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MUNICIPAL
LIQUOR STORE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
MINNESOTA MUNICIPAL BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION

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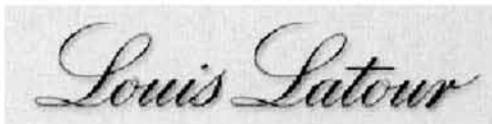
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MUNICIPAL LIQUOR STORE

Volume 67, Number 5, 2008

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On The Cover

Future Brands is now Beam Global Spirits and Wine.

Their current portfolio of brands includes: Jim Beam Bourbon, Courvoisier Cognac, Sauza Tequila, Laphroaig Single Malt Scotch, Windsor Canadian, DeKuyper Cordials, Maker's Mark Bourbon, Vox Vodka, Starbucks Liqueur, Canadian Club Canadian Whisky and Cruzan Rum.

There are some new faces serving the Minnesota market including Minnesota State Manager Greg Giannini.

For more on the Minnesota Beam Global team, see page 10.

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MMBA President's Message



Gary Buysse
President

All of us lead busy lives professionally and personally. It's often difficult to fit everything into a schedule unless we plan ahead. With this in mind I **STRONGLY SUGGEST** (That's for you, Dan Bahr!) that you mark your calendars, with a Sharpie, on January 27, 2009 to attend our **ANNUAL** MMBA/MLBA Legislative Day in St.Paul.

This is your opportunity to educate your legislators on the value of municipal liquor in your community. It is also the time to tell them how important the revenue you produce is to your community and how potentially damaging it could be if that revenue stream were reduced or negated! This event has more positive long-term implications to our industry than any other! Your municipal voices make a great impact at the Capitol! Mark down this date!

Paul and I visited one of our stores recently that had little interest in promoting the community value of their liquor department. As you may notice by the photo they're not doing very well.



Your responsibilities as a municipal liquor manager only start at operational issues. Tell your City Council and your residents what an asset your enterprise fund is to all members of your

community! Don't let your store end up like this one! Be a community leader, not just a beer buyer!

Your purchasing practices should include checking for low prices on spirits from all of your distributors. This business practice should also follow through to your dram shop insurance. Your local agent may be your friend or your brother-in-law but sending him, or her, to the Dominican Republic on your insurance premium coverage should not be part of your business plan. Tony Baldwin at Wells Fargo Insurance Company has consistently saved our member combination stores money since

forming the MMBA group rate plan. Rogers has insured through Wells Fargo since the programs inception.

Give Tony the opportunity to save your city some money. He can be reached at 952-830-7353. Call me with questions!

Our condolences to Deb Dahlberg from North Branch whose son was fatally injured in a tragic accident. Our thoughts and prayers are with you!

Support those who support you! Please consult your commercial member list at the rear of this publication when making your purchasing decisions!

