

THE
MUNICIPAL
LIQUOR STORE

Volume 77, Number 5, 2018/2019

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
MINNESOTA MUNICIPAL BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION
www.municipalbev.com



Forming Partnerships to
Improve Liquor Operations

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Official publication of the Minnesota Municipal Beverage Association. Published six times annually: September/October, November/December, January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August. For advertising and editorial inquiry contact Paul Kaspszak, Editor, Box 32966, Fridley, MN 55432. Phone 763-572-0222 or 866-938-3925. Advertising rates available upon request. Change of address: List both old and new address.

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ON THE COVER

It's not uncommon for municipalities to work together on issues such as law enforcement and fire protection, but under a new partnership between Howard Lake and Buffalo, the cities will collaborate in an area where they could be competitors.

The purpose of the partnership will be to improve the municipal liquor operations in both cities.

Howard Lake City Administrator Nick Haggemiller described the partnership between the cities as a *fun new way of doing business that will benefit both cities.*

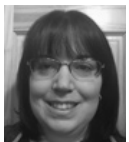
Full story on page 6.



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MMBA President's Message



CHRIS ARONLD
President

During this time of year I sit back and evaluate what I did in the past year and how I could improve my operation for the next year. This is also the time of year we start spring cleaning, dusting the shelf's, finding the dust bunny's around the computers, and cleaning out the computer fans. This is a crucial part of doing business, people like a nice clean and bright facility.

This year I have a few exciting and new things planned including, LED lighting throughout the store and installing a heat recovery system that will recover the heat off of our compressors so we can heat the store for part of the year for free. My store is only five years old, but we still need to do improvements and change with the times.

This year I also plan on implementing a customer loyalty program. I feel this will help motivate some of my customers to me more faithful and thank them for their support. Last year I started making a monthly sales flier, during the summer months. In 2019 my plan is to do it every month. These fliers seem to go over really well with the customers.

The last and probably the most important thing I can do for our operation is to concentrate on educating my customers and the citizens of Bagley. It is amazing the lack of knowledge citizens have when it comes to how a municipal liquor store operates and what it does for the community. I have heard over the years from different officials when we do our transfer, "it's in the minutes, they see it there and that's all we need."

This year I decided to do something different, by having 2' x 4' check made on an eraser marker board. We are going to use this check at every event that involves us raising money or

giving money back to the community. With this check we will take a picture with the organization or group we are working with and have it printed in our local newspapers with a story attached. This should help improve the education of citizens and consumers.

The first event that we used the big check at was City Hall when we did our transfer. This event has been what most of the talk has been about the last 3 weeks around our county, most people say they didn't realize how much we gave back.

Transfers to the general fund is only one way we give back to our community. This is why it's important for us to take part in the community values programs MMBA offers to us. With the help of the MMBA and our valued vendors such as Miller Coors, Anheuser-Busch, and Shiner Bock we are able to put these events together easily and inexpensively for our communities. I will be using my big check for these events throughout the year. With the first one coming up in April

sponsored by Miller Coors, you have some time to plan for it.

Other community value events including a fireworks fundraiser I have been doing for the last 12 years and working with our Tuesday study club ladies raising money for the Clearwater County Christmas project.

Being creative and playing outside of the sandbox gives you a lot of opportunities to better yourself, your community and your store. Sometimes you need to be the ringleader and take advantage of your knowledge as a manager and manage other groups and organizations for a common goal of benefiting your community.

I feel I've learned how to do this and implement it better by attending MMBA functions like our annual conference in April. Look for more information in the near future.

I look forward to seeing you at Arrowwood and the upcoming MMBA Legislative Day.

