


BEER SERVER

Training

FOR BREWPUBS



A MANUAL FOR HIRING, TRAINING
& RETAINING GREAT PEOPLE

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Preface

The Brewpubs Committee of the Brewers Association (BA) was established by the BA Board of Directors in 2011 with the goal of helping to ensure that the BA's programs and benefits are relevant to brewpub members.

Through the committee, Brewpub Roundtable discussions were put on the seminar agenda for the 2012 Craft Brewers Conference. At these discussions the topic of staff training was a main theme. The Brewpubs Committee took this idea and has turned it into the manual you have in hand. It is designed as a training guide and reference manual, intended to be used over and over.

The Committee realized early on that the knowledge of 'HOW' to train was what was lacking rather than the knowledge of 'what' to train. Resources and onsite employees,

e.g., brewers, are plentiful for providing the content of what to train. We wanted to provide a resource that showed how to pass along the content. The approaches suggested are based upon successful programs and the experience of those providing input for the creation of the manual.

When looking through the manual for the first time, note that there are sections dedicated to the reasons staff beer service training is so important as well as the concepts behind a successful training program. Both will be tremendously useful for all pubs, from those building a program from the ground up to those giving an existing program a facelift.

We would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to offer their input throughout the course of creating this manual. This is truly your publication.



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THE BREWPUB ENVIRONMENT



A E Brewpubs are a unique combination of brewery and restaurant, serving beer brewed onsite, thus offering their own distinct experience to the patron. The essence of this distinction to brewpub owners, brewers, managers, and trainers is clear because they live it, breathe it, and are passionate about what they do.

Universal to all brewpubs is the opportunity to introduce restaurant diners to craft beer, and, in many cases, to provide the guest with their first craft beer experience.

Some customers seek out craft beer when they are already familiar and comfortable with it, while others may still be finding their footing. Many guests patronize brewpubs as a convenient dining option. For these guests, educating them about craft beer is a complementary 'side dish' with their meal. Successfully converting diners to craft beer lovers and winning them over with quality, flavor, and variety is often possible at brewpubs. In many ways, brewpubs are the front line for craft beer.

The future of craft beer depends on educated and enthusiastic advocates.

The Brewers Association's Guide to American Craft Beer

There are currently over 1,300 brewpubs in the United States. The Brewers Association defines a brewpub as "A restaurant-brewery that sells 25 percent or more of its beer onsite. The beer is brewed primarily for sale in the restaurant and bar." When it comes to characterizing the defining components of a brewpub, the following are a few of the essentials:

THE TYPE OF ESTABLISHMENT

Adults of legal drinking age can find beer to drink in a variety of different kinds of establishments, providing the state or county laws for the area allow alcohol to be served. Among these are entertainment venues, such as stadiums, theaters, and county or state fairs, full service restaurants, traditional bars, craft beer bars, and brewery tasting rooms. Brewpubs are distinguished by their ability to serve their own beers in conjunction with food prepared by their own culinary team.

THE BEER

Brewpubs always brew their own beer, thus providing the freshest craft beer possible. Onsite brewing is an essential part of the ambiance and creative expression that brewpubs offer to their guests. When patronizing a brewpub, customers can almost always see some part of the brewing equipment and sometimes have a clear window to watch the brewing team in action. The opportunity to bring the guest into the actual brewing process, whether physically or

“It’s not just good beer and food that makes a brewpub a successful one; it’s the people who work there, too. They are an integral piece of the puzzle when it comes to creating an experience for a customer. The beer may sell itself, but somebody’s got to serve it—and serve it well.”

Ginger Tin, Ramping Up Server Training, The New Brewer

visually, creates a unique connection with the beer and with the entire brewpub experience.

Brewing different kinds of beer onsite allows for creative license and enables the guests to try beers they might not otherwise have the opportunity to experience. Innovation is encouraged, and the staff and patrons of a brewpub are the first to try the new flavors and styles that the brewing team creates.

THE KITCHEN

The major distinction between tasting rooms at a craft brewery and a brewpub is the kitchen. Brewpubs offer full service dining and the clientele expects knowledgeable service staff to be available to support both the brewery and culinary aspects of the business.

Tasting rooms often serve food of varying types. Examples can include bowls of snacks, visiting food trucks outside, or offering the option to order in from a nearby restaurant or catering company. Tasting rooms sometimes have service staff in addition to the bartender.

Much of the content in this manual will cross over to a tasting room server training program. That said, the kitchen and kitchen staff are key components of a brewpub environment and team, where the food from the kitchen compliments the beer, and the beer becomes an important culinary ingredient and inspiration.

THE CLIENTELE

The staff at a brewpub has the opportunity to serve a wider variety of guests than the average restaurant or brewery tasting room. The unique beers brewed onsite will attract the craft beer enthusiast, who generally has a higher level of knowledge about craft beer. Seeing the brewery in operation and perhaps getting a chance to speak to the brewers or get a tour of the facility will also attract homebrewers, who often know more about beer and brewing than the average person, and could be considering starting their own brewery. Homebrewers are often interested

in the experimental aspect of brewing, which can be characteristic of many brewpub operations as well. In addition, due to the kitchen and full menu offered in a brewpub, community members and other guests may come in simply to dine without any particular interest in craft beer (or any beer) at all.

Each brewpub has its own unique style, ambiance, brews, theme, cuisine and other distinguishing factors. However, the above characteristics are some of the fundamental basics. They are the building blocks that provide the foundation of every brewpub.

The control that the staff of a brewpub has over the guest experience is noteworthy. All three core components of the guest experience are created in house: beer, food, and service. Everything the staff serves, how they serve it, the culture and the ambiance of the bar and restaurant are all pieces of the whole that comprise the business. Brewpubs are challenged to revisit and improve each of these pieces daily in order to deliver that distinctive brewpub experience that each guest is expecting.



TRAINING IS ESSENTIAL TO BREWPUB SUCCESS

“Training is an investment that every restaurateur should take seriously. Even if you are brewing the best beer and creating some of the most fabulous menu items on the planet, if you don’t have a well-trained staff to back it up, you could be losing customers.”

Ginger Tin, Ramping Up Server Training, The New Brewer

Training is an investment in your business. Paying the trainer, paying the trainees, providing training materials, and paying staff during regular training time is expensive as well as time-consuming. However, implementing a solid training program will substantially repay this investment over time. For those owning and managing a brewpub, training is an essential component of overall success.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

A primary goal of every brewpub should be a strong commitment to the customer experience. Guests are the life blood of the business. Offering each guest an interesting, engaging, quality experience will keep them coming back as loyal customers. A top notch menu of both handcrafted beer and food served in a clean, attractive environment is the foundation for this experience. The staff’s knowledge, energy, and connection with the guest will help to define this experience and pull the different elements together into a cohesive whole.



“Knowledge is the queen and king of sales. In other words, the more your staff knows about the beer they are selling, the better they will be at selling it.”

Larry Chase, Hear, Hear Shift Meetings for Beer, The New Brewer

INCREASED REVENUE

A basic, comprehensive, consistent staff training program will show an immediate revenue increase. Increases can include average sales through both beer and food upselling and repeat business due to guest satisfaction based on staff knowledge of the beer and food.

MOTIVATION AND MORALE

The same program will also show results by improving staff morale through increased tips and continuing staff education, thus controlling costs by lowering staff turnover. Reducing the need for new-hire training is a savings that reflects immediately on the financial side of the business. In addition, time spent with staff allows trainers, managers and owners to communicate their passion for the business and their “story”, which spreads through the team to customers. Staff longevity, a higher level of enthusiasm, a solid connection with your brand, and a more knowledgeable service team also raise the standard for service and enhance the overall guest experience.

LONG-TERM RESULTS

Over time greater rewards can unfold. Potential benefits include cross-training wait staff as bartenders, nurturing promising staff members as supervisors and future managers, setting staff goals for achievement in service or sales, reinforcing the brand connection with the staff, and offering opportunities for staff to participate in outside events with the brewery team.

The ultimate goals here are to communicate the need for a consistent training program in each establishment, and to show the myriad of ways that your business can benefit from this investment of time and resources. A solid training program is a smart and worthwhile investment.



“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.”

Tony Simmons, Server Education for Brewpubs + Tap Rooms, The New Brewer

HIRE FOR ATTITUDE, TRAIN FOR SKILL

“How do you find people like that, and keep them working for you? You hire people with potential, and you train them. Show them what to do and how to do it. Teach them to be team players. Get them invested in the business by helping them to understand what your vision is. Invest in your employees, and they’ll return the favor by working harder and turning over less.”

Ginger Tin, Ramping Up Server Training, The New Brewer

The commitment to a training program requires a fresh perspective on how to hire people for your brewpub. To get your training program off to the best possible start, it is helpful to hire people who are a good fit for your brand and your business.

Always remember that your staff members are the front line for your business. They are the walking, talking image and brand for your brewpub, both at work and within your community. You absolutely want your employees to make an excellent first impression on your guests, especially when they walk in the door, sit down, and receive a greeting at their table. Although the greeter is technically the first face that the customer is likely to see, the servers and bartenders will be carrying the experience throughout the length



of the visit. **Your staff members need to facilitate a solid, positive, repeatable experience for the guest, and they also need to be a cohesive team by each supporting the other to create that experience.** Teamwork is easier to facilitate when the whole team is composed of knowledgeable and motivated people.

People who are a good fit for your brand and create fantastic experiences for the guest will drive an increase of returning customers, their referrals, and more business. Choosing the right people and offering a high level of service will also increase the check average. The improved check average results in increased gratuity coming back to the service staff, which keeps the staff happier and lowers your new hire rate and training expenses. It all comes around in a nice, neat circle when you hire the right people.

“A favorite quote we drill into our staff is from Warren Buffett, “It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you’ll do things differently.”

Cyrena Nouzille, Ladyface Ale Company

Another aspect to consider is the reputation your business has among your staff and in the community. **To find the type of people that you want to hire, you need to be known as a great place to work.** There are many factors that make up this “quality work environment” reputation besides the server’s average nightly income:

- Working in a positive atmosphere
- Serving and representing beer and food of high caliber
- Motivated, skilled service staff
- Happy, energetic, cohesive overall company team
- Grounded, structured, consistent and considerate management approach
- Willingness to provide staff members with new skills, otherwise known as continuing education or personal career development

Once you have established this reputation for a quality work environment, it will be considerably easier to attract viable candidates for open positions. In addition, your valued staff

members can recommend and more easily interest other people in the community who have the potential to be a perfect fit for your team.

When advertising and interviewing for valuable staff members, there are several key features or traits that require focus. These are the “anatomy” of the ideal brewpub server.

POTENTIAL

ENTHUSIASM

EXPERIENCE

PERSONALITY

FRIENDLINESS

DIPLOMACY

PATIENCE

One of the most important things that an interviewee can bring to the table is potential. This is certainly subjective and can include:

- The willingness to learn and improve one’s knowledge and abilities, including beer, food, and service
- The motivation to expand the original job description to include new frontiers within the business
- The understanding that beginning with an entry level position simply means that you will know it all as you advance
- A consistently positive attitude combined with general social skills

People with this kind of potential will be comfortable with and motivated by setting performance standards that build to advancement with structured goals. You will be able to identify many who have these traits as future leaders of your organization.

Top Ten Traits of a Great Server

1. Genuinely friendly
2. Passionate about providing great service.
3. Has a really great smile and is not afraid to use it.
4. Good listener.
5. Energetic.
6. Dauntless/Fearless.
7. Positive outlook on life and happy to be alive.
8. Attentive.
9. Organized.
10. Did I say really, really, really friendly?

Brent Schwoerer, Engrained Brewing Co.

Another advantageous trait is **enthusiasm**. This personality trait can come through in many different ways and is often the key to success with a new staff member who does not have a lot of food and beverage knowledge or service experience. Look at the posture and presentation of the interviewee. Are they confident with themselves and their knowledge? Do they love beer and people? You want people working with your customers who can deliver positivity and confidence. Keep in mind that a wide variety of styles and approaches connect with people. **The genuine connection between the server and the guest that facilitates a positive experience is what is important.**

Why does this person want to work at your business and be part of your team? You always want people who believe in your brand and your mission to be working alongside you. Why are they excited to be there? Can they communicate that message to the guest and to other staff members? Communication and excitement are a winning combination.

Experience is one of the more obvious parts of the anatomy of a terrific brewpub server, and it is also not necessarily a requirement. When you find a candidate who has potential, is passionate about being part of your team, is excited about delivering an exceptional guest experience time and time

again, is trainable, eager to learn and has an open mind, you can train serving, food, and beer knowledge. To this same point, those excited about beer can be an excellent fit for the brewpub environment, provided that they embrace the other components of the mission, such as service, food, and teamwork. Even further to this point, experience is not a guarantee that a person will be a good fit for your team. Look deeper for the other anatomy characteristics; experience alone does not serve your company.

Knowing that experience can be optional, applicants who already have similar experience and knowledge can shorten the initial turnaround from hire to working solo shifts. Candidates who fit this description may also be interested in moving into a role of increased responsibility as a service trainer of other new staff members, or perhaps as a leader of daily or weekly beer training for their shift on the floor.

In all instances you want to hire people who have a personality that will enhance your team and have a favorable impact on your company's culture. Positive people are a must. Negative people can bring down morale and fragment a team in a flash. **Friendliness** is also important, both for the guest experience and for teamwork. **Diplomacy** is ideal and is also critical on the floor for problem solving and thinking on the fly. **Patience**, with the guest and other team members, is a welcome trait. These are important elements for every shift team, and help to keep everyone working together more smoothly.

Beyond the initial screening, you want to have a good idea of what kind of person fits your brand, the atmosphere of your business, and the general image that you are presenting to your customers. There is also an internal standard of performance that people set for themselves. Those with a high standard who simply gain satisfaction from doing things well are optimal. To some degree you are looking for people who fit your team, and not in a discriminatory fashion. Those who understand what is important to you and sense the urgency to create that exceptional experience – every time – are those you need.

Throughout the hiring process there are many creative methods you can use to find the right candidates. Some are specific to the individual interview. Perhaps one or more of these techniques will resonate for your establishment.



THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- *“Offer a pre-hire orientation regularly for people interested in working for your brewpub. Give them a tour, share the company’s philosophy, allow questions, and accept applications and resumes. This offers management the opportunity to determine the interest level of the potential employee and weeds out those who clearly are not a good fit. Benefit: Reduces management time involved in the hiring process and identifies people who are excited about the company.”* Larry Chase, Standing Stone Brewing Co.
- *“We hire servers in classes so that we can train a group of individuals at a time. This ensures that each person goes through the formal training process and avoids inconsistency and short-cuts that may start on the floor and spread if servers do the whole training process.”* Brent Schwoerer, Engrained Brewing Co.
- *“We require all of servers to be 21 years old so that they can sample during training and speak to guests from a position of experience.”* Brent Schwoerer, Engrained Brewing Co.
- *“Ask for referral candidates from solid, current, valued employees. Offer recognition for both the referring employee and the new hire at benchmarks of the new employment.”* Ginger Johnson, Women Enjoying Beer
- *“We always stress that [employees] are also the face of the brewpub outside of the business, in the community. If one of my staff members is an *** at another local place, they will, without question, be referred to as “Joe, from the brewpub.” I tell my people (we have 80+ employees) that they represent the pub at all times, not just under our roof. Need to look at that when hiring.”* Chris Ericson, The Lake Placid Pub & Brewery
- *“I like to have, or one of my managers have, a couple of beers with [the potential employee] if at all possible. The guard comes down and you get a much more true feeling about the person. We have never [not] renege on hiring someone after doing this, but it does provide us with an idea of what to look for and nip in the bud during training.”* Chris Ericson, The Lake Placid Pub & Brewery
- *As an alternative to the traditional application process, in written form, ask the applicant: “Tell me about yourself and why you want to work at [brewpub name].” This allows the candidate to express what they are passionate about, and gives you insight into them as a person. Be attuned to their sincerity. If they are telling you what they think you want to hear, it is not a good start. Look for people who have the energy and drive to improve themselves, while adding something to the team in the process.”* Cyrena Nouzille, Ladyface Ale Companie



DURING THE INTERVIEW

- *“Ask the candidate to do a short presentation (or “show and tell”) about a topic of their choice, something they are passionate about. Make sure they learn about this in advance of the interview.”* Annie Korenjak, New Belgium Brewing Co.
- *“Choose a random item, such as a salt shaker, and ask the candidate to sell it to you.”* Larry Chase, Standing Stone Brewing Co.
- *“Share your company philosophy in such a way that the candidate’s feedback will let you know how much it resonates with them.”* Larry Chase, Standing Stone Brewing Co.
- *“Begin with “Tell me about yourself and why you want to work at [brewpub name].” This allows the candidate to express what they are passionate about, and gives you insight into them as a person. Be attuned to their sincerity. If they are telling you what they think you want to hear, it is not a good start. Look for people who have the energy and drive to improve themselves, while adding something to the team in the process.”* Cyrena Nouzille, Ladyface Ale Companie
- *“Keep in mind that interviews are something of a time warp, since all candidates will be on their best behavior. When possible, give them a trial run, a follow, or a task that will offer you the opportunity to see them in a more real situation.”* Ginger Johnson, Women Enjoying Beer
- *“Take them out on the floor of the brewpub and ask them for 5 suggestions to positively alter the brewpub and how they would execute the changes. Don’t criticize, only listen. What they say, how quickly they react, and how thoughtful their responses are can be very telling. If they are servers, they absolutely have to think quickly - this will also display core attributes of the person: Are they proactive? How do they think (does it fit you)? What are they noticing and suggesting?”* Ginger Johnson, Women Enjoying Beer
- *“Find out how much they know about your operation. While fresh candidates with no knowledge can work, people that visit once or twice or more before applying are usually motivated because they like being there - hence the easy extension of a desire to work there is usually a good sign.”* Ginger Johnson, Women Enjoying Beer
- *“A good question to ask during the interview is “What kind of beer do you like to drink?” Because there is no right or wrong answer, the answer can be quite insightful. The goal is creating that path of discovery and the conversation that ensues.”* Cyrena Nouzille, Ladyface Ale Companie
- *“Ask the interviewee to share an instance when they had trouble with a customer, how they dealt with it and what was learned.”* Sebastian Wolfrum, Natty Greene’s Pub & Brewing Co.
- *“Ask the interviewee to share an experience when they believed that their manager was wrong, and how they addressed the situation.”* Sebastian Wolfrum, Natty Greene’s Pub & Brewing Co.
- *“Observe the candidate’s body language and appearance during the interview. Do they smile, engage and showcase their personality? Did they arrive in clean, neat clothes, facial hair, nails etc. How a candidate comes in for the interview are telling factors in how they will continue to perform once hired.”* Catherine Portner, Portner Brewhouse
- *“During the interview, I suggest you give the interviewee beer and see how they conduct themselves when alcohol is involved.”* Tony Aiken, Data Collection Solutions

Being careful to take the time to interview many people to find those who are a good fit will be tremendously rewarding. Your investment here is time, and the return will be that you need to go through this exercise less frequently. Financially your new hire training expenses will drop, your check average will go up, your repeat customer rate will increase, and your referrals from those guests will, as well. Smart hiring pays dividends.

Introduction to Training

When moving from hiring to training, there are several important building blocks to recognize. The first is who you should involve in your training program. The next block is how to structure your training program. Fundamental training concepts, the last block, will tie these together and complete the foundation of your training program.

Another component to this creation process is determining how integral the training program will be to your brand and business culture. Put another way, how important is your training program to you? For the purpose of discussion and the opportunity to provide a complete range of training strategies and benefits, here are three program levels:

Basic: This training program will provide servers with adequate knowledge to work with guests on a basic beer-savvy level. Cost will be minimal with little interruption in daily service, and focus areas include inhouse beers, proper beer service, beer terminology including flavors and descriptors, and fundamental brewing processes.

Intermediate: This training enhances the Basic skills with food and beer education, provides more extensive and interactive staff tastings, offers select cross-training oppor-

tunities, brings the brewing staff into the picture regularly for shift training, and offers a closer look at the spectrum of beer styles and the brewing process. Further beer knowledge education and certification are options, and additional learning is actively encouraged in the brewpub.

Advanced: Your training program is fully integrated into the business. Everyone is involved in training on all levels: food pairing, knowledge certification, glassware, ingredients, and the like. The brewpub staff, kitchen staff, and any available management staff actively participate in staff training, tasting, and overall education. Cross-training is mandatory and service staff are involved in brewpub events outside of their normal shifts.

“The program doesn’t need to be elaborate, but it should be comprehensive.”

Ginger Tin, Ramping Up Server Training, The New Brewer

These three levels are provided as a way to show the simplicity of an effective program as well as the benefits of adding components to realize more rewards from advanced training. Mixing and matching elements from the three program levels to effectively fit your brand is recommended. Adapting one concept from a program element to work in a completely different way in your environment makes sense. It is optimal to customize your training program to fit your goals, needs and brewpubs.



SELECTING THE TRAINING TEAM



Now that the different levels of training are in place, begin with the first building block--the people who should be involved. There are essentially trainers and trainees involved in all levels, and they will be creating and running the show.

THE EXECUTIVE TEAM

The executive team, aka owner(s), general manager, controller and top leadership must play a role in the training program. This is essential to ensure that training is viewed as important, is consistent, and is made a priority. In a larger, more corporate environment this is a distinct layer of management. In a smaller organization the executive team and the management team may be one and the same.

- For a Basic program, this involvement may simply be the decision appointing one executive team member to be responsible for the training program throughout the brewpub. **The accountability for the program must start at the top, although the responsibility for the execution of the program may fall farther down in the organization.**

- With an Intermediate program, more people may be involved in the execution of the program, such as the owner or general manager. A show of support for the training program from top level management during the new hire period is expected, from participating in the program to simply meeting everyone.
- With an Advanced program, all will be involved at least to the point of awareness of the program and occasional participation. In an ideal training scenario, the executive team would actively participate in every new hire training and deliberately schedule themselves to participate in staff training regularly in some way.

THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

The training program must be made a priority for everyone within the hierarchy of the front of the house restaurant team. One person should be responsible for the entirety of the training program, whether general manager, restaurant manager, or other appointed person. This person is the leader providing continuity for the style, content, and execution of the program.

Selecting the person responsible for leading the operation of the program may be simple and obvious in a smaller business. On a larger scale, consider the personality and skills of those who would be candidates. **For the program to be maximally effective, the point person for the program needs to be someone for whom learning is important and the results of a top notch program are an obvious benefit to the business.** This person needs to be able to communicate effectively and establish routines among the training staff members that will ensure that the training program continues as smoothly as possible. There also needs to be consideration given for the time necessary to create and maintain a quality training program.

"During the training process, I agree that one person certainly needs to lead the charge. We also have implemented a mentor system, whereby each of my managers is assigned a group of employees. The mentor makes sure they have all the paperwork filled out, the contact info sheet is accurate, that initial and continuing education programs, tours, and tests are completed by all staff members. It also is a great way for one manager to communicate concerns about another employee by going to and through the mentor. With a large staff, and with many employees with other jobs or commitments, large staff meetings are very difficult or impossible. So one person trains, but the mentors shepherd their own flocks..."

Chris Ericson, The Lake Placid Pub & Brewery

Depending on the size of your brewpub, staffing the training program will range from minimal to extensive. Your trainers on the restaurant level could be your restaurant manager(s), shift supervisors, lead bartender, lead server, or selected staff trainers. In every case, organization and consistency are critical to the success of your training program.

- For a Basic program, determine how many people are needed to staff the program. It may be sufficient for one or two people to execute the program in its entirety, provided that they are given the time to do so effectively. For ongoing training, it may also be useful to assign one person to maintain a specific section of the program, like a weekly beer board, and another to do the shift training.
- With an Intermediate program there are necessarily more trainers involved due to the higher frequency of training and additional content. Perhaps a rotation of staff leaders is established to execute the shift training. If rotating trainers is the case, content still needs to be provided or guided by the person keeping the program consistent. An additional crew could be assigned the continuing education

portion of training, offering outside education or certification-directed education periodically. With a team focused on training, sharing the responsibility for training can be encouraged and promotes as a leadership opportunity.

- For an Advanced program, the design and execution of the program become more intense, requiring either more time for those involved or more people to share the additional focus. The time required may be demanding only periodically. The load lightens upon creation of the training schedule and the establishment of the content manual. The defining element of an Advanced program is the integration of beer training into all aspects of the business, with a higher expectation of the trainers and an increased amount of content to be trained on a more daily basis.

THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Beyond the front of the house, the brewery is a key element in training. **It is important for brewers to be involved on the trainer side of every kind of program, at a minimum providing information for the training.** It is ideal for the brewers to be involved in ongoing training, especially if members of the brewing team are comfortable working with the service staff in a teaching capacity.

- With a Basic program, the most important time to integrate the brewery is during the new hire training. The brewmaster or a lead brewer can review the basic functions of the different parts of the brewhouse with the trainees IN the brewhouse. **Stepping across the threshold from the front of the house into the brewery with the brewers helps to demystify the process and creates excitement and interest.** A tour, as extensive as possible and with as much time as possible, of the brewing facility and all of the elements and ingredients of brewing is critical. The more you involve your brewing team as trainers in your new hiretraining, the better grasp of the process and the better connection the serving staff will have with the beer.
- For an Intermediate program, giving the new staff team members a whole day in the brewery is ideal. They can follow the brewers and learn from them, the brewery team can prepare training materials and do some formal training with them, or some other combination can be determined that works well for your business. The more connections established with the brewing team and the art and science of brewing during this period of time, the more effective the program will be. Beyond the new hire phase, the brewmaster and lead brewer can also lead shift training when there is a new beer being introduced or on a rotational basis regularly. **Learning from the brewers is different than learning from a fellow**

service team member or manager, and their excitement about brewing will be contagious.

Meeting and working with the brewers on any level will also make the service staff more comfortable asking questions about brewing and learning more about the brewery.

- With an Advanced program, there are many ways to augment this initial new hire training in the brewery. The ongoing server training program can take the brewery staff participation up another level as well, such as including the brewery team in pre-shift tastings and asking them to lead select continuing education programs for the staff. The brewers can also help with training by dining in the restaurant and offering tips to the service staff from their experience. This tactic can be done on the fly, as an intentional exercise, or as a secret shopping kind of experience. The more the brewing team participates with service staff training in a constructive way, the more teamwork can be established. Servers will become increasingly comfortable going to the brewers for problem solving and other assistance.



THE KITCHEN TEAM

Although the culinary team is a fundamental part of the restaurant, it is often true that there is little connection between the training of the service staff and that of the kitchen staff. If it is possible to at least incorporate the leaders of the kitchen, executive chef, chef de cuisine, sous chef, etc. in your training program, there are tangible improvements that can be seen with the service team.

- In order to establish a Basic program, it is not essential to include the kitchen staff in your beer training at any point. Of course, it is an advantage to ask the chefs to work with your staff with regard to the food items on the menu, and if there is brewpub beer utilized in cooking the staff should be aware of it.
- With an Intermediate program, beer and food pairings are brought into the training program. There is a distinct advantage for the culinary team

to participate in training the service staff. Whether potential food pairings from the menu are presented with each pre-shift tasting, only periodically for a focused educational session, or only with the presentation of a new beer on the list, having the chefs available to discuss the flavors of the food, the flavors of the beer, and their interplay is helpful.

- For an Advanced program, the culinary team becomes an integral part of the training with the program's focus on flavors, food pairings, technical knowledge, and continuing education. When it is possible to include them, the chefs and line cooks can contribute to the pre-shift tasting discussions, which can be held regularly with food pairing options. **Bringing these additional kitchen staff members into the training program enhances the overall cultural reach of the training program and builds teamwork and camaraderie with this third element of the business.** Providing the service staff with resources in the kitchen to assist with pairing questions as well as building positive relationships between front and back of house can be invaluable.

TRAINEES

From the Trainee side of the equation, it is important to recognize the value in expanding the reach of your training program. While service staff members are the primary recipients of beer training, other staff members who have immediate contact with the guests or will be supporting the servers throughout their shift will benefit from beer training as well.

- With a Basic program, all staff members who have direct contact with customers in relation to selling beer should be included in all training sessions. Bartenders are service staff members and should always be included with servers for training purposes. In some cases they may be veteran beer servers and participate in a trainer capacity.
- Implementing an Intermediate program expands the scope of training further. Greeters, Bussers, and all other front of the house staff should be included whenever possible. In this environment, all managers and chefs should be well-versed about beer and be resources for the staff. Participating in training should be a routine occurrence for the management team, including shift meetings and periodically for educational opportunities.
- An Advanced program brings in more trainees from the kitchen and from other areas around the brewpub, encouraging everyone available to participate on a regular basis. **Encouraging all staff members to dine in the brewpub occasionally to coach the others and understand the guest experience is an excellent way to expand training.**

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

There are other personnel resources in the daily brewpub environment who can assist with staff training if you recruit them. You will most often find them willing and pleased to help. Vendors (brewing ingredients, food, etc.) have a vested interest in your success, and they may be happy to dine in your establishment and offer their feedback. Distributors, guest tap brewers, brewery reps, and retailers (if you distribute) are all valuable resources for your staff. Devise a system for these support people to provide constructive feedback to you and your team so they can be maximally effective.

Remember your valued customers when planning your training. These are the people who will most directly benefit from an excellent training program, and it always makes people feel special when you ask their opinion. Some guests will be comfortable working with the server on the fly, helping them where they might be able to provide assistance. Others will prefer anonymous feedback options or to directly communicate with the manager or owner following their dining experience. In every case, connect with your regular patrons as part of your training program and show them appreciation for their support. This strengthens their relationship with your business and lets them know you value their input.

SETTING UP TRAINING IN YOUR BREWPUB

As you begin the process of designing and implementing a training program, it is worthwhile to stress two essential facts about every successful training program:

- The training program must be endorsed and considered a top priority by the highest level of management and ownership in the brewpub.
- There must be a single person responsible for the overall service training for the brewpub. This person must have the time, direction, and motivation to make training successful.

This chapter is a guide to designing your training program, particularly insight to its structure and backbone. It contains three main steps to creating a customized training program for your brewpub. Other chapters are specifically dedicated to the content and approach to new hire training and ongoing training later in this manual.



STEP 1. CREATION OF FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENTS

A well-rounded training program includes three fundamental components:

- New Hire Training
- Ongoing Training, Daily and Weekly
- Additional Educational Opportunities, such as seminars or classes

STEP 2. INCLUDE IMPORTANT FACTORS

As you conceptualize each component, give further consideration to two factors that will be important to the success of your program.

