GoTab

CRAFTING A GUEST-CENTRIC BREWERY

A Path to Exceptional Results

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When you stop growing you start dying.
— William S. Burroughs

This statement could not be truer for craft breweries. From intense competition from craft cocktails, kombuchas and other non-alcoholic beverages among coveted consumer segments, to persistent inflation and competition for disposable income, the drive to continuously evolve is obvious. But if you're barely keeping your head above water just delivering great brews, it feels like meaningful change in your brewery is out of reach.

Worry no more. In this paper, we share specific strategies and tactics you can take advantage of right away to start the change that's needed in your brewery. Of course,we don't have all the answers,and the goalpost is always moving.

How to Elevate Taproom Hospitality at Every Interaction?

When it comes to guest experiences in the taproom, the difference between good and great is in the details. It's those small, personal touches of service that make all the difference in attracting and retaining guests, and it all starts by asking a simple question:

"What are the things we could be doing better to go the extra mile for our guests?"

By answering that question, and then implementing such practices, you can create a truly unique experience for your guests.A good way to start is through a simple taproom guest journey mapping exercise:

AWARENESS/DISCOVERY

How do prospective taproom visitors find out about you? Are you building a network of local relationships that will give people a reason to seek you out? Tarboro Brewing Company in North Carolina has really figured it out. Read their mission statement:

> *Tarboro Brewing Company believes that creating exemplary craft beer and meaningful partnerships across the region will make us a national model for breweries in small, rural communities. We are invested in revitalizing Eastern North Carolina. Our team, our supporters and our neighbors drive our success. TBC beer is crafted to be super drinkable; it's delicious, pairs well with food and has a penchant for making you want to drink another.*

Source: Presentation to the NC Craft Brewers Conference 10th Anniversary

This brewery has thought deeply about its brand promise and baked its connection with its community into every part of its business.

Most potential customers today will interact with your brand online before they ever come into your location. It almost goes without saying, but if you don't have a high-quality, responsive website with easy to find information like your menu, your locations, and how to book a reservation you're just not going to show up well. Next, focus on how your brand is being perceived on social platforms and if the content and messages being communicated resonate with guests and depict your brewery as the kind of business people want to support.

Once you have these fundamentals in place, the absolute most important place to focus is how your brewery shows up in mobile searches.

According to restaurant marketing guru, Rev Ciancio,

- 2 out of 3 searches for a local business are for a restaurant
- 2 out of 3 searches for a restaurant are unbranded. People search for what they crave.

That means you absolutely must show up in mobile searches for branded and non-branded search for the beer categories that matter for your business. That means everything online needs to be optimized for discovery on a phone, for someone who is looking for something right now. Low-cost, easy-to-use tools like Marqii make managing and automating menus, reviews, listings and local SEO easy for non-technical staff or even those with no marketing experience at all.

CONSIDERATION

A few data points to — Did You Know?!

- **50%** of guests walk through a taproom door one time and never return. The first experience has got to be good to get your guests to come back.
- **33%** of customers will never return to a brand after one bad experience.*
- **92%** of customers will leave your brand after three bad experiences.*

**Source: PriceWaterhouseCoopers*

PURCHASE

At GoTab, we focus a great deal on the purchase experience. As a hospitality commerce platform, it's where the rubber meets the proverbial road for us because that's how we get paid. But what about the purchase experience can really be improved?

We'd like to say it's mainly the tech, but there's so much more. In a panel presentation moderated at the NC Craft Brewers Guild Conference in November 2023, Andrew Coplon, Founder of Secret Hopper and Craft Beer Professionals, shared a few powerful ideas to smooth the taproom purchase experience for guests and drive higher guest satisfaction.

30-Second Introductions

- ☐ Welcome your guest.
- ☐ Be likable and offer friendly conversation.
- ☐ Offer direction.
- ☐ Let the guest know what they're drinking.
- ☐ Leave your guest feeling appreciated.

Greeting Guests

- ☐ Guests spend **12%** more when they receive a smile, "hello", or other welcoming gesture upon entering.
- ☐ Staff are **346%** more likely to provide high engagement when a visit begins this way.
- ☐ Staff that introduce themselves see tabs **25.2%** higher.

Crafting Meaningful Conversations

- ☐ People crave human connection.
- ☐ Tell your story.
- ☐ Guests spent 14% more when staff engage in conversation and tip 10% higher.

Source: Andrew Coplon, Founder Craft Beer Professionals, Secret Hopper

RETENTION

With the best source of repeat customers being your first-time visitors, what does it take to convince more of them to come back?

Here's where you can get creative. It's not always about the next discount or coupon. The Cornell University Craft Beverage Institute conducted an analysis of customer experience levels in taprooms around New York State. **They found five primary categories that impact the taproom guest experience:**

1. **Brewery Ambiance:** Aesthetics, Lighting, Sounds, Cleanliness
2. **Brewery Location:** Ease of finding the brewery, appeal of exterior
3. **Beer Tasting:** Tasting prices; Choice of beers/flights; Number of beers poured; Presentation of samples; Accuracy of descriptions; Uniqueness of offering; Quality of beer
4. **Retail Sales:** Availability; Presentation; Beer Prices; Variety offered; Variety of swag / apparel
5. **Service Quality:** Friendliness, Knowledge, Personal Presentation

Source: Of the five most important taproom guest experience categories, two are product-specific, two are location-specific, and the last is service focused. If you're not capitalizing on all the opportunities to create a great experience, you're potentially missing the chance to convert more first-time visitors to loyal,

longer-term customers.

