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future** 

The Case for
Going Green





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& Associates Inc., a global national accounts agency based in New York City and Bangkok, developing beer, wine and spirits programs for chain hotels and restaurant organizations no matter where they may be located. In addition, FTA is a global facilitator, bringing the best values in beverage products and the brightest advancements of every kind to national account corporate and division office decision-makers worldwide. The firm focuses on the United States and Asia Pacific, now with an even greater emphasis on China.

Wine Clubs and Wine Societies

How to Build Customer and Server Loyalty for Your Bar or Bistro

One of the best ways to build customer as well as server loyalty for your bar, bistro or restaurant wine program is to establish a wine club for your customers and wine society for your servers.

The idea is very simple: You invite your customers to join your wine club, while you invite your servers to join your wine society. Membership in the club is free, and everyone gets a monthly newsletter e-mailed to their home or business or both, plus you create a super attractive and user-friendly wine club Web site. Every member gets a unique user-name and password.

Wine Society

While membership in the wine society is also free, it is only bestowed upon servers after they have demonstrated mastery of the material in Level One of your new wine training program. Once you have enough wine society members to elect officers and help with planning monthly society-only wine tastings and events, let the members take control; however, a member of the management team should always be on the board of directors of the society.

As your servers continue their wine education by passing higher-level tests, let the wine society honor them with perks and special recognition. The society should have its own monthly newsletter, which you should let them organize and you fund. They also should have their own Web site, courtesy of your generosity.

Wine Club

As members of your wine club, your customers receive regular notices of visiting winemakers who are offering wine tastings in one of your private rooms or areas for club members only. And of course don't forget winemaker dinners — again, open on a first-come, first-served basis for wine club members only.

Your wine club monthly newsletter should be educational as well as informative. You should include articles by some of your wine suppliers and/or the wineries on your wine list. You also can make your newsletter interactive by including comments from your club members. Creative graphics and color pictures are very helpful. By all means, though, make it fun and informative.

Interesting, interactive wine education is vital to the success of your wine program in terms of both the resulting quality of your wine service and the loyalty of your wine-consuming customers.

Give your customers a reason to choose your bar or bistro over the competition by being better than the competition. Give your customers more than discounted drinks to drive sales; give them information that makes them better informed consumers and empowers them to be more comfortable when ordering wine with their meals and a cocktail with or without food.

If you have extra storage space, create a temperature- and humidity-controlled wine cellar with private bins for your best wine club members, where they may store wines they buy at a discount from your special "Collectors' Reserve Cellar List" before the wines are



ready to drink. When the wines have matured, you inform these customers, so they make a reservation for the special occasion.

As you can see, there are endless opportunities to customize these concepts to maximize customer as well as server loyalty. You can imagine the effect on your bottom line.

Roll With Changes

With respect to your new wine training program, work with your wine suppliers to develop the best program possible. The most important consideration, however, is the ways in which you offer the education to your servers.

The "millennials," as adults in their 20s are called, tune in to iPods, iPhones, the latest technology in mobile phones and handhelds, blogs and other state-of-the-art audio-video entertainment and communication devices. The old classroom-style lectures with memori-



Interesting, interactive wine education is vital to the success of your wine program

zation and wine training outlines years out of date is no longer acceptable. You need to tune in on their wavelength. Understand their favorite devices and deliver your education in this manner.

And hey, while you're at it, make me a member!

