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THE MUNICIPAL LIQUOR STORE

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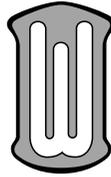


15 Nightmare Employees & What to Do

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ON THE COVER

The most important assets any business has are their employees.

In retail, employees being an asset is doubly true because they not only stock the merchandise but also have to sell it.

Your retail success is directly linked to their attitudes, behaviors and abilities.

Beginning on page 8, take a look at nightmare employees to discover what might be keeping your facility from increasing sales.

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MMBA President's Message



Brenda Visnovec
President

Knowing your customer's and their wants and needs is essential to the success of your municipal liquor operation. While new items are the lifeblood of the industry, something that is selling at one location may not do well at another.

And you may ask, how do I know this?

Well, Lakeville currently has three locations, with the longest distance between the three locations being four miles. Yet each store has its own personality, customer base, and product selection. In other words, every municipal liquor operation is unique and as a manager, you can direct the progression of your store. But, if you don't provide what the customer is looking for, there are just too many retail options out there.

What is the formula to success

- Well, just as in building your house you need to start with a good foundation. This means bringing those items that are the key players in the market place. All locations should carry the top ten players in the market for wine, spirits, beer and craft beers.
- Then you install the mechanical aspects, from nice displays, proper POS, to good knowledgeable customer service.
- At that point, this is when you begin to accessorize your operation, to make it appealing to your specific customer base.

As an example, all of our locations have the foundation and mechanicals in place. From that point we adapt to the needs and desires of the customer.

Our one location directly off the freeway is more your high pace volume customer. We will call them the "quick pacers".

These customers are on their way home, and have a lot of options in their commute to and from work. They want quick in, quick out service and they aren't very eager to spend a lot of time shopping. So placing high volume, high profit margin items in bulk is specifically important at this location.

Our store downtown is a more senior and community based location. We call these the "loyal turtles"

This is the location where it is very important to make the customers feel welcomed, the need to feel like they are at home. They appreciate what the store does for the community and their world moves at a much slower pace. These people are also the rebaters and the value brand buyers. They like the base products and seek the sale items, but it

is still important to have some eclectic items of choice for those special occasions.

Our newest store was built to be a destination location, but it is also on a high volume artery through the city, bridging several communities together. These customers, we will label as the "diverse yuppies" are not loyal to the store because of the community value, and they are very diverse in their selection likings.

The needs of these customers require us to carry an extensive selection of craft beers and boutique style wines. These customers are also more demanding, wanting more time and hands on service.

So as you are evaluating your products, make sure you understand your customer base, build a strong foundation and then take it from there.

Keep things fresh and keep trying new product. But equally important, keep moving that bottom 10% of your slow sellers out of your system.

Good Luck!

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Beer Storage Myths

Reviewed.com

Beer is the third-most consumed drink in the world, after water and tea. People learn about what is best for their beer and here are some beer storage myths and the facts behind the myths.

If cold beer gets warm, cooling it again will make it stale

Not True...beer experiences substantial fluctuations in temperature during shipping. Of course; you want to keep the temperature shifts to a minimum; but the notion that it can only be refrigerated once is a myth

Sunlight skunks beer

This is true. UV light breaks up acids in the hop plant creating a "skunky" odor. This can happen in the storage or the actual fermentation process. This is not a threat with wine, cider, or mash liquor as none of these contain hops.

The color of the bottle affects the beer's shelf life

Yes and no...it's not the color of the bottle so much as it's translucence that affects beer's long-term quality. Clear and green bottles allow significantly more UV light than brown bottles. This leads to skunking as mentioned above.

Beer must be shipped, stored, and aged cold

Wrong...in fact certain kinds of beer- mainly unpasteurized, bottle-conditioned craft beer can be aged in cellars, just like wine. Most experts agree the anywhere in the 40-70 degree range is fine for dry storage.

Putting beer in the freezer is an easy way to "quick chill" it

True...but be careful. Anyone who has

ever put a brew in the freezer to chill and then forgot about it knows what will happen....beer will explode when frozen.

