



Tasting Room Customer Service

Michael Wangbickler AIWS CWE

Senior Account Manager, Balzac Communications

Who am I?

- 20 Years Marketing Experience
- Senior Manager – Balzac Communications
- Napa/Sonoma Wine Country
- WSET and CWE



What is Balzac?

- Founded in 1991
- #1 Wine Communications Agency
- Full service PR and marketing
- Big and small clients
- Domestic and International clients
- Solo wineries and regional associations

First Impressions are Everything

- For many small wineries, their tasting room is where they make those first contacts.
- What sort of impression are you making?
- Strategies to best manage your tasting room to maximize profits.

What's the Goal?

- Only to extend the brand?
- Sell wine in a serious manner?
- Both, of course.
- Be clear on the purpose of your tasting room.

Analyze the Competition and Differentiate

- Visit the tasting rooms in your area and outside of it.
- Set yourself apart with your design and execution.

Insure Signage and Grounds are Well Maintained

- Ideally, 10 seconds before your entrance.
- Advance signage.
- Clearly mark parking, tasting room, restrooms, etc.



Space to Taste

- Make sure that everyone is comfortable
- Tasting bar should be large enough for crowded days
- Use an overflow area on heavy traffic days



Merchandise Strategy

- Not necessary, but good to have for DDs, spouses, partners, children, etc.
- Occupy their time.
- Additional revenue source
- Be relevant



Pours and Pricing

- What's the norm in the area?
- Set a limit on number of tastes?
- Set specific flights?
- Have that “special” bottle
- Apply the fee to purchase



Hire, Train, and Reward Staff

- Wine knowledge is good, but a friendly demeanor and positive attitude are a must.
- Insure responsible drinking
- Incent and motivate staff (commissions, bonuses, wine, etc.)



Professional Sales Environment

- Greet all visitors within 30 seconds
- Engage in open-ended conversations
- Welcome customers who do not drink
- Encourage visitors to linger
- Ask for the sale



The Checkout

- Invest in a good sales and inventory system.
- Position register near the door.
- Have “impulse” merchandise items around the register.



I Thought This Was About Customer Service.

- The set-up and structure of the tasting room environment sets the stage for customer interaction.
- Once you've set the stage, then the actors can perform.
- Give them the tools they need to succeed.

Key Techniques

- Eye contact is critical
- Use names wherever possible
- Create commonality
- Build rapport
- Wait.....for them to respond

Key Techniques continued

- Intonation and Articulation
- Humor – be careful!
- Body Language
- Make Friends, then make sales

Large Groups

- PROJECT YOUR VOICE
- Audience is on your side—they want you to be successful
- Get their attention
- Establish a common ground
- Talk to the leader
- Eye contact with everyone

Large Groups—PT 2

- Get them involved early—via poll, questions, etc.
- Step out from behind the podium
- Socratic method is still the best
- Emphasize copy points

The Close

- Thank them, and get a round of applause
- Sell them the wines they want
- Invite them back
- Give them your card

Make a Good Impression

- Make visitors feel welcome
- You want them to come back
- You want them to tell their friends

Thank You!

Michael Wangbickler

Balzac Communications

www.balzac.com

mwangbickler@balzac.com

Twitter: @mwangbickler

