

Volume 74, Number 1, 2015

THE MUNICIPAL LIQUOR STORE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
MINNESOTA MUNICIPAL BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION
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Secrets to Effectively Managing Retail Employees

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ON THE COVER

Very little is understood about what it takes to manage a retail employee... well any employee.

The real crisis is that poor management of associates has left them as unengaged on the sales floor as they are in many aspects of their lives.

This allows them to work at a minimum level, with minimal interactions, with minimal engagement of customers, and with minimal impact on your sales... even though, deep down, they would like to feel a part of something...part of your store, part of your team, part of your success.

Go to page 7 to learn 9 secrets to managing retail employees.

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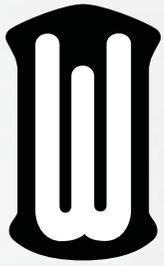


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Secrets to Effectively Managing Retail Employees

By Bob Phibbs, The Retail Doctor

A March 2015 survey by LoyaltyOne shows that approximately half of consumers reported experiencing a problem on their last shopping trip.

Of those customers, 81% decided not to contact the retailer about the issue. Among these *silent shoppers*, 32% said they were unlikely to recommend the retailer to friends and family.

I'm not surprised. Are you?

So very little is understood about what it takes to manage a retail employee... well any employee. The real crisis is that poor management of associates has left them as unengaged on the sales-floor as they are in many aspects of their lives.

This allows them to work at a minimum level, with minimal interactions, with minimal engagement of customers, and with minimal impact on your sales... even though, deep down, they would like to feel a part of something...part of your store, part of your team, part of your success.

If you don't want your employees to be as useless as the "g" in lasagna, follow these 9 secrets to managing employees:

Respect they have a brain. A grocery store route driver noticed the yogurt in one store never sold and went bad, yet they were always out of a particular salsa. So one week, he dropped the yogurt from an order and doubled the salsa. His boss called him on the carpet for independently modifying the order, and told him it was not his job to *think*. That boss was wrong. Actually, the best bosses understand great ideas can come from anywhere and always talk

to associates as equal of their time and concern.

Compliment in public. Everyone likes to know they are doing a good job and an occasional *attaboy* is fine, but the best go further. To develop leaders in your store, take time during store meetings to recognize associates for what they did well and tell why what they did was so good. When you find more of what employees are doing *right* than *wrong* and tell them specifically in front of others, you nurture a team environment.

Train in private. Learning requires judging – something is either right or wrong. For training to stick, you have to get past bad behaviors, which requires correction. No one ones to be corrected in front of others – or worse...in front of customers. Schedule time to train employees one-on-one off the floor, away from the demands of customers. Allowing employees to explore and ask questions without interrupting them on the floor gives them the space to learn. My virtual online training program SalesRX.com is perfect for this.

Encourage exploring the merchandise. Three of the worst words for a customer to hear from an associate are, *I don't know*. Make a point of everyone examining shipments for what's new. Make employees try on, handle, or use new merchandise.

Pay above minimum wage. A new employee agreed to start at minimum wage. She did a great job of pitching in, yet when her check arrived two weeks later, she posted her disappointment all over Facebook. She soon quit. If you want to attract and keep the best, you'll need to pay the best. Creating an *exceptional experience* takes thinking, acting,

and maximum talent. Those who can do that expect to be paid accordingly.

Hold accountable. If you train associates to do things correctly in your store, whether it is making a display, selling your luxury items, or doing a refund, you must hold them accountable for the expectations you have of them. Retail managers often only hold accountable those people closest to them like Assistant Managers or shift leads. But part-timers must especially be held to the same standards as they frequently are in more direct contact with your customers.

Help them find a friend. A manager's job is to train, encourage, and challenge their crew. One of the key components to making a great crew happens during *onboarding*. You want to help the new employee find things in common with other crewmembers. This helps remove the feelings of "them" vs. "me".

Ask their opinion. One of the most frequent comments about bad bosses is their inability to listen or pay attention to others. If you hire Millennials, you must involve them and get them to freely share their thoughts. It doesn't mean you have to use them all, but collaboration is the key in 2015.