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Conference Agenda

MONDAY, JUNE 10

Pre-Conference Day

11am-5pm	WSET Training, Prep Sessions & Exams (Separate Registration and fee)
5:30pm-9pm	Exhibitor Cocktail Hour and Welcome Reception

TUESDAY, JUNE 11

BARC Day 1

7:30am	Networking Breakfast
8:30am	Opening Keynote
9:45am-12:30pm	Education Track Sessions
12:30pm-2pm	Networking Lunch & Exhibits
2pm-3pm	General Session
3:15pm-4:30pm	Distributor Panel Discussion
5pm-8:30pm	Exhibitor Cocktail Hour and Day 1 Reception

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12

BARC Day 2

7:30am	Networking Breakfast
8:30am	Day 2 Keynote
10am	Retailer Panel Discussion
11am-12:30pm	Networking Lunch & Exhibits
12:30pm-2:30pm	Education Track Sessions
2:45pm	Closing Keynote
6:00pm	Top 100 Awards – Cocktail Reception & Banquet <i>(By Invitation Only)</i>

**Agenda subject to change without notice*

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Howard Lake & Buffalo Form Partnership to Improve Liquor Operations

Ivan Raconteur
Herald Journal Editor

It's not uncommon for municipalities to work together on issues such as law enforcement and fire protection, but under a new partnership between Howard Lake and Buffalo, the cities will collaborate in an area where they could be competitors.

The purpose of the partnership will be to improve the municipal liquor operations in both cities.

Howard Lake City Administrator Nick Haggemiller described the partnership between the cities as "a fun new way of doing business" that will benefit both cities.

The path toward this agreement began in August when a staff committee in

Howard Lake conducted a comprehensive review of the city's liquor operation.

Haggemiller noted that early in this process, the city established a consulting relationship with Jason Swanson, the City of Buffalo's liquor operations director.

Through discussions, an agreement was drafted under which employees of each city will work in the other city part of the time. Swanson will work 12 hours per week in Howard Lake, and Howard Lake's liquor store manager Myra Laway will work in Buffalo 16 hours per week.

Shared personnel agreement summary

According to a report prepared by

Haggemiller, the agreement:

- was entered into by the City of Buffalo and the City of Howard Lake with an anticipated start date of Jan. 1, 2019;
- establishes and assigns 28 hours of liquor operations manager to Buffalo and 12 to Howard Lake (Swanson);
- establishes and assigns 24 hours of liquor store manager to Howard Lake and 16 to Buffalo (Laway);
- dictates employment and compensation remain the responsibility of the origin city.
- dictates supervision will be managed by origin city, but actual direction by host city.
- specifies that host city will provide liability, legal, insurance, and indemnification as afforded by law to either employee. This means when a Buffalo employee is in Howard Lake, Howard Lake will provide coverage, and vice versa. Doing so is deemed appropriate for legal reasons per the city attorney. At the time the report was written, confirmation from Howard Lake's insurance agent through the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT) was also being sought.

"I'm hoping this will be a long-term partnership with the City of Buffalo," Haggemiller commented.

Benefits of working together

During the Dec. 4 city council meeting, Haggemiller presented a summary of the history of Howard Lake's liquor operation, and explained the benefits of the partnership to both Howard Lake and Buffalo.

"We believe the collective partnership and retooling of our liquor operations

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to be the necessary steps to determine our long-term viability into the future,” Haggemiller noted. “There are many reasons beyond the sharing of personnel that give us hope that this will be mutually beneficial and successful.”

Improved inventory control

A central server and shared point-of-sale system will enable the two liquor operations and three retail locations to track inventory as one unit. Howard Lake will

order with the combined buying power of more than \$5 million in gross sales, as opposed to \$700,000. Essentially, Howard Lake Wine & Spirits will be able to buy merchandise at the same volume pricing as Buffalo Wine & Spirits can with its larger operation.

Doing so will allow Howard Lake Wine & Spirits to buy product at a lower price and sell at a more competitive price.

Professional specialization

Reassigning duties will allow the shared staff to thrive in their areas of strength and expertise.

Swanson (Buffalo Wine & Spirits) has a master of business administration degree and has employed a “data driven decision making” model to the operation in Buffalo, and he is doing the same in Howard Lake. Benchmarks are being identified and established to help make decisions for the successful operation of the store.

