

LIQUORRETAILER

Keeping the Industry Informed

FEATURING

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Fall 2019

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF


ALBERTA
LIQUOR STORE
ASSOCIATION

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NORTH AMERICAN MARKET WORTH US \$47.3 BILLION BY 2024

North America's legal cannabis market will be worth over US \$47.3 billion annually by 2024 with Canada representing US \$3.4 billion. However, the true value of the market is likely to be much larger when black market sales are taken into consideration. [Read more...](#)

SPIRITLEAF – CANADA'S 2ND LARGEST RETAILER

If you've been following Spiritleaf since the beginning, you have witnessed how they describe cannabis legalization – that is, you witnessed *the start of something incredible*.

[Read more...](#)



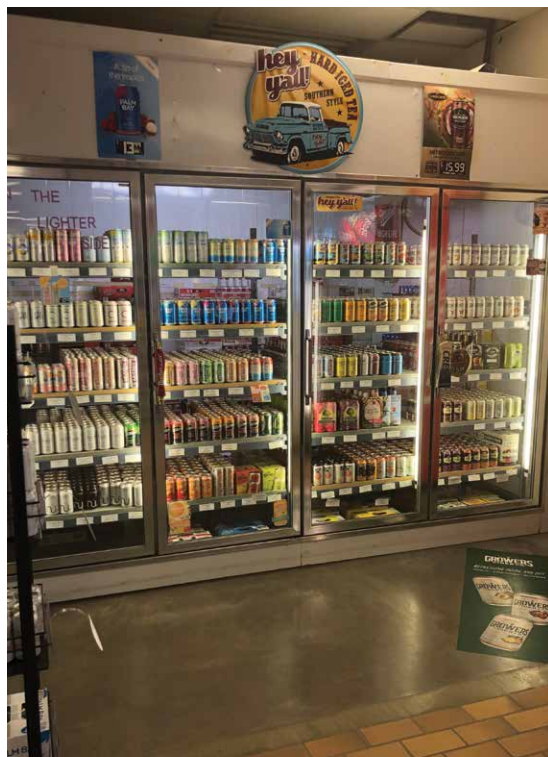
13 NEW APPLICANTS SELECTED IN ONTARIO

Of the 42 applicants who won Ontario's second lottery, only 29 submitted the required documents on August 28th and are now being reviewed for eligibility. [Read more...](#)

19 CANNA CABANA LOCATIONS IN ALBERTA

High Tide Inc. opened Canna Cabana retail stores in Calgary and Vegreville last week. The company currently has 23 branded Canna Cabana locations across Canada and expects to open another Canna Cabana later this month. [Read more...](#)





Town & Country Liquor Store

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Cover photo courtesy of Blindman Brewing



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EDITOR'S NOTES

by Joyce Hayne



The snow is beginning to fall again and consumers' tastes are shifting to beers, wines, and spirits that provide warmth. As you review your product selection, ensure you're stocking a wide array of Alberta-made products. Our article on Selling Local will provide tips on how to research unique items while learning the producers' stories that you can share with customers.

To encourage new and repeat customers to visit your stores, this issue of *Liquor Retailer* looks at ways to identify who your millennials are and then develop promotions targeted to those people. We also review mobile marketing strategies to send out offers to consumers who are near your store.

As robberies continue to be an issue, AGLC gives tips on how to prevent thefts and keep employees safe. If employees have been victims of crimes or other trauma, we also examine ways that you can help staff suffering from psychological injuries.

Wishing you an awesome autumn!

Joyce

UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct 16-17 Alberta Liquor Industry Conference, Westin Edmonton Hotel
www.albertaliquorconference.ca

Oct 18-19 Calgary Rocky Mountain Wine & Food Festival, Stampede Park
www.rockymountainwine.com

Nov 2 World of Whisky Festival, Calgary
www.eventbrite.ca/e/general-admission-world-of-whisky-festival-tickets-62750693012

Nov 8-9 Edmonton Rocky Mountain Wine & Food Festival, Edmonton Convention Centre
www.rockymountainwine.com/event/edmonton/event-details

Nov 21-23 Banff Craft Beer Festival, Cave & Basin
www.albertabeerfestivals.com/festivals/banff-craft-beer-festival

ALSA'S MESSAGE

by Ivonne Martinez



The Alberta Liquor Industry Conference (ALIC) 2019 is just around the corner. This October ALSA will be hosting the liquor industry once again in Edmonton. This will be the first time the Honorable Travis Toews, Minister of Finance and Minister in charge of AGLC will address our industry. We will also be hosting the newly appointed Chair of the AGLC board and new board members.

Some of the topics ALIC will cover this year include issues affecting all of our members, their safety and wellbeing: thefts and the threat from convenience stores.

Thefts

Police services across Alberta have identified two street level gangs that are responsible for a 350% increase in liquor thefts over the last year. Our

seminars will include presentations from Edmonton Police Services and loss prevention professionals that will discuss the current situation and strategies for keeping staff and customers safe. Read AGLC's Report on page 21 that also addresses this important issue.

