

Top 5 Reasons to Have a Beverage Program

5. Signature beverages help create brand identity and set your business apart from other operators.
4. There is a reason they call it "Happy Hour!"
3. Can you think of a better way to keep your customers satisfied while they are waiting for a table?
2. Certain beverages can entertain children and, when the children are happy, everyone is happy!
1. The profit that beverages bring in for your business will keep your accountant very happy!

Products and Presentation

In a world where first impressions are the most significant, ensuring drinks look their best is a marketing imperative! A signature drink must look special, like something one couldn't easily concoct at home.

- Pick 6-8 alcoholic drinks and 3 non-alcoholic drinks to promote.
- Mix between trendy signature drinks & "Lost & Forgotten" classics.
- Keep a common theme between the drinks.
- Rotate the promoted drinks out seasonally. (If a specific drink proves to be successful, keep it on the next season's menu.)
- Visual appeal - don't forget to garnish. (Fresh fruit, vegetables, candies, pretzels and cookies, etc. Remember garnishing is an art not a burden!)
- Glassware is important - be creative. (Offer a souvenir glass as an option with your most profitable beverages.)
- Recipes are widely available. (Experiment - have your staff come up with drinks and the drink names. Their "buy-in" will sell more!)

Menu Strategy

- No Restaurant is Complete Without A Drink Menu! (Drink menus serve as marketing devices capable of driving sales and improving profitability.)
- A separate menu should stay on every bar/table. (Provide Drink Menus while people wait.)
- Create a beverage menu full of color and pictures to create a visual appeal.
- Rotate quarterly - this small investment will generate greater profits.
- Do not include prices.

Training and Incentives

- A bartender with a genuine smile, quick wit and winning personality is a hot commodity.

- Does your staff open the Drink Menu and personally recommend one of the drinks?
- Do you quiz staff frequently about beverage selections?
- Do you do taste tests with your servers?
- Do they know what different drink products are? Which call brands you carry and do they up-sell them? What wine and beer selections you offer?
- Give incentives to your servers. Every shift, feature an alcoholic and non-alcoholic drink special. The server who sells the most is exempt from closing side work. Whoever sells the most in a week gets a reward...movie tickets, gift certificate, etc. Consider contests for up-selling call liquors.

Ideas and Techniques

- Doing anything tableside increases value - "Martinis shaken tableside".
- Bloody Mary Bar - Provide them a shot of Vodka in a glass & they make their own at the bar...different mixes, hot sauces, Worcestershire sauce, garnishes, etc.
- High tea at 3pm - slow time anyway!
- Offer coffee tray - flavored creamers, cinnamon sticks, powders, rock candy stirrers and anything else creative.
- Swirl Drinks - Double the popularity of your frozen drinks by swirling recipes together in the same glass! Midori Sour and a raspberry Daiquiri or frozen lemonade and a Frosted Coke - great taste and captivating looks make for increased sales.
- Use desserts to create signature drinks - decrease waste by using broken desserts to create innovative shake specials (example: Key Lime Shake or Strawberry Cheese Shake).
- Don't forget the kids! Keeps them entertained. If the kids are happy, their parents are happy.