

Official Publication of the  
Minnesota Municipal Beverage Association  
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# 2020 MMBA Scholarship Winners

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# MUNICIPAL LIQUOR STORE

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## On the Cover

Each year, the Minnesota Municipal Beverage Association awards scholarships to graduating high school seniors.

To qualify:

1. Applicant must be a son or daughter of a municipal liquor store manager or full-time municipal liquor store employee. Eligibility is extended to the stepson, stepdaughter, legally adopted child or legal ward.
2. Applicant must be a high school senior who will graduate in 2020.
3. Applicant's parent must currently be employed at the liquor store as Liquor Store Manager or full-time liquor store employee. Parent must have worked for the liquor store for one consecutive year.  
**OR**  
A permanent part-time employee who has worked in a municipal liquor facility for 3 consecutive years.
4. The liquor store must be current in Minnesota Municipal Beverage Association dues payment.

**See Page 14 for the 2020 winners.**



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## MMBA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**By Chris Arnold,  
Bagley**

Liquor operations managers wear many coats, from being a sidewalk sweeper to a financial analysis expert.

COVID-19 has added some hidden stresses some may be taking for granted or not even realizing they are on the back of our thoughts. One of these stresses we all are experiencing is the concern for our employees. We worry they could get COVID-19 how we would feel knowing we put them on the schedule and in harms way. Then, if someone gets sick how do we cover having one less employee? Most of us are running with a very thin workforce the way it is.

During COVID, we have the fun things of keeping our customers happy. I've had to step up my ordering. Instead of getting liquor every two weeks, I now order every week, sometimes twice a week, trying to keep the store stocked best as possible. I'm also finding myself impulse buying some items if in stock because I don't know if they're going to be there next week or three weeks from now. Then we have the can and box shortage. Trying to keep our customers happy is easier said than done, but we do try.

Furthermore, at this time of year we have 2021 budgeting. We ask ourselves, "How in the world do I know what I'm going to make a year and a half from now!" Somehow we always figure it out.

It is also important to remember we belong to the MMBA where help or advice is only a phone call away.

Sometimes our councils forget the added stress we are under. They come in, buy their product and leave. Some come in and say "you need to do this, you need to do that or you're getting too much clutter." They don't understand the new way of ordering, where you can only get what the supplier has in stock at the time you order.

So for all mayors and council members reading this article, please take a deep breath and realize there is a reason you hired a liquor operations manager to run your liquor operation. Instead of criticizing them or questioning them during this stressful time, offer a helping hand or word of encouragement.

Right now, some of operations are doing 2 to 3 or maybe even 4 times more business than normal, generating funds for our communities. However, we operate differently from City Hall. The biggest difference is City Hall is usually open Monday through Friday for roughly 8 hours each day. Municipal enterprise entities, like liquor stores, are open Monday through Saturday and are serving hundreds/thousands of customers. In fact, a few of us are open Sunday through Saturday and most generally open 12+ hours a day.

Fire, Police, Street departments are also different. Let's not forget public utilities are as well! But like all of these different departments, if you don't have support for your employees, you will not have motivation. Lack of motivation leads to lack of productivity.

In simpler terms, happy employees make for a happy city. So please take a step back and look at the big picture and don't forget a little appreciation goes along way. If employees are taken for granted one day they may not be there!

### PLATINUM MEMBERS

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# 10 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD HAVE AN ORIENTATION FOR NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS

**From: International City/  
County Management Association**

Jul 14, 2016 | Blog Post

A good working relationship with members of the governing board is crucial for every local government manager. So to ensure a good first impression with your newly elected council members, it might be a good idea to have a well-organized and informative orientation program that helps council members over the early hurdles in their adjustment to their new roles and responsibilities and lay the groundwork for effective working relations with their peers on the governing board and with staff.

## **Here are 10 important reasons to develop and implement a newly elected council-member orientation program:**

### **1. Becoming an effective council member is hard work.**

Local government professionals often underestimate the challenges involved for newly elected council members in making the transition from the role of citizen to that of effective council member. Many individuals elected to local government office have had little or no direct experience either with the organization they have been elected to lead or with local government, in general.

