

THE
MUNICIPAL
LIQUOR STORE

Volume 73, Number 5, 2014/2015

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MINNESOTA BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION
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Don't Have the
"It Can't Happen Here"
Attitude

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ON THE COVER

One of the toughest parts of security planning is overcoming the "It Can't Happen to Me" attitude.

Here is a recent note from an MMBA member...

Late last year, we had an attempted break in on our front door.

The lock was drilled out and there had been an attempt to crow bar the door frame open.

I didn't expect the same people would come back 4 days later and succeed by coming through our patio door.

See page 8 for the rest of the story.

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MMBA President's Message



Brenda Visnovec
President

Welcome 2015! Here is to hoping that each of you had a happy and prosperous holiday season!

Over the past four months we all know the market has changed! In the last issue, we discussed how all of you can compete with Total Wine & More. Now many of you may believe that being three or four hours away from the Metro provides you some protection from this new behemoth in the industry, but that couldn't be further from the truth.

Total Wine & More entered the Market in September. By December, the small town of Twin Valley, which is on the North Dakota border and more than a four hour's drive from the Metro area had received requests for a Total "proprietary" product called Veil Vodka.

Thinking forward.... How will those requests multiply once Metro area customer's start traveling north for the tourist season!

Is this bad news for the outstate municipal operations? **ABSOLUTELY NOT!**

This is **OPPORTUNITY KNOCKING!!**

These products are not exclusive to Total Wine & More. In the State of Minnesota, any product carried by a wholesaler for one retailer must be available to all. Any one of our operations could have demanded to carry Two Buck Chuck or even Costco's Kirkland brands. The difference is those retailers did not call out municipal operations informing them that they were going to put them

out of business, nor did they overinflate the retail prices of these products while selling other items at or below cost!

In Lakeville, we have brought in 40 different wines that are "Total Proprietary Labels". We selected a wide range to include all different price points as well as all different categories.

Page 6 has a list of our ten largest wine categories and the top ten sellers over the past two months. The wine italicized and in bold are the "Total Proprietary" wines, those with the double asterisks are the most profitable item within the category. As you can see these wines are more than viable! They are excellent quality, have appealing labels, and are extremely profitable and successful!

Are there any downsides to selling this product? Some, but they are minor in comparison to the rewards!

- Orders typically require a month lead time in order to get the products in stock. But once you learn how they sell, it is easy to forecast the sales to ensure these items remain in stock.
- Items must be submitted to Gary Stokvis at Johnson Brothers directly and can not be submitted by your regular sales reps. You can contact Gary by email at gstokvis@johnsonbrothers.com
- Finally, your sales reps will be upset! But I look at it this way, we carry 2080 different wines. At this time, we carry 40 wines that are "Total Proprietary". That is less than 2% of all the wine products we carry. Yes, we have some upset sales representatives, but as responsible operators, we need to remember, our job to perform and make the best decisions for our city, not what is always the easiest, nor should our judgment be swayed based on friendships. Remember to reward those sales reps

who are supporting your needs, and hold those who aren't accountable.

Now for the advantages in carrying Total Wine proprietary items:

1. These items are extremely profitable as Total Wine has some wines marked up more than 400% with the majority of these proprietary labels marked up around 140-150% range.
2. These items have clean packages and are excellent juice within the bottle.
3. We have heard from several bright retailers from the north jumping on board with the understanding they can appeal to the tourist industry. They are out to demonstrate they have selection and pricing that will compete with the biggest of retailers. The weekend visitor can shop their stores and be serviced rather than hauling product with them.
4. Best reason I can provide though, is they sell! Not only for Lakeville, but for others that have taken the charge including those outside of the metro area.

If you need the list of "Total Proprietary Items" please do not hesitate to contact Paul or myself.

Good luck and here's to hoping you make lots of money during the summer tourist season (since we know the Snowmobile Gods were not good to you this winter!)





