

Boozhooz

Attention to Detail

It's the difference between OK and exceptional – between making rent and making real money.

COMPILED BY IAN FOSTER, REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT

Here are some inspiring tips and insights from some of the best minds in the industry. The one thing they all have in common? Meticulous attention to detail in every aspect of our business!

"I am convinced that most guests who approach a bar don't know what to order and have no idea how to order. I am not trying to be mean-spirited. I just feel that we bar professionals have done a poor job introducing our guests to the world of superb cocktails and spirits choices. Most people are creatures of habit; they pick one or two drinks and, for the most part, stick to them.

"A moment of indecision is the perfect opportunity for bartenders to step in and introduce their customers to something new...your goal should be to guide your clientele toward a one-of-a-kind experience. Give them a reason to come back to your bar...suggest a world-class drink."

From "I'll have a...um...I'm going to have a..." by Tony Abou-Ganim, in Santé Magazine (May 04) www.santemagazine.com

Things I Hate when Dining Out **PART I**

Red wine that is too warm. I'm not a wine-snob but getting a warm glass of

wine is heart-breaking. Red wine should be served at "cellar-temperature" not room-temperature. Where I live in Southern California, room temperature in the summer is often 72 or 74 degrees – way too warm for red wine. I don't insist on exactly 65 degrees but anything in the 70s is ridiculous. I have even had to request that a bottle be put in the restaurant refrigerator for ten minutes – a request that is embarrassing and ensures that I will not return to that establishment. (I have the same complaint about white wine that is too cold).—*Ian Foster*

So I eagerly read this October 15, 2004 letter in the *Wall Street Journal*:

"...I ordered a flight of three U.S. Pinot Noirs at a very good restaurant in Washington... My gripe was that all three were very warm, warm enough to wreck the pleasure. My question is whether it is fair to hold a restaurant responsible for the temperature of wine served by the glass and, if it is, is there a graceful way to deal with the waiter?"

"Restaurants routinely serve whites too cold and reds too warm, both by the bottle and the glass... Usually we also suffer in silence, especially when we are with our own daughters, who

hate for us to make a fuss about wine at a restaurant. Our usual reaction is to keep it to ourselves – and never return. We know that restaurateurs can't control everything and we also know that the perfect temperature for wine is a matter of debate, but they should certainly be aware if their whites are being frozen to death and their reds taste like a day at the beach. Hold them responsible? You bet."

From Wine Notes by Dorothy J. Gainer and John Brecher, Wall Street Journal. The Weekend Edition of the Wall Street Journal has a great wine column by Gainer/Brecher and is a must-read for every restaurateur. I would also strongly recommend their books, including the delightful Love by the Glass.

If you are serious about building your bar business, then using commercial mixes, like sweet'n'sour, is not going to cut it. "News flash: It is cheaper to use inferior products! But if you think that your guests aren't willing to pay more for a superior drink, you're wrong. We charge \$2 more for a cosmopolitan or margarita than we do for a martini, and I assure you, the comments I receive are not 'That's expensive,' they're 'This is the best cosmo I've ever had.' Start from scratch today; discard the mixes, order fresh fruit, mix everything up fresh and treat your guests to better cocktails."

From "Bartender From Scratch" by Elizabeth Takeuchi-Krist in Santé Magazine

I got a nice note from ace hospitality trainer, Claudia Carr a couple of weeks ago. I think there is an important point or two in her message. She wrote:

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THE
TIPS
ISSUE

"I chaperoned a group of eight seniors [80s and 90s] to Victoria [British Columbia] last month for a few days. We stayed at the Grand Pacific Hotel. I have never in my life witnessed such gracious service to seniors as they were shown in the restaurant of this hotel. I never saw the 'resigned' look, rolling eyes, ho-hum service that I have almost come to expect when servers are faced with a large group of seniors ... and these servers had no way of knowing that my group likes to have cocktails along with wine and they are big tippers. It worked out well for everyone, but I was happily amazed at how nicely they were treated by all crew that worked in that dining room."

LESSON #1: It is unfortunate that exemplary treatment of senior should even be worthy of such comments. I mean, if everyone delivered high level personal service, we would hardly notice. Great service only stands out in comparison to lousy service. Are we really being as disrespectful to our older diners as Claudia suggests? Unfortunately, it is happening ... but it better be happening in somebody else's restaurant and not yours!