Thoughtfully reward them. When goals or large sales are made or they went over and above, reward with a gift card, car wash, or something personal to their interests, not just money.

In Sum

Properly managing your employees helps them realize their own potential and allows them to sell from confidence and to grow personally while they help grow your retail business.

Promoting Without Discounting

By Whitney Johnson

The most common types of promotions in this industry are happy hours, two-for-one drinks, or free bottles for booking VIP tables. The common denominator in all of these options is discounting drinks. Discounts and promotions aren't the same and it's possible for you to run promotions without giving up your profit margin.

When you boil it down to basics, a promotion is simply the act of 1) raising customer awareness of a product or brand, 2) generating sales, and 3) creating brand loyalty. To do this, you'll need to focus on four areas, discussed below. But first, you must abide by the number one step of marketing: identifying your audience.

Know Your Audience

Before you can start any type of marketing, you first need to know who your audience is. Customers are the number one component of a successful venue; without them you don't have a business. Discover who your customers are, what their idea of a good party is, the music they like to hear, the alcohol they like to drink, and the experience they expect. This information dictates your entire marketing strategy, including your promotions.

Once you've solidified your target audience, it's time to get the pieces in place to set up your promotions. To be successful, you must understand the importance of brand marketing, pricing structure, inventory control, and brand perception.

Brand Marketing

The first part of promotions is brand marketing. Brand is king. This is something most venues don't consider, but is one of the most important parts of setting up your business. People

connect with venues that have a focused style, and that style is your brand image. It's what aligns customer expectation with customer experience. Your brand needs to represent your club's reputation through your attributes, values, purpose, strengths and passions. It should clearly differentiate you from the venue down the street or even across the country. Define your vision, create the essence you want your customers to experience, and design everything – from the logo to the interior to the message – around these items. From there, your featured drinks, events and other promotions should align with your brand image. Never lose sight of your brand, and always work to strengthen it online and inside your doors. This is what drives consistency for the public's perception of your brand and what gets people to connect with you on an emotional level.

There are three critical components to brand marketing:

1. **The experience.** Promote and provide the experience you have for guests. This is what your customers are really seeking.
2. **The venue.** Ensure your venue supports the experience you are proposing. This includes interior design, layout, DJ, drinks and service. Your customers expect a certain type of atmosphere based on your branding and your venue needs to support that.
3. **Special events.** Events are a bonus to your branding and shouldn't be the branding itself. When putting on an event, make sure it aligns with what you're creating and gives your guests that extra bump in excitement.

Pricing Structure

The second part of promotions is the

pricing structure. It's critical to understand what customers will pay in return for your atmosphere, party, drinks and food. To do this successfully, focus on these three items:

1. **Market Research** What are your competitors pricing structures? Is that working for them? Why or why not? Learn from this information to help you determine your own pricing structure so you're not pricing yourself out of the market.
2. **Target Market** What is your target market's potential entertainment spend? This goes back to know your audience and understanding what they'll pay for a venue like yours. It also goes back to your brand experience. If you're a higher-end establishment, your prices will naturally be a bit higher. If you're the neighborhood bar, then your pricing needs to reflect that. If you price yourself too high, you'll scare your customers away; too low and they might see you as cheap.
3. **Profitability** Always remember the formula $r-e=p$. That's *revenue minus expenses equals profitability*. Understand your margins relative to pricing. The only way to increase your revenue is to either raise your profit potential (by increasing the price of inventory) or decrease your expenses.

Inventory Control

The third part of promotions is inventory control. You need to manage your inventory and reservation process to get a predictable level of what you can promote. There are three steps to do this effectively:

1. **Designate a decision maker.** There need to be one or more decision makers who control

promotions. Remember, it's not just the price that drives your guests in, it's the overall experience. Bottle service is a part of that experience. The party is a part of that experience. All of that can be sold and can be promoted.