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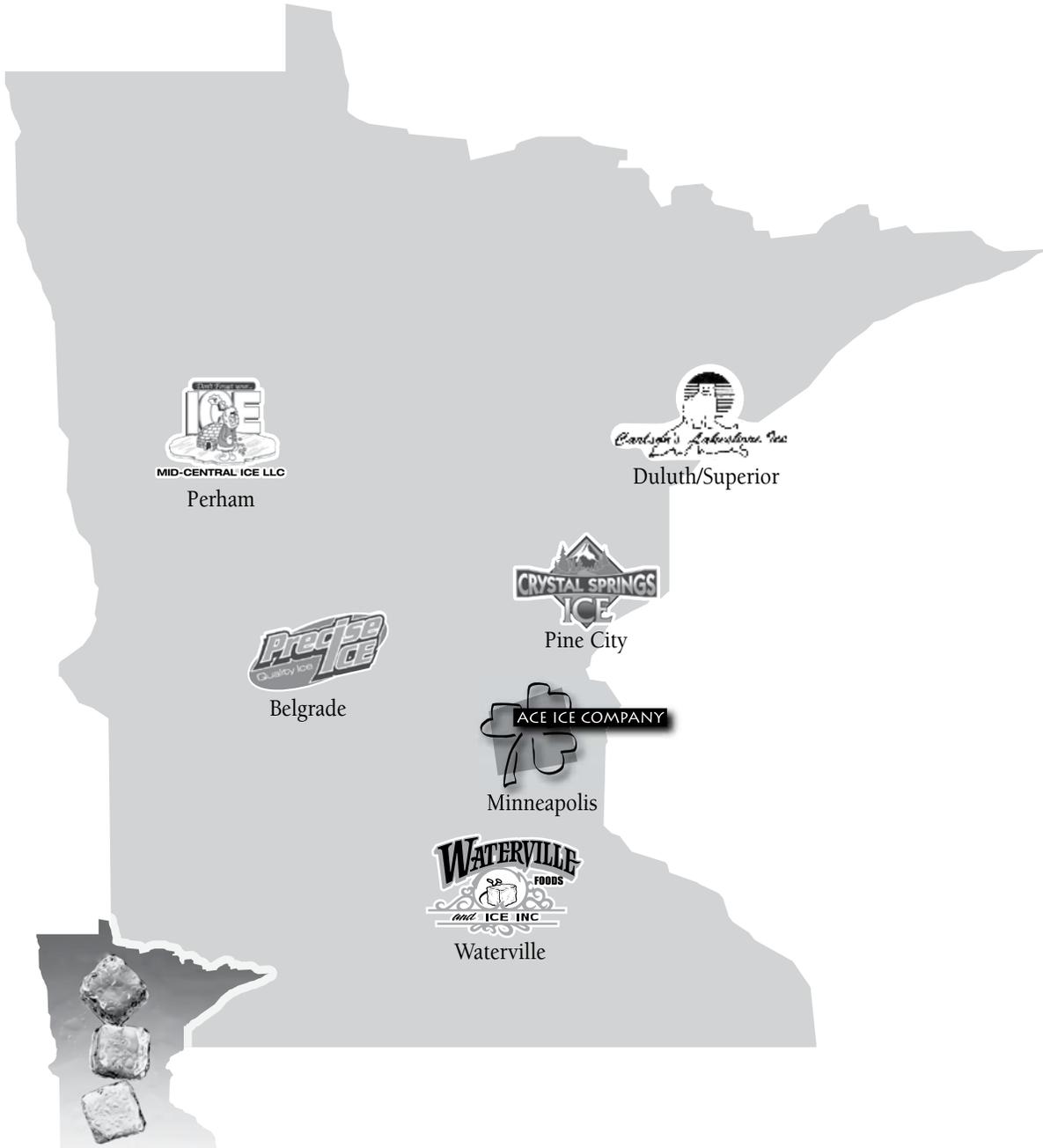
TEST YOUR MARKETING IQ

1. A reasonable way to find out what will motivate buyers to make a purchase in a particular category is to ask how important 30 or more different attributes and benefits are when considering a brand, product, or service.
True or False
2. Advertising pre-testing is a waste of time. You can't really know the effectiveness of an ad unless you run the ad in the real world.
True or False
3. As many as two-thirds of buyers in a category are price insensitive - meaning they are willing to pay more for a product if it meets some other important purchase criteria.
True or False
4. Most marketers will earn more profits from new products in the next two to three years than from existing ones.
True or False
5. Most contemporary approaches to market segmentation including need state, lifestyle, and attitudinal segmentation yield useful, pleasing results. They are actionable because they help find targets which are very profitable.
True or False
6. Brand equity and customer equity are two almost interchangeable concepts used by marketers to help evaluate their brand(s) relative to competitors.
True or False
7. Sports and event marketing are proven ways to help build a brand. That's why they have become an important component in many marketing budgets.
True or False
8. Once you know what motivates buyers in a category, you have all the information you need to develop a powerful positioning strategy.
True or False
9. In most companies today, marketers have measured the links between the inputs to a marketing plan-budget dollars, GRPs, etc. and the outputs-awareness, preference, incremental sales, etc.
True or False
10. Media planners at most major advertising agencies know little about the relative ROI of traditional print, television, radio, and out-of-home advertising.
True or False
11. Product-based positioning strategies - those which make claims about product performance or effectiveness - are a thing of the past. They are no longer effective because there are just too many brands and the tangible positioning possibilities are much more limited.
True or False
12. Most marketing and advertising programs are measured in terms of their profitability, typically on an annual basis, if not more frequently.
True or False
13. The most profitable customers of a firm are usually the biggest buyers in the category - they are often labeled the 'heavy users' or 'heavy buyers.'
True or False
14. According to the latest research studies, the average ROI for consumer advertising is negative.
True or False
15. American companies are increasingly successful at satisfying customers. Across a broad range of industries, the average grade is 'B' or better.
True or False
16. Female marketing executives are perceived to take a far more deliberative approach to making marketing decisions than their male counterparts, as well as far more focused on long-term rather than short-term results.
True or False
17. Big companies generally make their strategic marketing decisions after evaluating many different alternatives in terms of forecasted profitability.
True or False
18. One-hundred percent customer satisfaction is an admirable business objective.
True or False
19. Thirty to forty percent or more of American brands are well positioned. They offer prospects a clear reason to buy.
True or False

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FIVE SIGNS TO TAKEOFF

By MMBA Conference Presenter
Tom Shay

Many of the television stores you walk into are using a video of the movie “Top Gun” to demonstrate the quality of their products. Every stereo television with THX or surround sound uses the movie. The music is exciting, there is a lot of action, and there is a plot with a happy ending—if you stay in the store long enough to see it.