Newly elected council members have little opportunity to grow into the job. Immediately upon taking office, they are required to exercise the full authority of the office — no internship or apprenticeship here! In most communities, they have to become acquainted quickly with a wide variety of topics to which they have had little or no exposure. They are thrown into the policy-making arena to deal with topics ranging from planning and land use to public works, public safety and public finance, labor relations, and many specific service areas of the jurisdiction. Citizens almost immediately expect them to be experts on topics ranging from law enforcement to library collection information technology or social media policies. Although it will be appropriate and relatively easy for them to refer inquiries on many of these topics to staff, the public that elected them will expect them to know at least some basics about all these topics. Even the jargon that local government staff takes for granted can be foreign and perplexing to new members of the community's board of directors.

Council members value and appreciate the assistance provided to them during this challenging transition.

### **2. Important decisions often will not wait.**

It is rare for cities to have the luxury of deferring important decisions until newly elected council members are fully acclimated to their new roles and responsibilities. Issues often have their own critical path and may need to be addressed regardless of the tenure of council members. Newly elected council members in training are often required to make significant decisions on behalf of their communities.

An effective council member orientation program is not a guarantee that new council members will be able to rise to the occasion of tough and important decisions early in their tenure, but it certainly increases their chances. Such orientation programs are, in essence, survey courses in their roles and responsibilities as well as in the broad spectrum of issues the local government is facing. With the benefit of this context, council members are more likely to make better decisions.

### **3. Staff can demonstrate the importance of the transition.**

Their personal success in this visible and important role is certainly going to be of great importance to those who are newly elected. A thoughtful and well-prepared orientation program clearly demonstrates the staff's appreciation of the importance of their transition to having a public role. It is likely to be early in their tenure that new council members are most dependent on staff and will need their support. Through a thoughtful and informative orientation program, the local government manager and staff can demonstrate their commitment to assist and support council members in their important responsibilities.

### **4. The manager can learn about the new council member.**

While the manager and staff may have some familiarity with the new council member, roles have changed since the election. An orientation presents a valuable opportunity for the city manager and senior staff to learn about the new member's interests, knowledge of local government and the issues, and his or her experiences. Too often, the orientation may be viewed as a unilateral benefit where the new council member is the sole beneficiary. If the orientation is properly structured, it can be a good opportunity for the manager to engage, empower, and assess the new member's knowledge and interests.

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# 10 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD HAVE AN ORIENTATION FOR NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS, *CONT'D.*

## 5. Government managers can jump-start relationships with council members.

It has been demonstrated in more than one poll of managers that the relationship between the council, the manager, and staff is one of the most important factors in determining the job satisfaction of the manager. It is certainly one of the most critical prerequisites for creating an effective council-manager-staff team. Without an effective team, local governments are not likely to be high-performing. An effective orientation program can create a good first impression by modeling the type of open and informative communication with council members to which staff is committed. Orientation is also an excellent time to encourage staff (not only the local government manager and the executive staff) and council members to get to know each other outside the spotlight and formalities of a council meeting. Developing greater familiarity can be very valuable to the newly elected council member as well as to the staff members who will be working with them.

## 6. Council members take on new legal responsibilities.

After their election, new council members have legal responsibilities much different from those of private citizens. They have financial disclosure obligations, and they will certainly (and suddenly) discover pitfalls to avoid, including conflicts of interest. The sooner they are aware of their new obligations and the full implications of their new status, the less likely they will run into problems.

## 7. Council members may be surprised about the public nature of community input engagement and group decision making.

Newly elected council members may have little or no experience in considering public comments and group decision making dynamics. It is even less likely that they will have had experience doing so in the very public atmosphere of the council meeting. The sooner they gain an understanding of these dynamics and learn how to function best in this environment, the more likely it is that they will be effective in their new role.

## 8. Staff can step back and review issues comprehensively.

Preparing for an orientation program can have some specific side benefits for staff. It provides them with an opportunity to step back from their busy workdays and take a more comprehensive look at what they are doing. It allows them to take a look at all the issues and projects under way and see their context in the broader organizational picture. It also reminds them of how their roles relate to the council and of the critical components necessary for the maintenance of a positive relationship with the council.

## 9. Council member issues and priorities can be identified early.

A council election campaign will often provide plenty of clues about the priorities of the newly elected members, but an orientation program offers an opportunity to confirm and clarify those priorities. It can often be interesting to learn what was and was not said (or, possibly, what was and was not meant) during the heat of the campaign. The orientation process can provide helpful information about the priorities of new council members that might not be immediately apparent through formal council meetings.