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|--|---|

Lakeville Liquors Top Ten Sales by Category Since December 2014

Sales are reflective from Dec. 1, 2014 through Jan. 31, 2015
 Items italicized are Total Wine “proprietary labels”
 Items with double asterisks is the wine with the highest gross profit percentage within sub-category

<u>Domestic Cabernets - 166</u>	<u>Domestic Merlots - 90</u>	<u>Domestic Pinot Noirs - 101</u>	<u>Domestic Zinfandels- 47</u>
Carnivor Cabernet Coppola Diamond Cabernet Louis Martini Sonoma Cabernet <i>Bridgman Cabernet</i> Beringer California Chat. Ste Michelle Indian Wells Josh Cabernet BV Coastal Cabernet <i>Carson Ridge Cabernet **</i>	Coppola Diamond Merlot <i>Bridgman Merlot **</i> Beringer California Merlot Ste Michelle Indian Wells Merlot Barefoot Merlot Josh Merlot Crane Lake Merlot 14 Hands Merlot Blackstone Merlot Cupcake Merlot	Mark West Pinot Noir Coppola Diamond Pinot Noir La Crema Pinot Noir <i>Cloud Break Pinot Noir Reserve</i> Rodney Strong R. River Pinot Noir Mirassou Pinot Noir Mondavi Private Selection Carmel Road Pinot Noir Votre Sante Pinot Noir <i>Sonoma Cuvee Pinot Noir **</i>	Mondavi Private Selection Ravenswood Vintners Bogle Zinfandel <i>Sobon Cougar Hill Zinfandel</i> Gnarly Head Zinfandel <i>Oak Ridge Lodi Zinfandel **</i> Decoy Zinfandel Coppola Diamond Zinfandel Seven Deadly Zins Cline Ancient Vines Zinfandel
<u>Italian Imports - 108</u>	<u>New Zealand Imports - 29</u>	<u>South American Imports - 116</u>	<u>Domestic Other Reds - 164</u>
Cupcake Pinot Grigio Ecco Domani Pinot Grigio Santa Margherita Pinot Grigio <i>Piazzini Chianti Classico **</i> Gabbiano Pinot Grigio Gabbiano Chianti DOCG Atoria Pinot Grigio DaVinci Pinot Grigio DaVinic Chianti Classico Ecco Domani Moscato	Cupcake Sauvignon Blanc Kim Crawford Sauvignon Blanc Nobilo Sauvignon Blanc <i>Grey Rock Sauvignon Blanc</i> <i>Grey Rock Reserve Sauv. Blanc **</i> Kono Sauvignon Blanc Oyster Sauvignon Blanc Monkey Bay Sauvignon Blanc Sileni Sauvignon Blanc Whitehaven Sauvignon Blanc	Piatelli Malbec Gascon Malbec New Age White Trapiche Oak Cask Malbec <i>Flichman Malbec Tupongato **</i> Punto Final Malbec Alamos Malbec Oko Malbec Santa Julia Malbec La Joya Reserve Syrah	Apothic Red Menage a Trois Midnight Coppola Diamond Claret 14 Hands Hot to Trot Red Menage a Trois Red Bogle Petite Sirah <i>Red Theory Red Blend</i> <i>Hi Jinx Red Blend **</i> Columbia Crest H3 Red Blend Coppola Diamond Red

Fergus Falls Daily Journal Editorial

As it typically does, the Fergus Falls Municipal Liquor Store was among the top 10 municipal liquor stores in Minnesota in terms of revenues, and second among cities outside the Twin Cities metro area.

While some may prefer allowing private liquor stores rather than two city-operated stores, the facts seem to suggest keeping the system as it is makes the most sense.

- The municipal liquor store will contribute \$500,000 to the city's general fund for 2015.

Without it, the Fergus Falls City Council would have had to reduce city services or raise property taxes to make up the gap.

- Not allowing private entities to sell liquor also ensures the profits stay in Fergus Falls. While private liquor stores might have local ownership, it's certainly not a guarantee.

It may well be that profits generated from private liquor stores may be shipped out of Fergus Falls.

- It's possible that competition would be beneficial to consumers in the form of lower prices, more variety and additional locations.

However, an informal pricing check would suggest the Fergus Falls stores offer competitive pricing.