Convenience Stores Threat

The Ontario Provincial Government is planning to add beer and wine to convenience stores. This means that the issue is being discussed here in Alberta once again. ALIC will cover opinion poll surveys on Albertans' views towards convenience store security and their record on social responsibility. We will cover some of the strategies store owners can take to ensure the public continues to support the liquor store industry. This year ALIC is a must-attend event. You can register at www.albertaliquorconference.ca



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Courtesy of Elk Island Spirits Co.



SELLING LOCAL AS STORYTELLING

by Laura Starr

The province of Alberta is a massive hotpot of innovative, creative businesses that churn out exceptional local products. It is a point of pride, and the buy local movement is one that Albertans have truly bought into, for good reason too, since it is no secret that buying from local businesses and producers is advantageous to a healthy and booming economy.

Money spent in local businesses or on local products stays in the economy more so than money spent in a chain commercial store. It is not just the consumers who need to buy into this though: in order to foster buying local, you need to sell local.

Over 140 Options Available

There are numerous stores, big and small, that proudly promote local products. Albertan made craft beers can be found in most liquor stores, with brewers like Big Rock being easily around the province, and practically being a household name. Distilleries such as Eau Claire have garnered pretty solid brand awareness too. But did you know that there are over 140 manufacturing licences granted in Alberta for producers of craft beers, spirits, meads, and fruit wines? How many of these names do you know? Or when you discover a small producer that you enjoy, do you start stocking their products?

Researching Local Products

Not knowing of, and not being able to find local products are not just the problems of consumers. For retailers, selling local is not easy either. The onus is on the retailer to get these products into the hands of the consumer. This requires the time to research new products, and to risk purchasing them, hoping they don't sit on the shelf. It also requires the time and cost of educating staff so the product can be communicated to the consumers. Whether your liquor store is big or small, independent or chain, carrying local products can take a few extra steps.

Marketing Support

You are not alone though! To help you market local products, a new program was recently rolled out by the Alberta Liquor Store Association (ALSA) called Just Add Alberta. Aimed at supporting the buy local movement, Just Add Alberta provides tools and educational resources to help liquor stores carry and promote more local products. They supply branded promotional materials (such as shelf talkers) that you can use in your store as well as access to information on the products themselves to help you educate staff and communicate the new products properly to consumers. Additionally, there

are opportunities to collaborate with them on events, which are an engaging way to bring customers into your store, raise your own brand awareness, get engaged with your community, or just learn about new local products. This program is definitely worth taking advantage of, and you can tap into their resources online at justaddalberta.com.

Supporting your Community

Alternatively, you can take on these extra steps yourself and engage with local producers on your own. Liquor reps (or the producers themselves, when the company is on the smaller side) are often open to working with stores in order to promote their products; this can look like promotional in-store events, tastings, or contests, or it could be staff education, whether as a seminar, or a tour of their facility. (Side note: you can never go wrong sending your staff to a tour of a local distillery or brewery, for any reason.)

The benefits of selling local far outweigh the extra upfront legwork. Not only do you keep more money within the local economy, but you are also tapping into meaningful selling. There is a huge following for local buying. It is tempting to think everyone just wants the cheapest deal, but those people who are committed to purchasing local products are willing to spend an extra few dollars to support their community. Local products are meaningful. People know the faces of the people



BE SURE TO HAVE SOME PAIRING OPTIONS OR RECIPES USING LOCAL INGREDIENTS TO ACCOMPANY THESE INCREDIBLE LOCAL EXPERIENCES.

who make the products. It is personal, and you can't put a dollar value on that. Customers who are committed to buying local are also likely to be repeat offenders. Return customers are most definitely a plus for any business.

Selling Local Experiences

Okay. So you've found some interesting producers, purchased some product, and educated your staff. Now what? How do you highlight these very unique products, so they



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Courtesy of Siding 14 Brewing

don't stay invisible on the shelf? Don't be shy to display local products at the forefront of the store; if you want to advertise your commitment to selling local, wave that committed flag proudly a few steps into your store. From there, selling local is all about telling a story. You can embolden your staff to promote these products through contests or incentives. You can create displays that offer insight into the stories of local producers. Or, you can go even further than this, and tie all the local aspects into one storyline. Cross-sell the stories! Let's take honey as a local theme. Cabin Brewing just released a honey-infused beer, the Hive Mind Fruited Honey Ale, in collaboration with Canadian honey

company, Drizzle Honey, which was founded in Calgary. Showcase this new Hive Mind beer alongside Chinook Arch Meadery's Summer Sassation Mead, which is made from local honey and berries. Did you know Burwood Distillery makes a 100% Albertan Honey Eau de Vie? Throw that into the storyline too! Now, with all these drink options, what on earth do you eat with them? Be sure to have some pairing options

JUST ADD ALBERTA PROVIDES TOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP LIQUOR STORES CARRY AND PROMOTE MORE LOCAL PRODUCTS.

or recipes using local ingredients to accompany these incredible local experiences. Pull in everyone involved with these products: who are the artists making the labels? Is there a story to tell there? Who are the bartenders using these spirits, and what cocktails are they using them in? Find out, and share what you know with your customers. And remember, social media can be your friend, especially in terms of cross-selling a story. Share the stories in your posts, and be sure to tag and hashtag everyone and everything.

