



# Raising the Bar



**FOODSERVICE** *news*  
The Industry's National Newspaper



Proudly Presents:



## THE SEMI-ANNUAL BEVERAGE MENU MAKE-OVER CONTEST

One lucky restaurant will win 2 days of hands-on staff and management training by master mixologist and renowned flair bartender Gavin MacMillan, focusing on:

- accuracy • speed • flair • cocktail synergy
- time management behind the bar • review of current menu and full menu makeover

Here's what to do: Complete the ballot below (one entry per establishment). Mail or fax your ballot to the coordinates listed below. We'll take care of the rest. Gavin will visit your restaurant to help your staff 'Raise the Bar.'

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Establishment: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Does Passion Equal Profit?

Most managers in the hospitality industry have experienced a diamond in the rough. By this I mean a staff member who just seems to get service, and has that "X factor" we can never seem to put our finger on. Having thought about it a fair amount, I have come to the conclusion that the aforementioned "X factor" is passion. And while many of our staff members are admittedly on a career stopover, I believe that you can ignite this passion. How? By simply articulating the "What's In It for Me?"

Maybe you recall the rights of passage in the hospitality industry: the first time you were sent next door for the Corona bottle lime-remover, ice mix or a bucket of lemon steam. Perhaps you have sent a new hire next door for an ice polisher. If you can't relate to any of these examples, take special note. They are invaluable teambuilding tools that staff can not only laugh about later, but work in bringing about a sense of initiation, acceptance and camaraderie. So often we hear about staff serving the clock more so than the client. The reason is that few establishments these days have a strong sense of unity among their staff.

So how do you combat the dispassionate blahs? Contests and competitions are a great way to build a sense of team and motivate staff members. A weekly competition on varietals of wine, types of vodka, liqueur flavours, or imported beers, for example, not only increase knowledge but build unity. Empowering your staff to become experts at what they do will pay dividends down the road. Remember, guests are satisfied when staff members are comfortable answering their questions.

And make sure that there is a reasonable reward for their hard work, which doesn't necessarily mean an out of pocket expense. Getting your local liquor representative involved for prizing can quite often be mutually beneficial. If you haven't had contact with a liquor rep in the past year, check out [www.corby.ca](http://www.corby.ca), [www.diageo.com](http://www.diageo.com), [www.pmacanada.com](http://www.pmacanada.com), [www.chartonhobbs.com](http://www.chartonhobbs.com) to help you find some support.

With the ease of access to information today, quite often our guests know as much or more than our service staff do, which puts the operation in a potentially embarrassing position. This is a time when we should all be reading up, learning about the craft of bartending from the internet, magazine articles, blogs and books. It has been said before that knowledge is power. I believe knowledge also leads to passion.

But where do you begin? Well, it all starts with training and morale. Most new hires get a guided tour of the restaurant, a few "shadow" or "follow" shifts on food, expediting and table side service. Then we turn them loose on the bar. Are we missing something here? You might find yourself saying "well, that sounds nice, but we just don't sell enough cocktails to warrant the extra training." What if the reason you don't sell any cocktails is

because you don't provide any training? Why is it that we rarely post staff members by the bar for a night to give them a comprehensive training of the cocktail menu? Today's cocktails are a far cry from the stale, dated, so-called "Classics." They are also an easy sell and often the easy profit.

The term "Bar Chef" tends to change the perspective from the typical fast food / fast drinks mentality to handcrafted gourmet cocktails. That title, alone, on your menu will create interest amongst your guests. Bar Chef is a term you may have heard about, the union of the kitchen and the bar for mutual benefit. For example, when your seasonal dessert is blueberry pie, and the kitchen has too many blueberries, it would seem more than logical find a way to avoid the food waste bin, but few would think about running a blueberry Mojito promotion. There are many ways to connect the kitchen and the bar, communication is only one.

There is a huge trend towards fresh, local and seasonal, in both culinary and bar arenas. I believe that I shouldn't really be serving anything that I wouldn't really want my children ingesting, so fresh is definitely best. And if you really want people to start ordering cocktails, try a small bowl of exotic fruit on your backbar as a conversation piece. Watch how fast people want to know what you make with that Dragon Fruit!

The profit margin here is our bread and butter, so why have we been neglecting this crucial point?

With summer just around the corner, it's the perfect time for us to take a step back, rally our troops and get ready for a summer of profit. Empower your best bartenders to be better. Challenge them to come up with a new signature cocktail for your bar. If you have a bartender who is bringing in ingredients, or pushing for upgrades and change, give him the tools to succeed! Often the recognition of a job well done is worth as much or more than the money in their pocket at the end of the shift. These are the people we need today to move forward into tomorrow. Make your next staff meeting fun, one that is sure to inspire and motivate everyone involved.

Now take a step back and smile. Your bartenders have a newfound expertise to share with your guests. Your bar staff is having a great time, and possibly for the first time, making cocktails that they are proud to serve. With pride comes an interesting and inevitable byproduct: PROFIT. At the end of the day, you have a bar full of guests who come back for more, and a staff who enjoy coming to work to produce as a team.

There are many resources out there to learn from. For starters, check out [www.themodernmixologist.com](http://www.themodernmixologist.com), [www.thatsthespirit.com](http://www.thatsthespirit.com) and the iBar at [www.bartenderone.com](http://www.bartenderone.com).

Until next time, keep Raising the Bar at your establishment, because if you don't someone else will.



Chris Purdy is a master mixologist, bar chef and BartenderOne's director of corporate events. Having spent 16 years fine tuning his craft in various clubs, lounges and fine dining establishments across Canada, he can now be found at Canyon Creek Chophouse, located in downtown Toronto. Chris also acts as the head trainer for BartenderOne's Master Class program. He can be reached at [chris@bartenderone.com](mailto:chris@bartenderone.com).