- Accountability
- Communication

STEP 3. DEVELOP OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

Finally, once each component has been designed, follow these operational steps to implement the program.

- Create the necessary materials
- Train the trainers
- Put controls in place to maintain and improve over time

You can view a template that summarizes the following information in [Appendix B](#).

STEP 1. CREATION OF FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENTS

When creating each component of your training program, start with the basic outline of each and then fill in the details. Some critical pieces will necessarily dictate the approach to filling in the detail, such as the time allocation for each component. If referencing our [Training Concepts](#) chapter might assist in some of the necessary decision making.

B New Hire Training
Every brewpub needs an effective training program for new staff members. There will be service training, brewery training, and restaurant training components to cover in your program. Determine the number of hours and days that are practical for your new hire training. If there is no guideline for this timeframe, work backward from a list of what you would like to accomplish (see [Chapter 7](#)) to determine a breakdown of topics and the time allocated to each. Remember this can be adjusted going forward based upon feedback of staff and trainees.

Assign the senior managers or members of the executive team to each area of new hire training. Keep in mind that although each staff member only goes through this one time, there will be many new hire training sessions. Be practical when making these assignments, understanding that your trainers will need to impart enthusiasm to each new staff member every time and be able to coordinate their schedule with their other responsibilities.

Note that the support you are receiving from the top levels of the business should assist you in requesting this assistance successfully, and accommodation should be made for those recruited for new hire training. Regardless of the intensity of the training program, having representatives from the restaurant, brewery and kitchen participate in new hire training will set the right tone going forward.

You can view samples of other new hire training documents in [Appendix A](#).

C D E Ongoing Training

This is where the most significant difference in resource allocation can be seen. While new hire training is a one-time event for each employee, the investment in ongoing training can vary tremendously. (see [Chapter 8](#))

“Shift meetings are one of the best methods you can use to continually train your service staff and keep them informed.”

Larry Chase, Hear, Hear, Shift Meetings for Beer, The New Brewer

Ongoing training can include:

- Regular shift training throughout the week
- The beer board (i.e. bulletin board, white board, etc.),
- Notebooks that are maintained regularly,
- Other creative periodically scheduled opportunities, such as staff meetings.

First answer the following questions to help determine the frequency of the various components of your training program.

- How often will there be training at shift meetings?
- How long or short should the beer training portion of the meetings be?
- Will each training session involve tasting beer and/or food?
- If not, how often or based upon what criteria will training involve beer and/or food?
- Do you want to have new information posted on your beer board each week? Every two weeks? Daily?



Going through this exercise with an eye to being realistic and practical from an operational standpoint is important.

- Think about staff's arrival time each day and how much time is available before they are expected on the floor.
- Consider the trainers for each shift and their responsibilities throughout the day.
- What kind of set up is required of service staff in addition to the shift meeting?
- How much time does that take?
- How much information is appropriate for the amount of time allocated?

Remember to be considerate of both the trainer and the staff in this process. **Your training program will only be as effective as the focus of both trainer and staff.** Make sure they both have the opportunity to do it well. Keep in mind that you may be able to request changes in scheduling for both the trainer and the staff on the basis of creating a successful program. If the current system does not lend itself to adding training, push and plan for change. Training can be very effective with small blocks of time allocated each day. It is critical that the opportunity for focus, enthusiasm, sharing, and open feedback are incorporated at these times.

Once you have determined the frequency of training, look to the scheduled staff members and managers to see who would be a good choice for training. Depending on the level of your training program, size of business, and number of locations, you can enlist one or two people to assist you from the management team or significantly more people. Watch for different managers and staff members' talents. A different type of person might excel with the beer board than with interactive staff training about beer styles. Note that selecting trainers to oversee each area is different than determining how the trainees will learn in each area.

Buy-in from each trainer is an important element in the program. Meet with each person to discuss the overall mission and the operational logistics of "making it happen" successfully. Work through issues from the perspective that this training program is a high priority for the business, and ask for ideas to make it succeed. You may need top level support for the necessary changes to take place for the trainer to be willing and available. In a smaller business, few of these issues will be applicable since the one or two trainers could very well also be top level management.

Expect that the implementation of training will vary based upon each trainer's personal style, while the themes, topics, and specific content will be consistent between people, shifts, and locations. The content of each training session or each weekly overall training topic should be provided to the trainer by the person responsible for the overall train-

ing program. Unless the overall trainer is the same person responsible for shift training, you are simply asking that the individual trainers speak to the training content. Offer flexibility and creativity to the trainers with the understanding that the staff educational goal must be the same.

A successful program needs a group of positive, engaged, committed people and support from all areas to make it effective. Working through this stage can take time. Utilize the positive aspects of a successful program that are listed in this manual in order to convey the benefits that a training program has for each level of the team:

- Personal development for all members of staff and management
- Continuing education all around
- Improved guest experience yielding higher repeat guests and higher gratuity for staff members
- Improved volume and growth for all areas of the business

It is a winning opportunity for everyone.

F Additional Educational Opportunities

Offering periodic educational classes or seminars gives the service staff additional opportunities to learn, refresh existing knowledge, and generally have a break from the usual routine. These classes will be feasible on different levels and at varying frequencies. Creativity with topics, training locations, trainers, and including fun in the mix are always encouraged. (see [Appendix B](#))

When designing your periodic educational opportunities, the most important questions to include are:

- How often do you want or need to offer additional educational classes or seminars for your staff?
- How much time can be allocated for these additional classes, seminars or field trips?

Choose the first few seminar or education class topics. Keep in mind that repetition is good over time, and incorporate themes that will ultimately build on one another. Set up an easy system for keeping notes about the success or improvements needed for each event, and as the program matures this will become nearly effortless. These opportunities can be led by people from within your organization, outside specialists, and by people and groups throughout your community.

STEP 2. INCLUDE IMPORTANT FACTORS

Consider two important items as you create the framework for your training program. Both should be considered as you create each of the fundamental components.

Staff Training Accountability

To keep your staff engaged with training and your training effective, periodically measure the knowledge of trainees. This measurement or testing can be designed to be fun, optional, set as a mandatory achievement, or some combination of the three. You need to be able to determine the effectiveness of your program and make adjustments as needed. Whether or not you incorporate consequences or rewards for knowledge retention, you must have ways to gauge your program's success.

There are many worthy [training tests](#) that can be used to get an independent assessment of your servers' beer knowledge. In Tony Simmons' New Brewer article, titled "Server Education for Brewpubs and Taprooms", he highlights an example of one such program and how it was successfully applied in a brewpub training setting:

"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 flavors, 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."

Communication

Establishing a reliable, simple, communication system within your training team is also very important. Effective communication is key, so implementing the most basic system possible is the goal. As you move forward with setting up the program, consider the following:

- How often you want feedback from each of your trainers
- Other ways to get feedback such as participating in the training yourself
- How formally or informally progress will be monitored

- What communication needs you will have if there are major changes in direction or important decisions to make

Some of this structure can be created in advance, such as a weekly email update with the topic(s) of the week, and perhaps a fixed monthly meeting to review in person. You will be able to customize this structure for your business as the program is implemented and you can see your team's needs more clearly.

STEP 3. TAKE OPERATIONAL DESIGN STEPS

As tempting as it may be to jump right in and begin your training program at this point in the design stage, is it critical to be completely prepared for optimal results. Be sure to take all of these steps before you start your program.

Create the Necessary Materials

- **A** Prepare your Training Manual
There are many resources containing complete training programs. Look through the resource links located later in this manual (Appendix A), and choose the topics and content that fit your program.
- **B** Prepare Materials for the Staff Hire Packet
If you would like for the staff to have basic information about beer and beer service prior to beginning training, such as the beer list for your

"Because the brewer tends to be a morning person, though seldom by choice, and servers and bartenders are completely nocturnal, it is possible their two paths rarely cross. This is why it is good to have a bulletin (shift board) where the information from the daily shift meetings can be posted. Whether it a cork board where print outs are posted, or a white/chalk board, there should be a section for what is going on in the brewery."

Tom Dargen, Our House is a Very, Very Fine House, The New Brewer

brewpub and written beer service guidelines, prepare these to be included with the other information offered about the company at the time of hire. Be aware of any information included that will need to be updated in order to remain current and applicable.

- **E** The Beer Board

Decide what place(s) you want to post information and how. Examples can include a bulletin board with push pins, a white board with dry erase markers, or a chalk board with colored chalk. Purchase the materials and hang them securely. Locate the information where the staff will see it throughout their day, not just once. Alternately, create a binder with information that can be updated with current articles and educational material. This can be stored in a central area where all staff can access and review the material.

Give your trainer in charge of this training format the flexibility to be creative, and consult with them about what would work best as their creative outlet. Make sure the trainer has adequate supplies to express their vision creatively.



A note about white boards and chalkboards: If these are located in a high traffic area, the content may be wiped off accidentally. The idea is to be able to put it up only as often as you post new material, not every time someone walks by.

- Other Preparations

Look back through your program design, and see if other resources are needed to begin your program.



For example, if you are planning for staff to keep notebooks, are you providing them? Do you have a hole punch if handouts will be kept in the notebooks? Think it through all the way.

“The binder used for quizzes is filled with the Brewers Association handouts, Server Education article from New Brewer Jan/Feb 2012, beer style information, keg sales primer, and recent craft beer articles from local and regional publications.”

Natty Greene's Pub & Brewing Co. – Raleigh Location

Train the Trainer

This step will have an extremely positive effect on your program if done mindfully. **Training your trainers is the crux of a successful, well-received and effective program.** Everyone learns differently and has unique strengths, so adapt your approach to each person you work with. Include each of the following steps:

- **Review the structure and outline of the training program with each of your trainers.** Understood and applied knowledge is strength in this case, and understanding the whole program will help each person grasp their role with regard to how it affects others' as well as in relation the overall success of the program.
- **Be clear about their specific role in the training program and the expected results.** Have a clear method by which you can together monitor your collective progress with the program together. This can include staff quizzes or tests, situational questions of the staff at shift meetings, fun worksheets, and any other methods you find to be successful. Share the results with the trainers as well as the successes and needs for improvement. Present your training program as a team mission.
- **Share and review the training manual.** Be open for their feedback, and input. **The trainers must buy into the program and feel that it is their own.** Allow them the opportunity for personal expression while training. Make sure it is a big picture concept for everyone and that the program leader will adapt and change as needed.
- **Review the training principles and discuss examples.** ([Chapter 6](#)) Ask for their thoughts about other important concepts that might be specific to your individual brewpub and situation.
- **Stress the importance of consistency.** New Hire training needs to have consistent content, as each staff member needs to have the same opportunity for understanding their new work environment. **Ongoing Training is most effective when it is consistent, scheduled, and the staff knows what to expect.** Expectations of the staff in terms of knowledge retention and use of that knowledge need to be made clear and, again, consistent.
- **Provide support.** Emphasize during this “train the trainer” process that you are available as their primary support when they have questions and ideas for the training program. Make the communication system that you have established their first routine resource, and let your trainers know that the training program is a top priority for you. Their success is your success and you are there to help them.
- **Maintain engagement.** Keep in mind that you need the focus and support of your trainers. If you see

signs of losing interest, especially during this initial training, proactively pursue the situation. Find out what is causing the lack of interest and what might motivate them to become involved as an active, enthusiastic trainer. Apathy, tension, distractions, negative attitude, and poor instruction, for example, may be a reflection of a lack of interest. Once the program begins, watch for inconsistency in training and the attitude of the trainer both during training and when in discussion about training.

Implement Program Controls

In the course of executing your program, here are a few suggestions about keeping your program vital, alive, and successful over time. These will be important to the continuing success of your training program.

Regular Follow-Up

Set regular follow-up times with your Trainers to review the following topics:

- Content and Education



Is it working? This is the most basic question of all. Is the content you are teaching being actively learned and applied by the staff? Are you checking for comprehension and retention? What areas are working better than others? Which ones are in need of change or removal? What is not coming across? Is there enough time to communicate in shift meetings? Are people reading the beer board or reading the informational binder? What do you hear from the staff as feedback? **Ultimately, is training being well received? If not, what needs to change?** If mediocre, how can it be adjusted to be more effective?

- Service and Sales

What are the tangible results to your training program? Is the staff becoming more comfortable with the guests and connecting in such a way that the check average is increasing? Are your regulars coming back more frequently? Track server productivity statistics with your point of sale reporting in order to have a baseline to start from, and review with your management team regularly. If the training is not coming through in upselling and service, ask the trainer and the staff how these can be accomplished.

- Interest and Connection

Ask the trainers how they feel the training is being received by the staff. Ask the trainers what they think about the training. Be open to ideas and change, since the program needs to be a result of the collective team. Positivity and enthusiasm are the most important ingredients to a continually successful program, and keeping the spirit alive becomes the challenge.

“Keeping track of the staffs’ incorrect answers can be just as important as who got it right. Knowing what questions people are missing on quizzes and on the floor will tell you where the training needs improvement. If the trainees are not clear on the different ways hops contribute to aroma, taste and bitterness that is an indication of something to be explained better in training.”

Tony Aiken, Data Collection Solutions

Be open-minded about short-term and long-term goals and rewards for your training program and your trainers. Consider extending the goals and some kind of reward to the staff as well, keeping in mind that “winning” and simple rewards are effective. **Recognition is the best and most motivational reward for many people.** The inherent rewards of a good training program already exist, with increased business, higher check averages, and increased gratuity for the service team.

Cost vs. Progress and Profitability

Next, use metrics to track your training costs vs. progress and profitability. It is important to track the costs associated with the training program, from materials to labor hours. These expenses need to be logged against the progress being made at the front of the house with the guests, including everything from customer satisfaction surveys to average guest check, to perhaps even gratuity given via credit card payments.

The statistics being tracked should be regularly shared with those invested in the success of the business. **Training programs are an investment, and when done well will show their worth.** Keeping the awareness of the program’s success on the radar of owners and leaders of the business will ensure that your training program will continue going forward. Lack of positive consistent information could result in the loss of the training program to the detriment of both the staff and the business.

New Ideas and Open Communication

Finally, be actively open to explore new ideas and communication with regard to your training program. Brainstorm new approaches, and encourage your training team to come up with new concepts to keep it fresh and different. Innovation is often rewarded. Including the ideas of every person who is part of your training program in some fashion will keep you all moving forward.

As you complete this important program design phase, remember that effective education is a continual process. **Adjusting to the realities of your brewpub will simply make your training program stronger over time.** Combining your program design from this chapter with the training concepts in the next will give you an even greater edge on successful training.



TRAINING CONCEPTS



Several components are frequently included in successful training programs. While these concepts will vary in degree based upon the type of training program that you choose to implement, all will apply in general. Be mindful of the attitude you take with your team and with the staff when implementing and incorporating these components.

Positivity is essential to this entire process.

COMPONENTS TO A SUCCESSFUL TRAINING SESSION

Set the tone at the start of any program and at the start of each training session. Here are four different components to establishing an optimal learning environment:

- Participation by all staff members is necessary. When training begins, everyone is present and other activities cease, like sidework, staff meal, and shift breaks. Plan accordingly so everyone is available to attend. If this is not possible, multiple training sessions may need to be set up to maximize attendance.
- Expect full attention and respect for the training process from all staff members. This contributes to focus and retention by each person involved. Prohibit distractions of all kinds, including electronic

devices. Training is important to the business, and is each staff member's responsibility. In turn, respect for your staff members in the tone and presentation of the training will go a long way.