Beer should be stored upright

True. There are a few reasons that beer should not be placed on its side and this applies to both corked and capped bottles. First, the yeast- that magical little organism that eats sugar and poops out alcohol and carbon dioxide (the process of fermentation). Yeast is critical to beer, but the sediment it leaves behind has a way of corrupting flavor; so you want it to settle on the bottom. Second, the upright storage limits the amount of the beer that is directly exposed to air (the neck of a bottle is narrower than the barrel). This slows the process of oxidation and prolongs the life of the beer. And finally, upright storage is especially important for corked beers. When a beer is stored on its side, the

cork- by virtue of being in contact with the beer- will gradually push its way out of the bottle.

Bottles are better than cans

Wrong! It really does depend on personal taste; but canned beer has gotten a bad rap in recent decades because it is often associated with "cheap" beer. However, more craft brewers are canning their brew, saying that in blind taste tests....canned is preferred three out of four times.

The credit for this wealth of information must go to my Assistant Manager; Dale Ronning.

Good article that he found online!!

Nancy Drumsta
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Fifteen Nightmare Employees & What to Do

By Bob Phibbs, The Retail Doctor

The most important assets any business has are their employees.

In retail, employees being an asset is doubly true because they not only stock the merchandise but also have to sell it.

Your retail success is directly linked to their attitudes, behaviors and abilities. Sometimes you discover you've got an nightmare employee. You know, the Bitter Betty employee who looks like they sucked on a lemon. They pour water on a customer's passion for a product causing the customer to leave empty-handed.

And worse, sometimes, they can be your senior employees who should know better.

Take a look at the following nightmare employees to discover what might be keeping your retail store from increasing sales. My thanks to my Retail Doctor Facebook fans who helped me come up with this list.

The 15 Nightmare Employees

1. The Know-It-All. No matter how you tell this employee how you want something done, they always say that they already do it that way... but they continue to keep doing it wrong.

2. The Negative Nancy. Nothing is going right. No one is doing anything well. Everything is someone else's fault. They suck the exuberance out of living.

3. The Child. This employee is constantly making a list of what they are going to do, but they never get it done – unless you continually nag them. They always leave messes for others to clean up, and they are out

the door at 5:00 regardless of whether they've finished or not... usually not.

4. The Zombie. These are the ones who think if their body shows up, that's enough; that their job is to just be present for their shift. No effort, no engagement, no self-directed activity. They are bored from the moment they clock in.

5. The Thief. Obviously, these are the ones who steal your merchandise.

6. The Discounter. These are the ones who find a way to offer unauthorized discounts to customers to make sales. They'll say they had to price-match, or they'll hide evidence of having used discount codes for customers who did not qualify for those discounts. They then compound their crime by bragging about their numbers, claiming they were generated because the customers like their service better.

7. The Lawyer. This demon does only what is in their job description instead

of understanding that they have to go with the flow.

8. The Busybody. They love to know everyone's business. And they gossip everyone's business to everyone... about their employers, other employees and customers.

9. The Arguer. They never like the way you do a task, a display or a sale. They want to do it their way. They'll argue to your face that you're wrong. They'll argue just to be right.

10. The Phantom. These ones are always texting or taking personal calls while they ignore all of your customers.

11. The Corpse. These are the ones with that deer-in-the-headlights expression when you ask them to do something. They look at you and smile without a nod or indication they heard you. They just stand there. They'd rather be dead than be your employee.

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12. The Soulless Plodder.

They take forever to clean, stack, organize or price something. Their goal is to stretch out a job for as long as they can, showing just enough progress to say they are getting it done.

13. The Despot. When the boss is away, they do everything except what they are supposed to be doing; in their eyes they have free reign.

They take long breaks, don't greet customers or do the rest of their job. When they do deal with customers, they are short and rude and given enough freedom, close up early.

14. The Ninja. They are the ones who hide behind the rack, find things to do in the stockroom to keep them off the floor, or disappear as soon as someone enters their section. They would rather be stacking pants, re-pricing or cleaning. They don't like to talk to anyone... especially your customers.

15. The Distractor. These employees spend all their time preventing other employees from working. No one gets anything done... and that's fine with them.

