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**MUNICIPAL**  
**LIQUOR STORE**

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Volume 77, Number 3, 2018



**Retail Sales Forecasting:**  
**Part Art, Part Science**

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# MUNICIPAL LIQUOR STORE

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## ON THE COVER

A carefully thought-out financial plan is essential to the success of your retail business.

**Owners and managers who plan ahead invariably achieve** more than those who don't take the time to draw up forecasts and set realistic goals for their stores.

One of the most important forecasts you will make is the **sales forecast**.

It requires that you make strategic decisions regarding the future of your business based on accurate information of your past performance and thoughtful projections into the future.

In short, planning a sales forecast is part art, part science.

The process is not as bad as it sounds.

See details on page 7.

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# MMBA President's Message



**CHRIS ARONLD**  
*President*

Hello, I hope everyone is well.

As I sit here contemplating what to write about, I looked at my calendar.

Where did the summer go, and furthermore where did the year go?

It seems like it was just a couple weeks ago when we had our annual conference.

Speaking of the annual conference, Ruben is doing well, back to work and enjoying every moment of it. A couple weeks ago, he attended the MMBA Regional Meeting in Bagley.

It was amazing to see how everyone interacted at the meeting and how happy everyone was to see Ruben back. It was almost like long-lost cousins seeing each other for the first time in years.

I almost feel the MMBA is like a second family. We look out for one another, try to help each other and if something happens to one of us, we are affected like it is one of our own family members.

Furthermore, we all help each other work for a common goal which is to help everyone succeed and make more money for their communities!

This year I attended all of the MMBA regionals meetings. My grandfather once said, "Christopher, knowledge is the most valuable thing you can ever get, because no one can take it away from you. So, go out there and learn whenever you get a chance."

I've never left an MMBA Regional Meeting or Annual Conference without learning something. So this year was really unique for me, seeing all the different aspects of how members operate and the happenings going on in other parts of the state.

We had excellent turnouts across the state, with many new faces and a few old ones.

The number one topic on everyone's mind was legislation.

It is possible you now have a new House Representative, or maybe the incumbent will be returning to St. Paul.

In either case, the best thing we can do as managers is to make a call to our elected officials and tell them all of the good things we do for our communities. Also remind them they would have to find more money to increase LGA in order to subsidize lost revenues from municipal liquor operations.

Good communications with legislators is not only good for your facility and staff it is good for all of us.

Our industry is always changing and MMBA will help you adapt.

I find myself very fortunate to have so many knowledgeable people sitting on the board with me. We have a well-diversified group of board members from across the state.

I'm not only fortunate to have knowledgeable board members, but to have a large group of knowledgeable managers out there who work together for a common goal.

So, thanks to everyone for their hard work and ask you to keep it up.

I hope everyone has a great last couple months of the year.

If you have any questions or need any help, get a hold of a board member and we will do what we can do to assist.

Remember, if we all work together we will all be successful.



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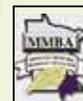


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# Retail Sales Forecasting: Part Art, Part Science

By *The Retail Owners Institute® and Outcalt & Johnson: Retail Strategists, LLC.*

If you are like many retailers, you probably haven't put together a **comprehensive business plan** since you first went into business (if you did it then!). But a carefully thought-out plan is essential to the success of your retail business.

**Owners and managers who plan ahead invariably achieve more** than those who don't take the time to draw up forecasts and set realistic goals for their stores.

One of the most important forecasts you will make is the sales forecast. It requires that you make strategic decisions regarding the future of your business based on accurate information of your past performance and thoughtful projections into the future. In short, planning a sales forecast is part art, part science.

## Where to Begin

The process is not as bad as it sounds. Dig out your sales figures from the past three years (if you've been in business that long) and **note your month-to-month sales trends**. You may find it helpful to summarize sales figures on a chart or spreadsheet. This will give you basic forecasting data. Look at More Than Past Sales Trends Past sales figures by themselves, however, don't give all the information you need to write an intelligent sales forecast. You also must consider a multitude of other factors.

Here are some important ones to keep in mind. Each of these has probably influenced your past sales, and will affect sales in the future.

- Your business' **previous sales levels**.
- **Comparisons** of similar selling periods.