If they were not, more residents would buy their alcohol elsewhere. In addition, the two locations and large selection, thanks to the city's investment in the west side liquor store, seem to meet the demands of consumers.

A municipal liquor store system may not work for every community.

But it works for Fergus Falls, and at this point, should stay that way.




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It Can't Happen Here

Late last year, we had an attempted break in on our front door.

The lock was drilled out and there had been an attempt to crow bar the door frame open.

I didn't expect the same people would come back 4 days later and succeed by coming through our patio door.

I received a phone call from our security company at 3:16am on Friday, November 21st that the alarm was going off and wondering if they should dispatch out law enforcement.

I instantly replied yes and got out of bed to head into town to meet our local law enforcement to assess the situation.

Upon arrival at the Liquor Store the police officer said he had checked the front and back door and said they were secure.

As I looked into the front door, I noticed glass all over and asked if he had checked our patio door because it appeared it was broken out.

We entered the building so he could search the inside.

I immediately went to the office and noticed the door was broken down and the safe was gone.

After our remodel, bolting the safe to the floor was always something that was on my "To Do List" but other things got moved ahead on the list and as it got moved farther and farther down the list I never really gave it much thought.

5 years ago we were robbed and our entire safe was cleaned out because my bartender had forgotten to lock the safe before she left for the night.

It was not an inside job, just careless on the bartender's part to not double check to make sure the safe was locked before leaving for the night.

The person broke in was never found and got away with about \$3000.

After that incident our closing procedures were changed.

Here are some things to help protect you from a break-in/robbery:

- **Install Cameras inside and around the perimeter outside of your building.**

We were fortunate enough to have a good camera system that we were able to download footage.

The 2 men who entered the building were completely covered from head to toe, but we were able to get a vehicle description and a clear view of the driver from our cameras in the back of the building.

The driver of the vehicle sat with the dome light on so we were able to get a shot of his face.

- **Have an alarm system that does not run through your phone line.**

When our alarm is armed and a code is not punched in upon entering the building the alarm goes off.

Alarms that run through your phone line to dispatch out the security company are not as effective as alarms that run through cell service.

People who want to break in, more than likely have investigated your place and know where your phone line is to cut it before entering the building.

- **Panic Button.**

We have a panic button installed for the safety of our bartenders when they are here and something would occur.

It immediately dispatches out law enforcement to come.

- **BOLT YOUR SAFE TO THE FLOOR.**

Our new safe is now bolted to the floor and make sure it is reinforced securely.

- Do not keep a large amount of cash in the safe at closing.

We do a money drop to the bank every night.

All that is left in the safe at closing is the rolls of extra change.

All checks, currency and credit card receipts go to the bank.

This time we only lost \$216 worth of change which is still a big deal, but it could have been a lot worse.

Our local law enforcement is supposed to come and escort the closing bartender to the bank each night but sometimes that is not always possible if they are out on another call.

- **Talk with your staff and tell them if they witness anything suspicious to let management know and document it.**