No matter how many times you have already seen the movie, you always want to stop for a couple of minutes to sit and watch. You hope that one of your favorite parts with the neat action in the air will be soon in coming.

In any of the scenes where the jet fighter is sitting on the deck of the aircraft carrier, there is a standard sequence of events that take place between the pilot and the air boss—the individual standing on the deck. It is the sequence of hand gestures used to check with each other to ensure they are both ready for the mission ahead.

They must *both* be ready. This is a team effort. There may be only one pilot and one jet, but if the air boss has not made sure the aircraft is ready, and the pilot has acknowledged it, the pilot will surely lose. True, it is always the pilot who is played by a Tom Cruise, and the name of the air boss is never known; but he is important—just ask the pilot!

From the movie, the first sign involves closing both hands into fists with thumbs pointing out. The pinkies are butted against each other. The air boss moves his hands apart when he knows the chocks have been removed. Chocks are the two large blocks placed around the tires of the aircraft to prevent it from moving. When the chocks have been removed, the sign is given to the pilot.

In a store, we too can have the initial checkoff that the air boss and pilot have. Perhaps this scenario would play out as you prepare your store for an upcoming sale circular.

In your store, perhaps the “chocks” are capital so that inventory is on hand. The liquor manager is the air boss, who must make sure the store has on hand what is necessary for a sale.

There may be those who are responsible for ordering the merchandise, but it is the liquor manager who has the ultimate responsibility to see that the store is ready. The liquor manager knows the inventory is on hand and that the chocks are removed.

The second hand sign is raising the right hand from waist level to above the head in a twisting motion. With an aircraft, this sign is given after the air boss has given the jet a walkabout and determined that he does not see or hear anything out of the ordinary.

Perhaps in your store, this is the walkabout the manager performs to determine that the merchandise is on the shelves, the end caps have been attractively created, and sale signs are placed throughout the store.

The third sign is a “thumbs-up” from the air boss to the pilot and the “thumbs-up” from the pilot to the air boss. This says that through this important procedure of taking off, each person is aware of the other person’s presence.

Perhaps in your store, during a sale or even every day, it is the motion of telling one another that we are there to support one another. The first thought that came to mind was that “the customer is No. 1.” Somehow this seems to translate to “the customer is always right.” We would like to make that so, but all of us have experienced the customer who is out of bounds.

If, instead, our employees are No. 1 and are treated as such, then they are more likely to treat their own customers in the same manner. It is with this that we give each other a “thumbs-up.”

The fourth sign is a formal salute between the air boss and the pilot. It is a vote of confidence to say, “I know you can do it.” In your store, it can be the liquor manager’s giving this sign to his team to show that he has confidence in them; and by showing your confidence in your team members, you know that they will do all they can for you.

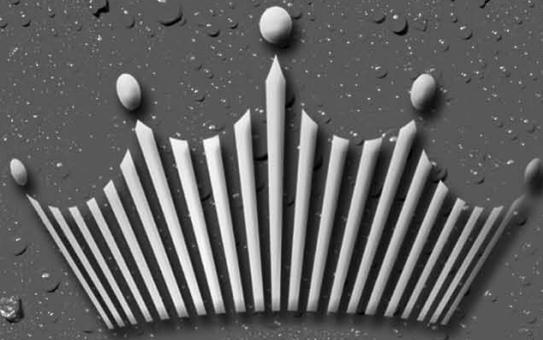
One of our warmest memories was to have our former employees tell us how much we were missed after we sold our store. We were family to one another, and a salute of respect and confidence was given to one another every day we worked together.

The fifth sign is a gesture involving the right arm and hand, with the hand starting at the left shoulder and then the hand and arm moving across the body and pointing to the far right. It is accompanied by the air boss’s getting out of the way. With that, the jet roars and is soon off the end of the aircraft carrier and into the air.

The doors are open, and your team members await the customers walking in your door. You are prepared to assist them as they come to shop your store.

When you have a sale circular for your store, the two biggest expenses are for the inventory and the sale circulars and their distribution. At worst, the cost of the inventory can be recovered.

