

May 12th - 18th is American Craft Week - Are You Ready?

BY MICHAEL KUDERKA

With the amount of craft beer that now dominates many store shelves and most tap handles, it may seem like every week is American Craft Beer Week. But scheduling events like beer tastings, or having your customers vote for their Top Ten craft beers, will allow you to capitalize on the increased media buzz and local brewery activities during this week.

Initiated by the Brewers Association, activities are coordinated by the organization's Craft Beer Program. The focus of the week is all about bringing brewers and enthusiasts together at the brewery or in your store to commemorate the art and tradition of American Craft Beer.

American Craft Beer Week Resources

Promoting in store events should start with a call to your local distributor or brewer, and a visit to the Brewers Association website: <http://www.craftbeer.com/news-and-events/american-craft-beer-week/resources>.

Aside from the American Craft Beer Week pages on Facebook and Twitter (include #ACBW in your tweets), there are a number of free Point Of Sale (POS) materials available at the Brewers Association site. Resources and materials include:

Promote Your Event Calendar

Submit an event to the official calendar and choose "American Craft Beer Week" as the category.

Downloadable Materials

The Official American Craft Beer Week Logo

American Craft Beer Week Posters (3 sizes)

American Craft Beer Week Manifesto (2 sizes)

American Craft Beer Week (3' x 8' Banners)

American Craft Beer Week Customizable Table Tents

American Craft Beer Week Cooler Tags

American Craft Beer Week Shelf Talkers

Other ideas

Think about expanding this event into American Craft Beer Month. Begin your activities early, take advantage of the increased interest in the middle of the month, and close out May by wrapping up your promotion.

Tastings: Local brewers/distributors will be looking for opportunities to showcase their brands. Run tastings each week on Thursdays and Fridays working with a different local brewer each week. Tie volume purchases (*two 6 packs, 4 packs, 22 oz. bottles*) to give away items like pint glasses or hats. This approach has stopping power, moves product, and can introduce many customers to craft beer.

Customers' vote to create your store's Top Ten beers: This promotion

is fun because it pulls in customer participation. On premise, this can be tied to flight or sampler purchases. For every flight, the customer is allowed to place two votes for their favorite brands. Off premise, the promotion can be tied to singles (*purchasing 6*) or "build your own 6 pack" (*purchasing 1*). In either case, the consumer gets two votes.

At the end of the month you have a store specific Top Ten list which can be displayed in the menu or in the beer section and this will serve as a list of beer recommendations for other customers to give a try.

Thinking Out-of-the-Box?

How innovative is your store at selling beer? We would like to know. If you have promotions that go beyond refilling the cold box, we would like to hear from you and share your "out-of-the-box" thinking with our fellow Beer Trends readers.

E-mail me at mkuderka@mcbasset.com with your successful ideas for selling beer, along with your contact information. If we write about your program in our column we will send you a free copy of The 3rd Edition of The Essential Reference of Domestic Brewers and Their Bottled Brands.

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