- Recognize that there is no "wrong" perception of taste. Encourage feedback and participation from the staff taking part in training, especially when tasting beer and food. **All input is encouraged and accepted as valid.** Responding with a different perception than someone else's will require tact and diplomacy, especially on the part of the trainer. It is important to establish that everyone has a different palate and likes different flavors. Each person is an individual, and although there may be differing perceptions of taste, there is no "wrong" opinion. It is important that acceptance is maintained, and positive reinforcement encourages everyone to be more involved in training going forward.
- Beer and food are fun! Beer training needs to be viewed as a positive experience and something that everyone looks forward to. Stay focused and enthusiastic. Require feedback, and avoid making attendance awkward or a punishment. Spread around the questions and requests for feedback, and ask for ideas from everyone.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Expectations are necessary. Let your trainers and staff know exactly what is planned and how it will benefit them individually and collectively. Help them understand the scope of the program and the company's perspective on training. In setting the expectations for your team, make sure the expectations are reasonable and will be supported by the management team. Choose your 'consequences' for failing to meet expectations carefully when you feel that they are necessary, making sure they can be applied universally in a reasonable and equitable way.

Expectations of the Training Program

- Provide the staff with a brief description of the training program components. If beer tasting is planned at the shift meeting, explain when and how often the tastings will happen. If the beer board or an educational binder of information will be incorporated in the training program, let them know where this information will be posted and when it will be changed or updated. If educational seminars or classes will be offered, let them know how often to expect them. Keep this structure as consistent as possible to assist the team in understanding and participating in the process.
- Benefits: Be certain to explain the benefits in detail that are a direct result of a successful training program. **Share the potential.** In addition to creating an increased connection with their customers with regard to beer, staff members will see increased check averages from suggesting the upsell, repeat guests will be seen more frequently, and they may see their gratuity increase as a result of utilizing their additional knowledge. Often bringing the continuing education piece to their attention will provide a sense of career development and self-improvement, satisfying the "What's in it for me?" question. In addition, doing well with training may offer advancement opportunities within the company. Be sure to let them know this, as well as discussing the bigger picture of improving the overall brewpub business and community.
- When implementing a more advanced training program and including other people in the training program, alert the staff to the scope of participation as well. Let them know that staff members from other departments will be participating in their training, and that vendors and customers will be brought into the overall program. Explain the reasons for their participation and emphasize the strength of including the entire brewpub community in their training experience.
- Offer resources. When a trainer is not available and more information is needed for a guest, establish a variety of places staff can find more information.

Encourage them to support each other with their knowledge. Keep an informational book or bulletin board with information about current products, suggest beer knowledge websites for specific reference, and ask a brewer if one is available.

Expectations of the Staff

- Retention: Retention of the material presented is expected for every effective training program. Encourage your staff to collect and use printed material to reference with their guests and to study for their own knowledge.



Remember that it is against the law to require study of your employees outside of work. Instead, create opportunities for them to reinforce their knowledge while working with each other, on a slow shift, or with the brewers.

- Making up missed training: If an employee misses a regularly scheduled shift that includes training, it is expected that they will find out about the topic from the trainer and find a way(s) to repeat the training on their own. Resources can be fellow staff members who took notes as well as referencing printed material that might have been distributed at the training.
- Testing: Inform staff what kind of testing will happen, how often it will happen, what scores are required or expected, if there are rewards for doing well or consequences for improvement needed, and anything else that will assist them in understanding the structure of the program. Once the program is established, this information should be included in the job description and perhaps in new hire training as well.

TECHNIQUES FOR TRAINING SUCCESS

Offering individual elements that are important to the training sessions will be extremely helpful to your trainers, especially those who lack teaching experience. Remind your trainers that people learn differently, and they must offer a variety of different approaches to learning to maxi-

"An entire week of the same topic is not too much. By doing so, you'll be sure all service staff hears the information. And those who hear it more than once will be more likely to remember it."

Larry Chase, Hear, Hear Shift Meetings for Beer, The New Brewer

mize understanding and retention. A few of these elements are as follows, and more are available in [Appendix A](#).

- **Repeat everything.** Repetition, particularly with different approaches, is an important principle to utilize with training programs. The more often you present it, the more consistent recall and real understanding will happen. This is particularly true due to the fact that the average attention span is less than 20 minutes, and some educational opportunities will take longer than 20 minutes to complete. Repetition with different approaches will also test and confirm comprehension to avoid misunderstandings as well.
- **Announce your training topic** for the day, talk about it, and then summarize what you talked about. This is a classic pattern used by speakers, and it helps the presenter and the audience quantify and qualify the content as well as improving comprehension and retention.
- **Listen, write, verbalize, practice.** When you hear about people learning in different ways, it's as simple as this: some people learn more easily by seeing things, some from hearing them, others from writing it down, and some from talking about and doing it. Often it is a combination, such as hearing and seeing at the same time. Your trainees will provide you with a variety of these patterns, some of which may become clear over time. Give them the freedom to learn in their own way.
- **Taste it, smell it, experience it.** Most people understand things in a clearer, more profound way when they experience them personally. Establishing a connection with beer-- or with beer and food-- will happen in a very different way when you take people out of the classroom and allow them to experience the product personally. Go beyond memorizing the terms appropriate for describing the stout; talk about what it is really like to you.

Once this personal connection is established, people will speak from the heart. Speaking from the heart, rather than from knowledge in their head, resonates in a very different way with guests. It is more than just educating people; it is providing testimony, an account of their personal experience. Guests also frequently ask servers what their favorite beer is. This is another opportunity for the same type of connection, and servers should be prepared to follow their opinion with alternative diplomatic suggestions.

- **Different Languages:** Remember that you need to reduce or eliminate language barriers in the best way possible for your training sessions. If you have participating staff members who may not have a clear understanding of the language that is being used for training, allow one of the staff members to translate for the others. You can also bring materials to the training that are bilingual or visually explanatory of the general concepts in training. 'Listen, write, and verbalize' applies to everyone, and training materials are most effective in the native language of the staff member.



For Spanish speaking staff, there is an instructional site called "Ceresvis." (See [Appendix A](#).)

- **Focus on each of the senses.** When providing the opportunity to experience beer or food, look toward sight, smell, taste, hearing, touch, and texture to develop knowledge.

Another less tangible impression is the gut sense of something, its overall feeling. For example, a milk stout might evoke an overall feeling with components of chocolate, milk, hot chocolate, winter, s'mores, curling up with in a blanket, sitting by the fireplace, smooth & creamy, and other such feelings, memories or descriptions. What does it 'feel' like? What does it make you think of?

When training, touch on all sorts of descriptors and offer the opportunity for your trainees to provide their own. Since they bring their own life experience and knowledge with them, you might be pleasantly surprised to learn about how people think and perceive the world around them.

- **Answer Why:** As adults, service staff are oriented to the relevancy of the training you provide. Continually offer reasons for the training experience as they relate to the individual staff member, to the guest, and to the brewpub. You are building the culture of the brewpub through this training. Connecting it all regularly will solidify those connections.

There are many different approaches to training, both broad in scope and as specific training concepts. Those mentioned here have played a valuable role in other programs and have been helpful to the trainers. Additional resources are listed in the Resources section ([Appendix A](#)), as well as helpful practices listed in the Templates section ([Appendix B](#)).

INITIAL BEER TRAINING OR NEW HIRE TRAINING

B This chapter takes an in-depth look at the actual training process for those new on the job. It may not be necessary for someone moving up within the company to go through this process formally. In every case it will be helpful to someone who is moving from a completely different area of the business into food and beverage.

As you dive into initial beer training, basic materials and structure should be in place before the training process begins:

- The beer and beer service information for the new employees should already be assembled and distributed to the new employees at the time they were hired, with whatever “current” information enclosed updated as appropriate.

- The trainers involved in the training process should already be familiar with their roles, with the structure of the program, and with its content and materials.
- The trainees should be aware that the information imparted in the training process is their responsibility to learn, retain, and actively incorporate throughout their daily interaction with both guests and staff. They need to know if there will be formal accountability, i.e., written tests or certification requirements. The new employees should be informed of these requirements in the interview or hiring process.

“We provide our new server with a ton of reading material. From our Introduction Letter which gives a brief history of our brewpub and our rules and regulations to what is expected of them as well as a bunch of beer information. We feel that a 10-day period of training (total of five training shifts) gives each person a chance to absorb all of the required material. Before their final training shift, they are given a quiz that, after corrected, is returned to them to help with their weaker areas. The quiz is a tool, not an evaluation.”

“We also require our new hires to participate in four quizzes to better familiarize themselves with our own operation and history as well as general beer and food pairing knowledge. Each quiz has 25 questions and the study materials are located on Quizlet.com. After each successful completion of a quiz, as an incentive they receive a 25-cent raise.”

Steve Polewacyk, Vermont Pub & Brewery

“Standing Stone’s initial server training encompasses a 1.5-hour class. You’ll find five documents in [Appendix B](#) attached that outline in detail the three sections that we cover in the 1.5-hour time frame.

The first section is focused on the main four beer ingredients and how they contribute to beer flavor. We bring out all the ingredients showing staff what they are as we talk about them. We let them taste, smell and touch while talking about the roles each plays in creating beer flavor. This is also when we begin talking about basic flavor terms that they can use to describe beer.

The second section delves into learning about our beers. We talk about how to describe beer and picking three distinct descriptors that resonate with the individual person to help them remember. The year-round beers are always tasted with seasonal specialties currently on tap only tasted if time permits. Including the story behind the beer is important because often the story is the easiest selling point for a particular beer.

Finally a quick tour of the brewery happens to point out major pieces of equipment and the basics of how it is used in conjunction with the ingredients. We spend the least amount of time on this since it’s the least important piece for servers to know when talking beer to customers. The primary point is for them to understand that we make beer here and to give them basic pointers that they can relay to customers who are either curious or who think that the equipment is only a nice display piece.”

Larry Chase, Standing Stone Brewing Co.

FOUR TRAINING CONSIDERATIONS

1. Although it is possible to separate beer service training from food service and the other components of a server job description, in a brewpub setting integrating beer knowledge and beer service into the overall training program is a key element of the business.
2. All training should be complete before the new service staff member is scheduled for any solo shifts. This ensures the staff member has the tools they need to be successful and is as comfortable as possible beginning to work with your guests. This overall initial training process will take different amounts of time at different locations, depending on the intensity of focus and depth of the training program.

3. Streamlining the training process can be very effective. In some places this new hire training is provided for each individual person, others train 2 to 3 people at a time, and some larger businesses plan for everyone who is hired over a 2- to 4-week period to all start at the same time. Grouping the hiring together allows for more efficient use of the trainers’ time and makes the additional training content and time investment more profitable than it would if given to each person individually. Strategize to the needs of your company.
4. Communicate your accountability expectations. If there is to be accountability immediately upon completion of the new hire training program, or at the conclusion of each different training session, make sure it is clear to the trainees. Communication about the importance of training and transparency of what is expected and why are all significant.

[Appendix A](#) has specific resources for guidance on training content. You may have already referenced these resources in preparing your training manual. The goal of this chapter is to provide suggestions for structure and key topics.

THE BREWERY TOUR

The brewery tour establishes the brewery as a primary focal point of the business. It is important to emphasize this with each new staff member. Everyone must have beginning surface knowledge that the shiny equipment is really being used to brew the beers being served in the pub.

Basic brewery tours can be quick and simple. The goal is to impart the general process, principle pieces of equipment, and basic ingredients. Having both malted barley and hops to smell and taste will increase the trainees’ effective connection and comfort level with the brewery.

Intermediate brewery tours should include a more in-depth show and tell (and taste and smell) of the ingredients and a more detailed tour of the brewery and equipment. It may also make sense to include more brewery experience later in the training process to keep the new hire training limited to a feasible amount of time.

Advanced brewery tours may be allocated more time or may incorporate more of the training in the brewery than the other levels would. Include walking through the brewing process one step at a time and explaining the equipment used throughout. Introduce the ingredients as they are brought into the mix, perhaps incorporating written and visual documentation of the process. This is another way to enhance the training to offer the new staff member amplified brewery connections. Shadowing a brewer for a full day is another way to create and enforce a strong connection and sense of teamwork between different areas of the brewpub.

BEER BASICS – TEACHING

“Our training procedure for new hires is kind of a three-step process.

- 1. They do a tour of the brewery where they get a chance to taste the malt, smell the hops, and see exactly how we make the beer from grain to glass. Including how the draught system works.*
- 2. Then they watch the Modern Marvels piece on Brewing. (It is an excellent overview of the history, culture, and process of brewing.) If it is a new store opening, where we are training 60 people or more, we do a classroom lecture with a PowerPoint presentation.*
- 3. We then do a formal tasting where we go in depth not just about each style and what makes it unique, including foods they go with and the importance of clean glassware and expert pouring; you taste with your eyes as well as your nose and mouth.”*

Tom Dargen, CraftWorks Training

Often the classroom portion of training, beer basics can range from extremely simple to complex depending on the depth of knowledge desired. Remember that everyone has a maximum amount that can be absorbed within a short period of time, and retention over time is more important. Keep the expectation reasonable and reinforce the information elsewhere in their training.

Basic beer fundamentals could include the four basic ingredients of beer, the differentiation between ales and lagers, flavors, and foundational vocabulary and terminology.

Intermediate beer fundamentals can build on the Basic level with a discussion of common adjuncts, spices and flavorings other than the 4 basic ingredients, define styles and explain them as desired, and should teach more beer-specific terminology. This could include a basic explanation of how various yeast strains can define the qualities of the beer styles.

Advanced beer fundamentals could be led by a brewer, with more in-depth hands on show, tell, smell and taste for all of the different areas to be covered. Taking new staff members to a tasting or festival where they will be explaining the beers over and over all day is a great way to learn more about the terminology and practice using it. This also serves to immerse them in the culture of your brewpub.

BEER BASICS – TASTING

Learning in a classroom environment has its advantages, all of which are magnified further with the opportunity to add the visual, aromatic and taste components. Putting all of your senses to work when learning about beer is a distinct advantage, whether in a separate format or in combination with the brewpub tasting described below.

“I often liken a new taster’s experience to being blind, with no reference to the primary colors. In this scenario, primary colors are taste elements like sweet, salt, sour, umami and bitter. On my beer journey, it took a while to mentally detect and separate these elements. Until a taster has reference to what they perceive, they have a hard time describing (internally or externally) what flavors they’re detecting.”

Julia Herz, Decoding Flavor: Four Keys to Tasting, CraftBeer.com

Basic beer fundamentals in a tasting format could be as simple as offering three different beers that are diverse in both style and flavor to begin the exercise of observing, smelling, tasting and describing the beer. Explaining the ingredients integral to colors, aromas and flavors further elevates the understanding and connection of the staff member with the beer.

Intermediate beer fundamentals provide a foundation for the observation, description and connection between ingredients with different beers. Begin simply and move forward into the lineup of beers offered on your brewpub menu, and

then to your guest taps. Offer the platform from which to expand confidently and practice on the larger range and variety of beers to be experienced. Establishing this foundation before expanding keeps the experience from being overwhelming to the newly initiated.