- Your customers' **lifestyles** and tastes.
- The general condition of the **local and national economy**.
- Business conditions in your **retail niche**.
- Changes in the **competition**.
- Changes in **store's policy**.
- Changes in your **store's size**, space, or product mix.
- Dates of holidays, **number of selling days**.
- Changes in **pricing policies**.
- Changes in **morale and motivation** among your employees.
- **Advertising and promotion campaigns**.
- Changes in **relationships with suppliers**.
- **External conditions** that might have caused more potential customers to move into, or out of, your trading area.
- Establishment of **goals and planning**.

Think about how each factor has influenced past sales. Then think about how to work these variables into your projections of future sales.

April's \$40,000 sales figure by 1.05 to find the amount that will keep you

## Factoring in pricing policies

Now, let's look at an example of how to take these variables into account in your planning. These provide the "science" of forecasting.

Consider rising (or falling) prices. For example, how should you change your sales plan if you expect rising prices to increase the amount of your average sale by five percent?

In this case, you start by multiplying last April's \$40,000 sales figure by 1.05 to find the amount that will keep you even with last year's sales.

$$\$40,000 \times 1.05 = \$42,000$$

So, on the basis of rising prices alone, you can plan for a \$2,000 increase, assuming your unit sales remain constant. Of course, that \$2,000 doesn't represent a true increase, since your own rising costs offset it. It does, however, give you the new base from which to make your other calculations.

Once you've figured the new base amount, you can calculate the effect of other factors, such as changes in the number of selling days, then multiply by 1.20 to arrive at a true 20 percent increase.

You'll have to devote some time to calculating how these variables will affect your sales. Making straight month-to-month comparisons can be very misleading. Without accounting for an increase in prices, you could easily conclude that you are achieving good sales increases when your sales are actually dropping.

## The Final Steps

The next step in the sales forecasting process is where it becomes an "art." This again requires you to **apply your judgment**.

### First, look at your projections:

- Do they **make sense**? Do they pass the "**plausibility test**"?
- Based on all the information available, can you **substantiate the dollar figures you planned for sales**?
- Are they **sound enough** to use in **planning other parts** of your business?

- Are they **good enough for your banker?**

Then, compare your forecasts to actual sales results as you see them develop.

- Don't worry about occasional minor variations.
- But if you consistently over- or under-estimate your sales by 10 percent or more, you should find out what's causing the discrepancy.
- Then you can make whatever adjustments you think are appropriate.

Make sure that when you have completed this process that it all makes sense and feels right. **Satisfy yourself**

**that your forecasts are logical and complete.**

Your sales forecasts are the backbone of your business plan.

- Once you are satisfied your forecasts and the plan make sense on all counts, then **create a couple of alternate plans** based on different assumptions.
- That way, when your sales results differ significantly from your plan, you can immediately switch to an alternative plan that **already has been well-thought out.**

You should have plans for **how to react to a variety of future changes**, either positive or negative. It is particularly

**critical to plan for a worst-case scenario**, so you know some of your options ahead of time.

*Having contingency plans will enable you to follow your primary plan more confidently.*

**Sales forecasting involves both "science" and "art."** There are preexisting formulas to help you in factoring different variables in your forecast, giving you the freedom to make sound, sensible estimations and assumptions based on those formulas.

Don't let the process intimidate you; take advantage of it and get the best possible strategic planning for your business.

## SMART Campaign Wins National Award



The SMART campaign – Supporting Minnesota's Alcohol Regulations and Traditions - was recently presented with a national award from *State Ways* magazine.

The campaign was formed in 2015 to educate the public about state alcohol policies and to lobby against significant industry deregulation.

The campaign is made up of a coalition of labor and trade organizations including the Minnesota Municipal Beverage Association, the Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association, the Minnesota Beer Wholesalers, the Minnesota Wine and Spirits Association and Teamsters Joint Council 32.

According to coalition lobbyist Joe Bagnoli, "The coalition represents the common concerns of each participant and presents a unified front to both friends and foes. There is strength in numbers and our ability to effect change is greatly increased when we work together.