But the flyer and its distribution are an expense with no chance of recovery if you do not take advantage of it. It does seem like the five steps to takeoff that, with their low cost, have the best chance of bringing your “jet” to a successful mission.



BUDWEISER

Meet Your Minnesota Beam Global Team



Barry Zilka 6' 9"
Vice President, North Central Division
"The General"
Favorite Drink: Jim Beam Manhattan



Colleen Herr 5' 2"
Administrative Assistant, North Central Division
"Keeping it all Together"
Favorite Drink: Cruzan Black Cherry Mojito



Justin Ashton 6' 2"
Sr. Business Analyst, Division Sales
"The Voice of Reason"
Favorite Drink: Maker's Mark and Ginger Ale



Will Arend 6' 4"
Regional Marketing Manager
"The Great Facilitator"
Favorite Drink: Maker's Mark Manhattan



Greg Giannini 6' 2"
State Manager, Minnesota
"The Man with the Plan"
Favorite Drink: Knob Creek Manhattan Straight



Leslie Defries 5' 7"
Sr. Sales Manager, On-Premise
"Making it Hip and Happening"
Favorite Drink: Hornitos Margarita



Joe Snippes 5' 9"
Sr. Sales Manager, Off Premise
"Setting Standards High"
Favorite Drink: VOX Vodka and Soda with Lime



Mike Krol 5' 11"
Sales Manager, On Premise
"The Party Starts Here"
Favorite Drink: Maker's Mark with a Splash of Water



Ben Young 5' 11"
Sales Representative, Minnesota
"Showing Them How it's Done"
Favorite Drink: Marker's Mark Old Fashioned



Adam Lenhart 5' 11"
Sales Representative, Minnesota
"Creative Cases Coming at You"
Favorite Drink: Canadian Club Sherry Cask on the Rocks



Dominic Giuliani 6' 4"
Sales Representative, Minnesota
"Making it Bigger and Better"
Favorite Drink: Jim Beam Black and Coke



BEAM

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MARKETING IQ TEST ANSWERS

1. **A reasonable way to find out what will motivate buyers to make a purchase in a particular category is to ask how important 30 or more different attributes and benefits are when considering a brand, product, or service.**

The answer is FALSE. As it turns out people will rate the most basic, rational, and tangible characteristics as the most important - 'good taste' for a cola, 'comes in many colors' for a laptop, or 'helpful to my business' for a consulting firm. They will further say something is unimportant if they don't know what it is or if it might make them look superficial to admit otherwise.

2. **Advertising pre-testing is a waste of time. You can't really know the effectiveness of an ad unless you run the ad in the real world.**

The answer is FALSE. Your gut may tell you rough ads bear little resemblance to a finished product so cannot possibly predict with any validity potential advertising performance. Yet research shows that scores for rough ads bear a strong correlation to finished ads. And the scores for finished ads bear a strong correlation to the performance of a campaign after it's been launched.

3. **As many as two-thirds of buyers in a category are price insensitive - meaning they are willing to pay more for a product if it meets some other important purchase criteria.**

The answer is TRUE. A sizable group in every product and service category is relatively price insensitive. While you can't necessarily double the price, in most cases you can increase price by 10 percent or 15 percent if you can tap into an unsolved problem or some other motivating factor. Contrary to conventional wisdom, you are not

going to lose your loyal customers—the people you want.

4. **Most marketers will earn more profits from new products in the next two to three years than from existing ones.**

The answer is FALSE. While new products are certainly an important piece of the overall organic growth picture, finding and launching an entirely new or (as in most cases) somewhat new product or service is not an inexpensive proposition. It typically exceeds by leaps and bounds the costs associated with maintaining or even increasing sales of an existing product. Not surprisingly, in most product and service categories 90 percent of sales and profits come from existing brands.

5. **Most contemporary approaches to market segmentation including need state, lifestyle, and attitudinal segmentation yield useful, pleasing results. They are actionable because they help find targets which are very profitable.**

The answer is FALSE. A recent Marakon Associates and Economist Intelligence Unit survey of 200 senior executives of large companies reported that, though 59 percent had conducted a major market segmentation exercise within the past two years, only 14 percent said they derived any real value from it. Their biggest complaint? Most segmentation research does not help them identify the target(s) they should go after! The segments are not different in terms of anything important to marketers, not to mention they're not easily found—they're like a ghost in media databases.