WHAT TO DO

You can hire better next time by:

- Asking better questions about their self-direction.
- Listening for their propensity to talk about others, rather than themselves.
- Looking for these types of behaviors in their mannerisms, eye contact and voice inflection.

If you decide to keep them... train the hell out of them.

Show them what you want, role-play the situations that get them in trouble and let them know that you expect better.

Have a frank discussion about their behaviors and how you are feeling about their work.

Highlights of these discussions can include:

- Giving more black and white examples and less grey for them to abuse during your retail sales training.
- Reminding them to curtail gossip from the start, saying you don't like it on your sales floor.
- Making sure they know their jobs are broad-based and not specific.
- Letting them know arguing is never appropriate, and that if you hear it, it is grounds for immediate dismissal.

You can also manage the crew better by:

- Not being afraid to have corrective conversations with employees. You're their boss, not their pal.
- If an employee is going out of

their way to avoid the job of selling, give them retail sales training, set performance metrics and coach them. If there is no improvement within a few days, realize it's not a skill issue, it's a will issue.

- Take away perks like having coffee at the counter, chairs behind the counters, anything that encourages creating a cozy clique of employees.

Remember to give them a chance to change.

Give them no more than a week before you have another discussion about their progress and include a written employee review. If training the hell out of them hasn't worked, make yourself happy and fire them.

You aren't doing anyone any favors by letting them cross over to the dark side when they step over your business' threshold.

That's because, in business, you can't afford to compromise your success.

How Much Should I Charge After a Price Increase

At the recent MMBA Regional Meeting in Thief River Falls, product pricing techniques were discussed and the following example presented:

Wholesale Cost = \$10.00

40% Mark-up = \$14.00

Retail Selling Price Using Odd-Pricing Modification = \$13.99

If the wholesale price increased

\$1.00, what should be the retail selling price -- \$14.99 or something different?

The correct answer is \$15.49.

A common mistake is to only add the \$1.00 to the selling price without adding a mark-up to the increase:

Wholesale Cost = \$11.00

40% Mark-up = \$15.40

Retail Selling Price Using Odd-Pricing Modification = \$15.49

14 Step Time Management Process for Success

By DMSRetail

Determine how much time you spend on various activities – Make a list of all of the things you routinely take care of during a normal day/week/month and assign a number of minutes or hours to each one. This exercise will draw your attention to things that are taking up too much of your valuable time. Awareness of this will assist you in determining which activities can be stopped altogether, delegated or combined with other activities to save time.

Figure out how your personal speed measures up - People who get a lot done are moving fast most of the time. It's difficult, in fact, to get them to slow down. Try walking through a mall with a high achieving go getter of a District Manager and you'll probably be out of breath in no time!

If you find that you're moving a little on the slow side, you just need to put a bit more energy into everything you do. Move a little faster each day. This applies to getting things done as well as some of your decision making.

Define Goals – Goals will include, but are not limited to, top success factors. In any case, they need to be well defined so that you can clearly see what kind of time allotment and resources will be needed to reach them.

Prioritize- Any activity or task that will not move you closer to your achievement in your top success factors is not worthy of investment of your time. Keep a log of what you are doing with your time for a couple of weeks and then review it to make sure that all of your time has, in fact, been spent on top success factors.

Work with To Do Lists – Daily or weekly, a 'to do' list must be created. It must include only those things that you have deemed to be priorities based on your top success factors. Others may inadvertently influence your 'to do' list unless you are very careful. Just remember whose 'to do' list it is.

Why is it important to use a to do list?

We can't necessarily keep everything in our memory and, even if we could, why waste the brain space when you can jot it down on paper? Seeing the list of things written down on paper helps you to prioritize. Any possible duplication of effort can be seen at a glance. You get the satisfaction of striking things off the list as they are accomplished.

Appointments – Make a plan for your day, week or month as if you are creating appointments. That is to say, if you plan to do something at 9:30 a.m., and have scheduled that activity as a 45 minute appointment, then do it in the 45 minutes you have scheduled it for. Appointments should have a start and finish time and cannot be left open ended.

