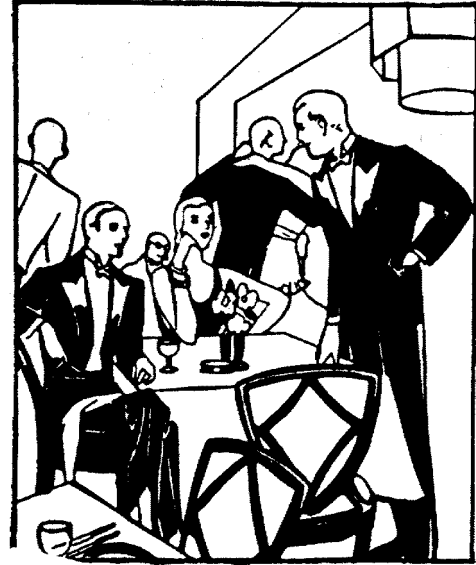


Bartending Mistakes Winners Don't Make



Few have become consummate professionals without making every mistake in the book at least once. It certainly holds true for bartenders. Making mistakes goes with the territory. It's nearly impossible to learn a trade without making them. The key is to learn from the mistakes and accept constructive criticism as a necessary part of the leaning process.

Bartending can be extremely challenging, and when someone does it really well, it's a sight to behold. Getting to that point, however, requires humility and a resolve to excel.

No one is immune to making mistakes behind a bar. In such a detail-oriented occupation and with so much human interaction, people are bound to make mistakes. Among the mistakes bartenders often make is not enjoying what they're doing. Bartending should be fun. People who bartend and just like it aren't giving enough of themselves. As entertainers, that's what bartenders do.

Even when not completely psyched about coming into work, great bartenders don their "game faces" and do their level best to give bar guests a worthy performance.

Bartending Mistakes

Mentors are few and far between, and tuition at the school of "hard knocks" is outrageously expensive. In hopes of flattening out the learning

curve a bit, here's a list of mistakes committed all too frequently behind bars.

- **Maintaining A "Me-First" Perspective** — Success in the bar business requires a pervasive team attitude and looking out for the house's best interests. That entails a cooperative effort, people helping each other to accomplish the stated objective, even when there may be no direct financial compensation pending. Prima donnas should pick another trade.
- **Disregarding Specified Serving Portions** — The misconception that "heavy" gratuities result from pouring "heavy" drinks is a costly one. Over-portioning liquor jacks up cost, swells alcohol potency, and increases liability. Pouring heavy shots undermines the business, and leaves the other bartenders on the staff, who pour according to the rules, in a bad way. Their drinks will suffer by comparison.
- **Letting The Professional Demeanor Slip** — Crank up the pressure and even common courtesy quickly disappears. Regardless, bartenders must maintain their composure and remain in control of their emotions. Stress and frustration must be internalized, not vented onto the clientele or co-workers.

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- **Serving An Inferior Product** — Whatever the reason, if a drink is not up to quality standards, don't serve it. Make sure that mixes are well-prepared, and juices taste fresh. Fruit garnishes should be cut daily, and be used only in good condition. When it comes to the business's product, don't take short cuts.

- **Improprieties Handling Cash** — Running an honest till is a conscious commitment. Depositing all of the bar's cash proceeds should be done without hesitation. Theft undermines trust and staff morale. Running an honest till is the only financially and ethically sound course of action.

- **Being An Order Taker** — Don't be complacent just filling orders, make things happen. Suggest new drinks, new products and energize your guests. Recommend the daily specials or inquire whether guests would like to try an appetizer or two. There is no more effective form of marketing than the enthusiastic efforts of servers at the point of sale.

- **Fixating On Gratuities** — Making a decent living behind a bar is best achieved through rendering prompt, competent service.

Concentrating on tips during a shift diverts your concentration from the job at-hand. Take care of your guests and the tips will take care of themselves.

- **Inadequate Short-Term Memory** — Fault lies in the undeveloped ability to recall customers' names, and what they're drinking. While people appreciate bartenders remembering their names, they fully expect bartenders to remember what they're drinking.

- **Scattered Priorities** — Working a high-volume bar requires the ability to "take care of first things first;" waiting on bar customers before washing glasses, or preparing drink orders for food servers before finishing a conversation with a regular. Prioritizing tasks according to their highest and best use of time is a proven method of wrenching order out of chaos.

- **Preferential Treatment** — While its natural to prefer serving some people over others, it's a fundamental mistake to act upon those sentiments. Treating select customers like second-class citizens is not part of the job description. Your attitude and demeanor can betray how you feel as clearly as inattentive service.



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