Likewise, Laway maintains a positive store experience and manages personnel well.

“Collectively, this sharing of personnel is anticipated to save labor dollars for Buffalo Wine & Spirits and provide additional management capacity at no direct cost,” Haggemiller stated.

“I feel what we are putting in place is a compelling reason to stay in this business,” he added.

The objectives the cities hope to achieve at Howard Lake Wine & Spirits include improved inventory control, new everyday pricing, improved merchandising, new shelving, as well as floor and bulk displays, and a new point-of-sale system that will provide significantly better reporting options.

The council approved the shared liquor operations agreement. The Buffalo City Council had already approved the agreement.

Either city can terminate the agreement with 90-days notice.

“We’re excited to move forward with this,” Haggemiller commented.

MMBA LEGISLATIVE DAY

February 27, 2019

MMBA Annual Conference

April 27 – 30, 2019

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2019 Legislative Session

Greetings! Again this year I will be assisting the Minnesota Municipal Beverage Association and its members with outreach and advocacy to state legislators. You'll hear from me regarding ways to get involved at the State Capitol and how to email your legislators through the SMART Campaign (www.mnsmart.org) website, etc.

Minnesota's 2019 Legislative Session kicked off in earlier this month on January 8. This is the "long" session and largely focused on setting the state's two-year budget. The legislature is expected to adjourn mid-May.

Once again we have "divided government." Democrats control the MN House (75-59 votes) and about a third of the members are new. There is also new chair of the House Commerce Committee, Rep. Laurie Halvertson (D-Eagan). Republicans continue to lead the MN Senate (currently 34-32) and Sen. Gary Dahms (R-Redwood Falls) is still the capable chair of the Senate Commerce Committee. Our new Governor, Tim Walz, is a Democrat from Mankato and former U.S. Congressman.

The MMBA has reasons to be both optimistic – and vigilant – for this legislative session:

- MMBA's smart and balanced priorities are supported by legislators on both sides of the aisle. MMBA has strong champions in the Minnesota Senate and House with both republicans and democrats.

- MMBA is well-positioned, because of strong education and aggressive advocacy, for advancing and defending bills to make sure we continue to provide choice and value for our customers and better our industry.

- Some – on both sides of the aisle – continue a push for alcohol everywhere with wine, beer, and/or spirits in grocery, convenience, and/or pharmaceutical outlets.

- It is expected legislation will be introduced to address the GASB 68 situation impacting many MMBA member cities.

Your engagement in advocacy is vital to educate and influence legislators.

Once again, the MMBA is partnering with the MLBA for the annual "Legislative Day at the Capitol" event. This year, we'll be meeting on Wednesday, February 27.

Agenda for Wednesday, February 27:

11:00 AM:

Legislative Briefing At the State Office Building, Room 300 North – our home base for the day

12:00 PM: Lunch (provided)

12:30: PM - 4:00 PM:

Individual legislative meetings and various speakers in SOB 300 North – we will schedule on your behalf.

4:00 PM:

Tasting Reception with political and industry leaders at the Best Western - Capitol Ridge (NEW LOCATION, NEXT TO THE CAPITOL)

Register today here:

<https://www.mnsmart.org/rsvp>

There is no cost to attend this event thanks to our generous sponsors, and our team will schedule your individual legislative meetings for you. It's easy – and important – to attend.

Thank you for your support,

Leslie Rosedahl
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MNSMARTCampaign@gmail.com
Leslie@RosedahlPublicAffairs.com