Reduce time allotments – Any activity, task, project or meeting can easily expand to use up all of the time allotted to it. For this reason, schedule on the short side. Things tend to be handled more efficiently and effectively when a tighter time frame is in place.

Organize – In retail, you must be highly organized. You need a system for reducing clutter (of your space and your mind) and for easy retrieval of documents and information. If your life is full of clutter, your brain is confused and is probably actually preventing you from getting things done.

(Continued on page 13)

Farmington Editorial

There was debate a while back about the value of Farmington's city government staying in the liquor business.

The city's two stores were struggling to turn a decent profit, and at least a few city council members wanted to close their doors and open the local liquor market to private businesses.

Things look a little bit different these days. According to the city's liquor store manager, profits at the stores are up about \$88,000 so far this year. The stores have attracted more than 800 new customers.

That's good news, but the better news is what those profits have allowed the city to do.

Liquor store profits have long been used to support the city's parks and recreation operations. Amenities like the municipal pool and Schmitz-Maki Arena don't necessarily make money for the city. Healthy liquor store sales help support them, as well as other projects.

But the benefits of the city-run liquor store go beyond that. At Monday's city council meeting, liquor store manager Blair Peterson presented a \$400 check to the local VFW post.

Afterward, he donated \$10,000 to the veterans' memorial currently under construction in Rambling River Park.

There have been other donations, too. And there likely will be more ahead.

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*Based Nielsen MPLS Liquor Beer Brand Report 2012



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Make a point of regularly clearing out junk that you don't need or use anymore. Stuff at home and work should be thrown out if it is not useful to you. You should actually schedule this 'clutter removal' appointment once a month or even as often as once a week.

Delegate – Presumably you have competent people working for you so you should be able to delegate according to their particular strengths and availability. Even if you need to break a larger project down into smaller, more manageable pieces it will help you and it will help in development your people.

You'll need to consider these things when deciding what to delegate:

- Is it a repetitive task?
- If a bad decision is made regarding this issue – what is the impact? Is it easily reversed? Will it negatively affect others? Will it be expensive, for the company, to correct or reverse?

Say “no” – Although it is not always possible, you need to know how to determine what you should say “no”

to. If someone asks you to take on a project or task that will not necessarily advance your cause – or contribute to your top success factors – then you need to say “no”. If you find there is no alternative but to accept the project or task, then you need to look for items on your to do list that can be moved to another time slot or 'appointment time' or delegated.

Remain flexible and reschedule often – You will need to allow for the unexpected. The idea of planning your work and working your plan is a very good one, but sometimes you will just have to be flexible. So, when the need arises, be prepared to reschedule.

Allow yourself some scheduled unproductive time - It doesn't sound right but it's important. This is what will keep you going. We can't have every minute of every day pinned down – sometimes we have to just enjoywhatever.

Don't let what you can't do stop you from doing what you can do - Sometimes it's impossible to embark on a big project. Maybe you have limited resources; maybe the expected outcome is still a bit uncertain. For whatever

reason, you just know you can't get the big project done. You can, however, start on small parts of that big project – the parts that you are able to get done and that will be useful when it comes time to get the big project underway. In fact, if you work at it that way you might just find that the big project has suddenly taken care of itself.

Sleep early, wake up early and take good care of your health - The early bird gets the worm! In our case, the early riser gets more done while they are still energetic. It's a great feeling to know that some people are just lounging around – still in their beds – while you have already accomplished half of your to do list.

As far as your health goes, we don't profess to know enough about the human body and it's nutritional requirements to provide advice on that topic. Suffice to say you must take good care of your health if you want to operate at the top of your game and make the best use of all of your waking hours. Eat a healthy diet, get some exercise, schedule your regular medical check-ups and generally..... be kind to yourself.

All the Success!

True or False: **White Wine Goes with Fish,** **Red Wine Goes with Meat**

As guidelines go, this one isn't bad, but it's a guideline, not a rule. Anyone who slavishly adheres to this generalization deserves the boredom of eating and drinking exactly the same thing every day!

