 Tons of Food!!!

The recent MMBA / Coors Light Food Drive generated the equivalent of 94 tons of food for local member food shelves!!!

Congratulations to everyone who participated!!

Your contributions, large and small, are helping an important need in all of our communities.

The overall winners of this year's contest are:

Miltona (Under \$1 million in annual sales) & Lakeville Galaxie (Over \$1 million in annual sales)!!!

Miltona collected the most of all participants with 47,291 pounds, which included over \$13,000 in cash.

Miltona has a population of 424.

The food shelves in these communities will be receiving a \$1,000 donation courtesy of MillerCoors and MMBA.

Each of the food shelves in these participating communities, chosen through a random drawing of all participants (not including the overall winners), will receive a \$100 donation:

Spring Lake Park	Longville
Isanti	Rogers
Granite Falls	Ogilvie
Darwin	Nisswa
Edina	Brooklyn Center

Making Citrus Wedges

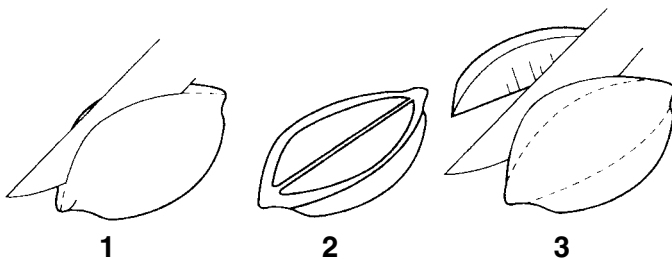
1) Slice the fruit in half the long way.

If you commonly hang your wedges on the edge of a glass, go ahead and cut a notch in them now. Make a small cut the short way across the inside of each half at this point. Make sure you don't completely cut through the fruit's peel or you'll cut the wedges in half, rather than notching them.

2) Lay the cut halves down, (peel side up) and halve them the long way again.

3) Cut each of those halves the long way to create eight wedges total.

(Note: A "squeeze" is very similar to a wedge, but smaller. In fact, it's half the size. Make wedges as shown below and then cut those wedges in half the short way. Rather than hanging on the side of a glass, a squeeze is squeezed into the cocktail by the bartender, and then dropped in the drink.)



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a warm, golden color

NOSE:

fresh, grassy and apple notes and a clean malt

TASTE:

smooth mellow honey sweetness, with underlying pepper spice

FINISH:

silky smooth with a touch of caramel



TASTING NOTES

COLOR:

a rich, glossy amber

NOSE:

rich caramel, toffee and butterscotch, but not overly good

TASTE:

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FINISH:

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