LESSON #2: When was the last time you had a training session on serving seniors? Do you know what turns them on, how they like to be treated and what annoys them? I devoted a whole chapter in my first book, *Restaurant Basics*, to serving seniors. The Baby Boomers are getting grayer, and the establishments that are going to get the senior business are the ones that go out of their way to earn it. Do the work.

From Bill Main's newsletter, available free at www.restaurantdoctor.com

"The best way to handle a complaint is to deal with it immediately. Swiftly replace that unsatisfactory entrée. Immediately send over an appetizer for that table that was waiting too long to be served. Have a manager inter-

vene when conflict arises between a server and customers.

If the problem cannot be resolved promptly via a thoughtful and well-timed comp, give them an incentive to come back. Offer the general manager's card with the promise of royal treatment or a gift certificate on their next visit."

From "How do you turn a guest's negative into a positive" by Evan Goldstein, MS, in Santé Magazine

Things I Hate when Dining Out PART II

I hate ordering a glass of wine and getting it in a little, tiny 5-ounce glass filled to the rim. I never enjoy wine in those glasses and I never order a second glass.

On my honeymoon in Italy, I was very impressed with the way that wine stemware was handled. When you ordered the "house wine," it was usually served in a little carafe along with a very nice size glass – usually a 10- or 12-ounce bowl.

When you spent a little more on a nice bottle of wine (\$25-\$70), they removed the wine glasses from the table and made a point of replacing them with gigantic wine glasses. My wife and I always felt a little special when they brought us what we thought were the "big" glasses.

But we were flabbergasted one night when we saw what happened when you ordered the really fine wines. At the table next to us, a couple ordered a bottle of their most expensive Brunello di Montelcino. Their regular glasses were whisked away and in their place, the server brought out the biggest, tallest wine glasses I have ever seen. They looked like each one could hold the entire wine bottle. I must admit, my mouth dropped open and I stared in awe – the best part was that the other customer caught my eye and, quick as a wink, he said "the doctor limits me to only one glass a day!"

The underlying psychology, of course, is that the customer who spends \$150 or \$200 for a bottle gets special recognition – and the entire restaurant saw it.—*Ian Foster*

Blended drinks, like Bellinis, Margaritas, Frozen Alcohol Cappuccinos, and Daiquiris should be a "dynamic profit center" at your bar. Yet bartenders cringe when they hear an order for a blended drink – it takes too long, is too messy and too loud.

"Fueling this common attitude are poorly maintained and out-dated blenders. These lemons and relics are prohibitively loud and do a poor job of blending drinks. Old, underpowered blenders are incapable of thoroughly crushing ice into minute particles, thereby failing to homogenize the ice with the ingredients. The drinks made



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THE PROFITABILITY OF DRAFT BEER

BY MIKE SWAIN, BEVINCO PHOENIX

Gone are the days when draft beer mark up percentages ensured that, regardless of the circumstances, a bar owner stood to make substantial profits on draft sales.

Draft costs have increased while competition has tightened the amount you can charge. Ten years ago, every establishment could count on making three or four more percentage points on draft than on bottled beer. Today draft is usually no more profitable than bottles.

But draft beer is in demand. Even a small typical bar often will carry a dozen or more beers on tap. Entire walk-in coolers are dedicated to draft beer. With the increase in price and popularity, come new methods of delivery and "shrinkage" control. Glycol chilling systems and FOBs, have become more prevalent with the awareness of cost control and profit enhancement.

The potential revenue, as opposed to the wholesale value, has become the benchmark of profitability. If we assume that a pint glass filled with beer and a half-inch of "head" equals 14oz, then we can determine that one keg (standard domestic half barrel=1984oz) will yield 141 pints of beer. At \$3 per pint this keg of beer will yield \$423 in revenue – a \$358 profit (based on \$65 per keg).

Many variables, however, can affect this yield. Temperature, pressure, glassware, bartender pouring technique, as well as outright theft can all have a negative impact.

In fact, Bevinco audits throughout the country have revealed that the typical bar is missing 15% to 30% for draft beer.

So rather than 141 pints, a typical keg may yield 120 pints (141*15%=21) if



the bar is "only" missing 15%. At \$3 per pint, that's \$63 in unrealized revenue per keg. Now add up how many kegs your bar uses in a week...a year.