One proven method to improve taproom guest experiences is to focus on educating staff. Drake's Brewing shares regular cheat sheets with staff on information like upcoming beer releases and happenings in the brewery. This change made it easier for their staff to build rapport with guests and resulted in marked increases in check averages and higher turnout for special events.

ADVOCACY

A positive advocate can do a lot for your business. But how do you create an experience so good that people will be motivated to talk about it through word-of-mouth and digital channels?

6 On-Premise Experiential Factors

- **Service Model & Order Flow:** What options do your guests have to place an order? Are guests ordering at the counter, at the table, or via a QR code? Are you using a hybrid model which is a combination of all three? Explore the pros and cons of each for your venue. Most guests are happy to wait in line for their first beer. Very few will enjoy doing so for their second beer. Take steps to ensure that the ordering and reordering experience is frictionless for guests without any gaps in service.
- **Keeping the Human Touch:** Maximize how staff shape positive experiences for your guests. How can they get more time at the table and less time behind the bar? Finding the right balance in service is where you keep that human touch and continue to personalize the experience.
- **Kitchen Operations and Pop-up Options:** Take advantage of the symbiotic relationship between beer and food. Do you have a kitchen? If not, can you partner with a food truck or pop-up? Don't overlook the opportunity to set up a simple food offering because food is a key driver of additional beverage sales.
- **Consistent Communication:** Facilitate FOH and BOH Operations. Make it easy for guests to get help right at the table instead of having to flag down a server. This is also a place where staff education comes into play. Make sure your staff are well equipped to answer questions about the menu, upcoming events, or other activities taking place in your taproom that will keep guests engaged.
- **Product Information and Visibility:** Are you using the most effective methods to let guests know about what you have to offer through digital boards, mobile and printed menus, chalkboards, signage, etc.? How easy is it to keep your menus up to date for new and out-of-stock items?

- **Brewery Tours and Special Events:** These types of activations are a perfect opportunity to tell your story and create opportunities to build community.

How Would a Truly "Guest-Centric" Brewery Feel?

To be authentically guest-centric is to focus on your customer before your product. Craft brewers love the craft. We'll spend countless hours getting the appearance, the aroma, the taste and the texture of our brews right. We focus on the branding, the creative and all the attributes that entice a guest to experience our product. Getting the guest experience right must be of equal importance.

As a start, think about what a personalized experience for each of your guests would feel like:

- Can you recognize a returning guest, show them that you know them, the beer that they like, the activities they enjoy?
- Are you building connections that deliver real value? For example, Mug Clubs for different segments like teachers, first responders and retirees or Industry Nights and trade events. These activations do more than bring in the crowds. They give your guests a positive association and a human connection with you.

Once you start to map ways to personalize your guest experience, the options can become overwhelming. The key is to identify the areas of personalization that result in a higher frequency of visits and higher check averages when those guests return.

The final piece is to continuously exceed expectations. That means that for each repeat guest, you need to focus on elevating hospitality to the next level. It's not easy, and in the short run, will cost a bit more time and attention. But once you have a strategy that is built to achieve it, you'll reap the rewards in the form of happier guests, larger check sizes and higher guest retention.

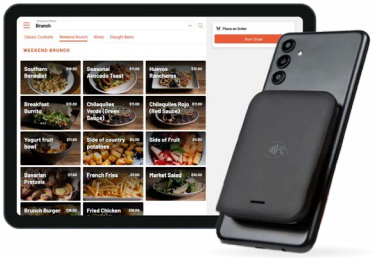
GoTab Hospitality Commerce Platform

A powerful, customizable system that brings together your FOH and BOH.

All-in-One Point of Sale & Pocket POS

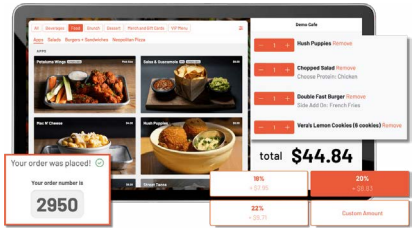
The All-in-One POS that centers the guest experience.
Tabs stay with your guest and offer a seamless experience.

The Pocket POS is the ultimate handheld ordering and payment device for busy servers on the go.



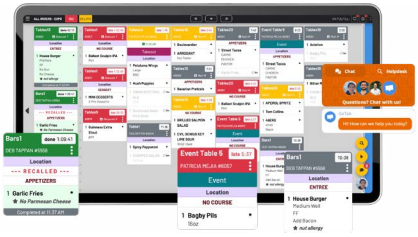
Mobile Order & Payment

Whether dine-in, take-out, or delivery, GoTab Mobile Order & Payment gives guests a satisfying experience without forcing them to download an app.



Self-Ordering Kiosk

Ideal for high-volume venues with limited staff and low service models, GoTab's Self-Ordering Kiosk experience lets guests avoid long lines and take control.



Kitchen Display System

Run a lean, profitable kitchen operation with bidirectional guest messaging for highly optimized operations and delivery.

PCI DSS COMPLIANT

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Whether you're launching a new taproom or taking a fresh look at the experience in your existing brewpub, take some time to walk in your customer's shoes. Are you delivering the guest experience you always envisioned for your business? If you want to make a change, give us a call. As a hospitality platform built by and for brewery operators, we understand how to create the ideal guest experience for your customers while helping your business to thrive.

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