2. **Sell.** Create the demand for what you're selling and price accordingly. For VIP tables or event tickets, guests understand they have to pay more when it's busy, so capitalize on that when you can. That's your yielding strategy: increase prices as tables or tickets become sparser.
3. **Control what inventory you give away for free.** This is where promoting without discounting comes in. Free equates to a loss.

A guests' likelihood to spend drops more than 50% with every free drink or bottle.

Brand Perception

The final part of promotions is brand perception. This is the difference between promotions and discounts. Promotion is raising customer awareness of a brand, generating sales and increasing brand loyalty. Discounting, on the other hand, falls within the price area of the marketing mix. Discounting and promotions are congruent in marketing, but they are not the same.

Let's go back to free. Free is a four letter word and that's it – that's all it should be to you. The last thing you want to do is promote anything for free. Customers equate the word free

with cheap and never expect to pay full price. Do you really want them to think of your brand that way? Instead of giving away free inventory, create packages that entice your target market to increase the perceived value. Also, make sure your promotions make sense to your target demographic. If something is too obscure or makes little sense in comparison to what your brand is known for, it simply won't work.

Next comes the fun part: putting it all to work. If you know your audience to a T, you'll be able to better identify which marketing channels are the best to reach them. It's best to use multiple channels to spread the word and target your audience directly with messages that tie into your overall brand image. After all, brand consistency is a critical part to making your promotion work for itself.

New 2016 MMBA Conference Dates

In response to member requests, the 2016 MMBA Annual Conference has been moved from mid-May to mid-April.

April 17 -19, 2016 are the dates.

Arrowwood Resort remains the place.

Consequently, there will not be an MMBA Boot Camp in mid-February.

However, there will be a New Manager Orientation the Saturday before the conference, on April 16.

Mark your calendars and contact us if you have questions.

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Mackenzie Anderson

My high school career has been filled with rewarding and foreign experiences.

I started the high school journey in Seattle, Washington at Ballard High School.

It was in this gorgeous city that I found my everlasting love for the ocean, poetry, choir, and biology. I was involved in the Maritime Academy, a unique opportunity was for students interested in a career in the maritime field.

After school I ran with the cross country team and during springtime I would play softball with my friends.

Due to some family conflicts, the winter of my sophomore year I returned to my original home of Minnesota, where I first attended North Branch High School.

Participating in out-of-school events became more challenging because of the change in curriculums. I felt I needed to focus my attention on my classes in order to succeed. Music still proved to provide a safe, loving environment.

After spending a short two trimesters at North Branch High I transferred for the last time to Forest Lake Senior High School. I participated in many distinct opportunities including prom, prom committee, AP classes, homecoming, and the ACT.

Moving was very difficult for me to feel accomplished and included. Yet, during this struggle, I have learned how to adapt, meet new people, and step out of my comfort zone to effectively get the most out of High School.

I feel as if these experiences set me apart from most high school students, who haven't yet had to adjust to a new home. It is because of this maturity I am thankful for my unique high school experience.

The next exciting chapter in my life is college. I'm proud to be starting my collegiate education at Vermilion Community College.

This unique school is known for their involvement in the outdoors. Located on the border of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area there are many classes and school events that take place in this beautiful Minnesotan environment.

Along with rare class freedoms, Vermilion will equip me with a Liberal Arts and Science Associates Degree.

With this general degree I want to finish my schooling at a university on the west coast, majoring in Environmental Science/Environmental Engineering. Engineering and science classes will challenge me to create an even more rewarding college experience.

There are many circumstances in the world today where the environment is being compromised.

The Earth is home to many individuals

including, people, animals, plants, insects and it deserves protective attention.

I love our country and our Earth; hence I want to dedicate my life to protecting it for not only myself, but for future generations.

Mackenzie's father Jeffery works at North Branch Liquor



Kalli Beaulieu

High school was one long, four year roller coaster.

Freshman year was pretty average, nothing too exciting. I just wanted start out high school on the right foot.