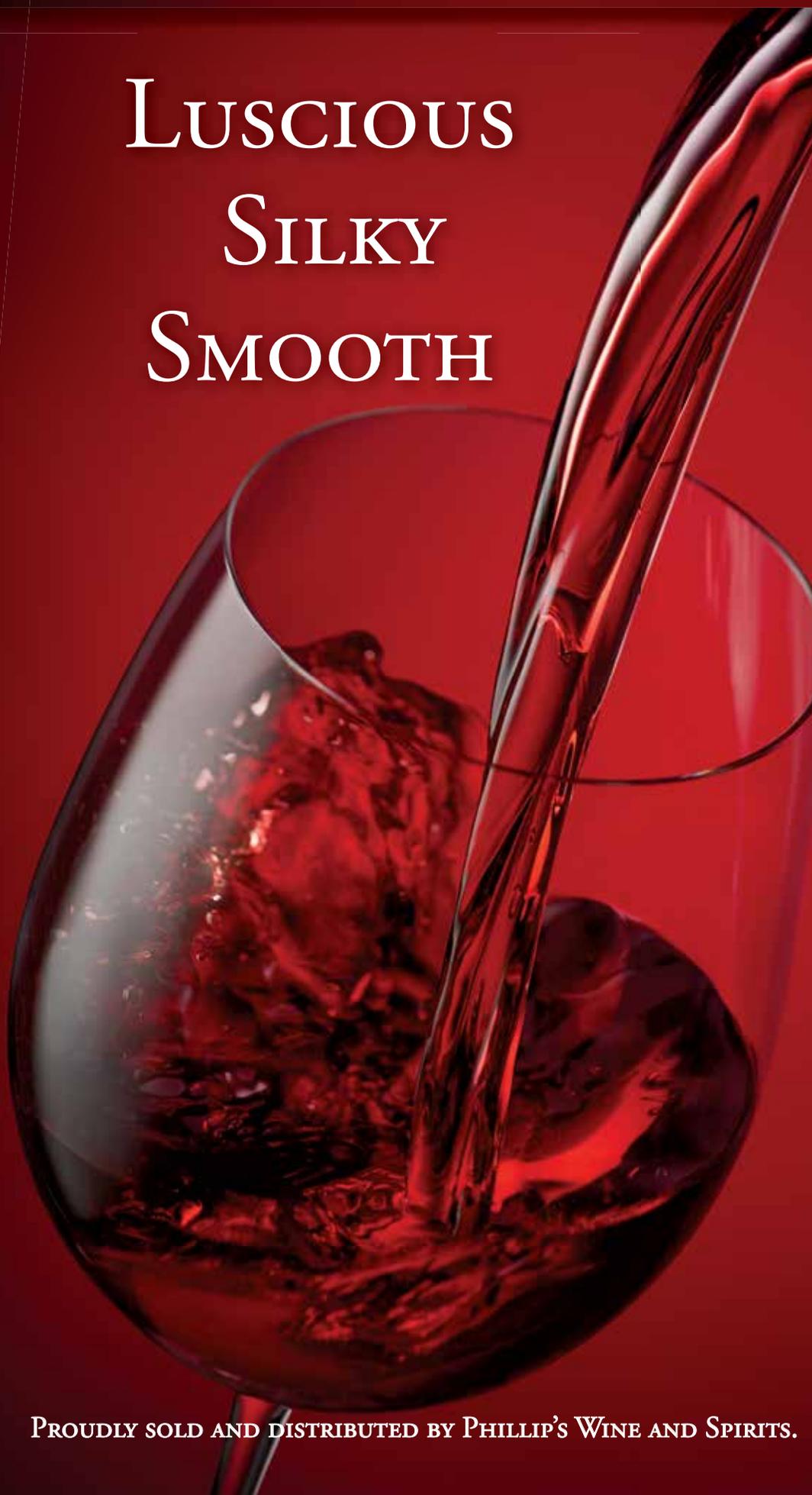
The people who broke in were in the week before and gave my bartender a bad feeling.

After she described them we were able to go back to that day on our security cameras and match the description of the vehicle and driver.

(Continued on page 10)

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It Can't Happen Here

(Continued)

- **The people who robbed us were in and out of the building in 2 minutes and 30 seconds, there was no way they were going to be caught**

By the time law enforcement was dispatched from the security company the 3 people were already gone and out of town.

However, by having a camera & alarm system we were able to get footage for our law enforcement for an investigation.

- **If a robbery ever happens to you, make sure not to disclose any information that could potentially ruin the investigation.**

When I get asked by customers if there have been any leads in the investigation, I reply "I can't talk about it".

Of course customers will make their own assumptions anyway, but I do not want to interfere with the investigation by telling them the things I do know.

- **Please don't have the "It can't happen here" attitude.**

You never know if a break-in or robbery is going to happen.

Now is the time to evaluate your procedures so it doesn't happen to you.

I didn't think it would happen here twice in 5 years either but I am really glad we changed our closing procedures because it could have been a lot worse this time around.

Cheers!

Karissa Kurth
Buffalo Lake Liquor



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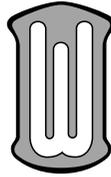
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Raise Your Glasses to Landmark Liquors

By Marie Johnson, Perham Focus

Everyone, raise your glasses in a toast to Landmark Liquors. Perham's burgeoning municipal liquor store had another record-setting year in 2014, and that means more money saved for local taxpayers.