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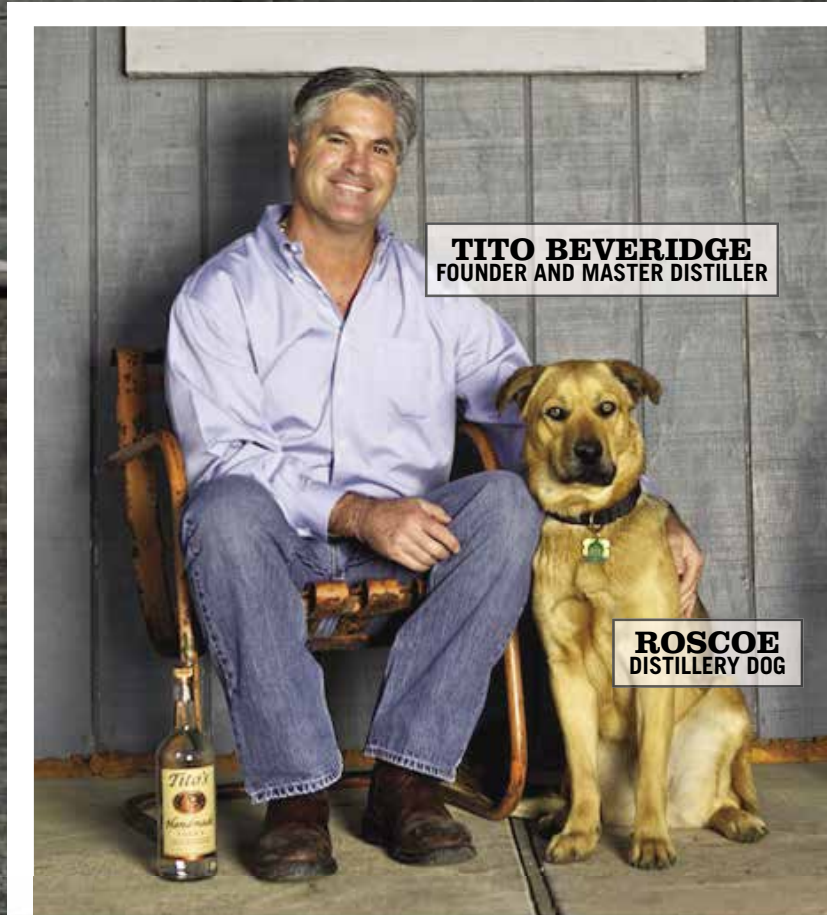
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Going Above & Beyond In Cromwell

By Krysta Konieska

I had an event happen here at the Cromwell Muni and I would like to share, now that I have permission from the guy that was involved.

A few weeks ago I was bartending a night shift when one of my new regulars came into the bar.

We shall call him John for this story.

John, who had just moved to town about 5 weeks before this event, came in about 9 pm.

He had a couple of drinks and then as I went to hand him another drink he hiccupped that made is whole body move.

I joked with him asking him if he was okay but his response was what not what I was expecting.

This grown man started talking to me as if he was a scolded child, asking if he was naughty and saying he was sorry if he was bad and pleading with me not to be mad at him.

I told him no you were not bad or anything I just wanted to make sure you were okay.

His whole demeanor changed.

I was thinking that he had probably just had enough to drink and that I no longer felt comfortable serving him.

When I told him that I thought he had enough and that I was gonna grab his tab for him, he started apologizing for being naughty and he didn't mean to be and asking me to please forgive him and not be mad (all in a child's voice).

I felt very uncomfortable with his changing of personalities so I asked another customer, who had only been

drinking pop) to give him a ride home and I would give this other customer (Matt) \$10 for doing so.

Finally I got John to agree to take this safe ride home, with John still apologizing for being naughty and telling me that he loved me and that he would be good.

Once we got John into Matt's car they left only for them to return to the bar about 15 minutes later.

John was refusing to tell Matt where he actually lived, we knew the road just not the house.

I tried talking to John nicely asking him to please tell us what house he lived in so we could get him home to his warm house safely, John would just shake his head no and giggle.

I tried to be firm with him demanding that he tell me right now where he lived and he would say how sorry he was and that he loved me and beg me not to be mad at him.

Please keep in mind I have never seen this kind of behavior from any adult let alone John.

Finally having enough of this game and knowing I had customers inside needing my attention I told John that he could either tell me and Matt where he lived so he could go home to his nice warm bed or go sleep it off in his car.