Elevating these products through storytelling sets them apart from what otherwise becomes a simple price war between products. Have fun with your stories, have fun with your products, and take pride in supporting your community by selling local. ■

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

WINE REPORT

by Tim Ellison

Canned Wine. A New Frontier.

Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon? Of course. Will that be bottle, draught, or can?

Alternative containers are causing a stir. More and more producers are getting on board with this trend and offering their wines in a lot of different containers—now including cans. Why the change? It's based on simple economics as well as environmental reasons for the producers, distributors, and retailers. It also provides convenience for the customer.

There is some resistance, however. It reminds me of the furor when the Stelvin Closure was introduced. When vignerons and producers switched to the screw cap in place of the cork, there was outrage. The screw cap had been associated with inexpensive, low quality, high-volume, commercial wines made for drinking at college frat parties, in a park, or under a bridge. It took a lot of convincing to change consumer perception and educate them on the benefits of Stelvin. With some of the world's most prestigious wines now packed so they will never be threatened by cork taint, consumers know that their wine will always be in good condition (and easier to get to!).

When canned wines were first introduced, they were generic with no vintage, region of origin, or varietal indications, so consumers suspected the quality was low. Now producers are putting vintage dated, single vineyard, varietally specific wines in cans and that means operators can serve these products with the confidence that their customers will perceive value for money. It's time for consumers to get used to containers made from things other than glass stoppered with a cork.

Producers have the initial hurdle of either purchasing a specialized canning line or arranging for a mobile canning service. Once this is looked after, the benefits start to mount up. Shipping a bottle from the winery to the end user accounts for up to 40% of the 1.28 kg carbon footprint of a typical bottle of wine (even more with the heavier so-called trophy bottles that can weigh up to almost 1000 grams alone, whereas a typical can weighs 14.5 grams), so businesses are better able to present a greener facing to consumers by utilizing alternative packaging. Cans require less energy to produce, ship, and recycle. This is something everyone can brag about. Cans also pack more efficiently into boxes, requiring less cardboard and space, and reduce the need for large warehouse space. Producers are also able to get more products in a container, which makes the wine more attractive to distributors as it lowers the shipping cost of getting the wine from the winery to their warehouse.

Distributors also appreciate the ease of storage and transport and the additional purchasing options for their retailers. The sales team now have another SKU of a recognizable product that has probably already created awareness and demand in the market in other forms of packaging.

Cans provide benefits to retailers as well. Cans are much lighter for staff to move resulting in increased productivity due to ease of movement and are less dangerous in regards to injury due to lifting strains or broken glass. Cans also take up less room in the storeroom and cooler. They chill faster than bottles as well, which eases stress during busy periods when pre-chilled stock starts to run low.

Are there downsides? Of course. If you are considering ageing a wine, a can is not necessarily the best choice of packaging. The lack of air exchange due to a complete seal results in an anaerobic environment where the evolution of a wine is stunted. You can have reductive qualities as well, so wine from a can needs a little exposure to air to open it up.

Another issue is the flavour profile created when drinking directly from a can. Producers almost uniformly recommend consumers decant the wine from the can into a glass before consumption.

Another challenge is price. A can will hold between 200ml and 375ml. That's up to half a bottle of wine in a single can, so buying a full 12-can case is like getting three magnums. The problem is the pack size is so tight, it doesn't appear to be that much product. Customers have to be reminded that a single can holds half a bottle of wine. Hence a price tag that can approach \$20.00 per can is still a good value.

Consumers will warm to wine in cans as they have to Stelvin and bag-in-box. Younger consumers don't have as much history with bottles, and have been weaned on alco-pops and bag-in-box. They have no pretense about what kind of containers are employed and will happily accept any increase in convenience. Plus, the green aspect will be appealing to the younger generations. If you are going camping, hiking, or kayaking—any activity where volume and weight are a consideration—cans make a lot of sense.

Let's be clear. At the end of the day, if it's in the short term, wine doesn't really care what it's stored in. If the wine has been created for near-term consumption (I'm talking within a year or two of releases) then chances are very good that your wine could be in any number of containers: plastic, tetra box, aluminum foil lined contains, and, yes, even cans.

Tim Ellison is a Certified Sommelier & Chef de Cuisine that has dedicated approaching half a century to a career in the demanding hospitality industry and is a proud member of the prestigious Vancouver Club team. Tim can be reached tim@vancouverclub.ca



THANK YOU

To all our friends & partners in bottleshops across this fair province, thanks for doing what you do and helping us do what we do. Cheers!