6. **Brand equity and customer equity are two almost interchangeable concepts used by marketers to help evaluate their brand(s) relative to competitors.**

The answer is FALSE. Brand equity, like IQ, an SAT score, or a price/earnings ratio, is a number. It is an assessment of the goodwill associated with a brand that reflects past marketing performance and predicts future sales and profit potential. Customer equity, on the other hand, is the financial value of a CUSTOMER over, say, a five-year period. Brand equity, relationship equity, and product equity all drive customer equity to varying extents depending on the brand. Customer equity is eclipsing brand equity as a measure of marketing performance and decision-making tool.

7. **Sports and event marketing are proven ways to help build a brand. That's why they have become an important component in many marketing budgets.**

The answer is FALSE. Spending on sponsorships and events has exploded. As Mike Reisman, principal of Velocity Sports & Entertainment put it, "Today sponsorships and events are the funnel for reallocated marketing expenditures. With all this spending, you'd think companies would have in-depth knowledge of the effect of sponsorships on sales and brand equity. Yet according to the IEG/Performance Research Sponsorship Decision-Makers Survey,"sponsor spending on research to determine the impact of partnerships lagged behind the lip service typically paid to wanting to measure ROI."

8. **Once you know what motivates buyers in a category, you have all the information you need to develop a powerful positioning strategy.**

The answer is FALSE. You cannot predict consumer reaction to positioning strategies based only on the motivations in the category. You also have to know how buyers perceive your product and competitive

products. If, for example, a competitor's brand is already perceived as superior on a highly motivating characteristic, then developing a positioning strategy based on it is an uphill battle you're more likely than not to lose.

9. In most companies today, marketers have measured the links between the inputs to a marketing plan-budget dollars, GRPs, etc. and the outputs-awareness, preference, incremental sales, etc.

The answer is FALSE. Few companies know anything about the relationship between inputs to the marketing plan and outputs. Leafing through the typical marketing plan, we find the pages with the objectives, a heavy discussion of strategy, a section dealing with tactics and spending, and nothing is connected. It looks good, it's well written, but virtually no one has a clue how the various elements interact with each other.

10. Media planners at most major advertising agencies know little about the relative ROI of traditional print, television, radio, and out-of-home advertising.

The answer is TRUE. Yes, there is great consensus among marketers that traditional forms of advertising - TV in particular - is not working and plenty of studies that back their belief up. Yet ask media planners at most major advertising agencies about the effectiveness of traditional print, television, radio, and out-of-home advertising, there's little available data comparing it for different media types. And if there's little for traditional forms of media, you can bet there's even less non-traditional.

11. Product-based positioning strategies - those which make claims about product performance or effectiveness - are a thing of the past. They are no longer effective because there are just too many brands and the tangible positioning possibilities are much more limited.

The answer is FALSE. Many marketers say tangible positionings worked back in the 50s and 60s

when marketing and advertising were new, brands were relatively few, and positioning possibilities were unlimited - this isn't reality today, they say. We say you're right, competition is tougher today, but for many brands in many categories there are still important tangible differences you can communicate. Moreover, tangible positioning strategies on average are stronger - work better - than their modern intangible counterparts.

12. Most marketing and advertising programs are measured in terms of their profitability, typically on an annual basis, if not more frequently.

The answer is FALSE. After years of justifiably claiming that it was hard to near impossible to measure marketing effectiveness, today's new data sources, technologies, and tools have made it possible to link marketing investments directly to market share, sales, and profits. Still, very few companies have systems in place to track the performance of their marketing programs. Even fewer are able to accurately assess ROI or identify a financially optimal way to allocate the marketing budget.

13. The most profitable customers of a firm are usually the biggest buyers in the category - they are often labeled the 'heavy users' or 'heavy buyers.'

The answer is FALSE. Although heavy user/heavy buyers are popular groups with 'gut' marketers, they are not great targets to go after. Heavy buyers are often price-conscious and deal-prone, and therefore not loyal to any brand. Others are committed to the brand they've been using and you can't tempt them to switch no matter the incentive. They're usually more heterogeneous than homogenous, making them an inefficient media target. Not to mention every one of your competitors is probably chasing the same group.

14. According to the latest research studies, the average ROI for consumer advertising is negative.

The answer is TRUE. We asked Marketing Management Analytics

(MMA), the largest ROI analytics firm in the country, to ransack its databases to tease out the effects of advertising. It discovered that advertising for established consumer goods returns only 54 cents for every dollar invested. Other product categories return 87 cents - better, but still a losing proposition.

15. American companies are increasingly successful at satisfying customers. Across a broad range of industries, the average grade is 'B' or better.