Sophomore year things changed a little more. That year I started taking AP (Advanced Placement) classes. It was something new, but it didn't faze me. Also, I got my first job at Carribean Tan during that school year, but it only lasted a few months because the business closed down.

Junior year was probably the biggest year for me. I took for AP classes and also took college classes offered at the high school through ARCC and SCSU.

The college letters, postcards, etc. started trickling in when I was a fresh-

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man. But once I entered junior year it became a down pour.

That year I also discovered my love and passion for science, particularly biology. I found my major and now, where should I go to further my education once I graduate?

I narrowed my choices down to the U of M (Twin Cities) and St. Cloud State University. The summer before senior year I went and toured both. I ended up loving SCSU more, so my decision became clear.

In my senior year, I'm continued college classes through the high school, while working at Cub Foods, and participating in Model UN (I was a captain this year) and NHS.

Throughout my four years I have participated in NHS (two years), Link Crew (one year), theatre (three years), speech (one year), Model UN (three years), and student council (two years). I'm very excited to attend SCSU to study in biomedical science and hope to obtain some type of doctorate.

With my roller coaster ride of a high school career coming to an end, I'm glad it's ending on good note. I've enjoyed the ride.

Kalli's mother Roxanne works at North-bound Liquor in Cambridge



Emma Hengemuhle

Throughout high school, I have made an effort to prepare myself for college through my academics and extracurricular activities. I have taken a wide variety of courses to enrich myself as a person and a student.

In doing this, I have followed a college preparatory path to better prepare myself for my future endeavors. My rigorous courses, such as A.P. Calculus, CITS Pre-Calculus, CITS Communications, A.P. United States and World History, Accelerate American Literature, and Spanish IV.

These higher level courses have not only prepared me for the college level coursework, but also for the challenges ahead of me.

I am involved with the Upward Bound Program, which is a college prep program for low income, first generation college students. This program has given me endless opportunities that

have allowed me to experience community events and workshops I wouldn't have done before hand.

In this program, we have mandatory Thursday study nights, Saturday Academies, and optional Summer programs where we stay in the University of Wisconsin – Superior dorms. I participated in a week long environmental science exploration, and an educational trip to a city in the United States.

Besides participating in the Upward Bound Program, I have actively been involved in the Superior High School Chamber Orchestra, InterAct Club, National Honor Society, Environmental Club, and Senior Mentoring. Due to my involvement in these activities, I have bloomed into a well-rounded individual.

Amidst the challenge of taking these courses and being actively involved



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within my school, I have invested a majority of my time volunteering and giving back to my community.

I have volunteered at the Superior Middle School after school, which has been one of the most rewarding opportunities I have been granted. I have influenced the lives of several young students and realized many of my strengths.

Service projects are extremely important to me because I have found it is something I never cease to enjoy.

I love investing my time in my community and growing as a person because of my extensive involvement.

Emma's father Tim works at Edina Liquor



Dakota Krumrey

My high school career is filled with great lasting memories.

Earning my State FFA degree as a junior has to be one of the greatest highlights.

Placing first in my FFA proficiency in agriculture mechanics was one of the highlights as a senior.

I sang in jazz choir and many small groups receiving superior ratings at the Minnesota State High School Music Contest.

I played varsity football for four years and received All Conference Honorable Mention.

It is an award I was very proud to have received, being I played the position of lineman.

I also participated in wrestling, golf, band, and jazz band while I was in high school.

My greatest memory of all was our class trip as seniors to Washington DC, Philadelphia, and New York.

My career goals are to become an Agriculture Education teacher.

I would also like to become an FFA Advisor, a football coach, and a volunteer firefighter.

My reason for pursuing this career is the real need for Agriculture teachers.

Since there is such a shortage of these teachers, many schools have had to completely cut agriculture programs.

Everyone needs to learn about agriculture and the effect it has on this world. Without agriculture there wouldn't be a world.

The importance agriculture plays in our world needs to be taught to the upcoming generations.

Dakota's mother Sue works at Buffalo Lake Liquor

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How Lighting Can Impact Patrons

By: Bernadette Hasson, nightclub.com

A young woman walks into a bar. What does she notice?