For the first time in history, the store surpassed the \$3 million mark in annual sales volume, raking in \$3,063,790 - an increase of \$128,135, or 4.4 percent, over 2013.

Almost 3,100 additional customers came through the doors last year, and customers spent an average of 42 cents more on purchases than they did the year before.

Sales of beer, wine and liquor all increased. The store's net income went up, while operating expenses stayed the same.

In short, as store manager Bob Dreger said, "2014 was a very good year for Landmark Liquors."

The store has been consistently growing in recent years, with a sales increase of 28 percent over the past four years alone.

City Manager Kelcey Klemm said the rising profits show city leaders were right to relocate the liquor store in 2008, moving it from the lower level of City Hall to a larger building of its own on a site that's easily visible from Highway 10.

The decision to move the store "was controversial at the time," said Klemm. "But the then-city council and city manager made a good decision to relocate. It's proven itself. It's paid off."

Revenues from the liquor store help fund the city's day-to-day operations

as well as special capital projects, and are also used to support events and organizations such as the Perham Area Community Center, the East Otter Tail County Fair and the city's two museums.

The more money the liquor store makes, the more can be used for these purposes, and thus taxpayers are relied on less.

Klemm said \$40,000 of last year's liquor store revenues went into the city's general fund, helping to keep the tax levy down, while another large chunk has been designated to help pay the city's share of repairs to the library.

(The city expects to pay \$257,000 this year to rid the library of mold, while a state grant will pay another \$257,000.)

The overall impact on taxpayers is worth noting.

If there were no liquor store revenues to factor into the city budget, according to Perham Finance Officer Patti Stokke, the city's tax levy would have been 11 percent higher in 2014.

Stokke said the store's contribution to the general fund has long been a part of Perham's annual budget.

The amount reserved for the general fund hasn't changed in recent years, so excess or unexpected revenues are available to put toward other needed projects, such as the library renovations.

"Our profits get poured back into our community," is the slogan on our sign," said Dreger.

"It's important to keep your dollars at home. I think people are realizing what an impact we have on the community."

Dreger said Landmark Liquors' growth is fueled by Perham community members.

Though summer shoppers and some out-of-towners boost the store's bottom line, it's the year-round local customers who provide a "stable base" for the store, he said, "and that's what makes us successful."

He also credits the store's competitive everyday prices, as well as sales, discounts, promotional items and friendly customer service from his staff.

Customers who stop in from out of town, he said, "really like the small town, friendly atmosphere... We get so many compliments from people on the beautiful building and store, and the variety that we have."

To help keep the store growing into the future, Dreger said there are plans to upgrade point-of-sale technology so credit cards with smart chips can be processed.

There will also be more craft beers put on display in the main aisle, along with some new wines.

"There will always be something different here, to keep it fresh and exciting," Dreger said.

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What to Look for When Hiring

By Dana Manciangli , Mpls / St. Paul Business Journal

The holiday season may be over, but retailers still need to be savvy recruiters as 2015 kicks off. One estimate says that retail hiring should be up 24 percent in the first quarter of this year.

With consumer confidence and spending ramping up, retailers will be looking for fresh talent to fill out their ranks as they try to reduce turnover — especially as seasonal workers depart.

During this transition, they'll face a perennial challenge: Making sure they hire the right people for the jobs. Knowing the specific traits to look for when building sales teams can make or break retailers' bottom lines.

Why it matters

It turns out that hiring sales staff with good customer service skills can be a great way to boost business. A recent study by American Express found that more than two-thirds of retail customers say they are willing to spend more money — 14 percent more, on average — at a company they believe provides excellent customer service.

What are the top traits that companies should be looking for when hiring for these roles? SkillSurvey, a company offering sophisticated software that generates insights about job candidates based on reference feedback, recently released new statistics on retail workers based on feedback from almost 17,000 references on about 4,500 job candidates. Ray Bixler, CEO of SkillSurvey, puts these insights into context:

- Customer service and sales job candidates are generally strong when it comes to people skills. Almost all of them (95 percent) are rated highly when it comes to treating people with fairness and respect. Similarly, 93 percent are honest when dealing with

others, and 90 percent show ethics and integrity in their work.

