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LIQUOR STORE

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MINNESOTA BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION

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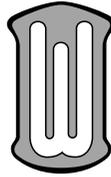


Creating a Marketing & Promotional Plan

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ON THE COVER

Creating a marketing and promotional plan allows you to put into action the vision that you have created for your liquor store, bar, nightclub or restaurant.

It aims to give you a practical plan that is easy to implement over the course of the year.

This plan will provide focus and direction while also encouraging you to monitor your results in order to improve.

In order to keep that register ringing, now is the perfect time to compile and start implementing this crucial plan that will aid in the success of your business.

Learn how, beginning on page 7 .

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MMBA President's Message



Brenda Visnovec
President

Typically, Paul has had to hound me for the President's article, well I was reviewing my Facebook and an article slapped me across the face.. It was the 19 things you must do in order to be successful.

I took the liberty of abridging this list down to 12 and gave it some thought as to whether or not I could be considered successful, and here is what I came up with.

- 1) You have to make a call that you're afraid to make.
 - a. I guess asking city council to consider building a liquor store utilizing park property to build on, not within close proximity to any other retail stores qualifies. And yes, we built the store and it did over \$5 million last year!
- 2) You have to give more than you get in return right away.
 - a. That's just a given to anyone who has a job and cares.
- 3) You have to fight when you are already injured, bloody and sore.
 - a. No comment! LOL
- 4) You have to feel unsure and insecure when playing it safe seems smarter.
 - a. Refer back to comment under number one! The best operations are those that are willing to commit, the ones that go outside the box to try new programs and marketing schemes.
- 5) You have to lead when no one else is following you yet.
 - a. We've all been there! We work in an environment where our jobs

intertwine with councils, other departments and civic organizations. You have to put in the overtime, do your due diligence and promote both your operation and yourself. Respect is not issued, it is earned.

- 6) You have to look like a fool while you're looking for answers you don't have.
 - a. A daily occurrence. This is retail which is impacted by transportation changes, trends, what your competition is doing, what consumers are doing. Not even Warren Buffet has all the answers. No one ever looks like a fool by saying let me get back to you on that.
 - 7) You have to make mistakes and look like an idiot.
 - a. Constantly! But is Peyton Manning not successful! A true leader is not defined by how successful he/she is when things are going well, but how he/she recovers after a fumble.
 - 8) You have to try and fail and try again.
 - a. Well I could provide you hundreds of examples here, but you deal with it and try again. You can't be successful if you don't try in the first place.
 - 9) You have to be kind to people who have been cruel to you.
 - a. We are all running municipal liquor operations and there are people out there that condemn government for being in the business, and there are the people who believe they can run a liquor store better than you because they worked as a stocker at the hardware store when they were 16. Respect them!
- You can't change a person's philosophy and everyone has a right to their opinion. The operations success and the knowledge of a job well done is your revenge!

10) You have to meet deadlines that are unreasonable and deliver results that are unparalleled.

- a. Absolutely!! Thanks to our Finance Director who has always placed the liquor departments budget deadline the day following the Taste of Lakeville. In one week's time, we coordinate a 400 wine, 2,500 attendee wine tasting event, while submitting more than 100 pages of budget documents and projections. Good news though.... The budget deadline has been moved up two weeks.

11) You have to be accountable for your actions even when things go wrong.

- a. Oh yeah.... It's easy to put the blame of theft, or failure on everyone but the person looking back at you in the mirror. However, being the manager of the operation, what happens in your operation directly falls on to your shoulders. Accept that, learn from it and be proactive!

12) You have to keep moving towards where you want to be no matter what's in front of you.

- a. You have to do the hard things, the things no one else is doing, the things that make you doubt yourself. If you do those tasks, you have then defined yourself as successful.

The only aspect of this article that I disagree with is that I believe in a business no single individual is a success. It takes a team, surrounding yourself with others that are willing to aspire and challenge themselves in the same manner you are is what will make the team a success.

The simple truth is that in business, most of the individuals that you may consider a "success" are truly ordinary people who are willing to do the hard things in life, and have surrounded themselves with others who are willing to do the same.

Do the hard things. You might be surprised at how amazing you really are.



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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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Creating a Marketing & Promotional Plan

By: Kristen Santoro, nightclub.com

Creating a marketing and promotional plan allows you to put into action the vision that you have created for your liquor store, bar, nightclub or restaurant. It aims to give you a practical plan that is easy to implement over the course of the year. This plan will provide focus and direction while also encouraging you to monitor your results in order to improve.

