

NEED TO BE RECOGNIZED

We all crave it. We all need it. It is part of the human psyche. And we all want to go where everybody knows our name. But what happens the *first time* a customer walks into your business and sits at the bar? How long does it take your barstaff to greet a new customer? Is your bartender just standing around behind the bar, talking to another employee? Does he/she take the time to introduce themselves to new customers? Are these new customers feeling neglected? It doesn't matter the size or volume of the bar, when the staff is busy, management should also assist in this effort.

How many times have you sat at a bar for the first time and felt alienated by the bartender and others sitting next to you? Bartenders sometimes forget that they are primarily salespeople. Push the more profitable drinks. They, not management, are responsible for cultivating and keeping business. Management's job, as I see it, is to create business.

It is important to know your customers names whenever possible. People love hearing their name. If your barstaff is just mechanically pouring drinks and taking orders for drinks rather than paying attention to those basic human needs and wants of his customers, they simply will not want to come back on a regular basis. Most likely, those who are not greeted and recognized will look for a place that is "friendlier." Regular customers have already established their own personal reasons for coming to your business. Apparently, in the past, certain relationships have formed which is what keeps them coming back.

It is the new customers, who are the 'meat and potatoes' of your operation, who should be noticed, introduced and shaken hands with. Let's face it; you can get a drink anywhere! It is your employees who must focus on making the new customers feel comfortable and at home.

About 20 years ago there was a fabulous restaurant in the suburbs of Pittsburgh called the Hartwood. I remember it clearly because they did something that I had never seen before or since. They had neatly placed in the middle of each plate on your table a folded pack of matches with the last name on the reservation imprinted on the front. They must have had a gadget that did that imprinting. I am sure it was relatively inexpensive to do. But, I have to tell you, from the first visit and every one thereafter, I felt special. But hearing that "good evening Mr. Sokoloff," and then seeing my name imprinted in gold on these matches was, at least for me, irresistible. Then, of course the maitre'd introduced himself as you ate and then the owner also appeared to see how you were doing during the meal. SOLD!

Your staff and management must be excited and focused about their work. They must go out of their way to make each and every customer feel wanted and needed. They must get to know their customers names and recognize them each and every time they enter your establishment. It works like this: you take the time to recognize them and they will happily spend their money at your business.