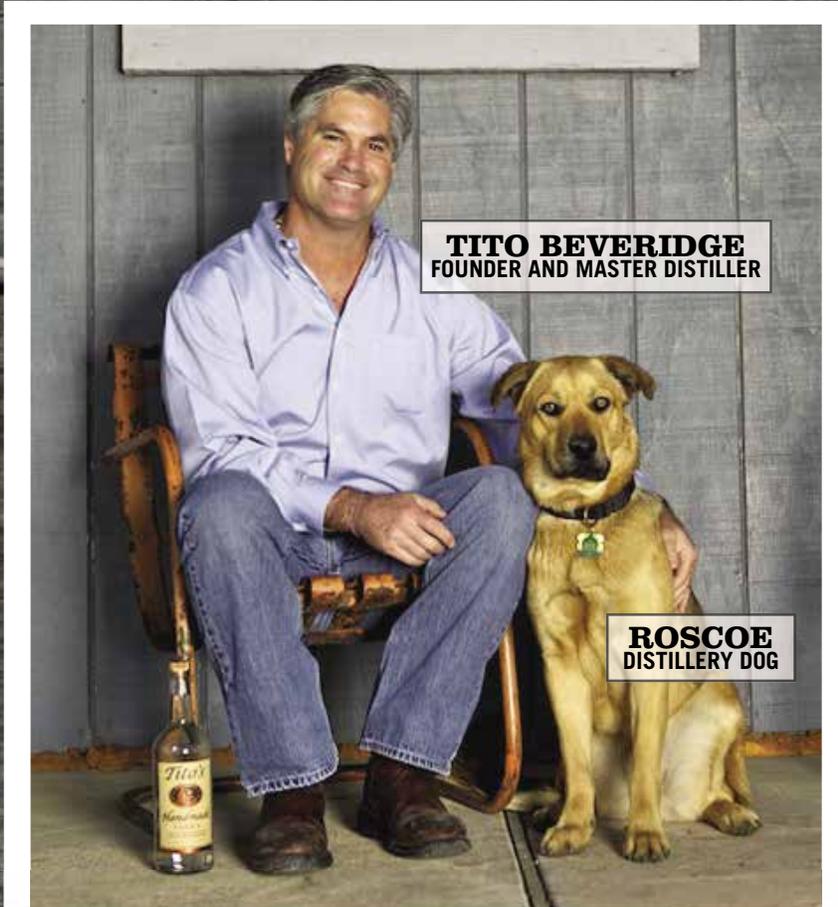
Pictured is MMBA executive director Paul Kaspszak and *StateWays* magazine managing editor Kyle Swartz.

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# 6 Ways To Care For Your Feet In The Service Industry

By Diane McMartin, SevenFiftyDaily

Anyone who has worked in the service industry knows the pain that the wrong shoes can cause over a long shift. Sommeliers and bartenders have physically demanding jobs that are especially hard on their feet, often in environments where looking polished is important, so broken-in sneakers aren't an option. Making the effort to care for your feet can help you stay comfortable and productive throughout your shift.

*SevenFifty Daily* asked sommeliers and bartenders across the country, as well as a podiatrist, for their best foot care tips and product recommendations.

## 1. Wear Compression Socks

Teri Perona, a bartender at The Bluebird Cocktail Room in Baltimore, Maryland, says the best way to prevent sore feet is to wear compression socks. These stretchy pressure stockings gently compress your foot and ankle, then gradually get looser further up your leg. Wearing them can help improve blood flow, which can lessen pain and swelling in your feet and lower legs. Says Perona, "I think the knee-high ones work better than the short versions."

## 2. Find the Right Shoes

Richard Mendelsohn, D.P.M., a board-certified podiatrist based in Northern Virginia, emphasizes the importance of making sure shoes fit

properly for their intended use. "Shoes that are too small will put pressure on your feet in the wrong spots and cause discomfort over time," says Dr. Mendelsohn, adding that flat shoes like TOMS are "basically just covers for your feet" and don't provide the arch support you need when standing for long periods.

"If you're moving around, the best thing to do is buy a good shoe that's big enough and use an orthotic insert." He also recommends getting professionally fitted for shoes once a year.

Robert Flood, the food and beverage manager for Baranof Fish Market in Sitka, Alaska, cautions that more expensive shoes aren't always better. "The [priciest] pair of shoes I ever bought in my life were Johnston & Murphy," says Flood, adding that they cost \$350. "I think I wore them twice before I said, These suck, and went back to my Clarks from DSW. That's all I wear." Flood and Mendelsohn agree that Clarks is a brand that's solid, supportive, affordable, and available in a range of styles.

In general, says Mendelsohn, good quality leather shoes provide arch support that flat shoes don't. Leather, he says, also offers a better fit because it retains its shape over more wearings than other materials.