In order to keep that register ringing, now is the perfect time to compile and start implementing this crucial plan that will aid in the success of your business. And not to fret, we've assembled our 2014 Promotional Planning Guide, including a calendar of events and holidays and some expert advice on getting started.

With this guide and calendar in hand, along with continuous updates on Nightclub.com, you'll be armed with ideas to attract crowds every day of the year! The more you plan, the easier and more successful your promotions will become.

Here we have provided some key elements for creating your marketing and promotions plan to help you get started.

Objective

What is the purpose of creating this marketing plan? Do you want to increase new customer traffic? Provide incentive programs for loyal customer? Build brand awareness through social media channels? Or, all of the above? It is best to clarify the main focus of the plan upfront.

Go Back

Did you create a marketing and promotions plan last year? If so, take the time to look back and objectively review the promotions that you executed. Analyze why successful promotions drove traffic to your business. Also evaluate what didn't work so that you don't make those same mistakes again. Sometimes a great idea fails because it was executed at the wrong time or promoted to the wrong audience.

Target Audience

Research shows that a carefully executed promotion plan directed at the appropriate audience significantly increases the effectiveness of the promotion. Identify the exact types of customers you want to frequent your establishment over the next year. It is impossible to market to everyone therefore this helps you to concentrate on specific groups that fit your theme and brand.

Budget

Budgeting is a key element in planning your marketing and promotions plan. Make sure that you know how much money you can allocate to your promotional strategies each month. This will determine how many promotions you can realistically implement based on the allocated portion of revenues that you put towards the plan. Promotional spend varies from venue to venue; therefore, you need to determine what works best for your budget. If you're a new venue budget more than you think you need.

Strategy

Based on the previous steps and the information that you have gathered it's now time to define the key elements of

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the marketing and promotions plan and the lead time needed in order to execute successfully. Without deadlines little will get done. Lay out the opportunities that you would like to take advantage of and what/when tasks need to be completed.

Tactics

Tactics include defining exactly what you are actually going to do for each promotion. Create a central theme and develop a message to support that theme. Get creative and fine tune the preliminary details of the promotions prior to implementation. Most people start at this step and then wonder why their promotions didn't work.

Execute

A great promotion means nothing if you can't execute, so make sure your staff is fully prepared and don't spare any details. Designate someone from your staff to drive the promotion. Then provide them with a Promotional Execution Guide.

Include the following:

- **What** — A summary of the promotion and goal(s).
- **When** — Pertinent "headline" dates (start, end, contest dates, finals, etc.).
- **Who** — Who is doing what and by what date? Sponsorships, POS materials, drink development, running the contest (if there is one)/ contest rules, media, staff, food, etc.
- **FAQ** — Think of all of the things a customer or server may ask and make sure you have an answer. Can someone reserve a table? If so, who and how? Who handles reservations, and is there a special reservation list? Is there an employee incentive? How does it work? What are the prizes? Are there food specials? What are they?

A FAQ list can be hung on the employee bulletin board or attached

to paychecks to make sure everyone is aware of the event as well as when and how it works for staff and guests.

Make sure to check in with the appointed staff member in order to keep them on track and provide them with the proper support to ensure success.

Evaluate

Evaluation of the marketing and promotions plan should take place on an overall level at the end of the year and an individual promotions level. Did the promotions work? If so, great! But, what elements contributed to the success of these promotions that can be applied to the others? What if your master plan didn't work? What can you learn from the promotion and make sure not to repeat.

success of these promotions that can be applied to the others? What if your master plan didn't work? What can you learn from the promotion and make sure not to repeat.

Do Not

Do not fall prey to the latest trends or fads. Not all of them will compliment your brand or relate to your target audience. The most effective

promotional plans are cohesive and well-planned.

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are
often used
after the fact
to make sense
out of an
action that
has already
occurred*

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Sauk Rapids Liquor Has Turnaround Year

By Kari Petrie, St. Cloud Times

After several years of declining profits, the Sauk Rapids municipal liquor store had a turnaround year in 2013.

The liquor store more than doubled its profits in 2013 compared with 2012. In 2012, the store made a net profit of \$62,400, and in 2013, it made about \$140,000.

Liquor store manager Tom Boulton gave the Sauk Rapids City Council an update on Monday about the store's operations.

