

Server Education

for Brewpubs + Tap Rooms

Server education is crucial for success in brewpubs, breweries, and taprooms. As brewers, we spend countless hours honing recipes, carefully brewing, and cellaring beers to craft that perfect pint. Yet a single inexperienced server or careless dishwasher can ruin that experience for your customer, possibly forever. This, coupled with the risks of over-serving and serving to minors, can literally destroy a business.

By Tony Simmons





deluxe organic ale
Sodbuster
Rio in Red
PINK
Fast & Furious

HOPWORKS
BREWERY

Seasotal
A "Seven-Grain" Stout
relates to the seven grains of malt and a touch of
chocolate malt give this beer its beautiful mahogany color.
The malt is brewed with a special recipe of malted
barley and wheat. The result is a smooth, rich, and
balanced beer with a great head of foam.
15 (degrees Plato 36 IBU)

Velvet ESB
A Session Beer brewed with a touch of hop aroma and
a generous helping of organic malt and a touch of
chocolate malt give this beer its beautiful mahogany color.
The malt is brewed with a special recipe of malted
barley and wheat. The result is a smooth, rich, and
balanced beer with a great head of foam.
12.5 (degrees Plato 30 IBU)

Beyond addressing the aforementioned concerns, one of the best ways to improve your beer business and differentiate your brewery from the competition is by promoting beer culture and beer knowledge. For customers, it's always a special experience to meet and chat with brewers and owners, yet they are not always available. Your bartenders and servers are on the front lines of both communication and interaction with customers...one table or barstool at a time. They need the tools, information, and education to be that "beer liaison" for your brewpub or taproom. To

address that need, server training programs and education are crucial.

There are a variety of options for almost any budget to develop or refresh a server-training program, including in-house training, outside training/testing, or some combination of the two. Whichever direction you choose to pursue, some of the more important areas of server training should include:

- Beer Style Education
- Beer and Food Pairings
- Glassware Cleaning and Draught Pouring
- Server Intervention Training
- Cicerone® Training

Beer Style Education

Understanding beer styles is a crucial yet relatively easy element to include in any server training program. You probably have the resources for this training element in-house in the form of brewers and experienced managers/bartenders/servers.

Iron Hill Brewery and Restaurants, with eight existing locations in the greater Philadelphia area, has a wide-ranging training program to cover some 600 employees.

"New hires receive extensive training over five to six days, which includes our own pre-printed training packet, face-to-face two-hour meeting with brewers, and a variety of beer tastings that focus on style, color, flavor, and body," said Iron Hill regional brewer Larry Horwitz. "At the end of their training, they are required to pass a 40-question test that covers both food and beer."

Iron Hill has found that the investment in beer style education has dramatically improved employee retention. And since Iron Hill considers training to be "a process, not an event," they strive to improve morale with a fun approach to beer education by reinforcing training with daily beer lineup sampling, edu-tainment events at the brewery, and field trips to other breweries for comparison...and beers.

For either an established or fledging beer style training program, many breweries have suggested using the style guidelines created by the Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP.) The BJCP offers 23 different beer styles and detailed style descriptions with commercial examples. The BJCP style guidelines create a good framework from which to conduct your training. You can use a combination of beers from your own lineup along with guest or specialty beers. This helps educate your servers and bartenders to better know and recommend replacement beers based on availability and customer preference. The BJCP style guidelines are available at www.bjcp.org at no cost. They also have a downloadable application for smart phones. This application is extremely handy as it empowers servers or bartenders with an immediate beer style reference at any time.

Beer and Food Pairings

The buzz in the industry continues to be beer and food pairings. Whether your business is full kitchen, limited food, or even uses mobile food wagons, server training in the area of pairings can help differentiate you from the competition, garner additional media coverage, build customer loyalty, and even increase beer sales.