- But there are missed opportunities, too. Job references report that almost a third of job candidates for customer service and sales roles have room for improvement when it comes to their ability to encourage customers to upgrade or buy new products or services. More than one in four could work on their ability to give customers specific recommendations about company products and services, based on information they learn about the customer.

Bixler said, "Employers will be well served by seeking out candidates who have shown that they can use

creativity and strategic thinking to create smart solutions to customer problems."

The bottom line

"Whether in-store, on the phone or online, retailers may not be completely satisfying customers and could be leaving sales on the table if they don't make the right hiring decisions this year," said Bixler.

He added that smart, strategic companies can set themselves apart and boost their bottom lines by hiring customer service and sales representatives who have demonstrated that they are great listeners and able to engage thoughtfully with customers.

Service Animals

The topic of service animals in restaurants is back in the news because of a Wisconsin woman who brought a baby kangaroo into a McDonald's and claimed it was a service animal because it gave her emotional support.

The only animals recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice as service animals are dogs and miniature horses.

This is the official definition under the Americans with Disabilities Act:

Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.

Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties.

Service animals are working animals, not pets.

The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability.

Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.



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10 Presentation Mistakes to Avoid

For some, public speaking is an opportunity to shine; for others, it's a nightmare.

Wherever you fall on that spectrum, understanding these 10 common presentation mistakes—and knowing how to fix them before they happen—can mean the difference between a presentation that's a career maker or a career breaker.

Too much content

According to presentation expert Paul Vorreiter of ReflectiveSpark.com, a company aimed at improving presentations and public speakers, your audience should need no more than three seconds to read and understand each slide. If they're busy reading the slide, they're not paying attention to what you're saying.

Too many bullet points

Bullet points don't tell a story, and a slide with 10 bullet points violates the three-second rule. Instead, break up that one overloaded slide into 10 slides with one idea each.

Relying on facts and figures instead of a story

A crucial mistake is failing to tell a compelling story. Instead of telling your audience that revenue is up 300 percent, detail how the revenue was increased or what the company is doing with the profits.

Making it all about you

The audience isn't there to try to decipher the tiny text on your boring slides. Make the presentation about them. Turn it into an event, something they will want to talk about with others. Know who your audience is, what they

them up at night.

Too many animations

Animations are fun for the person programming the presentation, but they usually add nothing. Keep things simple. The fewer bells and whistles your presentation has, the less likely things are to go wrong.

Too much text

In order to create an emotional response in your audience, use full-screen pictures. Use text for hard facts.

Disorganized presentation

When developing a presentation, most people open up PowerPoint and start writing. That's a bad idea. Instead, first use sticky notes to storyboard your presentation. It will save you lots of time and will help you organize your presentation. Plus, having limited space on a sticky note will help you maintain the three-second rule.

No rehearsal

A grave mistake that speakers and presenters make is neglecting to practice enough. Practice by yourself in front of a mirror; then practice in front of a colleague or friend. Practice

more times you've rehearsed, the more smoothly your presentation will go.

Last-minute changes

It's tempting to make adjustments right up until you walk on stage, but doing so opens you up to mistakes. Lock down your presentation a day or two beforehand; then, don't change a thing.

Technical difficulties

Most of us know the pain of waiting for a presenter to figure out how to make the projector work, or worse, listening to a presentation without slides because he couldn't make it work. Be prepared to connect your equipment to anything; a few dollars spent up front to buy all the right connectors will save you embarrassment and headaches. Know beforehand the kind of projector, the size of the screen and the layout of the room so you're prepared for anything.

Eliminating these 10 common mistakes will set you head and shoulders above your unprepared peers, whether you're presenting to your peers in a small conference room or giving a TED talk to an international audience.

Editor's Note: Segments of this article were taken directly from a LinkedIn.com article by Bernard Marr.



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