He said 2013 was the best year the store has had since 2004.

In recent years, the Sauk Rapids liquor store has seen a drop in its net profits.

From 2008 to 2012, the store had a 50

percent drop in net profits, according to reports from the State Auditor's Office.

In 2008, the store made \$124,000.

Boulton attributes the turnaround to more advertising, using social media and better ordering.

He said they work to have comparable prices with the other liquor stores in the area. Boulton started managing the store in September 2012.

The store has started a wine club that had about 30 participants at an event last week.

All the tickets for the April event are already reserved, but Boulton hopes to add seats.

Boulton said the store has also increased its options in craft beer, which has grown in popularity.

Statewide, municipal liquor stores saw a 33.7 percent increase in net profits from 2008 to 2012, according to the auditor's 2012 report.

Off-sale stores, like Sauk Rapids, saw a 27.6 percent increase during that time period.

In 2012, municipal off-sale liquor stores in outstate Minnesota saw an average net profit of \$176,000, according to the report, which was released last month.

In 2012, Sauk Rapids paid about \$422,000 in operating expenses at the liquor store, according to the auditor's report.

Bad Reasons for Not Checking ID

A Metro Minnesota police department recently ran stings at businesses that hold liquor licenses to make sure they aren't selling alcohol to minors.

According to the local newspaper, 10 out of 56 establishments failed the compliance check. And asked why they sold booze to underaged folks, three of the busted employees, in particular, offered up humorous excuses.

In one instance, the clerk said he was so blinded by a 19-year-old customer's beauty that he decided to press his store's magic button.

The 62 clerk, never asked for an ID. He stated the 19-year-old customer was very pretty. He further stated she appeared to be over 30 and there was a button he could press at the register that allowed him to bypass the date-of-birth entry.

At another establishment a 68-year-old

clerk sold booze to a minor without asking for ID but explained that "it was the end of his shift and there was a line, so he was trying to move quickly.

At another location, a 63-year-old employee said he simply "totally forgot" to ask for ID after he was caught selling to a minor red-handed.

At least those guys had excuses. However at an asian diner, a 22-year-old manager checked a minor's ID, but then proceeded to sell them booze anyway. Perhaps she didn't realize employees don't get any points merely for making an effort.

While their excuses may have been amusing, the penalties the aforementioned employees face are not. All who failed the compliance checks have been charged with gross misdemeanors and face maximum penalties of a year behind bars and/or a \$3,000 fine.

Voids & Returns

By Minnesota State Auditor

Avoiding Pitfalls: Cash Register Theft Schemes: Voids and Returns

For public entities using cash registers, it is important to recognize that voids and returns can be used to cover up cash register theft schemes. To reduce the risk of becoming a target of such a scheme, remember to segregate duties: the person ringing up the sale should not be able to approve voids or returns.

One very simple internal control is the use of void and return forms at each register. A form should identify the amount of the void or return, the employee working the cash register, and the customer involved in the return. A form should require a manager's approval of the void or return. If the manager is the person initiating the void or handling the return, a second person's approval should be required. Once the void or return is approved, the form would be placed in the cash register drawer and maintained with the cash register tapes

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Fun Alcohol Quiz

By Betty Stein for The News-Sentinel

My daughter and I were talking about — what else — the weather, and she mentioned a tropical paradise. She went from there to Hawaii and came up with the idea for this column: How about alcoholic beverages? They keep people warm, don't they?

So that's what this is about. Every question has a connection with an alcoholic drink or alcohol.

1. Who wrote the immortal words "Candy is dandy, but liquor is quicker"?
2. The novel "Catcher in the Rye" is back in the news. Who wrote that gem?
3. What is the drink we associate with the Kentucky Derby? (No, not Four Roses!)
4. What is a sommelier?
5. You use it to securely wrap a gift, it's manufactured by 3M and it's a transparent adhesive tape. What is it?
6. What do we call the tall, slender glass usually reserved for Champagne? (OK, so it's also a musical instrument.)
7. It's a breed of a large, heavy draft horse with heavily feathered legs and is associated with a popular American beer. Its name?
8. Which Scottish poet wrote "Comin' Thro' the Rye"?
9. It was successful first on television's "Playhouse 90" and then hugely successful as a movie starring Jack Lemon back in 1962. The title song was great, too. What is the title?
10. Its name also is used for a very helpful household tool. Name the drink.
11. A Belorussian who is Caucasian shares this name with an alcoholic beverage. What's the name?
12. It's also a girl's name, but she doesn't have salt around her edges. What's the drink?
13. What is Martini & Rossi?
14. Why is the real Champagne always capitalized?
15. Why has news person Elizabeth Vargas been in the news very recently?
16. It's a drink often associated with brunch. It consists of orange juice and Champagne and is also the name of a tree with colorful flowers. Its name, please.
17. It's a lovely song from Cole Porter's "Anything Goes," which fits into this quiz. You'll get a kick out of being right.
18. It is a city in Israel, principal city of the Negev, and goes back to ancient times. It lends part of its name to this quiz.