John said he wanted to sit in his car I told him to not try and drive and to sit in the passenger side of his car, yes I know he could still get in trouble by cops but not kill himself or someone else driving this way.

There was a blanket in his backseat so I grabbed it for him and told him to cover up and I went back inside.

This part of the event ended around

midnight.

I left work at 1:40 am, walking to my car I could see that John was still in his car in the parking lot. I stopped and started debating what to do. Should I get him in my car and bring him home should I just leave him.

As I was standing in the parking lot John opened his car door went to get out of his car and fell. I ran to him to see if he was okay, asking if he hurt himself, if he hit his head what hurt etc..

I couldn't get a clear answer from him so I told him that I was going to call 911 to get him help.

They sent an ambulance and took him to the ER.

I found out a couple days later that John had a brain bleed and had been having seizures all day (John did not realize that was happening either) and John did break his leg when he fell.

John just came in and seen me for the first time on Wednesday, he gave me the biggest hug I think I have ever gotten.

He told me that his neurosurgeon had told him had I not seen him fall or had he even just stayed home and not gone to the bar, it would have been a very different outcome.

John would have passed away that night.

His surgeon believes what I thought was a hiccup was actually a seizure. Also that was why the drastic personality change.

The reason I wanted to share this story is the watching of your customers, the change in personalities doesn't always mean they are full.

BREWED THE HARD WAY



THIS BUD'S FOR YOU

10 Tips To Improve Your Bar Atmosphere

By Buzztime Business

Do you run a dive bar that's always busy despite fluorescent lighting, elevator music, and that wet rag smell? You can ignore these 10 bar atmosphere tips.

For everyone else, creating a bar environment that impresses guests – and keeps them coming back – takes a little work. Start with these strategies for improving your bar atmosphere by appealing to all 5 senses.

Sight

1) Get Lit! (Or Not): Bright Ideas for Bar Lighting

No, it's not the beer goggles. People really do look better in most bars, thanks to the lighting. Dimmed lights create a warm glow that softens the wrinkles of time. But you still gotta see those bar tabs. That's why most experts in bar atmosphere and design suggest a 3-layered lighting approach:

- **(Layer 1) Ambient Light:** This is the main source of light, so choose wisely for best bar atmosphere results. Recessed lights are a classy touch. Or try large, industrial pendant lights for a more casual bar atmosphere.

- **(Layer 2) Task Lights:** While ambient light focuses on the big picture, task lighting is on a smaller scale. It's all about the practical stuff. Think cool brass gallery lights with small but bright bulbs so bartenders can easily check IDs and run tables. Task lighting also applies to the bar atmosphere you set at individual tables. Warm LED lanterns or small, softly lit pendant lights add a sexy vibe (and let patrons browse the drink list).

- **(Layer 3) Accent Lights:** Shine a light on a cool architectural feature like a rugged brick wall or a large plant.

Accent lighting should also highlight your liquor bottles. After all, you want guests to see that top-shelf option. For a signature look, line up bottles in rainbow order. Then get ready to go viral on Instagram.

2) Catch Their Attention with Digital Signage

One source of lighting is so obvious, you missed it. Use your TVs to change the channel on bar atmosphere. Join thousands of bars using digital signage to present menu items, events, and specials in an exciting light. Unlike posters and table tents, digital signage is dynamic. It brings that new craft brew or featured wine to life on the big screen. Not only does digital signage create a lively, upbeat bar atmosphere; it can boost revenue by up to 33% at the point of sale. The best digital signage software for bars will easily integrate with your existing TVs and flat screen monitors. You'll also get access to customizable templates.

3) Instagram-Worthy Décor

Keep your bar in the picture when those millennials snap their selfies. All it takes is adding a little trendiness to your bar atmosphere using these tips:

- **White Walls are Out:** According to an [NYC interior designer](#), the minimalist look of white walls in simple fixtures is getting old. What's in? Color. Funky, bold colors inspired by the 1960s bar atmosphere. Think turquoise, burgundy, and burnt orange.