"Food is a key component for our success and we regularly have the staff sample



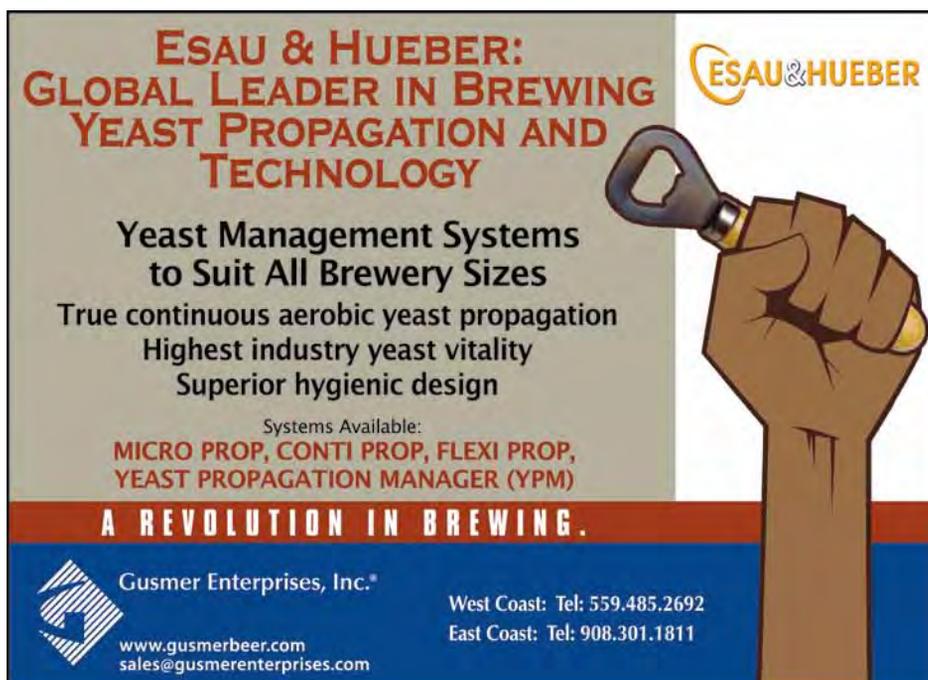
FACILITY PLANNING

1610 Des Peres Rd.
Suite 150
St. Louis, MO 63136
(314) 686-4524

We are the American Beer Industry's Experts in Building Design and Construction.

◀ See what we can do for you ▶

www.BeerFacility.com



ESAU & HUEBER:
GLOBAL LEADER IN BREWING
YEAST PROPAGATION AND
TECHNOLOGY

Yeast Management Systems
to Suit All Brewery Sizes

True continuous aerobic yeast propagation
Highest industry yeast vitality
Superior hygienic design

Systems Available:
MICRO PROP, CONTI PROP, FLEXI PROP,
YEAST PROPAGATION MANAGER (YPM)

A REVOLUTION IN BREWING.

Gusmer Enterprises, Inc.®
www.gusmerbeer.com
sales@gusmerenterprises.com

West Coast: Tel: 559.485.2692
East Coast: Tel: 908.301.1811



UNIQUE SOIL, UNIQUE WEATHER, UNIQUE GEOGRAPHY

PATAGONIA MALT[®]

Explore malt from the end of the earth

High quality specialty malts, grown & malted in CHILE since 1896.

www.patagoniamalt.com



BREWERS SUPPLY GROUP

www.brewerssupplygroup.com
800 374 2739



Resources:

- Cicerone® Certification Program
www.cicerone.org
- TIPS
www.gettips.com
- Draught Beer Quality Manual
www.draughtquality.org
- Beer Judge Certification Program
www.bjcp.org

Books:

- *Setting the Table: The Transforming Power of Hospitality in Business*
by Danny Meyer (2008)
- *Human Sigma: Managing the Employee-Customer Encounter*
by John Fleming and Jim Asplund (2007)
- *First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently*
by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman (1999)
- *Service That Sells! The Art of Profitable Hospitality*
by Jim Sullivan (1995)

beer and food combinations,” said Sebastian Wolfrum, director of brewing operations at Natty Greene’s Brewing Company in both Greensboro and Raleigh, N.C. In addition, Natty Greene’s hosts beer dinners throughout the year, providing a great opportunity for staff to gain a better appreciation for beer and food pairings. As such, approximately 30 percent of their beer dinner events are reserved for staff members.

While not everyone can host beer dinners regularly, training in beer and food pairings can be easily implemented with in-house brewers, chefs, and cooks or with the help of caterers and other food purveyors. A valuable resource from the Brewers Association (BA) is the pamphlet called *American Craft Beer and Food*. It details 28 styles of beer with the suggested foods, cheeses, and desserts that pair well with each beer. This pamphlet can form a base from which to introduce or refresh any server training program. The glossy printed version is available for purchase from the Beer Enthusiast Store at shop.beertown.org. A basic version

of the chart is available as a PDF at www.craftbeer.com/pages/beer-and-food/pairing-chart.

A big purchaser of *American Craft Beer and Food* is Michael “Mufasa” Ferguson, director of brewery operations for contract brewing and beer training at BJ’s Restaurants and Brewhouses, including 115 locations in 13 states and some 14,000 team members. Ferguson uses the pamphlet in conjunction with in-house video snippets through the “Quick Bites” program to provide a base level of training to new hires. The training process culminates with a test that covers both beer and food. And rather than a multiple choice testing method, BJ’s uses an oral exam, allowing for a more subjective interpretation of pairings.

BJ’s training program also includes specialized off-site training in its Beer Masters Program, which is accomplished by a top-down approach with general managers taking the course first and then disseminating the information within their organization. For on-site support, Ferguson explains,

“We also have three Finished Beer Specialist (FBS) team members at every restaurant. Our servers use them as a resource and if they can’t provide a solution, they contact me or one of my FBM (Finished Beer Managers) and we will provide the support.”

