



What's the best way to show your stuff?

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The way beer is displayed has a big impact on your customers' overall buying experience. Although 70% of purchasing decisions are made while customers are in your store, most consumers walk in with a good idea of which brewery's brands, or what beer style they want to purchase.

As a result, how you organize your beer selection can make a shopping pleasure or a pain.

Grouping Beer

Interestingly enough, there are more personal opinions than standards when it comes to displaying beer. Although everyone can agree that products displayed at eye level or below sell better, the debate around displaying beer by geography or region, by beer style, by craft, domestic or import, alphabetically, by price or by brewer, rages on.

Resolving this question comes down to your customers' preference. So we surveyed a few beer enthusiasts as to how they like seeing beer arranged in stores.

Options

Ranking	Grouping Preference by
1	Country and Region
2	Brewer
3	Style
4	Alphabetically
5	Other

The majority of beer consumers that responded to our question, "How should retailers display beer," said they preferred to have their beer selections grouped by Country and Region. So in the case of the United States, West Coast, Midwest, and Northeast, might be examples of regional groupings. Additionally there was a lot of interest in having sections devoted to "Local Beer" and "New Releases/Seasonals." Many consumers also thought sub groups by brewers and styles within countries and regions would make sense.

For those preferring beer arranged by brewery, their preference was based on wanting to see everything that one individual producer had to offer, arranged alphabetically. Consumers believed this system eliminated the need for a "New Releases" section because anything new would be found alongside the rest of the individual brewers' brands.

Admittedly those backing beer displayed by style were seasoned beer consumers. This group was very knowledgeable about what kind of beer experience each style had to offer, and style drove their buying decisions. This segment was somewhat extreme, and devoted to styles like sours, gueuzes and lambics.

Grouping beer by either style and alphabetically, as a retailer, does offer some challenges to implement. First, not every beer neatly fits into a style category (especially craft beers). Second, when grouping alphabetically you need to ask your-

self, would you display La Chouffe under "L" or "C"; The Bruery under "T" or "B"? Most importantly you need to think like a consumer and anticipate where they would be looking for these brands.

Other suggestions

Use Empty bottles - for new arrivals one store uses the tactic of displaying empty bottles in the New Releases section and keeps the product for purchase in the cooler, ready to go home. All New Releases in this store are available in singles.

Display by Beer Experience - this approach might offer a little stroke to one's beer ego, but the concept is to break the beer selection down from beer novice to beer expert level brands.

Prioritize Cooler Space - coolers should be organized differently than shelf space. Specifically cooler space should be reserved for the more fragile beer styles such as IPAs, Pale Ales, Pilsners/Lagers and Wheats, as well as some select Browns, Porters, Stouts and Belgians brands.

Shelf Talker - Rating, Pricing, Descriptions - the General consensus is that Shelf Talkers help. More importantly the more information, the happier consumers will be later with their purchase. Consumers like to see the pricing for what they are buying. They like to be able to see a rating, and then to read a description to see if the flavors and the style are a good match.

Remember, no matter what approach you select for displaying beer, the key is making sure that everyone on staff is following the system, and that your customers can understand it.