



Getting and handle on your bar!

Have you ever heard of the term leakage at your bar? It can be a very costly problem.

Having written bar procedures in place should be a must. Most, if not all managers/owners of bars are concerned with making sure that all money that should be making its way into the cash register is actually finding its way there and not in the tip jar or someone's pocket.

Without procedures in place, it is like leaving your windows open in the winter with the heat on.

Instead of heat escaping it can be money and a lot of it. Setting up bar procedures is very easy and well worth the effort. It is never too late, but the sooner the better. If you already have procedures in place, EXCELLENT!, but take some time to review them. If not, then it may make sense to put drafting them and implementing them on the top of your list of things to get done.

Bar procedures should be written communicated with bartenders and any other applicable staff and have the employees **sign** them. Somewhere in the document, it should state that if employees do not follow the procedures, they are subject to termination. This is very important. It is very important that employees read and sign them. Of course, any document of this kind should be reviewed by your legal counsel before it is used.

Our experience shows that some of the more effective bar procedures include the following:

- All transactions should be accounted for in the register at the point of sale. Bartenders should not serve several guests at the same time and then enter a bunch of transactions into the register later. Processing a bunch of transactions at the same time is a great way to mask free drinks given out and transactions that are not accounted for correctly.
- Bartenders should give everyone receipts, whether they are paying cash or have a tab set up. A receipt helps ensure that guests are correctly charged and items are correctly accounted for in your system.

"We keep your customers coming back!"

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- For guests who have tabs set up, the person's current tab should be placed on the bar somewhere or in something in front of the guest within reaching distance. The guest should be able to pick it up and read it at any time. When guests order their first drink, the bartender should enter it into the register at the point of sale just like any drink. It does not matter how busy the bar is. Drinks should always be accounted for at the point of sale. No exceptions. Bartenders should place the tab in front of the guest. When the guest orders something additional, the bartender should update the persons tab immediately after the additional drink or item was ordered and replace the current tab on the bar with the updated tab. In summary, guests sitting at the bar with tabs should always have the most recent tab in front of them within reaching distance. Check with your liquor suppliers. Some of them have plastic tab holders that you can put on your bar.
- All bars and related outlets should follow the same procedures.
- All registers should have a display pole. I am amazed at how many restaurant owners do not use them. This is a great way for your customers to police your employees. Aside from getting a receipt a display pole is the only way of verifying if you have been charged correctly.
- Surveillance cameras could also help you control what is going on at your bar and also help regarding safety and security issues. There are some amazing systems where you can watch what is going on at your bar from your home. This is probably one of your most expensive options.

The above procedures really should not be that hard to put in place. They are pretty basic. It is possible that you will get some resistance when implementing them. Tell employees these procedures are a good business decision. They really do make business sense if you think about it. Bartenders who are questioning this policy should be asked why they have a problem with them?



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Ways to have your customers help keep your bartenders in line.

- A way of have your customers help keep tabs on your bartenders is to offer them something for free if a receipt is not provided. For example, you may post a sign stating that you will get a free appetizer if you are not given a receipt.
- Another great way to have customers keep tabs on your bartenders is to have display poles mounted on your registers/terminals. The displays should be large enough, making it easy for customers to see the total from different vantage points. Most systems can be updated with display poles at a relatively low cost compared to how much you might save in the long run.
- Consider posting the prices of drinks and food items. This way customers will know if they are correctly charged or not.