The local government manager can use the orientation to find out what expectations the new council members have of staff. Although a full discussion of expectations may be more appropriately handled during meetings or retreats with the entire council, the new member orientation is the first opportunity to bring to the surface issues that may affect establishing a good working relationship.

## 10. Council members learn of areas where they need more information.

Depending on a council member's previous experience (e.g., as a board or commission member) or professional or volunteer work, the new member may well be stronger in some subject areas than in others. The orientation helps the member to identify these areas and find out about opportunities to gain more training or information.

### Topics for Liquor Department New Council Member Orientation

- Facility History
- Mission Statement Municipal Liquor Industry Information
- Liquor Store Community Activities and Contributions
- Finances and Contributions to City/City Projects
- Operational Hours
- Legislative Issues
- Industry Participation
- Operational Goals and Issues

# PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE SIMPLIFIED

Whether you serve on a board, council, commission or other governing body, it is helpful to understand how to conduct public meetings.

To simplify the rules of parliamentary procedure for those who participate in public meetings, Judge David Rosenberg created a video titled "Rosenberg's Rules of Order: Simple Parliamentary Procedures for the 21st Century."

Prior to becoming a Yolo County (California) Superior Court judge, Rosenberg served as mayor and council member for the City of Davis and as a Yolo County supervisor.

## Rosenberg's Parliamentary Procedure Quiz

Circle the correct response for each item. Answers appear at the end of following page.

1. You are a city council member. At a council meeting, you can't hear the discussion due to noise made by the heating system. You should raise your hand and, when recognized, say, "Point of order — I can't hear what's being discussed."  
 True  False
2. A vote on hotly contested Agenda Item 5 has passed by a vote of 3 to 2. You were one of the two council members who voted against the item. Later in the meeting you ask for reconsideration of Agenda Item 5, because you have thought of something you believe will convince one of the majority votes to change his or her mind. The mayor rules you "Out of order" and refuses to allow a vote on reconsideration. The mayor's ruling is:  
 Correct  Incorrect
3. It's 11:00 p.m. by the time the city council reaches Agenda Item 25. The mayor asks for a show of hands to indicate how many members of the public wish to speak on the item, and 32 people raise their hands. The mayor announces that she will limit each speaker to two minutes each. Can the mayor properly do so?  
 Yes  No
4. Joe makes a motion to hold a council retreat in May, and Mary seconds the motion. Sally then moves an amendment to have the retreat in June, and Fred seconds the motion. Esteban then moves a substitute motion to have no retreat this year, and Fred seconds the motion. The mayor announces that discussion will begin on the motion to amend. Is this the correct ruling?  
 Yes  No
5. On a highly controversial agenda item in a meeting attended by many members of the public, the audience becomes engaged in the discussion and members of the audience applaud in support or hiss in opposition following the remarks of the first speaker who addresses the city council. The mayor states that no vocal expressions of support or opposition will be tolerated at the meeting and asks the public not to applaud or hiss after speakers conclude their remarks. May the mayor do so?  
 Yes  No
6. A member of the city council continually interrupts other council members while they are speaking on agenda items. The mayor refuses to stop the offending council member from interrupting. As a member of the city council, you have the right to make a motion to challenge the mayor's ruling and have your motion voted on by the council.  
 True  False
7. After a very long discussion and debate on a motion you made to approve a street repair schedule, which was duly seconded, you want to move ahead with voting on the item, so you say, "I call for the question." The mayor responds, "OK, let's proceed with the vote on the pending motion to approve the proposed street repair schedule." Did the mayor handle your call for the question properly?  
 Yes  No
8. If the maker of a pending motion accepts a proposed change and incorporates the change into her motion, and the person who seconded the motion also accepts the change, this is called a "friendly amendment."  
 True  False
9. Sam moves and receives a second on a motion to create a seven-member Police Oversight Commission. Mariko moves and receives a second on a motion to make the commission 15 members. Helen moves and receives a second on a motion to create an ombudsman position in lieu of the commission. The mayor schedules discussion and a vote on the third motion (Helen's), which passes. The mayor should then schedule discussion and a vote on the second motion (Mariko's motion).  
 True  False
10. In the middle of a meeting the mayor recognizes Maria, a council member, who moves to adjourn the meeting. Frank seconds her motion. The mayor calls for discussion prior to the vote. Maria raises a point of order and says that the motion should be voted on immediately. Who is correct?  
 Mayor  Maria

---

### Answers to Quiz

1-False. 2-Correct. 3-Yes. 4-No. 5-Yes. 6-True. 7-Yes. 8-True. 9-False. 10-Maria.