Leading an open discussion while tasting, asking the employee what they smell or taste, and working together to identify the ingredients from which these aromas or flavors are derived can work well. Pointing out characteristics of the beer when you post the commercial description is another effective way to build their vocabulary.

"Identifying beer by its flavor profile is an alternative to identifying it by style, though both methods are complementary. When starting with a preselected style, the flavors are more or less predefined, so pairings and culinary uses will be restricted to what that style will work with. Beginning with flavor profiles allows the guest or chef to focus on descriptive characteristics and find a beer that matches their preferences."

Often the best way to introduce those new to craft beer is to work from flavor profiles as opposed to styles. Guests can identify with words like crisp, clean, bitter, fruity, tart and sour more easily than with beer-specific terminology like IPA, amber, stout or pilsner. Begin by asking which flavors the guest prefers, then select a style that best fits those descriptors."

Julia Herz & Adam Dulye, Beer & Food Course, CraftBeer.com

Advanced beer fundamentals could step farther into the explanations about taste, including the basic tastes of sweet, salty, sour, bitter, and umami. Diving into the concepts of orthonasal and retronasal as it relates to perceiving flavor would be another such in-depth topic.

SERVICE BASICS

Many of the service basics can also be learned in a classroom environment. Visual examples are extremely valuable in learning and reinforcing the importance of many of these principles.

Basic beer service training should start with how to describe beer. Quick and accurate descriptions are important for both guests and servers. Discuss characteristics as described above when learning through tasting. Follow with a discussion of the glassware styles used in your brewpub. Include the definition of a "beer clean" glass complete with examples of how to tell if the glass is not clean. Share both an explanation and demonstration of a proper pour, pointers

"Teach retronasal using Jelly Bellies. Buy a pack of multiflavored Jelly Bellies. Hand out different flavors to participants. Instruct your tasters to follow this order: 1) plug their noses, 2) place the Jelly Belly in their mouths and with nose still plugged begin chewing, 3) while chewing ask them to pay attention to the flavor they experience, 4) before swallowing they then unplug their nose, 5) ask what flavor they now experience. This exercise highlights the importance of retronasal aromas in helping us detect and name flavors."

Larry Chase, Standing Stone Brewing



“I would emphasize the importance of ‘beer clean’ glassware and a ‘proper pour.’ These details not only show a greater understanding of the proper handling of beer but it also saves the pub money because of less waste. The difference on a busy night when dirty glassware is filled to the brim versus when it is served with a proper ½ inch of head in a clean glass that sparkles can be gallons of beer saved.”

Tony Aiken, Data Collection Solutions

for handling the glass properly and tips for inspecting the glass, along with an explanation of the brewpub’s preferred approach to bottle service. If your staff will be serving outdoors, teach them about “light struck” or “skunked” beer and how to avoid it.

Intermediate beer service training builds on the basic level with additional glassware styles and the explanation of how the glassware provides a better experience for the drinker. Keep the conversation about “beer clean” glassware going and offer more practice and discussion about bottle service. Take the trainee behind the scenes with storage practices and the results of improper storage. Educate about the effects of sunlight and oxygen on beer. Beyond the proper pour, Intermediate training might include a tour of the cellar or cooler and an explanation about how the draught system works.

Advanced beer service training takes training deeper, with hands-on application of as many topics as possible. These topics could include a comparison tasting of the same beer in a shaker pint and a tulip glass to illustrate the glassware differential. Further, offering the opportunity for the trainees to see the evidence of glasses that are not “beer clean” and the process of visually detecting or testing for beer clean could be very helpful. Tasting a light struck beer next to one that has not been affected (not everyone can smell or taste the difference) and offering an oxidized beer to be smelled will be time well invested. Some of these demonstrations, like getting a sensory analysis spiking kit, could easily be used for an educational seminar farther into the trainees’ term of employment.

YOUR BREWPUB BEERS

A guided tasting of your brewery’s beers is arguably the most important part of new hire training with regard to the brewery and beer, and is entitled to the most time and

focus. This information will be shared with the guests over and over again, and will be critical to the guest experience and their impression of your business. A good guest experience requires the service staff to be able to describe your beers’ flavors and to develop a personal connection to the experience of drinking each beer.

“We follow up the brewery tour with a tasting of our beers. The brewer describes the appearance, color, aroma, flavor and finish for each. We discuss food and beer pairings and how to approach tables with a beer focus.”

Tim Piotrowski, Freehouse Brewery

Basic: Taste all year-round offerings and share information about the flavor, aroma and distinctive ingredients. Provide descriptors to show trainees what words can be used to describe specific flavors.

Intermediate: Taste all of the beers offered in the brewpub, perhaps over multiple sessions, in an interactive environment. Discussion between brewers, managers, existing staff and new staff members is tremendously helpful. Talk about

specific ingredients that impart different flavor characteristics to enhance the connection between the beer and the brewing process. Share a story about each beer. Stories will often sell a beer more easily than a flavor description. Bringing food to the training for the purpose of allowing the trainees to experience beer pairings elevates the training experience further.

Advanced: This tasting connects the ingredients, flavors, styles, and brewing processes to the beer in creative ways. Incorporating beer pairings for specific beers with individual menu items will provide the trainee with yet another level of connection to be shared with the guest. Sharing a special brewing technique employed to create a certain beer will augment the story about the beer. Beyond learning the descriptors, comparing the flavors with each other and comparing the individual beers will be tremendously useful to staff interaction with the customer. Brewpub staff members have the opportunity to introduce many of their guests to your beer, in this case literally beer made on premise. This comparative knowledge will make each staff member a smart brand ambassador and flavor guide.

“New hires receive extensive training over 5 to 6 days, which includes our own preprinted training packet, a face-to-face two-hour meeting with brewers, and a variety of beer tastings that focus on style, color, flavor and body. 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.

“The training is conducted through a class administered by the head brewer of a location which includes a classroom portion, a tour, and a tutored tasting of our ‘house beer’ lineup. Step two is “sampler training” administered by a service trainer every shift on days 1 through 5 of service training. In addition there are twice daily “lineups” where a brewer spends a few minutes reviewing the beers on tap, especially anything new, and works some general beer knowledge into the conversation.

“The main training goal/outcome: [The] Ability of a server to deliver a sampler (validated by a brewery employee) where they list the color, body, flavor, and defining characteristics of each beer on tap, [and the] ability to describe the BASIC brewing process.”

Larry Horwitz, Regional Brewer, Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant

YOUR STORY

Share the story of your business with your tasting and discussion of the brewpub’s beers. Talk about the original inspiration for the brewpub, tell stories about the owners, how the brewpub was founded, the first beers, and other engaging information. Make sure to include the facts that servers might need to provide a guest, such as when the brewpub was built, how many and who the owners are, who the brewmaster is, and if the owner(s) are operationally part of the brewpub. Philosophy is also important, about the beers served, the character and location of the brewpub, and other aspects that are distinctive to your business and the customer experience. This understanding is relevant regardless of the level of training you provide. Your story is part of your brand and your relationship with the guest. Make it fun and interesting, and connect with the guest in the best way that you can.

When moving forward with ongoing training, remember to use the Resources chapter as well as the Templates appendix for good information and approaches used by others to successfully accomplish these goals.



ONGOING BEER TRAINING

“When you have a good training plan in place, the end result is that everyone will have a clear understanding of what you’re looking for in a valued team member. Training also indicates that you care about your business and the success of your staff.”

Ginger Tin, Ramping Up Server Training, The New Brewer

C Each employee has been provided a foundation for working in your brewpub through the process of interviewing, being hired, reviewing their employee packet and completing the company’s initial training program. Now begins the reinforcement process of everything taught, as well as the opportunity to introduce new material.

Regular training provides the consistency necessary for staff members to understand that this knowledge is expected. Knowing that training is a priority for the management and will therefore be maintained on an ongoing basis offers staff members the opportunity to increase their personal understanding and connection with the content as well as offering different ways to learn.

Over time, your staff will become comfortable and participate with training by interacting with the trainer, describing what they taste, sharing their ideas about pairings, and relating guest feedback as a matter of course. This comfort level and participation also allows servers to practice their beer terminology and approach to discussions about beer, thus increasing their comfort interacting with their guests in the pub.

“Your personal opinion [about the beer] is irrelevant. Your strength as a beer server lies in the diversity of your knowledge about beer styles and profiles and dissecting what the guest is looking for in their experience. The success of a sale is finding the connection between the two. The result is a satisfied and more educated consumer that finds value in their purchase.” [Excerpt from a role-playing coaching session]

Cyrena Nouzille, Ladyface Ale Companie

Ongoing training is an opportunity to relate to your staff and share your knowledge. The trainer becomes a sales person during the training sessions, conveying excitement and passion about everything being trained as well as their strength of belief about the business. The servers will buy into this passion, sharing it with each other and with their customers.

Consistent training offers your staff members the opportunity to expand their knowledge and improve their memory recall. Repetition is a primary learning tool and supports all others. Providing the option or the expectation for your team to document their knowledge through beer certification programs raises the bar for your establishment. Continuing education is extremely valuable for moving up; it increases gratuity earned, furthers advancement potential within the establishment, enhances qualification for other opportunities outside the establishment, and boosts self-esteem and confidence.

When creating your daily, weekly, monthly and periodic training components, keep in mind what you are providing for your staff. It is considerably more valuable than simple beer trivia.

D SHIFT MEETINGS

Shift meetings are generally held every day prior to the start of the service period. This is the optimal time for a learning session. Focus is heightened substantially, as the staff is literally preparing to go "on stage" to work with the guests. In a brewpub, shift meetings often include up-to-date information about specials and promotions, discussing anything that is new or no longer available, and reviewing any service issues or changes in protocol.

"5 Musts for Every Shift Meeting

1. Preparation.
2. Every shift.
3. Keep it short
4. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat.
5. Engage."

Larry Chase, Hear, Hear Shift Meetings for Beer, The New Brewer

Basic training programs will include any updates to the beer selection, any beer that is liable to change over the course of the shift, special glassware, pour sizes, and beer-service-related issues or anything that deviates from the norm. Shift meetings are an easy opportunity to introduce new specialty and seasonal beers.

Intermediate training could include the opportunity for staff to practice describing beers to their peers, discuss-

"Pre-Shift: This is the optimal opportunity to communicate with the hourly staff who serve as the front line and will make or break a brewpub."

"Take the time in a shift meeting to dole out petite pearls of wisdom. Discuss the seasonal beers on tap and those coming soon; let them try them paired with contrasting and complimenting dishes while the brewer and chef explain how to describe the flavors in tantalizing vernacular. Keep it short and simple though, just a few sentences."

"Give them a story to tell at the table and hammer home that telling those stories not only sells more beer, but it makes it rain more money on them."

Tom Dargen, Our House is a Very, Very Fine House, The New Brewer

“The training is conducted in a three-part method, the first is a daily discussion at the shift meeting which includes upcoming beers, tasting and pairing for new beers, and occasionally quizzes based on reading material. In addition there is a monthly server beer education class that tackles a particular topic (i.e., Year-round beers, cleanliness, tasting beer, styles, etc.). The class also features a tasting and food pairing section. Lastly there is a binder in the server prep area. The binder is required weekly reading (quiz mentioned before), reward for answering correctly is a beer (something not from the pub, unique and targeted to the season).”

Natty Greene's Pub & Brewing Co. – Raleigh Location

ing beer pairings that are new or are being particularly well-received, comparing related beer styles, and sharing new beer facts and service tips. Shift information should be short, as most shift meetings need to be brief in total time and content. Taking the opportunity to keep the staff interested in learning can still be accomplished here. Bartenders should always be included, and including bussers hosts, and other auxiliary staff will increase the effectiveness of the shift meeting.

Advanced training might include a quick presentation by one of the staff about something beer related such as the history of a style, explaining a special yeast strain or hops that are being used, and so forth. Testimonials about what approaches or beer & food pairings are most effective, a hand out with interesting beer information, or perhaps a fun puzzle or pop quiz are also options for shift meetings. Rotate through staff members to present in shift meetings for increased involvement, accountability and the opportunity to contribute. Daily content should be quick and succinct in order to be maximally effective. Including all front of house staff members and as many back of house (kitchen) staff members as possible can be a real team-building factor.

STAFF TASTING

Tasting your brewpub's beers, and perhaps including food pairings from the menu, is a very effective way for your servers to connect with your business. They become comfortable with the beer, and learn to describe the food and beer to the guests in a more personal, knowledgeable way. Tastings can be occasional, and appropriately served in small quantity. Tastings are often included as part of the regular shift meeting. Be aware of and respect any legal guidelines in your area for tasting alcohol with your staff.

“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.”

Tony Simmons, Server Education for Brewpubs + Tap Rooms, The New Brewer

Basic training programs might offer tasting opportunities to the staff once or twice a week, perhaps one beer at each tasting. Reviewing the flavor characteristics, identifying flavor descriptors, reviewing ingredients that play a significant part in the flavor profile and any other relevant qualities would be valuable. If a new or seasonal beer is available, discuss how long it is going to be available and provide some helpful information about the inspiration for the beer.

Intermediate programs can have tastings led by the brewing team. This training level might bump up the fre-

quency to three or four times per week, possibly include more than one beer at the tasting, and could offer food options from the menu to discuss pairings as well. If food options are included, walking through the pairings with a member of the culinary team can be beneficial.

“Food is a key component for our success and we regularly have the staff sample beer and food combinations.”

Sebastian Wolfrum, Natty Greene's Brewing Co.

Advanced programs will include all of the basic and intermediate elements mentioned, elevating the experience further by increasing the detail provided to the staff and the depth of the discussion. The following ideas can be included over the course of training to offer the server maximum understanding and connection with the entire business:

- Offering more information about the brewing process for the specific beer,
- Diving into the why and how of the flavors and why they may complement specific foods,
- Discussing glassware to be used for the beers and
- Learning more about the creative process and inspiration behind the beer.

Consider a tasting session using other beers similar in style to yours. This will build brand awareness and help servers sell beer by identifying similarities and differences to other beers your customers may be familiar with.