- **Try Living Walls:** Go green with plants...planted vertically on a wall. We can almost guarantee you'll get plenty of local press coverage.

- **The Gallery Look:** Team up with a different photographer or artist to "take over" the walls every season. Let them sell their work to patrons in exchange

for the free and instantly cool bar atmosphere.

Sound

4) Music Matters

What if creating a better bar atmosphere also improved drink sales...by up to 40%? Follow the advice of researchers who suggest playing slow tempo music when business is slow.

On the flip side, crank up the tunes when the bar is packed and patrons will drink faster. Music can even influence how we perceive the taste of food and drinks. Science, it rocks.

5) What Bartenders Say

Like the sound that your POS makes when you enter transactions? Then train your bartenders to say the right things to customers. That means upselling. And no, it doesn't need to be pushy or sleazy. When done right, upselling creates a luxurious bar atmosphere where bartenders cater to a customer's ever need.

For example, instruct bartenders to offer sample pours of a new, high margin wine or spirit. Wait, how is that up-selling and won't this turn my bar atmosphere into a Costco? No, here's why: First, free samples put the "reciprocity principle" in action. When someone is generous with us, we feel obligated to be generous in return – by purchasing that premium drink, or leaving a nice tip. Then, studies show that free samples boost sales of the item by 2,000%. Nope, not a typo: 2,000%.

Touch

6) Give Me Some Space! Seating Smarts

Most bargoers love a packed house. A loud, fun, and super

Most bargoers love a packed house. A loud, fun, and super social bar atmosphere is the gold standard. Touching shoulders with strangers just comes with the territory.

It's not just where patrons sit that factors into bar atmosphere, it's what they sit ON. Hard, wooden stools may prevent folks from camping out at the bar. But they may also rush patrons out when their butt goes numb. Consider a happy medium like rugged, leather-upholstered stools. Or try swanky velvet seats with a small back that's comfortable...but not too comfortable.

7) Touchscreen Bar Tablets

You already know the secret of a great bar atmosphere. Guests don't just want a drink. They want a great time. So, give the people what they want: a more entertaining experience. Start by putting fun at their fingertips with Buzztime touchscreen bar tablets. Guests can get their game on by competing in real-time trivia – across the bar, or across the nation through the Buzztime trivia network. Trivia games run 7 days a week, 15 hours a day. Or, to really liven up your bar atmosphere, host your own live trivia game using bar tablets. You can also expect to see some new faces.

There are over 10 million registered Buzztime players who seek out bars that offer their favorite trivia and arcade games.

8) Smells Like My Fave Bar: Signature Scents

You know you're in a Kimpton hotel – even if you're blindfolded (wait, that doesn't sound right...but go with it). That's because every property is scented with the same signature citrus fragrance.

The Kimpton chain is tapping into the power of olfactory marketing – and you can take the same approach with your bar atmosphere. After all, a study by Rockefeller University found that people remember 35% of what they smell as opposed to 5% of what they see, and 2% of what they hear.

If you want your bar atmosphere to be memorable, focus on smell. Burn a specific candle or diffuse a custom essential oil blend. Use crowd-pleasing scents like citrus, vanilla, or a trendy bourbon-tobacco blend. But beware: when it comes to scent in a bar atmosphere, less is more. It should be barely detectable yet still present. This is a bar, not a spa.

9) Little Fresh Air, Lotta Profit

When the sun is shining on a 70-degree day, no one wants a dark bar atmosphere (unless they're going through a break-up). So take it outside. Set up picnic tables, café tables, or just move a few seats to the sidewalk. You could even go big with your outdoor bar atmosphere and invest in a permanent patio. Wherever you go outdoors, millennials will follow – and spend up to 43% more on drinks.

Taste

10) Social Bites

What's on the menu impacts bar atmosphere. Think about it. If your goal is to be the "it" spot in town, you want to attract big groups. So, you need a menu meant for sharing – and socializing. That's especially important at happy hour. Research firm Technomic found that for 61% of guests, happy hour is a social hour. They want to meet up with friends (38%) and bond with their work crew (23%). Use these tips to build a bar atmosphere...one bite, and one sip, at a time:

• **Board and Bottle:** Serve up cheese, sliced meats, and crackers on a rustic cutting board. Then pair it with a bottle of wine.