### For more information:

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<https://www.ca-ilg.org/document/parliamentary-procedure-simplified>

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# SECURITY



**The following 10-point checklist provides a starting point for considering the security of your business premises:**

## 1. Security lighting.

Is security lighting installed throughout and around the premises? Are all lights operating? Is some lighting left on inside the business at night? Are entry and exits well lit?

## 2. Building design.

Is the building solidly constructed so unauthorized access is restricted? Is there adequate protection against entry through the roof? Is the building secured to reduce the risk of vehicle ram raid?

## 3. Doors and windows.

Are the external doors and windows solidly constructed? Are they fitted with deadlocks? Are doors and windows locked at all times? Are skylights secured?

## 4. Property identification.

Has the make, model and serial numbers of items such as computers, printers and photocopiers been recorded? Is your property photographed for identification?

## 5. Telephones.

Are telephones pre-programmed with emergency contact numbers? Are telephone lines installed in such a way so they cannot be tampered with (particularly important if your alarm system is connected to your telephone line)?

## 6. Safes.

Has a safe been installed? Is it appropriately positioned? Does it have a drop-chute facility? Is it kept locked?

## 7. Cash handling.

Are there established cash handling procedures? Do you have irregular banking procedures? Is money counted out of public view? Do you use a company to transport cash?

## 8. Key and valuables control.

Is there a key register? Are all keys secured? Do staff have somewhere to store their personal items securely? Is there restricted access to this area?

## 9. Alarm systems/surveillance equipment.

Is an intruder alarm system installed? Is it monitored? Is surveillance equipment installed? Is footage recorded with the tapes kept for a minimum of seven days? Is there a fire alarm?

## 10. General.

Are sensitive documents appropriately destroyed? Are computer passwords changed regularly? Do you have an emergency evacuation plan? Do staff know the plan?

**In addition to the above checklist, the implementation of a security plan is an ideal time to review your business insurance. Consider:**

- What does your Shop & Retail Insurance policy cover?
- Have you met all the minimum requirements stipulated in your policy?
- Have you updated your business insurance policy to reflect any new purchases or changes to your business?
- Do you need to upgrade your insurance to include add-ons such as stock protection, contents insurance or theft by employees?

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## 2020 MMBA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!



**Anna LaRose**

My high school career consisted of a lot of sports and dedication to play sports, keep up with school work and have a social life.

In high school, I played tennis, hockey, and lacrosse. I love sports and it is my passion, so I didn't mind being busy all of the time. Sports have brought me friends I will be in contact with forever. It's also brought me my best friends.

Playing sports has also taught me how to manage my time. I would typically come home late in the day and have to do homework right away to make sure I was keeping up with my classes. It's also taught me about priorities, because I wanted to be successful in whatever I was doing.

Outside of sports, high school brought me so many new friends and relationships with my teachers. High school was probably the best years of my life so far, and I am so grateful to have gone to a great high school with awesome teachers and staff.

My objective for post-high school study is to attend the University of Maine and pursue a marketing degree. At the University of Maine I will also be continuing my hockey career and following my dream of playing division one hockey.

I am very excited to see what the future has in store when I go to school in Maine!

Anna's father Bobby works at BC Liquor in Brooklyn Center.



**Danielle Olson**

Danielle Olson has been a choir student of mine at WBLAHS North Campus for five years. Choir is the type of class that allows a person to shine in unique ways while staying consistent with who they are as a person. Danielle is confident, caring and a hard worker. She is unassuming and values being part of a team that does great things; both academically and culturally.

Danielle is a part of student leadership groups in WBL where it is clear she wants to make a difference in our community.

She loves being in choir and enjoys singing, but, most of all, Danielle values being a part of a group of students that value music and human connection creating a strong community.

Danielle is a well-rounded student that values choir, education and creating an inclusive community. She understands it takes the entire team to work hard to become great. She is a positive communicator and cheerleader in her Alto section and the choir as a whole. She is an independent learner and knows it is up to her to make sure she is working 110% so the entire ensemble can feel success.

Danielle has made it into many auditioned-based honor choirs at the regional, state and national levels. She is successful because she cares, puts in 110% into her work and has found her passion and pours into that passion each and every day.

Danielle understands school is a place to create community and that it is up to everyone to foster that sense of inclusivity every day. Danielle is well liked by her peers and her teachers. She has a lot to offer and will always be considered an incredibly valued member of our team. I would, without hesitation, recommend Danielle for the opportunities you present.