If heels are a must, Mendelsohn says to avoid anything over two inches. Five-inch heels, he emphasizes, are "unsafe and not recommended." Wedge-style heels are the best choice, he says, noting that chunkier heels overall are better than spiky heels because they put less pressure on the heels of your feet.

Mendelsohn also recommends inserting pads in high-heeled shoes to cushion the balls of the feet.

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pads in high-heeled shoes to cushion the balls of the feet.

Amanda McCrossin, a sommelier at Press restaurant in St. Helena, California, recommends Shoes of Prey. “[The company] lets you customize your shoes to almost your exact specifications,” she says. “From heel height to width, toe shape, colors, materials—you name it, they can do it. They custom-create your shoe and send it to you within two weeks with all the necessary accessories for the perfect fit, from foot pads to heel gels.”

For additional toe padding while wearing heels, McCrossin recommends using a pair of Profoot Toe Pouches, or wraparound gel cushions. “There are several on the market—those, specifically, are the best,” she says, adding that she often gives them as gifts to friends in the service industry.

### **3. Use an Insole**

Mendelsohn says that most people won’t find the support they need from shoes right off the shelf, so he recommends using orthotic insoles to keep ligaments and arches from being strained. He mentions Powerstep insoles, in particular, saying, “Those are the most accessible ones. I wouldn’t recommend spending a tremendous amount for an over-the-counter orthotic—\$40 to \$50 is adequate.” Make sure that your shoes are large enough to comfortably fit the insoles.

### **4. Switch It Up**

Courtney Humiston, the general manager and wine director at Maybeck’s in San Francisco, believes that maintaining a shoe rotation can also be beneficial to those who work on the floor. “I find that rotating shoes, even if it’s two of the same style, helps your feet and back,” she says. “I learned this when I was training for a marathon, since all shoes stress you in slightly different ways.

” Mendelsohn also says that alternating between several pairs of shoes is ideal.

Not only does it help mitigate foot stress, he says, but it helps leather shoes keep their shape and structure longer.

Humiston adds that she keeps a pair of “still-professional but even more comfortable shoes, like rubber-soled leather ankle booties,” in her wine room to wear before and after service. “It feels good to change your shoes à la Mr. Rogers as part of your pre-service ritual,” she says. “And it feels super good to slip [the more comfortable shoes] on after service!”

Perona concurs: “Having the chance to look forward to the comfy sandals or other shoes you’ve brought with you to change into at the end of the night? So priceless.”

### **5. Start Rolling**

Self-massage with acupressure techniques and a massage ball can help relax muscles, reduce tension, and boost circulation. McCrossin recommends the Due North Foot Rubz Hand and Foot Massage Ball. “This little foot ball is amazing,” she says, noting that she uses it before and after she hits the floor. “Wearing heels all night definitely

affects not just your feet but your whole body. I roll my feet out with this thing and then use a foam roller [on my back and legs] to get the downstream-upstream effect. You can’t just target one area to treat—you have to tend to your whole body.” Perona recommends foot rolling as well, but she favors a lacrosse ball, saying, “It hurts so good!”

### **6. Practice Good Foot Hygiene**

Good foot hygiene, Mendelsohn points out, is key. He encourages somms, bartenders, and others working in the service industry to change socks if their feet sweat a lot during service.

To prevent painful, infection-prone ingrown toenails, he says, “don’t cut your toenails too short.” In addition, Mendelsohn says, if you have severe foot pain that doesn’t go away after a restful day off, or an ingrown nail that feels tender or infected, don’t wait for it to resolve itself. “Try to catch it early, before it gets to be a problem. Don’t let it go on too long.”

If you do have a problem with your feet, Mendelsohn says to make an appointment with a foot specialist to address it

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# Increase Check Size To Increase Tip Amount

by Amanda Baltazar, [Nightclub&Bar](#)

When people go out to drink or to eat, they have a fixed number in their minds about how much they're going to tip. They might be a 20-percent person, a 15 percent or a 10 percent.

And while there are things servers can do to increase that percentage, it usually stays close to what patrons had envisioned before they'd even left home, says Tim Kirkland, CEO of Renegade Hospitality Group and author of *The Renegade Server* and more recently, *Coach*.

So, he says, the best way for servers to increase their tips is to increase the size of the check. This means instead of serving a \$2 soda, for example, they should sell a \$15 specialty drink. But how do they do that?

First, Kirkland advises, be specific. Instead of a server asking a group if he or she can get them something to drink, a better approach is, "Gee, it's hot outside—who'd like an ice-cold margarita?" This plants an idea in the customers' minds, he explains.