• **Sangria and Tapas:** Offer pitchers of Sangria and a menu of shareable, small plate appetizers.

• **Pizza and Beer with a Gourmet Twist:** Who says pitchers need to be full of cheap beer? Offer pitchers of cool craft brews and gourmet pizzas made for sharing.

Whether they realize it or not, your patrons experience your bar atmosphere through all 5 senses. With these 10 strategies, you can ensure every sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste is on point. Whatever you do, be intentional when creating your bar atmosphere. Unless you're that rare dive bar with a cult following that defies logic. Just keep doing what you're doing...

Good Reasons for Firing Employees

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- Repeated, Unexcused Tardiness
- Intoxication on the Job
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2019 MMBA FACILITY AWARDS

Purpose

Provide industry / community recognition and an example for others to emulate.

Categories

- Best Themed Promotion
- Best Product Launch
- Best Business Development: New Build, Refit or Launch
- Commitment to Customer Service
- Commitment to Staff Development
- Community Involvement Award

Judging

All member facilities are eligible to participate. An independent panel will determine the winners. Panel participants might include current MLS managers, city staff / officials / industry representative and MMBA staff. Panel participants will vary each year.

2019 Nomination Timeframe

Entry deadline is April 1, 2019 for activities in 2018.

Awards will be presented at the 2019 annual meeting.

Winners will receive a plaque and \$250 community project monetary award.

Submissions must be received in the MMBA office by April 1, 2019

MMBA, PO Box 32966, Minneapolis, MN 55432 or kaspszak@visi.com

Include: Facility Name, Address, Phone Number, Primary Contact Information & Award Category.

Nominate Yourself or Others!!!

2019 MMBA Award Criteria

Entries may be submitted individually or jointly by key parties involved.

Best Themed Promotion

Awarded to the facility demonstrating the most innovative themed promotion to reach and appeal to its customers. Entrants must describe how the campaign or promotion was conceived, executed and evaluated for success, giving necessary data to support their claims. Each entrant must submit photographic evidence and relevant items of promotional material to support their entry.

Best Product Launch

The best product launch for sale through the facility to the consumer. This must be launched within the qualifying period and demonstrate innovation and fill a gap in the market. Entrants will submit photographs of the product and information on how it was a) conceived b) the response to it c) show its commercial success. Entrants should explain why stocking the product is important or beneficial to their operations.

Best Business Development: New Build, Refit or Launch

Awarded to the best facility development within the qualifying period. This may be a new building, concept, extension, rebuild, refit or relaunch. It should show best practice in design, innovation and environmental standards. Entrants should describe how the initiative was a) conceived, b) executed and c) quantified in terms of commercial success.

Commitment to Customer Service

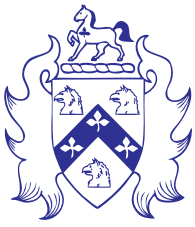
Awarded to the facility showing customer service above and beyond the norm (i.e. carry out service). Please include any feedback available from customers and evidence of what your facility's customer service offer involves. The award winner will demonstrate how it offers its customer's advice, information, attention to detail and a pleasant customer service above and beyond its competition.

Commitment to Staff Development

Awarded to the facility with the best attitude and commitment to developing staff. Entrants will submit written evidence, with supporting printed material if available. Entrants should demonstrate how they are a) committed to training of the highest standard, and b) how they have enabled staff to better their knowledge for improved performance and possible career development.

Community Involvement Award

Awarded to the facility showing the most commitment to getting involved in activities within its local community. Entrants will provide written and photographic evidence, including media coverage, of how being committed to the community benefited business and added to the facility's appeal. The Awards winner will show how a municipal liquor operation is more than just a retailer that sells alcohol.



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