The answer is FALSE. According to the University of Michigan's American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), customer satisfaction averages 75 percent. Moreover, the publishers of ACSI at the University of Michigan's National Quality Research Center note that the rate of improvement in satisfaction has slowed.

16. Female marketing executives are perceived to take a far more deliberative approach to making marketing decisions than their male counterparts, as well as far more focused on long-term rather than short-term results.

The answer is TRUE. According a recent Copernicus/Brandweek survey of 256 marketers (162 men and 94 women), 85% believed the statement, 'approaches decision making deliberately, examining the available data before making any big decision,' applies to woman marketing execs vs. 74% to men. Eighty-four percent said woman marketing execs are far more focused on long-term rather than short-term results vs. 63% for men. While men were perceived to be far more in a rush to make decisions—77% applies to men vs. 46% applies to women—men and women were about equal in terms of relying more heavily on intuition and judgment rather than research and science in making marketing decisions—70% applies to men and 72% applies to women.

(Continued on page 15)

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St. Anthony Village Celebrates Anniversary

Throughout 2008, the City of St. Anthony Village's municipal liquor operations, St. Anthony Village Wine & Spirits, is celebrating their 60th anniversary.

For the past 60 years, this oldest of city departments has continued to meet the standard as presented by its original mission statement:

Control the sale of alcohol beverages while simultaneously generating revenue.

Profits from the municipal liquor stores have provided fire trucks, public works equipment, building improvements, and park development.

Without profits from the liquor operations, the city would have had to increase taxes to the residents to fund these community reinvestment projects.

While these profits benefit the community, controlling the sale of alcohol is the most important reason for the city to be in the retail off-sale liquor business.

The liquor operations department works closely with the police department for training and enforcement of liquor-related laws and regulations.



Employee Training Must be "On-Going"

If the skill you are teaching is a simple one, some of your sales associates will need just one cycle of "watching" and then "doing" to master it. However, you should expect other sales associates to need two or three cycles. Different people learn at different rates. In fact, different people learn different things at different rates.

If the skill you are teaching is a complex one, such as "suggestion selling," you should expect that all of your sales associates will need many cycles of "watching" and then "doing" to master it. Suggestion

selling requires an understanding of the way each item in your store relates to all of the other items in your store. It also requires the ability to ask good, open-ended questions and fully understand each customer's needs.

Suggestion selling, however, is just one of several hundred skills your sales associates will need to master before they can do their jobs well. **This means that staff training must be an ongoing part of your business – a steady stream of "watching" and then "doing" cycles!**

IQ TEST ANSWERS

(Continued)

- 17. Big companies generally make their strategic marketing decisions after evaluating many different alternatives in terms of forecasted profitability.**

The answer is FALSE. Whether you are talking about what buyer group to target, which positioning to go with, what product to take to market, or what advertising campaign to run with, marketers at America's biggest firms routinely consider one, maybe two options, and pick the one they believe most likely to succeed. They're choice is much more often than not guided by personal judgment, experience, and competitive activity versus measures of potential profitability.

- 18. One-hundred percent customer satisfaction is an admirable business objective.**

The answer is FALSE. The University of Michigan's American Customer Satisfaction Index shows that the average cross-industry customer satisfaction score has fallen below 75%, basically a "C"

grade on the ability to satisfy customers. While there's clearly room for improvement here, profitability rises as satisfaction increases only up to a point. After that, the cost of delighting the customer by delivering ever-increasing satisfaction rises faster than the payoff in profits.

- 19. Thirty to forty percent or more of American brands are well positioned. They offer prospects a clear reason to buy.**

The answer is FALSE. Fewer than 8% of respondents were able to associate anything with the five leading brands in a wide variety of categories—either what they stood for or how they were different from other brands. There was no recognizable positioning. Should brand managers be concerned? Absolutely! After two decades of testing and research into marketing failures, we've established that the absence of a clear, definable positioning for the brand is one of the most frequent reasons for failure.

Bob & Dan's Annual Road Trip

By MMBA Vice President Dan Bahr

This is the time of year I look forward to, visiting stores around the state and finding out what's going on in other communities. I really enjoy being able to pick Pelican Rapids liquor manager Bob Leslie's brain for three days, since he can't walk away from me. He is filled with little nuggets of information, and is a very good resource.

We left Bemidji about 8:30am heading for our first stop in Blackduck. We found Shawn hard at work with daily reports etc.

On to Kelihier where we found Sherri and another employee getting ready to take an inventory to put in the new system they just purchased.