19. It was a wildly popular song back in the big band days, and then Spike Jones took hold of it with a hilarious version.

20. A lovely Viennese waltz is "Wine, Women and Song." Name the composer.

There you have it. A bonus? You want a bonus? OK: Who starred in "Cocktail," a film about a charming, flashy bartender?

Answers: 1. Ogden Nash; 2. J.D. Salinger; 3. Mint julep; 4. A wine steward; someone really knowledgeable about wines; 5. Scotch tape; 6. Flute; 7. Clydesdale; 8. Robert Burns; 9. "Days of Wine and Roses"; 10. Screwdriver; 11. White Russian; 12. La Margarita; 13. an Italian alcoholic beverage company specializing in vermouth and wine; 14. Champagne is a region of France; 15. She announced she had become addicted to alcohol and is now a member of Alcoholics Anonymous; 16. Mimosa; 17. "I Get No Kick from Champagne"; 18. Beersheba; 19. "Cocktails for Two"; 20. Johann Strauss Jr.

Bonus: Tom Cruise

*Managers
are often
uncomfortable
discussing
performance
weaknesses
directly with
employees*

*Men tend to use
talk to emphasize
status, while
women generally
use it to create
connection*

Things They Didn't Tell You About Retail

By Bob Phibbs, Retail Doctor

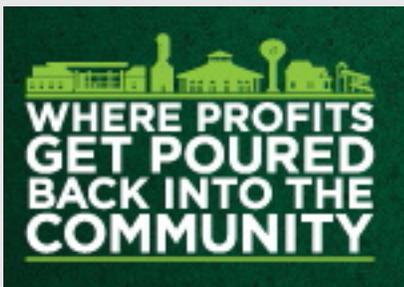
- As soon as you figure out what your customer wants, they will want something totally different.
- What customers say with their mouths is interesting, but what they say with their wallets is how they really feel.
- You will always remember the customer who managed to get under your skin and got you to lose your cool... even if you were right.
- Every big event coincides with a terrible storm.
- Customers will have suggestions for every part of your business - what you carry, what events you should hold, etc. But what they buy, attend, and otherwise support, is another matter entirely.
- You will work weekends, nights and holidays; if you don't like it, don't go into retail.
- Just because someone asks for a discount, doesn't mean they won't buy if you don't give them one.
- Customers never read the small print on coupons.

- 99% of the time, that 800 number on your caller ID is probably a merchant-services telemarketer trying to get you to switch to them.
- Sometimes a Tuesday might be your best day of the week; other times it will be a Saturday. In retail, there is often no consistency.
- There will always be customers who won't respect your store, products, or employees.
- Without a sense of humor, you will never survive. OK, you may survive, but you will be miserable.
- The customer is not always right.
- There are many businesses out there whose only business is to rip-off and scam other small businesses.
- Sales reps lie...even the good ones.
- If you let your vendor substitute one item for another one time, the next time they will simply send you whatever they feel like sending you, to the point that you won't even recognize it as your order.
- You'll have to fire the friend you were sure would be a great business partner

or employee.

- 20% of your customers are responsible for 80% of your sales.
- You can always be told "no" and say "no."
- Organization is a skill worth working on; it's what can make or break you.
- You need to listen for what customers actually spend their money on, not what they say they want.
- You'll discover an employee you loved during the interview is unable to do the job.
- The best parenting advice in the world doesn't mean a thing if you don't know what YOUR baby needs. Retail is no different. Know your baby.
- Consistently great customer service will make your business thrive, but one bad customer's experience, in the face of social media, can close your doors!
- Even with all of the maddening things that come along with being a retailer, the things you will learn about yourself, your customers, and your community will make your life more rewarding.