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LOOP INSIGHTS

THE NEXT EVOLUTION IN LIQUOR MARKETING

In a competitive liquor market, it's critical to take advantage of every opportunity to engage with your consumers. Loop Insights delivers a solution that bridges the gap between physical and digital landscapes, turning data into actionable insights, and providing real-time personalized marketing at scale. Loop Insights has created a fully automated, plug and play system that seamlessly integrates with your existing POS system. The platform is an affordable and user-friendly technology that delivers personalized offers to customers, either in-store, at home, or on the road.

Specializing in the liquor and hospitality industries, Loop Insights helps retailers develop new sources of revenue and increase their average sale. Rob Anson, CEO, explains, "Real-time intelligence pairs customers to specific products and promotions. Retailers see an average 18% increase in revenue when they optimize their loyalty programs."

Personalizing Promotions and New Line Revenue

Loop Insights' technology uses artificial intelligence and unique identifiers in your POS data to develop personalized promotions that can be delivered real-time on sales receipts or digitally to mobile devices.

These personalized promotions create new line revenue opportunities. Using Loop's platform, liquor retailers now have the ability to sell the personalized promotional ad spaces to brands and third-party businesses, granting brands and businesses 1-to-1 access to consumers in targeted areas. Never before have you been able to advertise like this to unique target markets of consumers in-store.

Upselling & Cross-selling

Rather than relying on sales associates, Loop Insights' technology can be used to upsell and cross-sell. Knowing that Mr. Smith loves bourbon, the software can trigger an offer on bitters, so he has the ingredients to make an Old Fashioned. These types of personalized incentives receive a much higher response rate than generic offers. Anson says, "A lot of retailers are spending money on marketing campaigns with limited returns. I'm a big believer in ROI and return on experience."

Identifying Trends

The real-time data can also be used to identify sales trends, which will help with inventory management. Tying in third-party data provides additional marketing intelligence on factors affecting in-store visits, ranging from weather and road conditions to sporting events and concerts.

Understanding how your customer thinks, buys, and behaves is valuable information for any retailer. Loop allows you to understand, action, and monetize your data. This competitive advantage is particularly useful when liquor retailers are facing new competition from online and cannabis stores.

Key Partnerships

Loop Insights and Barnet POS have partnered to bring you the perfect liquor retail partnership. With the Loop Insights' platform partnered with the industry-leading Barnet POS system, retailers now have the ultimate tools to run every aspect of their business from operations to marketing with the most technology-forward solutions in the liquor industry. Barnet POS brings years of expertise and credibility to the liquor retail industry and now has partnered with Loop Insights to ensure their customers are set up for success to compete in today's market place. Barnet and Loop will continue to invest in delivering two unique solutions that help your business grow while giving you the ability to interact like never before with consumers, brands, and the liquor industry.



Contact us to book a demo.
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MOBILE MARKETING

WHY YOUR LIQUOR STORE NEEDS TO GO MOBILE

by Danielle Leroux

Don't know what mobile marketing is? You're probably already doing it! If you're not, you need to start today.

Mobile marketing is marketing on mobile phones or devices. "It sounds like some sort of new and different marketing, but if you're doing any sort of online advertising or promotions, you're doing mobile marketing," says Lindsay O'Donnell, Founder & Marketing Director at Piquant Marketing. "Over the past five years, mobile users have exceeded desktop users, which means that people are consuming content more often on their mobile devices than on their desktops." O'Donnell is right. According to Statista, mobile usage in Canada is one of the highest in the world: the country's total number of mobile subscribers surpassed 30 million in 2016. The number of mobile phone Internet users stood at 22.8 million in 2016 and is expected to grow to 28.6 million by 2021.

Mobile users also use their devices a lot. 66% of people check their phones approximately 46 times per day and 65% of all digital media time is spent on mobile.

This matters when it comes to your business. Customers care about their mobile experience and mobile plays a big role in the path-to-purchase.

75% of users prefer a mobile-friendly site and 52% say a bad mobile experience made them less likely to engage with a business. 82% of smartphone users turn to their phones inside a store when making purchasing decisions. If you offer online sales, 67% of mobile users say they are more likely to buy from a mobile-friendly site.

Craft Cellars in Calgary has embraced this trend. "We use mobile marketing because it allows us to extend our reach to existing customers as well as new and potential customers," says Jennifer Cann, marketing manager. "Mobile marketing essentially allows people to carry our store in their pocket; giving them access to product information, sales, and the capability to make purchases anytime and from anywhere."

Currently, Craft Cellars uses email marketing campaigns, social media including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, blogs, and a mobile optimized website as part of their mobile marketing strategy.



Harnessing the Power of Mobile Marketing

First, ensure that whatever you are doing digitally is formatted for mobile viewing. "It sounds more complicated than it is," says O'Donnell. "When you're creating your website, online ads, newsletters, or online content, simply preview how it is going to look on your phone. Most programs allow you to preview your content in a mobile format or you can grab your phone and see how everything looks."

