

Something to think about, especially the bars that wonder why noone stops in...

Seven Reasons Why Bars Lose Money

By Gabe Gabrielsen, OEO

Though I reside in northern Wisconsin my work takes me across the country. When traveling, I often stop in local bars to gather insights on the community I am working with. Within minutes of entering a local bar I can determine whether it is making money or just getting by. Bar, pub or tavern owners who are making money will find this article of little interest; however those who want to boost their sales and increase profits will find this article of tremendous value.

As a consultant my job is to ask questions, so it's only natural I ask bar owners questions. When I ask why their bars aren't performing well most point to the sagging economy, others to the lowering of the OWI standards. Some cite a "smoking ban" enacted by their state legislatures and a few lament high gas prices. For me it's amazing only a handful cite internal reasons for their bar's lack of revenue.

There are seven factors that impact a bar's revenue stream. In this article I will address the most significant one – the bar staff. Skip all the bull your bartenders have the greatest impact on your profits. You grant them access to your cash draw and control of your inventory. In your absence they set your bar policies. Good bartenders attract business, retain customers and generate profits; lousy bartenders cost you money and run off potential customers. Last fall, I developed a simple Socratic checklist for a wonderful couple with an ailing bar. My checklist helped them increase their profits. I have since shared this checklist with other bar owners and their profits increased significantly as well. Not all bar owners agree with my checklist and hey that's okay. Not everyone agrees with brushing and flossing their teeth or changing the oil in car every 3,000 miles and that's cool. However if a bar owner is serious about increasing bar profits "Gabe's checklist is a great place to start.

To use my Bark Staff Checklist just answer the nine questions below. They require a simple Yes or No reply. Some yeses add to your profits while other yeses limit your income.

Do your bartenders –

- Welcome strangers when they walk in the door?
- Engage first time visitors in "lite conversation"?
- Spend their time "evenly" with patrons in your bar?
- Every Yes means more profits


Do you allow -

- Your bartenders to come to work in T-shirts advertising other businesses or places they have been?
- Male bartenders to show up unshaven and not wearing a belt?
- Female bartenders to arrive wearing tank tops or plunging V-neck blouses that expose excessive cleavage?
- Your bar staff to drink while on duty?
- Every yes means you lose money
- Finally -

Do your bartenders

- Allow or ignore bar patrons who frequently drop the "F" word in their conversation?
- Engage in controversial discussions such as politics and religion?
- Each Yes cost you profits and the loss of customers
- Generating bar profits is not rocket science. Profitable bars are managed professionally. Gabe will share his insights on the six other profit factors in future articles.

Gabe Gabrielsen, OEO is the author of Pearls of Wisdom and Fifty Fascinating Stores that Will Change Your Life. If you have question or comments Gabe can be reached at www.betterpublicofficials.com or 800-274- 7757.



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