With accurate inventory management, proper refrigeration/pressure, staff training and accountability, those shrinkage rates have, in many cases been reduced to as low as 2%.

That improvement would mean an increase in revenue of about \$54 per keg. (141 pints- 2%= 138 pints, and 141 - 15%= 120 pints. Therefore 2% shrinkage yields 18 more pints per keg, or at \$3 per pint, \$54 more per keg).

If your bar uses 10 kegs per week, you could easily be missing nearly \$33,000 annually (at a 15% shrinkage) or over \$65,000 (at a 30% shrinkage) – a lot of profit that is going missing. **BN**

with these inferior machines begin to separate within minutes, with the ice rising to the top and the other ingredients sinking to the bottom.

- If you are shopping for a new blender, consider getting several canisters for the machine. This will allow you to prepare more than one blended drink per order.
- To create a consistent product, bartenders need to accurately measure both the recipe ingredients and the amount of ice used.
- Bartenders need to be trained on how long to blend each drink.
- Blend them too long or use too much ice and the resulting drink will be too thick; too short or too little ice will result in a drink that is too thin."

From "Sizzling Hot Frozen Drinks"

by Cindy Busi, in Santé Magazine

We all know that great servers have the ability to increase wine sales with their enthusiasm for their favorite wine brands. Take this one step further and feature a "Staff Favorites" section on your menu like at your local Blockbuster Video. For example, each month you might feature a different server's three favorite wines along with a little paragraph on why they like that wine. Your servers will love having their wine choices highlighted – especially when customers recognize them for it. And you will be taking one big step to de-mystifying the whole wine selection process. —*Ian Foster*

For today's low-carb, low-fat diets, less is more. Smaller dessert plates at a much lower price point is an increas-

ingly profitable strategy. Instead of getting \$10 or \$12 from a table splitting one dessert, Marc Murphy, executive chef and owner of the Landmarc in New York City, says that his smaller \$3 or \$4 desserts usually turn into \$15 in sales as customers order several to taste. "Who can eat an entire crème brûlée?" questions Murphy.

From "Dessert Economics"
by Keith Branche in Santé Magazine

Things I Hate when Dining Out PART III

I cringe when I hear a server ask, "Do you want to see the dessert menu?" The whole dessert issue is one that is full of unspoken anxieties and, let's face it, feelings of guilt. Most people will feel a little guilty about ordering a

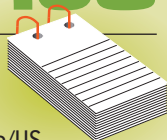
dessert and don't want to be seen as answering "yes" too quickly about the dessert menu. That's why servers are usually met with a blank stare and a table full of people looking at each other to see who is going to answer. All too often, the result is that one person says no and his dining companions are secretly disappointed – and the restaurant has lost a sale!

Here is how I would do it. The server shouldn't ask about the dessert menu. Sometime after the plates are cleared away, the dessert menu should just be distributed to each customer, quietly and discreetly. After a few minutes or so, the server should reappear at the table and, perhaps in a conspiratorial stage whisper, confess to loving "the crème brûlée" or "the home-made gela-

to" and ask what everyone wants. If this question is met with uneasy glances, then the server should suggest that "if you want to share a dessert or two, I can bring some extra spoons."

That certainly takes the guilt out of the process and will sell a lot more desserts. —*Ian Foster* **BN**

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING **events**



February 1-2: Westex Colorado Restaurant Association/US Foodservice Show; Denver, CO

February 9-11: International Restaurant & Foodservices Show of

New York; Jacob Javits Convention Center, New York, NY; Booth #2371

February 24-27: Digital Dining Dealer Conference; Chateau Elan; Atlanta, GA

March 1-2: Nightclub & Bar/Beverage Retailer/Beverage & Food Convention and Trade Show; Las Vegas Convention Center, Halls C 1-4, Booth #s 3903A & 3905A; Las Vegas, NV.

March 5-7: Annual Ocean City Spring

Trade Expo. Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association; Ocean City Convention Center; Ocean City, MD

March 9-10: SYSCO Food Show; Los Angeles, CA

March 11-15: Spring Tavern League Show; Wisconsin

April 7: SYSCO Winnipeg 2005 Food Show; Winnipeg Convention Centre; Winnipeg, MB



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