Specifically, to improve mobile viewing for email newsletters, use a responsive email template, reduce image file sizes, and increase size of links and buttons.

**66% OF PEOPLE CHECK THEIR PHONES
APPROXIMATELY 46 TIMES PER DAY.**

For your website, use a responsive design or design a mobile-optimized site separate from your desktop site. It should also be easy for customers to find the information they are looking for. Make sure your content is clear, concise, and accessible on a mobile device. Visit website.grader.com for a free test of how mobile-ready your website is.

Don't overlook the importance of this. "A mobile optimized website has been our *most successful* mobile marketing tactic," says Cann. "We have found that most of the visitors to our website are using their mobile devices to browse and shop."

Get Location-Specific

"The thing to keep in mind with marketing, particularly digital marketing for liquor stores or any retailer, is that your marketing is generally going to be location-specific," explains O'Donnell. "What I mean by that is that it's easy to get a lot of 'wastage' with online activity. You can likely reach thousands, if not tens of thousands of people, with an online ad or a blog, but how many people are within your store radius?"

When you are making a marketing plan, O'Donnell suggests looking for ways to be efficient and cut down on that wastage. "Be specific with your online ads or make use of location-based advertising, which are ads that pop up on someone's phone when they're within your radius," she suggests. "Ask yourself if what you're planning is going to reach your target within your radius."

Ensure mobile users can easily discover your business via online search. To improve localized search, HubSpot suggests inserting your store



address into key areas across your website, like the footer and meta description. You can also embed a Google Map of your location on a page on your site.

Other Mobile Marketing Tactics

Here are five more tactics O'Donnell suggests liquor stores implement in their mobile marketing strategy:

- 1. Mobile-Specific Ads** - Create mobile-specific ads through Google, in addition to your Google and social media ads, with a specific call-to-action. i.e. click through to your store location on Google Maps
- 2. Get Local with Keywords** - If you are running search engine ads, get specific with local keywords and test different copy. "Think

MOBILE MARKETING ESSENTIALLY ALLOWS PEOPLE TO CARRY OUR STORE IN THEIR POCKET.

about what someone is going to search when they're looking for something your area," says O'Donnell.

- 3. Text Message Ads** - Use text message ads if the customer has signed up for text notifications. Otherwise, you could risk annoying customers or breaking privacy laws.
- 4. Apps** - Create your own app using an online program like Appie Pie or Bizness App. Only do so if your app is providing real value and you have the resources to drive users. Alternatively, use existing apps to help customers discover you, like Yelp, Instagram, or Foursquare.

- 5. Take Some Time with Google** - Take some of Google's free training for online advertising. You can find a list of courses on Google Ads Help.

Be warned: mobile marketing is a commitment. Cann says the biggest challenge Craft Cellars encounters with mobile marketing is time: "Many hours go into management and maintenance of our website and the creation of engaging social media and email content." However, can you afford not to invest time? The success of your business could depend on it. ■