And it's important who answers first. There's a "decider" at every table, Kirkland says, and that person sets off the trend of what everyone is drinking. If the decider orders a Martini, they all will; if he or she orders a club soda, another trend will happen.

So, servers shouldn't direct the question about drinks to the nearest person, Kirkland says. Instead, they should address the table and allow the decider to order first.

## **Tell a Story**

Servers need to tailor what they offer, what they entice your guests with, says Kirkland. A group of college kids in their 20s would probably like beers; a

group of women in their 50s might prefer white wine.

And tailor your stories, too, says Steve Zagor, former dean and instructor of restaurant and culinary management at the Institute of *Culinary Education in New York City*.

"People, especially Millennials, like stories and everything has to have a story. Where has the food or drink come from; is it unique; is it proprietary?" he says. "If you want to sell something give it background and authority to make it sound like it's something special and unique—did your pork chops come from a farm down the road, for example?"

Zagor's also a fan of upselling and broadselling. *Upselling* is asking customers if they want Absolut when they order a vodka tonic—an easy way to boost a check.

*Broadselling* is when servers add things. A customer might not order wine but may change his or her mind when a server says there's a special one on just for this month; or that the chef got some peaches at the market this morning and they're only featured for today in the special salad. "It's adding things people don't think about," Zagor says. "Bring it into the frame with a story attached to it."

He points out that when customers order food on a tablet the average check is 25 percent to 30 percent higher, and it's because customers are tempted by all the extras the screens offer, "[s]o servers have to mimic that."

## **Tailor the Experience**

Once servers have increased the check, they can work on other aspects of service—and these are mostly expected by customers, Kirkland says.

First, they shouldn't just tailor what they offer to guests, but they should tailor their personality to the table, he says.

"Servers have to be fluid with their personality. If you treat every guest the same, guests feel like they're being processed. And if you treat everyone the same, you're missing the opportunity to delight all of them. If you want your tips to go up, you have to build on that." A group of old ladies would prefer a different server personality to a group of frat guys, for example.

"If you offer the same service, it's interchangeable with any other restaurant and any other server in town," Kirkland explains. "The more you customize the guest experience, the more differentiated it is, and the more people will pay for it and go out of their way to get it."

## **Make Guests Feel Special**

The customers who tend to tip the most are those who are regulars, or feel like regulars, says Kirkland.

And it's even possible to make first-time guests feel like regulars so they'll start tipping generously too (and maybe become regulars).

The key, Kirkland explains, is that they want to feel special and important and different. Even more, they want to be better than other guests and be treated differently, preferably in front of other customers!

To trigger the feeling of being a regular in guests, servers can call them by their first name. They can find this out at the very beginning, by saying "Hi, my name's Dawn. What's yours?"

Servers can also make them feel like regulars and make them feel special by adding a little something extra. That

regulars and make them feel special by adding a little something extra. That might mean spending a few cents to finish the end of a bottle of wine into someone's glass. Or, if a patron orders a dirty Martini, giving them a shot glass filled with olive juice and an olive.

"If it costs a bit to make someone feel they got something no one else got, it's worth it," Kirkland points out.

### **Physical Touch**

With sexual harassment on everyone's agenda lately, it's important to be clear: It's OK to lightly touch someone on the shoulder or the hand, or to initiate a handshake. In fact, says Kirkland, research shows that touching someone on their hand when dropping the check can increase tips by 11 to 18 percent.

"A casual touch can make tips go up by quantifiable amounts," he says, though admits this is more effective for female servers than male.

### **SIDEBAR**

Tim Kirkland is a believer in the five Rs when approaching any table of guests so servers can tailor their approach to them:

#### **1. Read**

Servers should take a mental snap-shot of the people in front of them and decide who they're going to be for that table. A table of little old ladies has different expectations to a group of guys in their 20s, for example.

#### **2. Regularity**

How often have these guests been in the bar or restaurant? The easiest way to find out is to ask; that will inform the server of what they need to know. First timers need to know all kinds of things that regulars don't.

#### **3. Reason**

Why are they here today? Are they a family of five with three kids under the age of six, that needs to get in and out quickly? Are they a group of ladies in their 20s with time to burn? Once you have this, it informs.

