



Wine Marketing 101: How To Get Started

By Gary Gottfried

So you feel you do not have time for creating a special wine event due to time, resource support, or a combination of the two. The response in your head should be “I have to rethink this because I cannot afford NOT to have the time or resource support to devote to this”.

After all, with the expense of a license and with beverage being a 65% gross margin item and wine being on the higher per unit sale, that’s real dollars. In fact, simple math means that if you are an establishment that **could average just one glass a day** of the next incremental level for special occasions (i.e \$5), that translates to an added \$1800+ in revenue or \$1200 in gross margin. Promoting it and generating a lot more than one glass per day and it adds up quickly.

Now granted, if you are relatively new to the wine promotion game or your business sells wine on a smaller scale, you should crawl, before you walk, before you run ... however, regardless you should get moving. All it takes is a little education and aid.

You do not need to be a wine expert to get started. I still recommend having a favorable wine rep from a wine distributor of your choosing. Most important is not necessarily they have the most wine knowledge, but that they are interested to mutually grow your business (you sell more, therefore they sell more). A good rep determination be able to coax resources that will help you and your wine program and they will continually look for more opportunities for sales to happen.

The easiest start to a wine event program, without going overboard in devoting additional time and energy is simple. Use your wine by the glass (WBTG) program and augment the regular list with specials that will occur during special occasions bringing in added revenue and profits. Taking advantage of times for celebration whether big or small, add incremental revenue to your top and bottom lines.

For planning, map out some key event dates, over the year, that match up with natural celebratory occasions such as Valentine’s Day, Mother’s Day or Fathers Day. Turn those days into weekend offerings and specials on wines not regularly on the menu. Be sure they have value to you in whether financial or in marketing terms. Financial becomes obvious, however all too often overlooked is the “panache”, interest and reputation developed by establishments that offer new experiences and knowledge of wines.

The wines selected can tie in to the themes based on quality or clever connections. As a comfort in selling

wine develops, a savvy restaurant can actually develop its own creative celebrations to interest patrons. If there are bistro type restaurants reading this why not offer some special French wines surrounding Bastille Day or Italian restaurants offering special Italians for Columbus Day.

A critical piece of success is not that difficult, but it does require “some” effort and planning and be sure to plan on developing and having metrics to measure your success. When reviewing the metrics, I expect that it will be a complete surprise on the impact.

When looking to figure on how to maximize the upside while minimizing the risk, keep reading future articles on how to make that happen. It could be a lot easier than you think.

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