Beer Notes

TASTY BEERS WITHOUT THE BOOZE

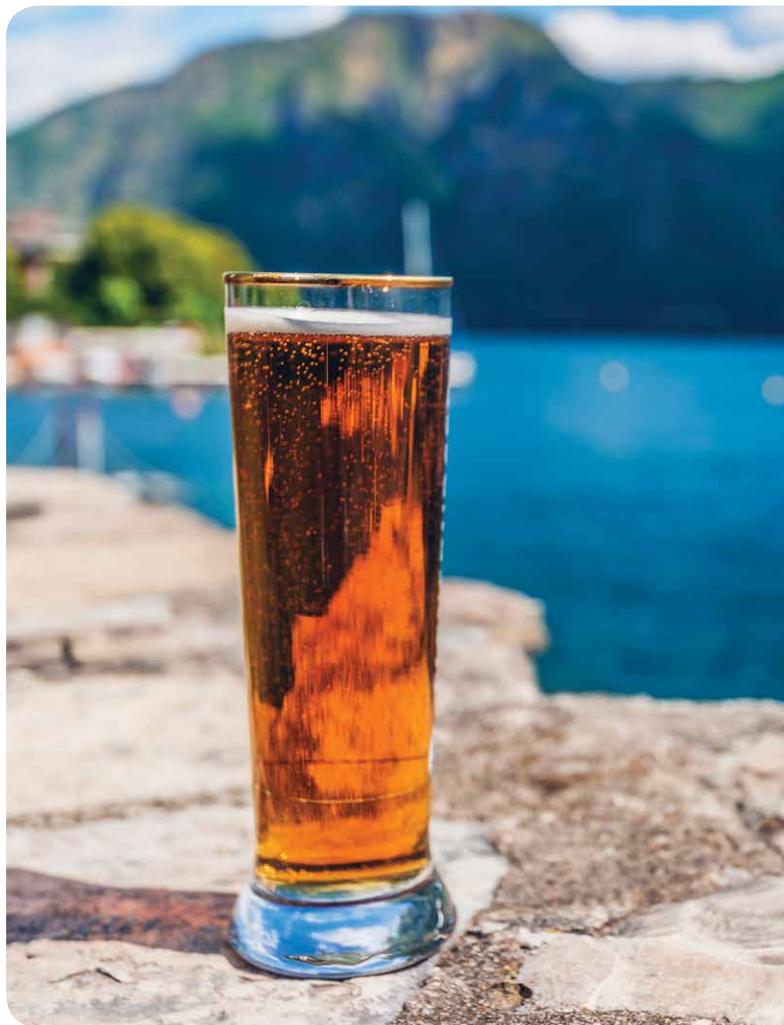
by Kirk Bodnar

When my wife was pregnant with our first child, being a fellow beer lover, she quickly discovered just how limited her choices were when it came to non-alcoholic beer options. Additionally, when we weren't quite ready to share our good news, she felt that ordering a soda or settling for water while out for after-work drinks would be a bit too obvious, and invite questions she wasn't quite ready to answer. Since that time, I've often thought about the untapped market for non-alcoholic beers—the trick, of course, was to make one that actually tasted good.

Of course it goes without saying there are many reasons one would choose a non-alcoholic or low-alcohol beer over a brew of standard strength. And though standard beers will likely always outsell non-alcoholic beers, it does make sense for breweries to consider offering these options as a part of their portfolio. At the very basic level, it could be considered a good idea to have the ability to offer beers for all potential customers (gluten-free beer options could also be included in this example). A brewery would also benefit from the substantially diminished excise tax rates for non-alcoholic beer, reduced regulations, and expanded channels of distribution. Of course, the added processes and equipment required to de-alcoholize beer could possibly counteract some of these benefits.

A number of domestic breweries have decided to give non-alcoholic beers a try, and the results have been generally positive. Local Calgary favourite Village Brewery introduced the Village Local. The beer, despite being nearly devoid of alcohol (at 0.3% ABV) is definitely not lacking in flavour boasting a distinct caramel malt character and a big citrus hop punch as well. Besides providing beer drinkers with a non-alcoholic option (which is also low calorie and low carb by the way), it also provides Village Brewery an opportunity to feature their product at more community events and even make it available in grocery stores—something that is as of yet out of reach for standard beers.

Another brewery that has taken it a step further is Partake Brewing. They don't merely offer a non-alcoholic beer within their portfolio—their entire portfolio is non-alcoholic. This makes them the first brewery of the sort in Canada, and they have been making waves in the non-alcoholic beverage sector in a big way, recently winning a gold medal for best non-alcoholic beer at the World Beer Awards—no small feat to say the least. Partake is the brainchild of Ted Fleming, who had to forego drinking alcohol due to a medical condition. Being an avid beer lover, he simply wasn't ready to give it up, though he was even less excited about giving up the social aspects of going out for a beer with friends and colleagues. Thus Partake was born, which has added an interesting selection of non-alcoholic beers to the market. Rather than sticking to the standard de-alcoholized light lagers, Partake has an IPA, a stout, and a blonde—proving that non-alcoholic beers don't have to be bland and flavourless at all.



There are also some tasty international non-alcoholic beers. Erdinger Alkoholfrei is much like its alcoholized version. It's a German wheat beer, commonly known as a Hefeweizen. Despite losing the alcohol, Erdinger was able to keep much of the classic flavour and full body of the original brew. Additionally, Erdinger claims that without the alcohol, this drink can essentially be considered a sports beverage, or energy drink. It contains distinct isotonic properties and a high dose of B vitamins, folic acid, and polyphenols as well. In fact, Erdinger Alkoholfrei is a title sponsor of an endurance sport series in Europe called the Active Tour, which includes over 400 endurance races taking place in nearly a dozen countries. The ability to dabble in the large energy drink category is another clear benefit to going alcohol free.

Non-alcoholic beers are on the rise, and they are finding a market that is not only accepting them, but embracing them. They provide a great way to introduce new customers to beer drinking. Look at expanding your selection to cater to both consumers and your hospitality customers.

Town & Country Liquor Store

SPECIALIZING IN THOUGHTFUL SERVICE

by Joanne Sasvari



When the wind comes whipping across the Rocky Mountain Foothills and through Pincher Creek—as it does most days—it can bring with it a mighty thirst. Luckily, the Town & Country Liquor Store is ready to handle that.

Head east from Highway 6 from this Southern Alberta town of 3,642 and you can't miss it: A low-slung red brick building with the unmistakable profile of a former provincial government liquor store. Indeed, Town & Country opened in December 1993, one of the first to do so when the provincial government liquor stores were privatized. It was also one of the first to join the fledgling Alberta Liquor Store Association back when it was first started.