“I usually take in the layout of the space, whether it’s crowded or not, and what’s on tap,” says Lauren D.

Lighting doesn’t even make her list. But research shows and interior designers agree, every customer is impacted by a bar’s lighting -- whether they know it or not.

Back in the 70s, Dr. John Flynn conducted a groundbreaking study of lighting’s effects on our moods and experiences. His conclusions show the lighting in a space determines whether someone considers the environment:

- Pleasant or Unpleasant
- Public or Private
- Spacious or Confined
- Relaxed or Tense
- Visually Clear or Hazy

In other words, every one of us, including Lauren D., is influenced by lighting when we walk into a bar. And if patrons’ moods and experiences are affected, bar owners better pay attention to the message their lights are sending. Good lighting can equal increased sales.

Jennifer Glickman is the Principal and Owner of Glickman Design Studio. She’s worked with several bar and restaurant owners in Boston to design their spaces. Jennifer says “the mood in the bar sets the tone for how long people are going to sit there and feel comfortable there, which of course then dictates how many drinks they’re going to order. Alcohol is a high cost per square foot item so it behooves the owners to have patrons sitting there longer, ordering more drinks.”

Lauren D. admits that lighting in a bar

subconsciously impacts her mood, her appetite, and not only what but how much she orders to drink. “If the bar feels warm with the right amount of light, I’m more likely to stay.”

When Lauren talks about the right amount and the warmth of light, she’s referring to light’s properties. Light, after all, is both a science and an art. We rely on light practically – to see inside after dark – and aesthetically – to set the mood and create ambience.

Stephen Martyak then must be both mad scientist and artistic genius as he designs posh restaurants (Boston Chops), happening music venues (The Sinclair), and popular bars (Bill’s Bar) around Boston. While he is responsible for designing the space from top to bottom (lighting to floors), he finds lighting to be the MOST important element in generating ambience in a space. He says at his company, Studio Tyak, they devote the most time to searching for the right fixture and the right output.

Fixtures, outputs, warmth, oh my. Light has many properties or characteristics, and each affects the vibe in an establishment and in turn the customer experience. Here is a breakdown.

Color Temperature

Every light source has a different color temperature measured in Kelvin (not degrees). Color temperature, unlike body temperature, doesn’t have to do with heat output. When you read “warm light” here, don’t think heat lamp. Lower color temperatures mean more yellow or warm hues; the higher the Kelvin measurement, the bluer or cooler the light. Confused? Understandably. We usually associate higher temperatures with warm weather, lower numbers with cooler

temperatures. It’s the opposite with color temperature.

Is there a “right” temperature? Jennifer Glickman says amber lighting in the bar area evokes comfort and encourages people to drink more. Stephen Martyak adds, “it depends on the space, but in terms of enjoying a meal, you want a warm light on the color spectrum, around 2400K is nice.” Cooler lights give off a greenish hue, making foods look unpalatable and faces unflattering.

While striving to realize a lighting vision, interior designers must also stay under budget and meet local construction codes. For instance, Stephen Martyak says he’s required to use LEDs because of energy codes. The upside - LEDs use significantly less wattage and thus last longer, meaning lower electricity bills, the staff doesn’t have to change bulbs out all the time, and owners need not fear lights unexpectedly going out on patrons mid-service.

The downsides – high initial cost and slim pickings. A good LED will cost \$250, a halogen \$20. With the fail rate of bars and nightclubs, owners may push back on the higher frontend costs. Secondly, LEDs are relative newcomers to the lighting scene. Manufacturers are continually improving upon their offerings, but Martyak says it’s still a challenge to get the right color temperature out of LEDs.

He recalls opening The Sinclair two and a half years ago. “At the time we put in 3000K lights (significantly cooler than I would have liked or would have been desirable). Just a couple years later, the same manufacturer is producing 2700K bulbs.” He says he designs with what he’s got and figures out ways to overcome any such obstacles. For instance, if the lighting is putting off greenish hues, you can counteract with warmer paint colors.