Edina Liquor Has New Tagline



Edina Liquor has created a new tag line - "Where profits get poured back into the community" - which is proudly displayed in their advertisements and other materials.

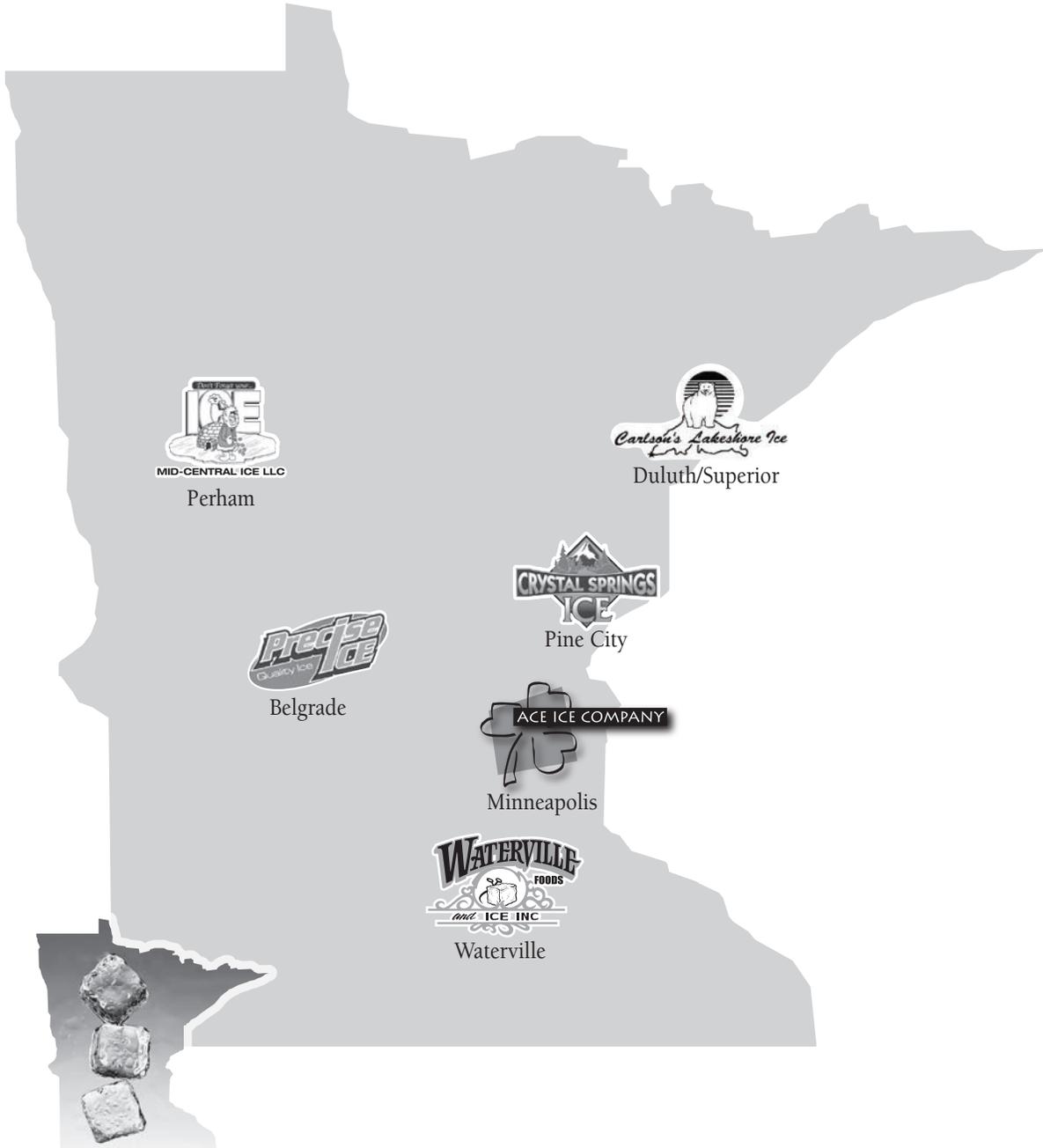
More of their new branding can be found on the liquor store website.

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Beware of Unseen Consequences

Recently, the Rochester Post Bulletin printed an editorial endorsing Sunday Sales of alcohol.

The thought, “beware of the unseen consequences” entered my mind.

Sunday sales could affect so many people in so many ways. From the obvious, of a family owned store being forced out of business to the incremental of losing the sponsor for an adult softball team.