On to Baudette where Russ talked with us about his remodeling project. His store looks really nice and very workable from the checkout area. We also met new assistant manager Vicki, who was on her first day on the job.

Left there for Big Falls. We had a lot of windshield time, but I was able to keep Bob awake and pick his brain. We got to Big Falls, but Teckla was working the later shift that day. We left our cards and told the clerk if there were any questions to give us a call.

On to Littlefork where Penny informed us that Michael was up the street at city hall. So again, we left our cards and said if there were any questions please give us a call.

On to Orr. It was late in the day and

Bob had already left. So again, we left our cards and informed the clerk to let him know we were there and if he had a questions to please give us a call.

We arrived in Cook around 6:00pm. Dean informed us Debbie had left for the day. However, we did see her in Duluth the next day at the regional meeting.

We then traveled to Winton and found Debbie Maki hard at work behind the bar. She enjoys working the evening shift. We visited for awhile about business and left for a cross country trip through the woods to Silver Bay. We called Tom to let him know we were running late, and would call him at home when we got into town.

The trip from Ely across Minnesota Highway # 1 after dark is not something I would recommend to anyone. There were lots of hair pin turns, venison, and even a brush wolf in the road. We arrived in Silver Bay at 8:00pm checked into our room and called Tom. He graciously came back to town and we met at his new off sale and bar. What a great place! I would recommend everyone to see it. We had a nice visit, a few beers, and something to eat before calling it a day.

We left the next morning for Grand Marais to see Pat. He was at work and his phone was ringing off the wall. It was question and answer time with a salesman trying to sell him something over the phone. Don't you just love those types of calls? We talked for awhile about industry issues, regional meetings, and the MMBA conference in May. He hopes to make the conference in the spring.

We left for Duluth and the regional meeting at the Holiday Inn. We were running late again, so Bob being Bob, pushed the speed limit slightly. However, we made it in plenty off time and didn't miss a thing. Great turn out from the area.

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We left after the meeting for more store visits. Our first stop was Proctor. We saw Peggy at the meeting, but wanted to stop and see her new sign. She was running errands and so we missed her. But, we talked with her on the phone about her sign. It looks great and it sure is an attention getter. In fact, she has had people tell her they did not know a liquor store was there – even though they have been in that location for many, many years. This is a clear example of the importance of proper signage!

On to Cromwell to see Tomika. We saw her at the meeting in Duluth where she asked if we would be stopping to see her new beer cooler. We stopped, but missed Tomika, as she hadn't returned from Duluth yet.

On to Barnum. They also were at the meeting in Duluth.

Off to Moose Lake. Mark also was at the meeting in Duluth, but we had to stop and check out his new off sale and bar. It is another superb job of remodeling. If you get a chance, stop and see for yourself.

We left for Finlayson but missed the manager. But, we talked with an employee and some customers. We were told they have a political race going on. But, we all know politics, religion, and alcohol don't mix. So, they are voting for the town's best dogs for president and vice president. They had posters all over the place and were having a good time.

We then left for Hinkley, it was getting late, so we got a room at the casino for the night, had a good supper, dropped a few quarters in the slots (didn't lose, but didn't win much either) and got a good nights sleep.

Stopped for Breakfast before going over to visit with Colin at his new store. It was another superb remodeling project. Stop and see it some time. While visiting with Colin, there was a big fire down the road. Fire trucks from three communities came to put it out. It certainly was our excitement for the day.

We then stopped in Pine City to say hi to Lara, even though we saw her in Duluth the day before.

We visited for a while and left for Rush City. We wanted to visit with Carol about her up coming remodel and the moving of their store to a new location. But it was her day off. We were sorry we missed her, but we left our cards and the same message to call with any questions.

On to Braham where we were told that Jacque was at home sick that day. But, Nikki was hard at work with a beer delivery from their Coors distributor. The store looked great, all decked out in Halloween theme. Great job!

Drove down the road to Ogilvie and was met at the door by Del. She told us Judy was next door at city hall if we wanted to see her. We had a nice visit with Del. She told us they were in the process of stripping their floors and redoing them, so there were no displays at the time. We left our cards and again said to call if there were any questions for us or the Association.

On to Milaca. Vicki and her crew were hard at work, and Halloween decorations were up. Vicki gave us a tour of her facility. It looks great, with lots of room in the back room as well

as in the cooler. Business was up and Vicki is pleased.

We thought that the last stop for the day. But as we neared Nisswa, we both agreed we needed to stop and see Wayne and Ginny. We caught them both at their computers working feverishly. We had a nice visit and then left for home. It had been a long three days on the road and got to Bemidji around 5:00pm. Bob still had another 140 miles to home, so we said our good byes and he left.