Owner David Tompkins owns the Town & Country in nearby Fort Macleod which opened in 2000 and is housed in another former government liquor store building.

"It's just a standard-issue government liquor store building," says Leslee LeBel, manager of the Pincher Creek store. "They built the same brick buildings, all at the same time."



Unimaginative though the design might be, the old ALCB buildings did have one big advantage: space, and lots of it. “It’s at least 7,000 sq. ft.,” LeBel says.

That means there’s plenty of room to breathe and move around—and lots of space for the cases of beer, racks of wine, branded merchandise, and shelves packed with whisky and other spirits. And don’t forget the walk-in coolers: customers regularly praise the store for having the coldest beer around.

“We are not just your average neighbourhood liquor store,” LeBel explains.

For one thing, the store is an important part of this rural community located 210 km. southwest of Calgary and perched on the edge of Waterton Lakes National Park. Pincher Creek is perhaps best known for the hundreds of wind turbines that take advantage of the 50- to 90-kilometre-an-hour winds that whistle through the Oldman and Castle river valleys.

Known for its friendly and helpful service, Town & Country sponsors local events like the Pincher Creek Rodeo, holds in-store tastings, and supports the kind of causes that are important in connecting a rural community where neighbours can be far-flung from each other. “Pincher, it’s an old farming community and it’s also a retirement community,” LeBel says. “We believe it’s important to support local.”

That community spirit has earned plenty of accolades for Town & Country, including a Chamber of Commerce Award of Excellence in 2009 and an ALSA award in 2001, among other recognition.

It also means that staff tries to ensure there’s something for everyone who comes into the store. “We have thousands of products here,” LeBel says. “I try to get all the new products in as well as special products. Anything you’re looking for, you can get it here, and if we don’t have it, we’ll get it in for you.”

The store is known for its plentiful beer selection and a wide range of domestic and international wine, mainly in the \$20 to \$30 range. Plus there’s a generous selection of single-malt whiskies, including some relative rarities from distilleries like Bruichladdich and Jura Island.

That selection, along with the case discounts, a helpful points program, and draws for merchandise, make this as much a fun shopping experience as it is a fruitful one.

And it’s a far cry from the old days when the government owned this store and 200 others like it. Since privatization was announced in September 1993 (and completed six months later), the number of liquor retailers in Alberta has increased to 2250 liquor retailers; meanwhile, product selection has expanded from 2,200 SKUs in 1993 to more than 26,000 varieties of beer, wine, and spirits today.

WE ARE NOT JUST YOUR AVERAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD LIQUOR STORE



Stores like Town & Country have reaped the benefits—but their customers even more so, thanks to vastly improved selection and service.

The reviews pretty much speak for themselves.

“Always well stocked, clean, uncluttered, friendly and helpful staff,” says one customer. Another adds, “Great staff, has your beer and liquor needs pretty well met!” A third sums up the experience: “Everything you need in a liquor store.”

“Customer service is number one here,” LeBel says. “And I think we have people coming back, just because we are so friendly.”



WHO ARE YOUR MILLENNIALS?

by Laura Starr (a millennial)

To some of you who own or manage liquor stores, millennials are enigmatic. They seem impulsive, demanding, and impossible to understand (said every generation ever, to the following generation). And even those of you who ARE millennials, find millennials to be enigmatic! How does that work?

A millennial is generally defined as someone who was born between 1981 and 1996, although many argue that the spread is from 1980 through to 2000. That is a wide range of people, who would today be aged anywhere from 19 to 39! Millennials are chastised as being entitled, and simultaneously hailed as the innovators of the world. Some still live with their parents, but many are already parents themselves. Some millennials have not yet found their first job, and others are already CEOs, teachers, or travelling musicians.

The point is, you cannot specifically pinpoint a millennial. Sure, some of the postulations are accurate, such as younger people demand 'meaning' in their lives. Millennials want work-life balance; they crave meaningful interaction; they are drawn towards social consciousness. They are diverse, they are distinct, and they abhor disingenuousness. So if you want to reach this demographic for your business, you need to get to know who YOUR millennials are, and what matters to them.

Know What They Want

So what does that look like for a liquor store? Putting together a promotion or an event that appeals to a millennial doesn't have to be monumental or profound (although it can be!). Getting to know your millennials means you've made the effort to know that your

customers are Seinfeld fans, but not Big Bang Theory fans, and you organize a tasting night accordingly. Getting to know your millennials means understanding that they want a good 'deal' but that doesn't mean they want the cheapest beer available, so you should stock a great craft beer selection.

Getting to know your millennials could mean organizing a rainbow flight of wines for a Pride Week tasting event, because you recognize and support that a large portion of your millennials are part of the LGBTQ community (deVine Wines & Spirits hosted this exact event for Edmonton Pride earlier this year). Getting to know your millennials means you acknowledge the growing demand for locally made products, or the ethical conversations around what is being consumed, and how it was made. Maybe your millennials are vegan, or perhaps they are organic farmers of grass-fed, ethically sourced beef. The point is, get specific! Get personal! See them, hear them, and they will show up!