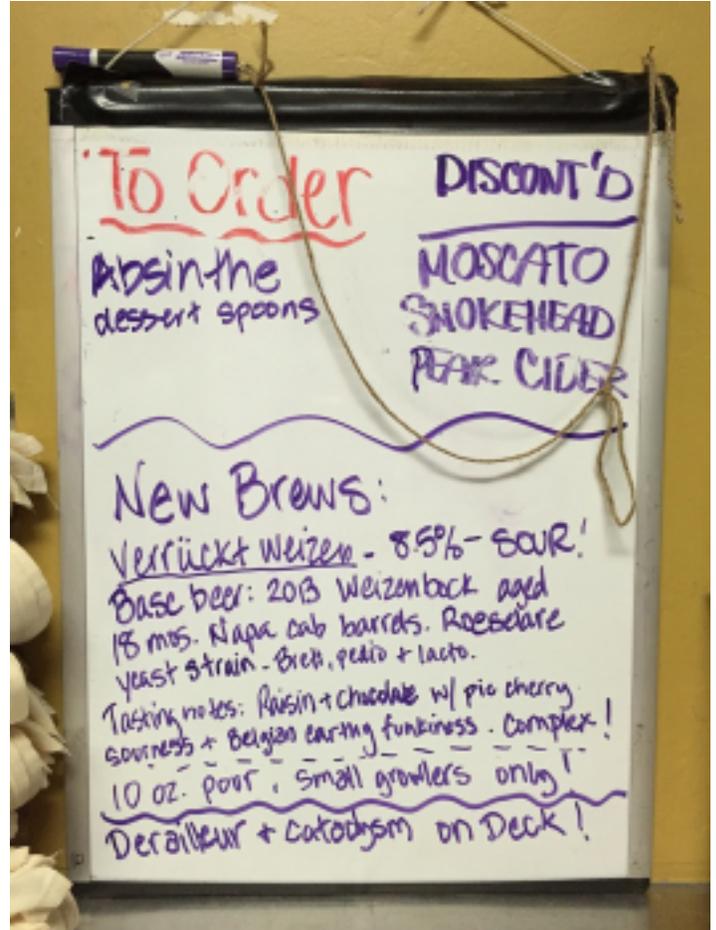
SHIFT BEERS

If your brewery allows shift beers, the opportunity to relax over a full pint can be a good time to taste and discuss the beer in a more relaxed way. Limiting shift beers to those that you make, and rotating through the selection available regularly, will offer your staff the chance to analyze that specific beer in a different way. Encourage them to practice the formal steps of tasting and utilizing their flavor descriptors with each other while winding down from their shift. If you provide packaged samples for consumption off-premise, suggest the same protocol.

E THE BEER BOARD

The beer board and other fixed, posted information stations can be extremely helpful training opportunities. Using

this option for communicating training material can keep your shift meetings shorter and provide continuity for your staff through their days off. The information posted on your education board or in a binder can be themed to your shift meeting and tasting plan for the period or can be completely separate. The updates need to be easily noticeable and mentioned in the shift meeting.



The brewing team can also post information to further learning about the brewery and to update the staff about the latest developments or beers brewed in the brewery. Having a way to communicate from the brewery to the pub is a very effective means of building common ground and understanding between different areas of the brewpub.

The Brewers Association offers three educational beer and food pairing charts that would be useful for this area, and could possibly be permanently posted. They are Tips for Pairing Food and Beer, the Beer and Food Pairing Chart, and Pairing Interactions.

Basic training programs might include posted content that focuses on the ingredients of brewing, information about specific beers, beer service tips, terminology, current rotating items, and the basic brewing process.

Intermediate boards could expand upon the basics by adding information about food pairings, getting into more of the why and how of the brewing process, offering

in-depth information about the ingredients, specific styles, exploring the history of styles of beer, and so forth.

Advanced training programs extending into certification testing areas about beer storage, beer clean glassware, what can happen to beer as a result of light, oxygen or bacteria, and other similar information can further the knowledge and increase the ability of the staff members to retain what they are hearing in shift meetings, tastings, and other areas. Repetition, visual, and auditory information all combine to create a very effective learning environment.

UTILIZE THE INTERNET

In the age of ever-growing technological opportunities, expanding your brewpub training program to include email, social media, or creating a staff access option for your website is easily done. Sending educational emails using your own email client or a free online bulk marketing email client could be an option. Posting educational beer content to an established group on Facebook, Google or another social media platform are additional suggestions. These electronic formats lend themselves to including links to further information online that supplement the content being shared in the post.

Content can piggyback current info being shared in shift meetings and on the beer board at the brewpub, and can be a good resource for those who might have missed the weekly shift meeting information as well. Supplementing shift meetings and the beer board in this fashion gives staff members the option to learn on their own time and out of the intensity of the work day. This could also be an opportunity for staff to earn additional incentive credit of some kind, and is easily testable to see who has seen, read, learned and retained the information.



Consult your HR professional or labor attorney about the proper presentation of these kinds of “off the clock” voluntary learning opportunities.

Remember that requiring study outside of work cannot be an expectation or requirement.

BREWERY FOLLOWS

Enhancing your daily and weekly training components with other experiences can serve to boost motivation and learning opportunities. Some ideas that may build upon your core program might be brewery follows, beer or beer pairing features, staff incentives or competitions, refresher classes, in-depth seminars and events such as festivals. Keep in mind that the feasibility of these enhancements can vary dramatically based upon the size of your operation and the labor cost that they may require.

Basic programs might specify a time or day that one or more service staff members have the option to follow the brewery staff in the process of brewing. This commitment could be a couple of hours, or as much as a full day to experience life in the brewery environment. This practice should include an

in-depth brewery tour led by one of the brewers or someone very familiar with the details of the brewing method.



Intermediate programs can build upon the basic experience by ensuring that the brewery follow is for an entire day. More explanation about the why and how of each step in the process, exploring more about the various pieces of equipment used, learning more about the ingredients, and other related connections will benefit the service team.

Advanced brewery follows build upon the basic and intermediate information, adding a higher degree of training throughout the process and perhaps mixing a combination of individual and group experiences over time. Living the brewing process to a higher degree equates to an amount of “ownership feeling” with the product, and it becomes personal to the staff member. This translates to enthusiasm and passion as well as service upsell on the floor.

BEER AND BEER PAIRING FEATURES

Basic training programs can incorporate a specific beer feature over a period of time, challenging the staff to focus on selling that beer. This feature offers the opportunity for the service team to learn more, retain more and talk more about that individual beer. This could include a promotional price for that beer during that period.



Reference a few basic pairings with menu standards or top sellers, such as “Try our IPA with the burger, the Belgian Abbey with the cheese plate, or the Pale Ale with our fish and chips or carrot cake with IPA, cheese with stout, seafood with kolsch.

Intermediate programs bring in the food component. They may offer the staff a focus on pairing a single beer with several different menu items or limit the scope to a single pairing. This kind of feature allows for more practice with descriptive terminology both with food and beer, and gives an opportunity to bring additional upselling into the picture at each table. Pairing fundamentals can be incorporated as helpful suggestions to the guest, such as balancing the body and strength of the beer with the choice of food. Bringing in resources for your staff to learn more about pairing while running beer pairing features will amplify their effectiveness. [such as the Beer & Food Pairing Chart from CraftBeer.com (see [Appendix A](#))]

Advanced training can add variables into this feature. Consider changing the feature often instead of keeping it the same for a period of time, changing the pairing focus for a single beer, or assigning different staff members to different features over the same period. Your brewpub team will determine the best approach to mixing up your feature program and customizing it to be maximally effective for your business and your staff. Teaching and attaining a more complex understanding of the palate and beer profiles can be part of this program. [Incorporating information from programs such as the Beer and Food Course developed by the Brewers Association (see [Appendix A](#)) can expand the educational opportunity further in a culinary direction as well as enhancing beer knowledge.]

STAFF INCENTIVES AND COMPETITIONS

Whether offering bragging rights, a material prize, or financial gain, staff incentives and competitions can energize your service team in a different way. As a group, supporting each other, or as a competition among individual team members, competitive programs can show marked sales increases for the business as well as motivating staff members to step up their knowledge and service. Challenging individuals to perform is a different way to evaluate the effectiveness of your training program, and can show extremely positive results. Setting up these incentives or competitions in coordination with your accounting team will allow you to determine where the brewpub would benefit most from additional focus. Make sure you are choosing features and incentives that will showcase items and pairings that might not get as much attention on a regular basis, thus building a foundation for improved sales of those items beyond the scope of the incentive program.

Basic incentives and competitions might happen over a longer period of time and less frequently. The whole team can be challenged to sell more of a specific product than was sold over the same period last year. Or perhaps the staff could be divided into two teams and the team who outsells the other wins. Answering trivia questions about beer is fun and simple to prepare. Remember that the reward need not be financial. A team field trip or lunch on the house can be just as effective, a growler fill of their choice to take home is fun, and sometimes bragging rights alone are sufficient. Be sure to give recognition formally to make the competition meaningful.

Intermediate incentives and competitions can be held more frequently with smaller teams or as a more advanced challenge. Similar to the features, pairings could be used rather than a single beer focus or a specific upsell required, such as a flight with an appetizer or a large draught of a specific beer rather than all sizes. Smaller, rotating teams with straightforward challenges may make the most sense for your group. Customize the program for your brewpub.

Advanced incentives and competitions might be between individuals or could be based upon a single individual's pre-

vious sales. Each person's sales could be their own personal challenge to beat, whether overall total or of a specific beer. The incentive or reward might be a percentage of those improved sales, a winner's prize to the person who had the biggest increase, or significant recognition. The competition need not be between members of the team. It can be set up as a personal challenge.

F REFRESHER AND IN-DEPTH CLASSES

Refresher classes can be given by your trainers; guest speakers can be brought in to speak on a particular subject; seminars can be offered to delve deeper into ingredients, styles, certification exams and more. For smaller size brewpubs, these might be scheduled on slower days for a few people at a time as business allows or 'one on one' as appropriate.

Basic training programs will reinforce the primary knowledge targeted in new hire training, in shift meetings and in tastings by offering classes to refresh the staff on these topics. Classes can be offered quarterly, and can be taught by your in-house trainers, brewers, or management. Each person who was responsible for the material in the New Hire training may be a good candidate for teaching the review class. Classes can be optional or mandatory, and can include tasting for some topics.

Intermediate training programs delve deeper into individual topics than was originally presented, and an outside guest speaker can add interest by providing additional perspective. An in-depth look at malt or yeast can be intriguing, a specialty class on a specific style or beer provides a lot of material and gain for the attending staff member, and perhaps the refresher or in-depth class could be given in the brewery with demonstrations. Another important and very relevant area to cover with your staff is the draught system. An in-depth session about how it works-- perhaps taking a faucet apart and putting it back together-- can be incredibly valuable.



"When handled properly from brewery to bar to glass, draught beer delivers what many consider to be the freshest, most flavorful beer available to the customer. But the job does not end once the keg is tapped and the beer begins to flow. Good beer quality depends on proper alignment of the dispense variables and consistent housekeeping practices. As one industry insider quipped, "Even the Mona Lisa would look terrible in a museum with lousy lighting.""

Draught Beer Quality Manual, Brewers Association

"Beer pouring and beer troubleshooting. That is basically my job, by definition.

Examples:

1. *What are the elements of pouring a "perfect pint?"*
2. *How does a perfect pint affect my bottom line?*
3. *Why does my beer foam when we get busy?*
4. *Why is my beer flat?*
5. *Why does it have a cardboardlike taste to it?*
6. *Why is the beer always so foamy, I have to pour half of it down the drain to serve a good pint?"*

Doug Downing, Beer Product Engineering

"Training some staff on draught system balance and levels of carbonation for particular beers very important, especially when the beers produced vary greatly. Having someone with the expertise to fix a dispensing issue helps with the following:

- *Shorter time to pour a beer which lessens bartender and server frustration*
- *Dispense beer at the correct volume on CO₂ for the beer style*
- *Saves money because the bartenders are not pouring large amounts on foam down the drain"*

Tony Aiken, Data Collection Solutions

Advanced classes might happen offsite as a field trip or could be intensive training for the certification exams. Another approach is learning more about pairings by being in the kitchen and tasting different single herbs or spices with the beers. An intense feature on the physiology of tasting, learning to design a beer pairing dinner, or tapping any number of resources for an in-depth topic can all be intriguing. A closer look at the brewing process would be appropriate here, including simplified discussions about enzymes at malting process, mash water temperatures, isomerization, coagulating proteins, sugar conversion and yeasts, and fermentation temperatures.

The sky is the limit for creative classes and continuing education. (See [Appendix A](#))

G FUN EVENTS & IDEAS

Mixing up the normal routine with something special will always motivate people. Whether a field trip to another brewpub, offering the staff members the chance to attend a specialty dinner at your own brewpub, or presenting the opportunity for interested staff members to create their own special event, different is good. Working a festival at the brewpub booth pouring and talking about beer all day is a special treat, as it gets the staff out of their groove and offers a different focus. An off-premise event can be a very

"We run a GABF contest every year where employees enter a raffle to win a free trip to the GABF. One hourly winner is chosen for every location and tickets are earned based on seniority, and by participating in "Brewer-for-a-Day" where the employee comes and works with us for a brew day.

Larry Horwitz, Regional Brewer, Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant



Social Tasting: Every time your staff has the opportunity to enjoy and discuss your brewpub's line of beers, encourage them to engage with their peers, talk through the beer(s), and experience the beer as a guest would. This could be as infrequently as a staff outing to a festival or as frequently as partaking in a shift drink at the end of their day.

Crossword Puzzles: [Insert link with crossword pdf] Liven up your training by mixing up the presentation and making it fun. Crossword puzzles help staff members with memory retention and recall by prompting them in a different way with important facts and definitions.

Beer Trivia Games: [Insert link to Dargen's Jeopardy] Staff holiday party, road trip to an event or offsite learning experience, or engaging with guests, beer trivia games are effective ways to engage and learn more about all facets of beer and brewing.

Take-Home Tests and Study Materials: [Insert link to Ladyface sample test] Focus outside of work can be a much better way for some staff members to learn, and the opportunity to excel and advance by showing dedication off the clock is an excellent opportunity for personal and professional development.

Off-Flavor Sampling/Experiments: [Insert link to Seibel Sensory Course or something similar] As the topic of an in-depth class, for fun at a staff event, an activity with the brewing team and in almost any format, off-flavor sampling is a very useful and valuable experience for your staff.

The Library: Create a library of beer and service information for your staff. Challenge them to dig in and learn on their own.

Brown Bag Bottle Shares: Fine-tune your taste buds and those of your staff by creating a blind tasting experience. The employee holiday party would be an informal setting, and an in-depth class would be a more formal example of this kind of exercise.

Other Beer Games: In the name of education or in the name of fun, giving your staff a reason to taste, focus and evaluate beer [with or without food] will establish this important personal connection.



“A large percentage of the front of the house staff will have in-depth beer knowledge or homebrewing experience. Some breweries have non-brewery staff give input on seasonal and specialty beers. This sort of activity lets the front of the house and kitchen feel involved in the business’ flagship product.”

Tony Aiken, Data Collection Solutions

TURN IT UP

When you feel it is time to incorporate other elements into your training program, there are a few that have surfaced repeatedly as successful enhancements to solid training programs. Cross-training your staff, leadership training, and brewing with the brewery team have all been mentioned as quite valuable.

Cross-training on a basic level could mean that all service staff are also trained as bussers and greeters. For intermediate programs, all service staff would also be trained as bartenders and all bartenders as servers. With an advanced program, everyone might get experience working in the kitchen as the expeditor or working in the brewery with some basic tasks. Depending on your specific environment, cross-training in one area may be more accessible than another.

Leadership Training is a very situational mission. This can take on a basic program format of establishing shift leaders to support other servers with more in-depth beer knowledge or resources. An intermediate program might also

“ All of our new servers are also required to go through both busser and host training as they will at some point find themselves doing those jobs as well...”

Steve Polewacyk, Vermont Pub & Brewery

offer the opportunity to lead shift meetings or beer tastings. Advanced leadership training could offer the option of assisting management with planning features, educational seminars, and incentives.

Brewing with the Brewery Team can easily be broken down into segments. A basic training program opportunity can include the adding of ingredients at the proper time in the brewing process, and perhaps not staying for the whole thing. The intermediate approach can start at the very beginning of pulling and measuring the ingredients and seeing it through to the end. The advanced training program can begin with the brainstorming process of what to brew and work from the creative to the recipe and all the way through to kegging, bottling

and packaging. A specific degree of knowledge should be expected at each level following this experience. The brewing team can ensure that the content is related throughout each session.

