

Sizing-Up The Professional Manager



No one can make or break a place like the manager. It takes a lot of savvy to manage a bar or restaurant well, and frankly, not just anyone can pull it off. Between the owners, staff, and clientele, there are numerous agendas for a manager to deal with every day.

It takes more than being dynamic and outgoing to be an effective manager. The proof is in those who fall short of the ideal. Some choose to manage through intimidation and create a divisive, negatively motivated staff. Others concede their positions of authority and leadership, choosing instead to be friends with their employees, creating an underachieving, club-like atmosphere where little actual work gets done. Both extremes are ineffectual.

So what combination of knowledge and personal attributes does it take to produce an effective manager? Naturally the answer is going to vary with the individual and specific business being managed. However, there are some shared qualities that make-up the all-pro manager, and here's our list of what those qualities are.

- **Desire To Lead** — Every business needs a person who is willing to accept the mantle of leadership, and who can earn the respect and loyalty of the staff. Leadership is essentially intuitive. The leader grasps what needs to be done, sees how it can be done, believes it can be done, and then gets it done. Effective managers are leaders at heart.

- **Business Training** — To excel, managers must have a working knowledge of the business they operate and an understanding of how all the various aspects of their business inter-relate. They routinely deal with cash register operations, bookkeeping, the ordering, receiving and issuing of inventory, marketing and promotion, and a score of other business functions. While it's not necessary to have a business degree to be an effective manager, a firm grasp of the inner workings of business is fundamental.

- **Market Knowledge** — Businesses don't operate in a vacuum. A good manager knows his or her market, knows the competition and what the competitors are doing, and responds accordingly. Market position affects decisions on pricing, marketing, and promotions. A business where the clientele knows more about what's going on in the market than management is a poorly managed business.

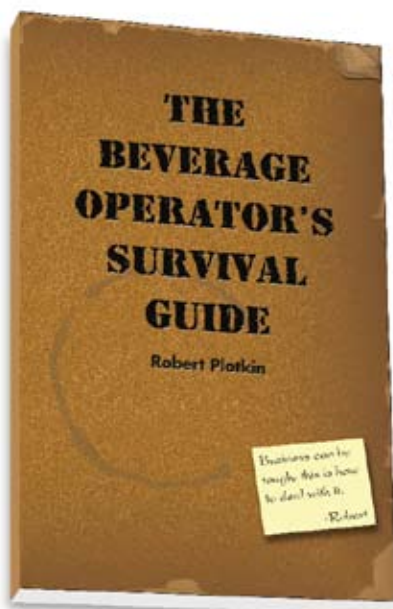
- **Maturity** — Managing a bar or restaurant is an emotional challenge. The stress of working with a young, socially active staff, the drinking public, and a fiercely competitive marketplace can prove too demanding for some. Individuals who have outside interests, such as school or a home-based business, or who have a family they're supporting tend to be more stable and self-motivating, and less negatively affected by the distractions and pressures of the position.

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- **Dollar Wise** — Cash flow is the lifeblood of a business. An effective manager spends the business's money as if it were his or her own — prudently and only with just cause.
- **Street Smarts** — Managing the bar-end of the business requires an individual who's savvy and street smart. Exert too much control over a bar and its patrons and it'll grind to a halt; let loose of the reins and it'll take you for a harrowing ride. Street smarts also means recognizing when you've made an error, figuring out how to correct it, and making sure that you don't make the same mistake twice.
- **Legal Eagle** — If you play the game, you better know the rules. Between health codes, liquor laws, and fire codes, there's a lot to know, and what you don't know can prove costly. Cited violations can result in the suspension of the operation's health permit, liquor license, or occupancy certificate being suspended, and the business is forced to close its doors. In addition, a well-informed manager can save a business untold legal grief by limiting the operation's exposure to liability, and successfully avoiding the many legal pitfalls involved with the hiring and firing of employees.
- **Sense Of Humor** — What with putting out fires, handling customer complaints, and dealing with the employee-related problems, managing a food and beverage operation can be extremely stressful. All the while, the manager must ensure that the business is operating efficiently and profitably. A good sense of humor can help take the edge off most situations, and helps everyone involved better cope with reality.
- **Communication** — The ability to speak clearly and write concisely are pivotal to the job, and are essential attributes of the successful manager. Effective communication also involves the often overlooked ability of being a skilled listener. As the adage goes, "If you have the courage to speak, have the wisdom to listen."
- **Creativity** — The creative mind is challenged by what can be, not what is. A good manager needs to be able to see things as they are, and look to improve them. Creativity is an intrinsic element to conceptual growth. It staves off operational boredom and keeps things hoppin'. Whether it's creating new house signature drinks, happy hour appetizers, or some off-the-wall promotion, every business needs an innovator, someone unafraid to chance trying something novel.

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This Month At BarMedia



Healthy survival is all about contingency planning. Think about any day and how many things happen to change the way you expect it to go. Add 5-25 other people (employees) into the mix, and you can guarantee at some point in the day you will have to plan for the unforeseen, and occasionally it will be something that seriously threatens some aspect of the business. So roll up your sleeves and get ready to put some policies and procedures in place that will, in the long run, make your business a much more lucrative and positive place to be.

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Valid until 08/01/09