Kind regards,  
Wendy Suoja, WBLAHS Choir Director

Danielle's father Rod works at Stacy Wine & Spirits.

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# THE NEW STRATEGIES FOR WINE RETAIL SUCCESS



**By Christy Frank**

<https://daily.seventy.com/the-new-strategies-for-wine-retail-success>  
September 8, 2020

## **How savvy off-premise operators have adapted their approach to inventory management mid-pandemic**

Every U.S. wine and spirits retailer will agree: The months since March have been wildly volatile. Some shops continue to record their best monthly sales ever. Others are seeing signs of sales returning to normal or didn't have much of a bump to begin with. New challenges pop up constantly, the most dramatic being a near overnight shift to online ordering and delivery. Consumer behavior has changed, too.

Maximizing success in this new landscape means that a retailer's approach to buying and stocking must evolve. We polled retailers around the country on their strategies for successfully managing inventory in the new normal. Here's a sampling of their experiences and advice.

### **Buy Deep for Healthier Margins**

Operating an online shop and offering delivery service costs money. The costs, including such expenses as web-hosting fees, higher credit card processing costs, potential delivery vehicles and drivers, and additional insurance, add up quickly. Although charging a fee and setting minimums can help recoup some of these expenditures, neither tactic is likely to cover all of the incremental costs, so it's important that your overall pricing and purchasing strategy ensures robust margins, especially on your top-selling items.

Buying on deeper deals—taking advantage of a volume discount from your wholesaler—is one way to do this. If your shop has moved to curbside/delivery-only service and your sales floor is now functioning as a mini-warehouse, then storage space may no longer be a limiting factor. "Without the need to have a beautiful shop, I now have more buying power and can take advantage of 10-case drops. This helps absorb the higher fees related to selling online," says Sarah Pierre, owner of 3 Parks Wine Shop in Atlanta.

As on-premise sales have nearly evaporated in many parts of the country, numerous suppliers are adjusting their price structures, so keep an eye out for newly available deals. TJ Douglas of Boston's Urban Grape notes that "distributors that didn't offer larger drops are now offering them. For those items, I can now offer my customers a better price or run a better margin to cover delivery costs, where every penny counts."

### **Keep an Accurate Inventory—It's Never Mattered More**

As sales shift online, accurate inventory is critical. If a customer orders an item that isn't actually in stock, you'll need to discuss alternatives. This takes time, and if a return needs to be issued, that racks up additional processing fees and time. "Since the front door is locked, the shop can be messier, but my inventory needs to be cleaner than ever," says Urban Grape's Douglas.

That's easier said than done. Mitch Ancona, owner of Ancona's Wine in Connecticut, reports, "Given limited time and staff, store-wide physical inventory counts are no longer possible. It's now a never-ending process to try to keep our website stock list as clean as possible." Shops that previously conducted regular store-wide inventory have shifted to a cycle counting model. At Bay Grape in Oakland, owner Stevie Stacionis says, "We do a stock reconciliation daily for a section of the store, say the still rosés, and just keep moving around each day." Sarah O'Kelly, general manager at Charleston's Edmund's Oast Exchange, says, "This inventory method is also a good tool to have less experienced staff really get to know what's on the shelf."

Inventory checks can also be built into other processes throughout the shop. Pierre explains that at 3 Parks, staff bottles are now backed out daily rather than monthly, and stock levels are recounted whenever an item is replenished, ensuring that fast-moving items are always correct. At Urban Grape, a manager checks all orders before they go out the door, noting any issues and fixing inventory in real time.

### **Invest In—and Understand—Your Point of Sale (POS) System**

Integrating your point of sale (POS) system with your online shop is never as simple as it should be. However, that integration is vital to keeping your inventory accurate online and in the store (it also saves time). When Daneen Lewis, who owns New York's Harlem Wine Gallery with her husband, Pascal, developed a downloadable mobile app, she spent up-front time with the developer to ensure "complete synchronicity between our POS system and digital platforms. This allowed us to streamline our online order process and made time for us to devote energy into new marketing initiatives."

Make sure you fully understand which part of your system maintains the master item records and whether inventory synchronization happens in real time or on a periodic basis. Understanding all of this will help you choose and install an inventory audit plan that's specifically suited to your shop. In addition to making sure your systems are talking to each other properly, make sure to periodically check that any state and local taxes are correctly added to every sale.