These ideas and the examples sprinkled throughout are offered to assist you with creating and maintaining an interesting and engaging program for your staff regardless of the size of your business. Keeping everyone interested and involved with the training process can be the biggest challenge here, so refreshing with new concepts and trying different things from time to time can be the key to success. To this end, [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#) will provide you with even more resources for content and different brewpubs' approaches in this arena.

TROUBLESHOOTING TRAINING



Once your training program has been structured and implemented, the next step is maintaining consistency at all levels. It will take some time for operations run smoothly and continually. Be patient and realistic; every program needs time to evolve and mature.

While you monitor and maintain the program, it will be tremendously beneficial to keep a close eye on missteps and glitches to see where improvements can be made. When you can catch issues early and train your staff to be proactive and alert for the same situation repeating itself, everyone wins. This awareness is most fundamentally protecting your team's investment of time and resources.

There are all kinds of normal service challenges every day in the course of a regular shift. The goal of this chapter is to target those that can be prevented by the training program; those that the trainer can reduce or eliminate by adjusting the program. The program itself can be reviewed as it addresses specific situations, and fine-tuning can be done based upon guest issues and problem resolution on the floor.

A THE TRAINING PROGRAM: COMMUNICATION

The number one challenge and priority in every organization is communication. Your training program can address a system of communication to improve or avoid challenges between staff members, issues with guests, problems between areas of the brewpub (brewery, kitchen), and passing along the day's challenges from one night's management staff to the next day's team.

Staff Resources

Be sure the service staff knows what their resources are in any given situation and that those resources will be consistently available, whether manager, bar book, or white board. If the manager on duty is the immediate support for guest issues on the floor, the manager on duty needs to be available to assist the server with the situation. This support can become a critical issue that needs to be addressed in some instances.

In many organizations there will be one or two primary management representatives who shoulder most of the problem-solving situations that arise. Be sure you provide a solid alternative for the staff when these people are not onsite. The service team needs to know who their resources will be in all cases.

Management Follow-Through

Another troubleshooting question is whether the manager on duty or point person in a problem situation has the experience and tools to address the issue. If the situation is an empty keg at the bar and there is no backup keg in the cooler, the point person needs to know where to find one, what is to be tapped next, and what to do. Likewise for draught system issues and other similar troubleshooting situations. The tools and resources need to be readily available to remedy the situation.

When your training program provides your team with a solid communication system, it improves their confidence substantially. Further, when communication breaks down, immediate attention is necessary to identify and remedy the problem. Management support and follow-through is tremendously important, and will establish to the servers that providing them the tools to service their guests is a priority.

Communication Throughout the Brewpub

There should be a communication network between the brewery, kitchen, bar and restaurant. In the course of daily business, all areas should be communicating and sharing relevant challenges as they occur. Teamwork within the brewpub is essential. It is a best practice to keep a manager's log or shift report that records any issues, concerns and questions that occur over one shift in order to assist the person following. This practice also builds stronger team support across the company.

Consistent Feedback and Adjustments

As covered previously, you should periodically gather together the people who are most active in your training program for brainstorming about its effectiveness and necessary adjustments. Asking for input from your service staff (your trainees) can be tremendously beneficial as well. Be proactive about making changes, and take care if significant changes are needed. Consistency is important, and changing smaller things as they happen will be more easily done and taken in stride by everyone.

THE TRAINING PROGRAM: STAFF ISSUES

Service complaints that repeatedly occur with regard to the same server or the same management shift need to be reviewed carefully. Once the communication system is determined to be in good working order, check on the availability of resources for these individuals.

- **B My new server does not drink beer.**

Another challenging staff situation can be the staff member who chooses not to drink alcohol, cannot drink beer for medical reasons, is a recovering alcoholic, does not like beer, or for any similar reason is not actively participating in training. If the trainer is prepared for this eventuality, it can be diffused before it ever becomes an issue for the team or for the performance of the staff member. Acceptance of the individual's choice not to drink beer, for any reason, is of paramount importance. In all cases, the expectation should be clearly set for that individual to have the same level of knowledge that every other server is expected to demonstrate. Many non-drink-

“In order to get everyone's buy-in, it's necessary to let servers know the benefits of training. Discuss what employees can expect when they fall in line with the restaurant's defined standards, and why it's important to take training seriously. These benefits include a smoother shift. Smoother shifts provide for better service, which leads to bigger sales and more tips. When you mention these things, you will get their attention.”

Ginger Tin, Ramping Up Server Training, The New Brewer

ers turn out to be the best beer sales staff members on the floor, and can provide expertise in describing flavors and styles to guests.

- **Staff does not want to learn about beer.**

Over the longer term, if your service staff is simply not motivated to participate in your training program, the program may need a facelift. Learning about beer and tasting beer should be fun. Further, the end goal of everyone earning more-- the server and the business-- should be very interesting to all parties. Bring some puzzles or games into the shift meeting or post on your beer board. Simply asking for the servers' input about making it more interesting and fun will give them more ownership and push them to participate actively. Alternatively they may need to take it more seriously as being important to the business, in which case an expected tested knowledge level might generate some focus from the team.

- **Server cannot answer any questions.**

If the staff member is continually uncomfortable with complex questions from the guests, two approaches can be used. First be sure that the server knows who to go to for answers for the guest during their shift and that the server can comfortably let the guest know that they will find the answer for them. Second offer educational materials to the server for self-study or assist them in learning more about the beers that they are serving. Depending on the expected knowledge level in your brewpub, these steps may easily mitigate the problem.



- **G How do I motivate the staff?**

Switching things up for a shift or a day can create motivation. Plan a field trip to another brewpub, to a festival, to participate in the brewery (your own) for the day, have an appreciation day, or reward a server for an achievement. Several other suggestions are included in the Ongoing Beer Training chapter and Templates appendix for your convenience.

- **G D Server does not know what is on draught.**

Both the manager and the server need to be informed about new products and those that have been taken off the list. Ensure this information is available to everyone and that the expectation is clear to review this daily.

- **B Upselling vs. transparent guest manipulation**

Upselling is a term that should always be used in conjunction with positive, constructive communication with the guest resulting in increased sales. Sharing knowledge about flavors of both beer and food, experience with complementary selections, and personal preference should likewise be offered in response to a similarly directed guest statement or question. Put another way, upselling is the product of a constructive interaction with the guest who is interested in exploring other items on the menu and may then order more items (or) different items than they might have originally planned. An effective training program will not tolerate phony, arbitrary, inappropriate automatic suggestions that guests order the most expensive items on the menu, and will redirect the service staff member to more appropriate, respectful interaction with the guest. Staff members who need to be "deprogrammed" may need to be monitored to ensure that this behavior has been eliminated.

ON THE FLOOR: BEER COMPLAINTS

D When setting up your training plan for shift meetings, make sure to include beer service strategies and tactics. Many of these strategies simply fall under the heading of "service," and some are more specific to beer. All strategies and tactics require diplomacy and engagement with the table in order to be maximally effective.

- **"I do not like this beer."**

If discussing draught products with a guest, it may be a good strategy to bring them a small taste of their potential selection before ordering a pint, suggest that they order a smaller quantity to try first, or even offer the option of sharing a flight to determine their choices. Stress the importance of communicating special circumstances, such as a smaller pour, a higher level of alcohol, or an unusual flavor or style

of beer in these situations. Including these strategies in your training program will ensure that the staff understands how to use them and when it is appropriate.

- **“This tasted different last time.”**

E Experimentation is more feasible when the beer is brewed on-premise, and the flavor profile of your beers may change over time. Make sure that the brewing team lets everyone know when there are changes happening to specific beers. People tend to expect flavors to be exactly the same as they perceived them to be last time, whether good or bad, and the server needs to be able to explain or address these reactions appropriately.

- **“My beer tastes awful!”**

Your service team needs to be comfortable with the fact that what people taste before they drink their beer can have a profound effect on their perception of the beer’s flavor and quality, i.e., toothpaste, chewing gum, coffee, etc. The server needs to be comfortable suggesting a palate cleanser, agreeing that it takes several sips to eliminate some strong flavors, and doing creative troubleshooting at the table to mitigate the observation that “this beer tastes terrible.”

When the same beer complaint continues to surface, it is worthy of investigation. The servers are probably looking for a solution as well, and management assistance and support will be appreciated. Whether beer clean glassware, a draught system issue, or something funky with a specific beer, completely follow through to ensure that the staff remains confident that the issues are important and will be resolved.

ON THE FLOOR: SERVICE COMPLAINTS

There will always be situations that are service challenges. Creative, proactive training can keep most issues from escalating. Beer service complaints generally fall into two categories: availability of the desired beer, and speed of service.

- **“You are out of my favorite beer?!”**

Training in flavors and styles together with food pairing knowledge can be good tools for a server who is faced with the dreaded fact that the guest’s requested beer is not available. Redirecting the guest toward an available beer of a similar flavor profile or alternatively using deductive strategies to determine what the guest is seeking for their selection are important strategies to maintain guest satisfaction. When conducting flavor and style training and working with pairings, bring the everyday situation into focus for the server. Remind them that these resources are extremely valuable for exceeding the guest’s expectations every time.

Also be sure they let the guest know if their preferred beer is not available in order to create an alternative version of that beer, or to brew something completely new and different. These situations can be presented as something new and exciting, giving the server an opportunity to turn the situation into a positive adventure for the guest.

- **“What happened to my beer order?”**

Speed of service can be a tougher challenge. Strategies need to be in place around the brewpub to make service maximally efficient, and on a busy night the manager may need to be helping where the service bottlenecks are happening. Communi-



cation directly with the guest about beer or food delays is essential. Having strategies and tactics available to ease the wait will be helpful. Apologies are necessary, and the offer of some snacks or a small complimentary beer sample “while you wait” can also be very effective. Make sure your servers are familiar with the correct vocabulary to use in these situations. In the instance where there is an unavoidable delay, such as changing a keg, simply letting the customer know the situation can smooth their irritation.

- **The guest who knows everything.**

Be certain that your service team is trained in effective methods to deal with the “know it all” customer. Allow the guest to talk, providing encouragement with open-ended questions. Suggest that they join the brewing team for a brewery tour, offer them a list of special events that they would appreciate, or perhaps the lead brewer is willing to offer their email address for technical questions that no one was available to answer.

- **Service is always slow.**

If the speed of beer service is a regular challenge having to do with changing kegs, draught issues, glassware supply, delivery to the wrong table, or anything other than simply being busy, some troubleshooting or system adjustments may be helpful. Alleviating stress to the server and thus the guest on the floor is the priority. When you feel like you are too busy to provide good service, scheduling an additional bartender or server is the best option to ensure a quality experience for the guest.

- **Stuff happens.**

There are instances that fall outside of these two broad areas of service, such as broken glassware, foreign objects in the glass, improper handling or delivering of the order. Approach each situation objectively to determine if retraining is necessary, if there is an adjustment needed to an established operational practice, or if a simple guest recovery is in order due to a random incident. Once handled, move on. One issue need not create stress for the entire shift.



“When talking about problems of any sort, I have come up with an acronym for dealing with any issues - MIRMOMO...it stands for Make It Right, Move On. Too often problems like slow food, beer issues, staff problems, or any other the problems you describe are handled well, and then discussed amongst the staff members for the next 15 minutes-- what was the problem, what did she say, what did the manager do??? This type of gossip distracts people from their tasks and also sometimes can be heard by other customers. Fix the problem, and move on without further discussion on the spot. MIRMOMO.”

Chris Ericson, The Lake Placid Pub & Brewery

Remember that not all issues are due to your training program, and that there will be unpredictable situations that occur daily for which there are no magic solution. A well-trained team with solid resources and management support has the best possible chance for handling these situations gracefully in the course of regular business. Learning from each of these experiences, communicating and establishing protocol where appropriate, will reinforce confidence and augment the training program even further.

There is a vast amount of information available about beer, brewing, restaurant service, server training, and hospitality. Here are resources that have been used successfully or have been recommended, knowing that there are many other resources out there. Please note that this is not an endorsement of any of the listed products or resources.

As a general guide, each resource is coded as it applies to the general areas covered in this manual for those setting up training programs. Because it is recommended that you customize your program to your specific environment, many of these resources may be helpful in other areas of your program than those indicated.

GENERAL INFORMATION AREAS

- A** Staff training manual content
- B** New hire training content
- C** Ongoing beer training content
- D** Shift meeting content
- E** Beer board content
- F** Continuing education/seminar topic info
- G** Fun ideas to mix things up

BREWERS ASSOCIATION RESOURCES

A B C D E F G

CraftBeer.com Beer & Food Course
<http://www.craftbeer.com/beer-and-food-course>

A B C D E

Brewers Association Guide to American Craft Beer p. 3, 5-6, 7-13
<http://www.brewersassociation.org/educational-publications/american-craft-beer-guide/>

C E F

Draught Beer Quality Manual Chapter 7-8;
<http://www.draughtquality.org/>

C D E F

Deconstructing Craft Beer Poster
<http://www.craftbeer.com/the-beverage/deconstructing-craft-beer>

A B C D E F

Decoding Flavor: Four Keys to Tasting
<http://www.craftbeer.com/craft-beer-muses/decoding-flavor-four-keys-to-tasting>

A B C D E F

Choose the Right Glass
<http://www.craftbeer.com/tips-for-tasting-videos/choose-the-right-glass>

A B C D E F

Beer Glossary
<http://www.craftbeer.com/beer-studies/beer-glossary>

A B C D E F G

Beer & Food Articles
<http://www.craftbeer.com/category/beer-and-food>

A B C D E F

CraftBeer.com's Beer Styles
<http://www.craftbeer.com/beer-styles>

ONLINE BEER EDUCATION COURSES

A C F

Beer Conscious Training

Beer Conscious Training offers beer knowledge sessions for those looking to pass industry exams such as the Cicerone®, Beer Judge Certification Program and Beer Steward Exams. Online, DVD and customized training for distributor sales reps, brewery employees, retailers and individuals.

A B C D E F

Beer Judge Certification Program

The purpose of the Beer Judge Certification Program is “to promote beer literacy and the appreciation of real beer, and to recognize beer tasting and evaluation skills.” This program covers 23 different beer styles and has been around since 1985. There are currently 4,500+ active judges in the program.

A C F

Better Beer Scores™

Better Beer Scores™ is the proven leader in beer webinars—offering a dozen craft beer webinar programs. The Better Beer Scores™ webinar platform is a new and interactive way to learn more about craft beer styles, homebrewing, and to prepare for each of the Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) Exams in three distinct and affordable series: the World of Beer Series, the Homebrewing Series and our flagship offerings, the BJCP Exam Prep Series. Visit our website today for more information and to sign up for one of 12 craft beer webinars.

A C F

Ceresvis (Online Courses for Spanish Speaking Students)

Ceresvis ofrece cursos a través de una plataforma de web-conferencia para todo el mundo de habla hispana. Los cursos están dirigidos a alumnos de todos los niveles en la industria de la cerveza artesanal, incluyendo cerveceros caseros. Se dictan distintos cursos como Elaboración de cerveza, química de la cerveza, distintos cursos sobre estilos, materias primas para cerveceros avanzados, etc. Los cursos están diseñados para asistir a los alumnos en la formación en cervecería y cuentan con herramientas de aprendizaje interactivas para brindarles a los alumnos una experiencia amena y formativa.