As I bring this long road report to a conclusion keep in mind I am not a writer, but a fellow municipal liquor store manager dedicated to assisting MMBA members and growing our industry. When I travel the state and see things not in line with current laws I will report them to you. Specifically, there are still stores illegally selling food items and clothing apparel on the off sale side of the business. I also pointed out some changes to strongly consider as it relates to shelving and pricing. What you choose to do with this information is up to you. Again, my only purpose is to help you succeed.

Respectfully Submitted
Dan Bahr



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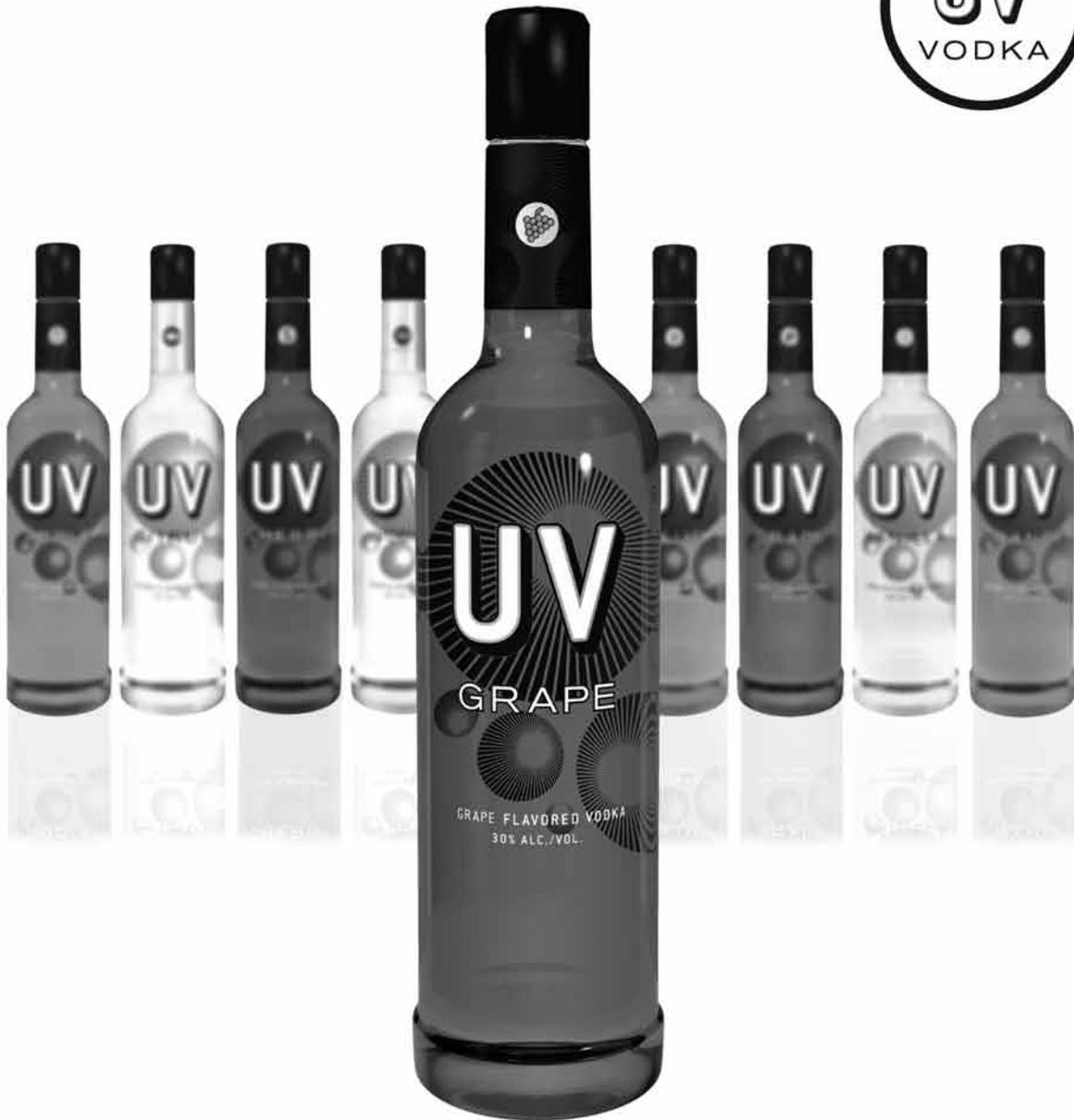
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