It's also worth regularly reviewing the fees related to credit card processing, which have a way of creeping up over time. If your online business has increased, you can also call your providers and ask for a lower rate.

### **Upgrade Your Virtual Selling Experience**

Setting up a new item in your online shop is likely a more involved process than setting it up in your POS system. Writing enticing copy, adding eye-catching photos, tagging items, and adding them to collections all takes additional time and focus. Consider shifting an existing salesperson into this role or hiring someone to do it part-time, especially if you're bringing your full inventory online.

At my wine retail shop, Copake Wine Works, in upstate New York, we have a checklist that includes all the elements needed to set up a new item. During downtime, team members review a master list of incoming items to get a head start writing tasting notes and other selling points. Everyone is trained on our standard bottle shot format and filter, so as soon as the wine arrives, anyone in the shop can take the picture, fill in the details and description, and add the item to the web store. We run regular reports to ensure that we haven't missed any items or a key part of the setup.

### **Strike the Right Balance Between Comfort and Quirky**

Lauren McPhate at Tribeca Wine Merchants in New York reports, "People are buying what they know—Sancerre, white Burgundy, rosé, Oregon Pinot—so we're not selling as much of the fun, geeky stuff that we usually can when we run tastings or have more staff on the shop floor."

When Domaine LA moved to a pick-up/delivery model, owner Jill Bernheimer had planned to shift to more of a warehouse model, purchasing deep deals on a limited number of high-turn items while scaling back on the small-run items that weren't continuously available. But, she says, she quickly realized, "I need to sell what I love to sell. It's now more of a hybrid approach, with new items featured on the website to keep it fresh."

Hand-selling lesser-known varieties, regions, and styles is difficult to do online, but shops that have built their business on this sort of selection and service have cracked the code. Eric Moorer, director of sales and engagement at Washington, D.C.'s Domestique Wine, says, "We've worked even harder on social media and on the functionality of our website to make sure people have an easy time getting the things that they want or finding the wines that we would suggest for them." Online shoppers can easily browse staff picks and curated cases, as well as navigate such collections as summer reds or domestic offerings.

Social Wines, with locations in Boston and Cambridge, has found creative ways to introduce its customers to new arrivals. Operations director Eileen Elliott says, "We started marketing 'sets' of wines, making the conversation less about specific growers and more about styles of wines that could be of use in different social situations."

### **Clean Up Your Bin Ends**

Bin ends are easy to offload in a visible basket near the cash register in your shop. But those last couple of bottles of an item often linger on the virtual shelf, making your online store more difficult to browse. At Copake Wine Works, we regularly make up batches of Mystery Bottles, which sell for a set amount, usually \$20 each. Customers get a choice of red or white and take their chances on getting a bottle that's worth more than they pay.

Lily Peachin, founder of Dandelion Wine Shop in Brooklyn, groups "last chance" items onto a single page. Something as simple as this makes it easy for customers to browse and buy those bottles.

### **Budget for the Short Term**

Given sales volatility and ongoing changes to federal, state, and local guidelines, consider budgeting on a shorter time horizon than in the past: monthly instead of quarterly, or weekly instead of monthly. Keeping a close eye on sales trends and overall inventory levels will ensure you aren't caught off guard if sales suddenly slow down—or ramp up. Urban Grape's Douglas runs frequent reports to keep a close eye on what's actually selling, "so we can buy bigger and be more proactive rather than reactive."

O'Kelly at Edmund's Oast Exchange met the initial surge of panic by purchasing with "a heavy focus on wines falling at that magical \$20-ish price point on the shelf." Now that the panic has subsided, she says, "It's very difficult to guess consumers' buying habits. I am still definitely thinking long and hard on any major purchases, like Grand Cru Burgundy, especially with tariffs increasing those prices even more."

As hard as it may be to say no, many shops report delaying, or passing altogether on, expensive allocated items as a way to build more flexibility into the budget. Tribeca Wine Merchant's McPhate limits her purchases to items in her regular email offers, increasingly from non-tariffed places. She reports these have done well. "I think with people being home and not going out, they're more adventurous in their drinking, too," she says. You have less show-off buying. The cat doesn't care what you're drinking."

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Christy Frank is a partner at Copake Wine Works, a shop in the Hudson Valley of New York. She is an advanced sommelier with the Court of Master Sommeliers and holds various WSET certifications.



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