#### **4. Rate**

This is the rate of service. Fully 90 percent of restaurant complaints are centered around time, Kirkland explains. So once you know Reason, you know the **Rate** at which

you need to serve them. If the guests are rushing to see a movie, the server should make it snappy; if it's a group of **friends out for the night**, there's no rush.

#### **5. Recommendation**

Based on what the server now knows of the guests, what should he or she recommend to them to eat or drink? A bottle of wine is perfect for a first date, for example, but perhaps not garlicky chicken wings.

### **Assignment**

*Make it a point to be the most informed and up to date in the industry.*

*Provide your staff with the tools, and insist they use them.*

*Make your sales staff the people with the latest industry knowledge and trends.*

*Your customers will learn you can be depended on to have the most up-to-date information in the industry*

## **Think Like a Customer**

*Thinking like a customer is very hard to do. Retailers tend to think like retailers and forget why customers buy what they buy. Retailers are more concerned with the features of products than the true benefits to the customer.*

*To be a successful retailer, you must change your way of thinking and stand back from your store and your employees – look at them in the same way your customers do.*

*Thinking like a customer means you must shop for products the way your customers would shop. To be a good retailer, you need to be a good customer – so shop! Shopping at your competitor's stores or other stores in your category – even different kinds of stores – can give you lots of new ideas and fresh approaches to merchandising.*

# MMBA Commercial Members Are Available to You! Contact Them!

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# What Happens if I Lower My Price?

The calculator below was created by MMBA Annual Conference presenter Tom Shay and can be found at his website, [www.profitsplus.org](http://www.profitsplus.org).

*The bottom line in the example below: If a product price is reduced from \$7.49 to \$6.99 will 15 additional units be sold to achieve the same gross profit dollars? If not, are customers really purchasing other products to make up the difference?*

There is always a discussion with businesses about the prices that are charged for a product or service. If the price is \$12, a business owner will wonder if they can sell a lot more of the product if the price is reduced to \$10.

This calculator helps to answer that question from two perspectives. The first part of the answer is to tell you how many more you have to sell to make the same amount of gross dollars of sales. The second calculation will tell you how many you have to sell to make the same amount of gross profit dollars.

With each calculation, you are then left to make a decision. You know now how many more you do actually have to sell; you then ask yourself if you believe that is an achievable goal. Remember that in achieving the goal, you are not making any more profit or any more sales dollars, you are just selling more units to produce the same gross sales dollars or gross profit dollars.

Price Change Analysis Calculator		
1	Price Per Unit (nnn.nn) \$	7.49
2	Number of Units (nnn)	60
3	Cost Per unit (nnn.nn) \$	5.00
<input type="button" value="Clear Fields"/>		
4	Gross Sales Amount \$	449.40
5	Gross Margin %	33.24
6	Gross Profit %	149.40
7	How Many Units Will I Need To Sell At \$	6.99
<input type="button" value="Clear Fields"/>		
8	To Make The Same Gross Sales OF \$	449.40
9	Answer:	64.29
10	New Gross Profit \$	127.94
11	New Gross Profit %	28.47
12	How May Units Will I Need To Sell To Make The Original Gross Profit Dollars	75.08

# **Evaluating Your Business**

*Where do you excel? Where is improvement needed?*

1) Can management and staff describe, in detail, the target customer?

(The “locals” is not a good answer)

Do existing customers bring new customers to the establishment?

4) What is the average customer purchase amount?

5) How is advertising measured for effectiveness?

6) How long has it been since a new advertising media has been tried

7) How long has it been since a new advertising media has been dropped?

8) What is the most commonly used opening comment given by an employee to a customer?

9) How attractive is the building when first seen by a customer?

10) What is the condition of the parking lot, landscaping, exterior lighting and signs?

11) Where do your current customers live?

# How to Motivate Your Staff in 3 Quick Steps

By putting the quick tips below into action at your store (s), the motivation you need to achieve your performance levels will be easier to get:

## Clarity of Objectives

Vague goals kill motivation. Without a clear and concise target to reach for, your staff can't possibly trigger their internal drive simply because it has nothing to head toward. Only when the objective is vivid in their mind can you tap into a powerful inner drive.

If you haven't already created a set of clear goals for them, it's time to deliver a little more direction. Meet with them and let them know clearly what the objectives and expectations are. Continue narrowing down the goals until they clearly see the point of detail you need.