Ceresvis offers a number of courses through a web conference platform to pupils in the Spanish speaking world. These courses are for all levels of knowledge in the craft beer industry, including homebrewers. Some of the courses are about an overview of beer and beer chemistry, while several courses are about different beer styles, raw materials and advanced brewing. Courses are designed to assist pupils in learning about brewing and beer styles with interactive learning tools that give them an informative experience.

A C F

Craft Beer University

Craft Beer University offers comprehensive BJCP Entrance Exam and BJCP Judging (tasting) Exam prep courses. These two online courses provide aspiring beer judges an eight-week series of live, interactive, two-hour weekly webinars designed to assist in effectively studying to pass and achieve high marks on the BJCP examinations.

These courses are also designed to assist in learning about craft beer styles, improve homebrewing skills and to learn how to effectively evaluate craft beer. All instructors are experienced BJCP certified judges and professional educators—culling experiences from public/private educational and professional coaching institutions.

A C F

CraftBeer.com's Beer 101 Course

Beer 101 is a narrated online course for the beer beginner takes approximately 1 hour to complete and costs \$15. Upon successful completion, you will receive a printable certificate from the Brewers Association.

A B C D E F

Cicerone® Certified Beer Server

To begin your Cicerone® certification, you must start with this exam, which confirms “competent knowledge of beer storage and service issues, as well as modest knowledge of currently popular beer styles and culture, and basic familiarity with beer tasting and flavors as well as brewing process and ingredients.” Directed by Ray Daniels, author of Designing Great Beers, this certification program has three stages; Certified Beer Server, Cicerone and Master Cicerone. The word Cicerone (pronounced sis-uh-rohn) has been chosen to designate those with proven expertise in selecting, acquiring and serving today's wide range of beers. For more information see CraftBeer.com's: “Cicerone's are Experts at What?” Note: The syllabus for the Certified Beer Server has a lot of valuable information that is good for training purposes.

A B C D E F

GreatBrewers.com

GreatBrewers.com has resources for the new craft beer lover. Learn about the history of beer, brewing process and gain tips on how to taste. Once you think you're ready, take the 20-question Great Beer Test or step up to the GBT-100. The site also provides a beer glossary, explanations of funky beer and profit calculator for those who are running their own better beer establishments.

A C F

Master Brewers Association of the Americas:

Associate Beer Steward Program

Designed for bar and wait staff, retail clerks and sommeliers, the Associate Beer Steward Program will increase knowledge of beer, giving you information you can use in your job right away.

With this program, you will learn more about the importance of beer freshness, how to present different beer styles most effectively to customers, beer's relationship to human history, how beer is made and the various flavors and styles worldwide.

A B C D E F

World Class Beer-Ber U Beer U from World Class Beverages, features several 10- to 15-minute presentations on topics such as the history of beer, beer off-flavors and pairing basics. The user-friendly interface and the topics presented make this course perfect for the beer beginner.

A C F

TIPS Training – www.gettips.com

ONLINE RESOURCES

A B C D E F

Beer Judge Certification Program – Style Guidelines & downloadable app: www.bjcp.org

VIDEOS

A B F G

Modern Marvels video on brewing:
<http://www.history.com/shows/modern-marvels>

ARTICLES

A B C D E F

“Ramping Up Server Training,” by Ginger Tin – *The New Brewer*, <http://www.brewersassociation.org/articles/ramping-up-server-training/>

A B C D E F

“Server Education for Brewpubs & Tap Rooms,” by Tony Simmons – *The New Brewer*, <http://www.brewersassociation.org/articles/brewpubs-server-education/>

A B C D E F

“Hear, Hear, Shift Meetings for Beer,” by Larry Chase – *The New Brewer*, <http://www.brewersassociation.org/articles/hear-hearshift-meetings-for-beer/>

A B C D E F

“Our House is a Very, Very Fine House,” by Tom Dargen – *The New Brewer*, <http://www.brewersassociation.org/articles/our-house-is-a-very-very-fine-house/>

BOOKS

A B C D E F

MBAA Beer Steward Handbook, <http://www.mbaa.com/store>

A B C D E F

Setting the Table: The Transforming Power of Hospitality in Business by Danny Meyer

A B C D E F

Human Sigma: Managing the Employee-Customer Encounter by John Fleming and Jim Asplund

A B C D E F

First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman

A B C D E F

Service that Sells! The Art of Profitable Hospitality by Jim Sullivan

A B C D E F

Beer, Food, and Flavor by Schuyler Schultz

A B C D E F

Tasting Beer by Randy Mosher

A B C D E F

Neurogastronomy by Gordon Shepherd

A B C D E F

Sensory Evaluation Techniques by Morten Meilgaard, Gail Vance Civille and B. Thomas Carr

ONLINE TOOLS

B C D E F

Quizlet - <http://quizlet.com/>

B

VISA Restaurant Staff Service Tips, Douglas P Fisher, <http://www.visa.ca/merchant/resources/acceptance/pdf/restaurant-staff.pdf>

B

Employee Onboarding Best Practices, Rob Wormley, When I work.com, <http://wheniwork.com/blog/employee-onboarding-best-practices/>

Here we offer a training program template to supplement the previous information and resources. In addition, there are examples of shift meetings, beer board content, continuing education ideas, staff quizzes and tests, fun informational content and approaches, and other tips and tricks of the trade.

STAFF TRAINING PROGRAM TEMPLATE

[Training Program Worksheet](#) [Referred to in Chapter 5]

[Training Program Worksheet with Examples](#)

Other Examples:

[SSBC Beer Ingredients and Their Flavor Contribution Outline](#)

[SSBC Beer Ingredients and Their Flavor Contribution Notes](#)

[SSBC Beer Tasting & Description](#)

[SSBC Beer Tour & Process](#)

[SSBC Beer Tour & Process Notes](#)

SHIFT MEETINGS

Depending on the length of time available for your shift meetings, there is a variety of possible ways to approach training. If time is short, the trainer should lead and be very concise with no (or very brief) input from the staff. Given a little more time, discussion can be very valuable and allows the team additional 'ownership' of the process.

The following are different suggestions of possible content given various time constraints. The preparation and beer attributes to include are consistent with each.

Preparation: Have beer (pitcher/bottle) and glassware ready prior to shift meeting, as well as any handouts or further resources that you would like to provide in support of the tasting.

Beer attributes to review/discuss: color, aromatics, flavor descriptors (3 is ideal for retention), style, abv, proper glassware, pour size, any special circumstances about the brewing, special ingredients used in the recipe, story about the [guest] brewery, and anything else relevant

[Shift Meeting – Daily Worksheet](#)

[Shift Meeting – Tasting Worksheet](#)

BEER BOARD THEME EXAMPLES

- House Beer Theme
 - Photo of beer (using proper glassware)
 - Photo of beer with food
 - Photo and information about special ingredients
 - Description (detailed) of the beer, including flavor descriptors
 - List of suggested food pairings
 - Trivia about the beer within the brewery
 - » Whose inspiration
 - » Whose favorite beer
 - » Sales stats
 - Whatever else you can think of relating to this beer
 - Include this beer in your shift meetings for the week (talk, taste, taste with food)
 - Rotate through all of your house beers, changing the board regularly (weekly?)
- Guest Tap Beer Theme
 - Photo of beer (using proper glassware)
 - Photo of beer with food
 - Photo and information about special ingredients
 - Description (detailed) of the beer
 - List of suggested food pairings
 - Trivia about the beer within the brewery
 - » Whose inspiration
 - » Whose favorite beer
 - » Sales stats
 - Whatever else you can think of relating to this beer
 - Include this beer in your shift meetings for the week (talk, taste, taste with food)
 - Rotate through all of your house beers, changing the board regularly (weekly?)
- Brewing Process Theme – break the brewing process down into large steps

- Photos of your brewhouse equipment used for this step
- Somewhat detailed explanation of the operational aspects of this step
- Possibly photos of your brewers performing this step
- Explanation of what happens to the beer in this step
- Include discussion of this brewing step in shift meetings, perhaps bringing in a brewer to explain and answer questions
- Rotate through each step from inspiration to end product, changing the board regularly (weekly?)
- The History of Brewing
 - Illustrate the board appropriately for the period being discussed.
 - Connect this historical period to an ingredient, a beer, a food – something currently in use – if possible
 - Use photos where possible
 - Use interesting facts where possible
 - Discuss in shift meetings
 - Rotate through the interesting periods of brewing history in chronological order, changing the board regularly (weekly?)



- Ingredients Used in Brewing (one per week)
- Glassware (one per week)
- Styles (History of – or – a comparison between)
- Featured Food Pairings (one per week)

CONTINUING EDUCATION EXAMPLES

Seminar Format

- Off-flavor Education & Training
- Glassware Education and Tasting Comparison
- Draft System Mechanics

Field Trips

- Hop farm
- Malting company
- Neighboring brewery
- Festival – participating or attending
- Comparable restaurant

Brewery Format

- Learning about a specific process within the brewery
- In-depth ingredient tasting and discussion
- Lab work/sensory analysis – learn and try it

Fun and Different Approaches

[Crossword Puzzle](#) - Referred to in Chapter 8

[Crossword Puzzle Key](#)

[Beer Trivia Games](#) - Referred to in Chapter 8

[Take-Home Tests and Study Materials](#) - Referred to in Chapter 8

WORKSHEETS FOR TRACKING YOUR PROGRAM OVER TIME

[Weekly Shift Training Tracker Worksheet](#)

[Weekly Shift Training Tracker Example](#)

[Yearly Shift Training Tracker Worksheet](#)

[Yearly Shift Training Tracker Example](#)

Words are powerful. In the context of Brewpub Server Training Manual (BSTM), we want to define the key words and concepts within the pages as they are intended. The purpose of this glossary is to make sure the definitions are consistent throughout for best understanding.

Accountability: The commitment of each manager and staff member to carry out their mission completely and carefully. Creating a working atmosphere where the entire team supports and accounts to others as defined in each business.

Administrative: Behind the scenes, frequently office, computer and paperwork related, often associated with tasks and people necessary to bring together the daily operations on an accounting and management level.

Advanced Level Training Program: Inventive, creative, extensive, and integrated into all aspects of brewpub life, training is a primary focus for your establishment.

Back Of The House (BOH): The kitchen and other staff who are not servers and not in the direct line of the customer are considered back of the house.

Basic Level Training Program: Plan for training in which the sessions are usually brief, to the point, and educate the staff on the fundamental and practical essentials about beer and service.

Beer Clean Glass: A glass that has been properly washed and sanitized so there are no particles, chemicals, or residue to affect the flavor and appearance of the beer poured into it.

Beer Style: A term assigned to a specific collection of flavors, mouthfeel and other attributes generated by specific ingredients and brewing processes.

BJCP, The Beer Judge Certification Program: Independent program which defines 23 primary styles of beer, with 80+ substyles within the style categories.

Bottle Service: The presentation style and format used by restaurant and bar staff to serve a bottle of beer, wine and other beverages to guests in the establishment.

Brewpub: A restaurant-brewery that sells 25 percent or more of its beer on site. The beer is brewed primarily for sale in the restaurant and bar.

Communication: Conversing and relating information to and within all operational staff. Communication happens on all levels between all departments and staff members. Examples of methods of communication are talking, emailing, texting, Facebooking, tweeting, and the like.

Components: Individual elements of a training program. New hire training, shift training, the beer board, and continuing education are all components discussed in building a quality program.

Content: Actual information to train or share.

Continuing Education: Staff learning opportunities outside of the regular training routines.

Cost/s and Expenses: Financial outlay and investment needed in order to achieve desired end goals.

Craft Brewery: Defined by the Brewers Association as a small, independent, and traditional brewery. See this link: <http://www.brewersassociation.org/statistics/craft-brewer-defined/> for further information.

Cross Training: Educating a staff member about working in a position other than the one they were hired to perform.

Culinary Team: The kitchen staff.

Customers, Guests, Patrons, Clients: People paying your establishment for beverage and food.

Diplomacy: The ability to handle situations in a tactful, positive, careful, and effective way maximizing efficacy and minimizing stress.

Draft Beer, also Draught Beer: Beer drawn directly from the keg to glasses and pitchers using a mechanical system (draught system) to keep it cold and properly maintained.

Education: Providing knowledge about service, beer, and related topics.

Enthusiasm: Positivity and passion presented about particular subjects, issues and product.

Executive Team: Top level of management.

Experience: Time spent in a particular role or particular place.

Flavor: What you experience when consuming beverage and food as the result of creating food or beverage using different ingredients.

Front Of The House (FOH): Servers, bartenders, management and other staff who have direct contact with the customers are considered front of the house.

Full Service Restaurant: A food service establishment with its own kitchen, offering service staff to take orders after the guest is seated and bring the food when it is ready.

Homebrewers: People who brew their own beer for consumption at home.

Intermediate Level Training Program: Middle ground between a Basic Program and an Advanced Program, encompassing more time and training approaches than the Basic Program, though less extensive than the Advanced Program.

Management Team: Those responsible for the day to day operations of the restaurant, kitchen and brewpub. Can be synonymous with Executive Team.

MIRMO, Make It Right, Move On: An approach to problem solving offered by Chris Ericson from The Lake Placid Pub & Brewery.

New Hires: Staff members recently employed and in need of training before working their new positions.

Pairing: Putting two things together in a positive way. For this manual, pairing refers to finding flavors in a beer that work well with flavors in a specific food.

Personal Development: Cultivating new experiences and abilities that make it possible to enhance your knowledge.

Professional Development: Cultivating new knowledge and abilities that make it possible to do more with your career in the work world. Can include educational classes and certifications.

Program: A group of components, all focused toward one goal.

Repetition and Redundancy: An effective tactic in teaching, offering the information many times to ensure retention.

Resources: Opportunities for learning and assistance. Can include people, books, the internet, and other varied informational sources.

Retention: Knowledge and information that is memorable to apply forward.

ROI, Return On Investment: In this manual, ROI is only used in terms of showing benefit to your business from the investment in time and money spent on training staff members.

Sales: The financial income gained from customers who purchased beer, food, and merchandise from the business.

Seminars: Educational opportunities presented in various environments directed by people who have knowledge to share on a subject.

Server: Person who is responsible for providing assistance, knowledge, food, beverage, solutions, and facilitating an overall positive experience for a brewpub customer.

Service: That which the server provides. Service provides the experience the client receives.

Shift Meetings: A gathering of staff members to share information prior to work sessions (or) shifts.

Stakeholders: Investors in the success of an endeavor.

Tap Room, Tasting Room: An establishment located within a brewery without a kitchen where customers can sample beers.

Teamwork: Created by all people involved in an orchestrated effort for comprehensive success, enjoyment and profitability.

Traditional Bar: Establishments offering a variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages and sometimes food to its customers.

Trainees: Staff members attending training sessions to learn from trainers.

Trainer: Staff members, managers, and specialists offering information to others in order to improve their ability to perform their job-related tasks.

Training: The act of sharing information which will be beneficial to and needed by staff on the job.

Training Materials: Educational information serving to train staff and supporting other content offered in a training session. Can be provided in many formats, such as on the beer board, in a binder, and via an internet link.

Trouble Shooting, Problem Solving: Improving a situation by offering solutions and assistance to those in need.

Upselling: Offering options to customers to upgrade and add on to their current order. Should be done only when appropriate.