Ferguson has found that this approach to training generates enormous enthusiasm with team members and has definitely boosted customer relations and purchases.

Glassware Cleaning and Draught Pouring

There is probably no faster way to turn off a customer than presenting a handcrafted, premium beer served in a glass with an ugly lipstick mark on the rim. Ensuring that your glassware is properly clean gives your beer the ability to make its best appearance to the customer.

Nick Funnell, head brewer at the Great American Restaurants in Centreville, Va., has regular monthly classes for staff in beer style training that includes glassware cleaning and proper pouring. Funnell says about glass-

ware, "It needs to be 'beer clean,' not just clean. Otherwise, it will negatively affect the appearance, aroma, and flavor of the beer."

When it comes to draught, poor pouring practice is negative for brewers and customers as well as the bottom line. Using the correct glass and pouring appropriately are paramount. The Great American Restaurants train their staff to properly pour just enough foam equal to one to two fingers in height in the appropriate beer glass. That provides for an inviting pour, keeps oxidation to a minimum, and decreases spillage when carried by the server.

A great technical resource for beer pouring is the *Draught Beer Quality Manual*. It was prepared by the technical committee of the BA (including representatives of large, small, and foreign brewers) and has the support of vendors. Its mission is simple—"To improve the quality of draught beer for all beer drinkers." The *Draught Beer Quality Manual* covers topics including line cleaning, draught system components and design, gas dispense and balance, and proper pouring and sanitation. While it might be a bit of information overload for the average server, it is an immensely valuable tool for managers or trainers. The manual is available as a PDF for download at www.DraughtQuality.org.

Alcohol Intervention Training

Over-serving your customers and serving to minors simply leads to trouble for your business. Servers can be significantly fined and establishments can have their liquor license suspended or even revoked. Therefore, it is highly recommend that every server and bartender take a TIPS or comparable class in alcohol intervention.

TIPS (Training for Intervention Procedures) is a skills-based training program designed to prevent intoxication, drunk driving, and underage drinking by enhancing the fundamental "people skills." TIPS gives individuals the knowledge and confidence to recognize potential alcohol-related problems. Benefits of server intervention training can include:

- Protection from alcohol liability lawsuits
- Decreased penalties from alcohol violations
- Better bottom line through lower insurance premiums
- Increased staff professionalism

To obtain intervention training, contact a local certified trainer or training company. If one does not exist in your area, you can send one of your managers to receive specialized training. That person can then train the remainder of your staff. Find more information at www.gettips.com.

Cicerone® Certification Program

This all-inclusive program covers most of the areas previously discussed. A growing number of brewpubs and breweries have recommended and incorporated sections of the Cicerone® Certification Program as part of their server training programs. There are three levels of certification: Certified Beer Server, Certified Cicerone®, and Master Cicerone®.

Ron Kloth from Papago Brewing in Scottsdale, Ariz. was one of the first six Certified Cicerones in the nation. "What I like about the Cicerone Certification Program is that it's very comprehensive," said Kloth. "It covers a multitude of beer industry topics for every level of knowledge." Kloth disseminates this knowledge to his key staff members, many who have been there for long tenures. They, in turn, use that training to educate newer servers and bartenders as they come on board.

Kris Oyler from Steamworks Brewing in Durango, Colo. had 49 of his serving/bartending staff complete the Certified Beer Server program. This level of testing requires competent knowledge of beer storage and service issues as well as a modest knowledge of beer styles, culture, and fla-

vors, and brewing process and ingredients. The cost of the online test is \$69. "Passing the final exam ensures that the staff is properly knowledgeable," said Oyler, who said that the goal was to "drive 'beer culture' at our pub."

If a Steamworks server/bartender does not pass the exam, his or her shifts are taken away until they do. They have three chances to pass the test before the employees must pay for the course themselves. "The results were outstanding," said Oyler, who combines Cicerone training with TIPS. While the combination is certainly an investment, Oyler said he has seen a significant increase in employee retention. That in itself could be one of the best side benefits to any server training program.

Tony Simmons is the founder and head brewer for the award-winning Pagosa Brewing Company & Grill in Pagosa Springs, Colo. He is a graduate of the Siebel Institute and World Brewing Academy as well as a Brewpub board member for the Colorado Brewers Guild, and a Brewpub subcommittee member for the Brewers Association. ■

GET WIRED

ICAS

RELVAS PORTUGAL

BELGIAN-STYLE

Wirehoods and Corks Available

DISTRIBUTED BY: SCOTT LABORATORIES

2220 Pine View Way • Petaluma, CA 94954

USA: (707) 765-6666 • Canada: (905) 839-9463

info@scottlab.com • www.scottlab.com