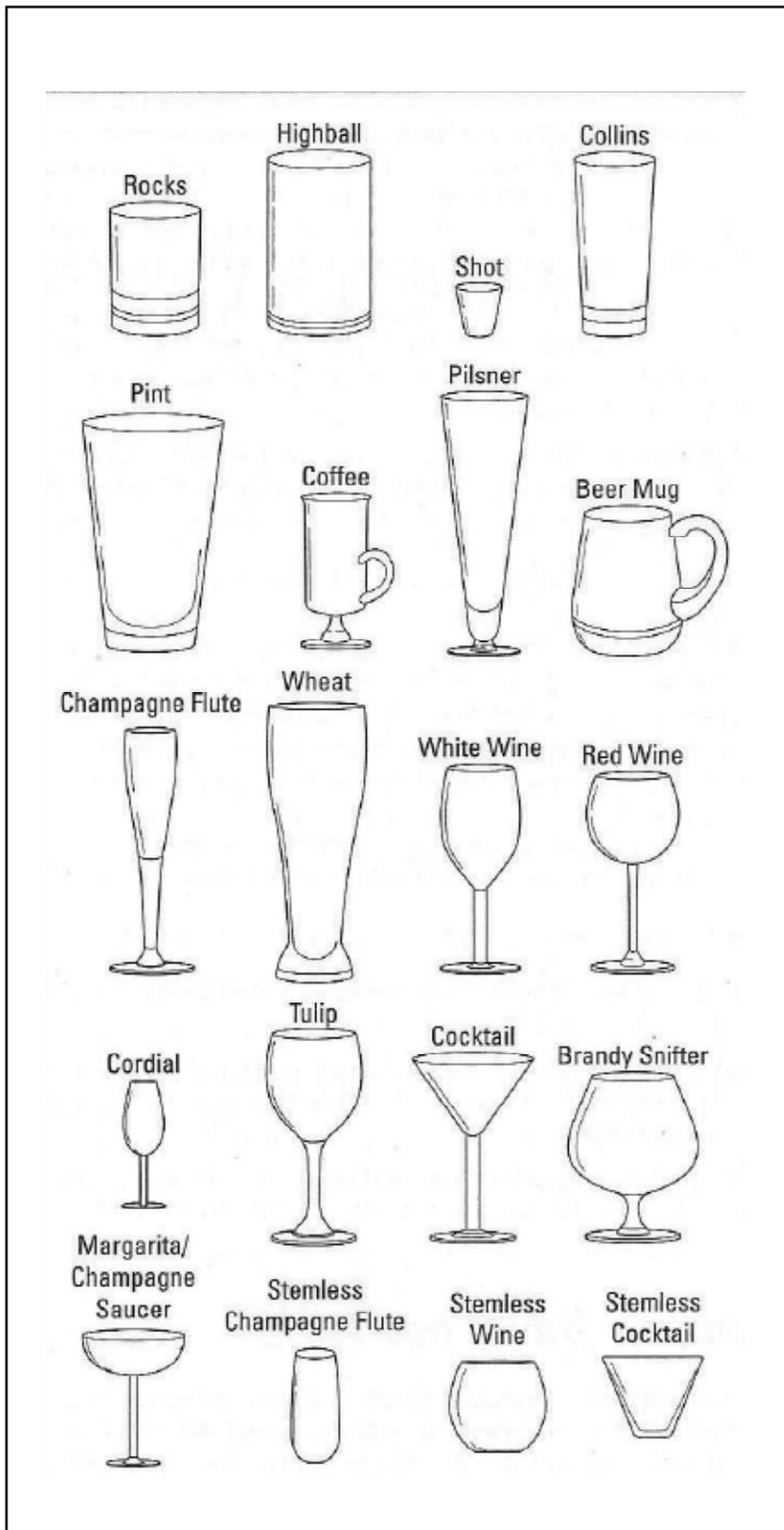
## Educate Them

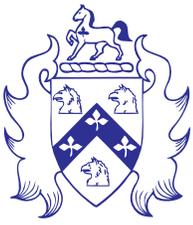
The better skilled they are at a particular task or activity, the more motivated they'll be to get involved with it. This principle lends itself perfectly to the world of motivation in the workplace the more they know about their position and what it takes to excel, the more driven they'll be to produce results.

## Give Them New Challenges

People around the world have an intense need for growth and variety; too much of the same old thing and soon there will be no sign of motivation. To avoid this experience, put them out there for new work challenges to keep things fresh and new on the job.

# Know Your Glassware





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