Even if you're a perfectionist who's always looking for the ideal food and wine combination, you'll find yourself wandering from this guideline. The best wine for a grilled salmon steak is probably red — like a Pinot Noir — and not white at all. Veal and pork do equally well with red or white wines, depending on how the dish is prepared. And what can be better with hot dogs on the grill than a cold glass of rosé?

Sunday Sales Fight Continues

The following was printed in the Politics in Minnesota newsletter. You can add MMBA each time MLBA is indicated.

It is reproduced here to let you know the Sunday Sales fight continues.

Remember, there is no “powerful liquor lobby.” It is YOUR involvement that stops this initiative. You and our other allies are also voters and constituents.

by Briana Bierschbach,
Politics in Minnesota

Jason Alvey says he’s tired of mincing his words when it comes to the powerful lobbying forces that have protected a decades-old ban on Sunday alcohol sales in Minnesota.

The native Australian, who owns the Four Firkins craft beer store in St. Louis Park, is a rarity among liquor store owners: He wants to see the ban lifted. He’s the face of a growing movement of mostly metro-area and border community beer store owners and brewers who call themselves the Minnesota Beer Activists and want to reframe the perennial issue at the Capitol as a question of what the public wants rather than what liquor store owners want. He cites a poll from Public Policy Polling in May of this year that puts approval ratings for Sunday alcohol sales at 62 percent, with bipartisan support.

“Customers overwhelmingly want this, and the number one rule of retail is listen to your customers,” Alvey said. “Some of these liquor store owners — it’s a very old boys’ club. A lot of these owners are in their eighties. We are talking about silver-haired old men who haven’t stepped a foot in their retail stores for years. They are so out of touch with their customers, it’s a joke, and these are the guys who are

overwhelmingly the majority.

Most of the liquor store owners in the state are members of the Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association (MLBA), a powerful lobbying force at the Capitol. Opponents argue Sunday sales would cost Mom and Pop liquor shops by forcing them to be open seven days a week while simply stretching out the same revenue they’d make in six days. They win most of their battles in St. Paul — Minnesota is one of just 12 states that still restrict Sunday liquor sales, and most of the state’s core regulations governing the industry date back to the end of prohibition.

“It’s the pig that just won’t die,” MLBA executive director Frank Ball said of Sunday liquor sales, trying to recall an exact quote from Republican Rep. Greg Davids. A folksy former police chief and sheriff from rural Minnesota, Ball is practiced in talking about the issue. He’s been doing it some form or another for much of his life.

“I think we have a really good lobbying effort representing not only the interests of liquor stores, but also in talking about issues with selling a controlled substance to our public. There’s a high cost of that, in insurance and in health care, and when we talk to the Legislature, they buy into that,” Ball added. “The craft beer people are coming in and saying, ‘Why do we need all these regulations?’ It’s not tires, batteries, et cetera. It’s booze we are talking about, and legislators listen.”

But Sunday liquor sales supporters are teeing up the issue for the 2014 session anyway, and they say there are reasons to feel encouraged about its chances. “The folks who support Sunday sales are starting sooner, [and] they seem to be gaining a little more momentum than they have in past interims,” said Joe Atkins, chair of the House Commerce Committee and last year’s author

of the House omnibus liquor bill. “They are more organized than they’ve ever been before.”

Political obstacles

The sale of liquor on Sunday is a complex issue politically. It unites libertarian, free-market Republicans with the far left in support of removing the ban, while the religious right and moderate, business-friendly Democrats typically join hands to defeat attempts to change the law.

The MLBA understands the dynamics, and regularly enlists its nearly 2,000 members across the state to make phone calls and meet with their legislators. The group spends big on lobbying and pumps some money into elections — their campaign spending is hard to track, because members tend to donate individually to candidates — but MLBA’s real power is in its sheer size and scope.

“I don’t think there’s another industry that captures the hearts of more people than the liquor industry,” Ball said. “We have 87 counties, and in those counties and they have Mom and Pop stores and they vote and they are politically active. It’s a powerful group of people, because they influence a lot of candidates.”

