Making More $$ In Your Tasting Room

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Profit Centers

- Lots of foot-traffic
- Impressionable buyers
- Come with money to spend
Create a Memory

Tell the story behind your wine, label, winery, goals, marketing, etc.

However, you aren’t selling wine! You are selling a memory

Creating a bond makes a memory
Customer Service

- A thing of the past

- Customers must come first

- Find a way to relate to the customers

- Everyone has a bad day…but you can’t afford that employee for long!
Who is working behind your tasting bar?

- **Staff**
  - Bubbly girl who knows little about wine or
  - Stone-faced boy who know a lot about wine

- You can “teach wine”. You can’t teach “personality”

- It is all about attitude
  - Hire someone who is putting the wineries interests first and likes coming to work
You need staff

- Never be understaffed
  - It isn’t a cost-saving measure
  - People may never buy if they aren’t waited on or shown any attention
  - Customers don’t want to see how busy you are. It’s not important to them that you are SWAMPED! They want their wine!
Staffing your tasting room

Front door greeter

- Hands out tasting lists
- Directs customers to tasting bar
- Helps wheelchair customers, moms with strollers, others with disabilities get through the door

Tasting Bar

- Employees with engaging personalities
- If they came to work having a bad day, they do something else
Well Paid Staff = Happy Staff

- Tasting room staff likely underpaid

- Don’t use mindset that “others will do it for less.”

- How much money are they bringing in?
  - Front line for customers
  - Responsible for selling your product
Incentives for Staff

- Not only underpaid, they are “under-incented.”
- Doesn’t have to be cash
- Use t-shirts, large bottles of wine, hats, stock in company, use of facilities, etc.
- Find a mix of salary and commission.
- If employees know they get a % of sales, they’ll likely work hard to make the sale.
Impact of staff on customers

– Happy customers tell 0.7 people about their experience

– Unhappy people tell 11-20 people!

Don’t make people unhappy! They’ll likely tell their friends and neighbors.
Your Most Important Person

- TASTING ROOM MANAGER
- He/She runs the show
- Equivalent to the president of the largest-distributor in a winery’s portfolio
- Pay them well
- Give them control over the tasting room
Wine Clubs

- Offer commission on membership signups
- Good for creating memories
  - Feel like they have ownership in winery
  - “Knows” the winemaker
- Those members bring their friends back to the winery
- ...Or sign them up for their own membership
Trade Visits

- Potential major buyers
  - Restaurants or new vendors

  Give them VIP status. They need a memory created.

  Take them away from the tasting room environment.
Charging for Tastes

- Does it create a memory?
- All in how you present it
- Charge a nominal fee ($2-3)
- Give it back with a bottle purchase
- Offer a “private reserve” tasting
  - One-on-one/group
  - Even though you are charging you are creating a memory for that customer
What are we doing right?

- Personable winemakers
- Great locations
- Nice atmospheres in the wineries
- Great gift shoppes to browse through
- Knowledgeable winery owners
What do we need to work on?
The opinion of Jeanette and only Jeanette!!

- Need more staff help
- Too much stress in the wineries
- Need to train staff better
- Greet everyone as they come in the door, don’t overlook customers

- Comments based on feedback I get from customers who visited wineries and then email me to either complain or offer compliments.
The Bottom Line

- Tasting rooms are big business
  - Most popular tourist attraction in California

- Train people to “create memories”

- Tasting room employees are your front-line soldiers

- Tasting rooms are a relaxing, stress-relief indulgence for visitors.
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