Some argue the law is antiquated, but the economics of Sunday sales are very present day.

I would encourage you to contact your representative and make yourself heard!

My letter of response to the Post Bulletin, which was limited to 200 words:

A little boy was in a relative's wedding. As he was coming down the aisle he would face the crowd, put his hands up like claws and roar loudly.

So it went, step, step, ROAR, step, step, ROAR all the way down the aisle.

When asked what he was doing, the child said, “I’m the Ring

Bear!”

Current legislative action regarding liquor sales on Sunday, would not come without a cost. I do not believe the cost is worth the added convenience.

Opposition to Sunday sales is a matter of economics for store owners and managers.

It will spread six days sales, over seven days, with additional labor and utility costs.

The result would ultimately drive profits down or prices to the consumer, up.

The proponents who glibly offer, that a liquor store does not have to open on Sunday, or could be closed another day of the week, do not understand competitive industry.

Sunday sales, could lead to the elimination of 3.2 beer and thus, result in wine

& strong beer sales in grocery and convenience stores.

In a state where elected officials tout their allegiance to ‘Mom & Pop’ businesses this legislation could prove detrimental.

“Why in our right mind as Minnesotans would we perpetuate policy that exports our commerce to neighboring states?” Drazkowski asked.

Perhaps the answer to this question is not the days that Minnesota stores are open, but rather the fact that the sales tax on beer and alcohol in Wisconsin is 5.5 percent while in Minnesota it is 9.37 per cent.

Catherine Pletta

Fergus Falls Journal Editorial

Make no mistake, it would be beneficial to consumers if the Legislature passed a bill to allow liquor stores to sell alcohol on Sunday.

However, the hardship it would put on liquor stores, including municipal liquor stores in Fergus Falls and the surrounding area, seem to outweigh the convenience to consumers.

Since the days of prohibition, the laws preventing the sale of alcohol at liquor stores on Sundays was to maintain control over the sale of a product that clearly can be harmful if abused.

That said, the fact is that Minnesotans are used to the law, and have planned their shopping patterns around it.

Changing it would mean liquor stores, both private and municipal, would spend more money on staffing, utilities and other expenses, and would not likely see an increase in revenue, since sales would be spread out over seven days instead of six.

Other than convenience, there does not seem to be a dire need to change the law. Let's just leave it as it is.

Ways to Analyze Your Operation

The first part of the New Year always seems to go by really fast for me, as this is the time to analyze our business in 2013 and look ahead to 2014.

I also make sure this time of year I clean up my computer to make it run more efficiently.

Here are some of the things that help me analyze my operation:

- I run sales analysis reports to show me my top sellers in sales and profit. I do these reports as overall items and by department such as liquor, beer and wine. These reports let me know what items made me the most money and helps me set my displays for the first part of the year. I can also work with my vendors in hopefully getting better deals when they see how their product performs.
- I also run 12 month sales reports to see what trends are happening at different times of the year.
- I run “last received” and “last sold” reports to help me get rid of slow items so I can make room for new products that hopefully will sell better.

- I run productivity reports to see if I’m utilizing my staff in the proper way and making sure I have the best coverage during peak times.

These are some of the things I do to help me run our stores to be the most profitable they can be.

If you need any help in setting up or running these reports, feel free to contact me or another board member and we’ll be happy to help.

I also know that for my POS system to run the best, I need to do some cleaning up of files and data and this time of the year is the best time.

- Delete inactive items. You can run a delete inactive item report and eliminate hundreds of items that are just taking up data space. Do not just delete items - you need to run the report. I purge all the records I can to clean up valuable data space. I can help walk you through this if you would like.
- When purging the “trans log” file, I only keep 2 years. The same for the sales history file. I have found I do not

look back further than 2 years, so why keep data I never look at.

- If you run the ARS POS system, you can also call TRS and have them help you. If you have their new maintenance contract they can remote into your system and show you how to clean up the data base.

- Something to consider... If you are replacing computers in your store this year, keep one of the ones your replacing to use as a backup. If a computer crashes, you will be able to use one that you replaced in a pinch. It may run slow, but it beats not having a replacement and being without for a few days.

I hope I have given you some ideas for things to do to help you succeed in 2014.

Good luck and I wish all of you a very prosperous 2014.

Remember our board is here to help, but you need to take that first step.

Steve Grausam
Edina Liquor

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