It also doesn’t hurt that the MLBA has powerful allies. Each year the group joins forces with the Teamsters Joint Council 32 union and liquor industry lobbyists. Then there’s DFL bundler and attorney Sam Kaplan, who has served as counsel for the liquor industry. “He’s been a big hitter,” said Bernie Hesse, political director at UFCW Local 1189, who tried to get wine sold in grocery stores. “He has been a kingmaker, and the DFL caucuses have always respected his views.”

(Continued on page 17)



Embrace the myth



In 1731, in accordance with the Regulations relating to His Majesty's Service at Sea, British sailors were given a daily ration of rum. Coincidentally, mermaid sightings in the Caribbean rose significantly around this time. Sailors believed mermaids rescued shipwrecked sailors and brought them to Sugar Island. Many great ships have been lost at sea forever, chasing mermaids and looking for the mythical island...



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The combined influence of these forces was easy to see last session. While the issue managed to get a hearing in both the House and Senate commerce committees in the same year — a first — opposition from the MLBA kept it from landing in the omnibus liquor bills. It didn't help that lawmakers were also debating a possible 7-cent-per-drink tax hike on alcohol.

Senators held off on pushing the issue after an informational committee hearing, but DFL Rep. Tina Liebling brought Sunday liquor sales as an amendment to the omnibus bill on the House floor. When it came time to vote, legislators shot Sunday sales down on a 106-21 vote. Another amendment to allow liquor stores to choose which six days of the week they want to be open, offered by DFL Rep. Phyllis Kahn, also went down in flames on a 122-5 vote. That's even worse than the proposal's fate in 2012, when legislators rejected Sunday liquor sales on the floor by a 97-25 vote.

"The power and might of this lobbying organization on this issue is just massive," said GOP Rep. Steve Drazkowski, who supports Sunday liquor sales. "It's going to be hard to beat them until the issue itself gains enough importance of the minds of the public."

Building public pressure

Most Sunday sales supporters agree with Drazkowski— polling data, absent real public pressure, has gotten them nowhere.

"Believe it or not, I don't get all worked up about polls. My sense is that you've got folks who get asked a question over the phone about would you support it, and they say yes, but the next question isn't asked, which is how strongly do you support it?" said Atkins, who added that he plans to wait for hearings to take a position on Sunday liquor sales. "You've got the same question posed to mayors, and city council members and Mom and Pop liquor store owners, and they often

say no, and you ask them how they feel about it, and they start jumping up and down."

Duluth DFL Sen. Roger Reinert, who serves a border community abutting Wisconsin, which allows Sunday sales, says he's hoping for public mobilization in the interim. "People who hang around the Capitol know that things don't move as quickly as you may want them to, but we will be using the interim to mobilize the 60 percent [that support this]," he said. "Opponents have benefited from the lack of organization around supporters, but that won't always be the case."

Efforts are in progress. Reinert says some liquor stores may start advertising in support of Sunday liquor sales, and members of the Minnesota Beer Activists are already meeting with legislators. A documentary about the issue is also in the works. Ben Jenkins, a spokesman for the Distilled Spirits Council, said his group is "exploring ways" to get the message out that

"Sunday sales is a great way to generate revenue without raising taxes." That could include newspaper ads, he said.

For his part, Alvey is encouraged about the chances to repeal the longstanding ban. Democrats who control the Senate included the issue in their annual State Fair poll questionnaire, which is usually an issue teaser for the upcoming legislative session. Supporters also hope to take advantage of a light legislative agenda next year and push the issues as a winner for lawmakers at the 2014 ballot box.

The key, still, is public pressure, he said. "Legislators tell me all the time, I hear from the MLBA and their liquor store owners every single day about how they don't want this repealed, but they never hear from constituents," he said. "We need to get their phones ringing off the hook. We need them to say, 'What the hell are you doing? You need to stop listening to the lobbyists. You need to listen to us, the voters.'"

ABV & Proof

By law, the labels on containers of distilled spirits and wine must show either alcohol by volume (ABV) or proof.

- Percent ABV = percent alcohol by volume, which is the percentage of the liquid that is pure alcohol
- Proof = two times ABV
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