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Not the Brightest Bulb

Even at the right color temperature, lights turned too dim or too bright can detract from an establishment's ambience. Harsh fluorescent lights are used in fast-food restaurants for a reason. They're far from welcoming. The message is: grab your food, scarf it down, and be on your way.

In an upscale bar, on the other hand, dim light is the goal. Jennifer Glickman says to be especially mindful of the brightness when a bulb is exposed. You don't want it to be too blinding. On the flip side, "if it's too dim, where someone can't read the menu, that can become frustrating. That's something we consider too. You never want to see your patron holding their iPhone light up to the menu.

Kitchen lighting typically needs to be brighter so the staff can see what they're doing, but with an open kitchen concept, it's important the kitchen lighting is as pleasing to patrons as the bar and dining room areas. Here's where Glickman recommends layers of light --

The Layered Look

The lighting in a place is never just about one type of light hanging at one height. In the open kitchen concept, Glickman says she found layering very important, including lower ambient lighting to help the chef and his staff work. At the bar, she says pendants work nicely, but you never want the lights to feel too low so you create a wall between the patron and the bartender.

When employing layers of light, the combination must create a cohesive, pleasing whole. Stephen Martyak states Boston Chops is his overall best-lit project. "There we used a dimmed halogen lens so it provides you with a 2400K LED fixture, which is fantastic. That with the other incandescent fixtures and the 2700K LED cove lighting and under-counter lighting throughout that space, that place glows.

It's a jewel box."

It's All About That PLACE-ment

You can have the right fixtures, the right temperature, and the right output, but the precise placement of each light matters too. Jennifer Glickman says in a restaurant, she wants to see lighting over the tables, but people don't want to feel spotlighted either. "If the space is a nightclub, you don't want it to be overly bright, but you do need to light certain areas properly. You want to make sure you light the bar so if someone is on the opposite side of the space, they can identify where the bar is. You want to highlight that area. And then you need to make sure there is enough light in the dancing area so you can still see who is in front of you. Usually you'll have some sort of performer, and you want to be able to see the band or DJ too."

CONCEPT IS KEY

Lighting designers say they don't necessarily want patrons to notice the lighting. Oftentimes, it's only when the lighting is off that the average individual takes notice. If it's done right, they don't. Even if the lighting stands out as phenomenal and unique and pleasing to the senses, it's only part of the equation. If not accompanied by excellent service and an overall positive experience, lighting alone probably won't bring customers back. But bad lighting can drive people away.

Lauren D. says "I can't say that lighting has ever been the #1 reason I kept going back to a place (although I'm sure it contributes to my overall appreciation of a bar or nightclub), but I can definitely think of places

I wouldn't go back to because of lighting. I don't think blaring fluorescent light works in anyone's favor, nor do disco balls."

Stephen Martyak sums up a winning lighting design – "it is the right lighting for the concept – the right color temperature, the right fixture and that within everything else together that reinforces the concept. A well-designed space that is well lit that people feel comfortable in is where people will want to be. It's a combination of everything though – service, ambience, etc. that will get people to stay."

Enlightening Tips: A few bits of advice to illuminate your future choices.

From Stephen Martyak: "In a recent project, the client wanted to be involved, and was constantly challenging and questioning me which made for a far more robust result. I've had clients that have brought me a concept board and said this is what I envision and then I become editor in chief. I personally love it when the client is involved – this way when they're developing their menu, their cocktail list, their calendar, it is all far more cohesive."

Jennifer Glickman suggests you "use a lighting consultant! Just as a chef uses kitchen consultants to lay out a kitchen, a lighting consultant is equally important. I think this is something you don't want to leave out of a budget when you're planning to open a new restaurant/bar"

Bar patron Lauren D. advises you to "keep it warm, yet bright enough that you can read the menu or see the person next to you!"

How is it that our memory is good enough to retain the least triviality that happens to us, and yet not good enough to recollect how often we have told it to the same person?

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