Create Promotions & Events

There are some great examples of promotions and events to pull from communities all across Alberta, which all tend to lean towards a millennial market. J. Webb Wine Merchant in Calgary is a specialty wine store with a meaningful brand initiative; in this clip from one of their newsletters, they perfectly sum up their purpose:



Courtesy of J Webb Wine Merchant

MILLENNIALS ARE CHASTISED AS BEING ENTITLED, AND SIMULTANEOUSLY
HAILED AS THE INNOVATORS OF THE WORLD.



DeltaBrewery.ca

f @ t in

Through the millennia, the delta has been a symbol of change and transformation.

Delta Brewery represents the positive and transformative change that craft breweries can make in the industry and the communities they serve. Our delta triangle has three points, each representing our vision to enhance our community, inspire change, and above all, to produce the highest quality beer.










Courtesy of Juanita Roos

THEIR EVENTS ARE QUIRKY, BUT PROFESSIONAL, ENGAGING, AND MEANINGFUL.

We don't simply look for good wines, we look for wines that have a story. We select wines that have been made by families over generations, organic and sustainable wines, and wines that deliver the character of where they were born. We get to know the people that make these wines, so that we can better understand them and share their stories with you.

Their statement is backed up with an event

listing that features fun and thought-provoking themes, with headings such as, "Unusual Suspects: France vs. Italy," a seminar that dives into the lesser known varietals from those regions, or "Punch in the Face" which explores bold and powerful wines. Their events are quirky, but professional, engaging, and meaningful. They know exactly who they want to appeal to, and they don't hesitate to

be precise in their events. They also know how to communicate and appeal to the under-40 crowd, which you can see through their fantastically current and engaging social media presence.

Create Rich Content

Seven Degrees Wine, Beer & Spirits, in Edmonton, also boasts a very thoughtful online presence, in particular on their website blog, which is evidently written by someone with a passion for storytelling. The posts cover topics such as "Ways to Stay Healthy While Drinking Wine," "All About Orange Wine," and "What I Learned From Drinking 100 Gin and Tonics." The topics are mischievous and playful, but the content is rich, and although the posts appear to be targeted towards a younger crowd of consumers, they are also geared for those who care about more than price point, and who would consider "orange wine" to be something more than just a trend. They also host a Beer School and a Wine School, with creative themes such as "Pet Wines," which is a vegetarian four-course dinner paired with wines that all feature pets on the label, or "7 Degrees of Beer and Chocolate" which highlights the different ways chocolate and beer can intertwine.

Tap Employees' Expertise

You are not limited to a blog either, especially if you tap your employees' expertise. Juanita Roos, who co-owns Color de Vino, an independent wine and spirits store, writes the wine column for the Edmonton Journal. Backed by a WSET Diploma, as well as being a local business owner, Roos shares her passion for wine to a large audience, while promoting local products and quality, thoughtful producers. It's specific and it's personal, which is exactly what some millennials are looking for. Her writing for the local paper also helps bring awareness to her business.

It can seem overwhelming to keep up with a new generation of people as your customers age and grow, and come and go, but it doesn't have to be complicated. Millennials just want a meaningful experience, from a genuine human, and since they are on the cusp of becoming the largest demographic of people in the world, I would say they are worth the effort. So who are your millennials? 🍷



Liquor Thefts are on the Rise: What We Can Do

There are many opportunities and also some challenges that come with operating retail liquor stores in Alberta. One hazard, which is on the rise, is an increase in crimes of opportunity at liquor stores, a trend that's being seen in other provinces as well. With more blatant and unconcealed liquor thefts occurring in Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta Gaming, Liquor & Cannabis (AGLC) wants to remind retailers of some best practices that can help keep employees safe and minimize thefts.

As many retailers know, liquor is a sought-after commodity for thieves who consider it an easy target for shoplifting. Class D liquor store licensees have reported an increase of individuals or groups entering premises with large bags, filling them with product, and leaving without paying. These thefts have been linked to low-level organized crime groups, and the stolen liquor is either consumed or

resold on the black market. Times when store staff have attempted to interfere have resulted in threats and in some extreme cases, assault and injury.

There are steps we can all take to help minimize these concerning crimes and help keep retailers and staff safe. AGLC's Retail Liquor Store Handbook outlines a number of best practices and guidelines. Retailers know their stores best—which practices are in place and which ones could be implemented or improved upon.

For example, by regularly updating store security procedures, contacting local police to stay apprised of loss-prevention programs, considering local crime activity, and developing training and programs for staff, retailers can help ensure that staff are best positioned to handle any aggressive liquor thefts. These loss-prevention and security techniques will also help Class D licensees to stay informed and help prevent and reduce the crimes that are occurring.

Section 4.7 of the Retail Liquor Store Handbook also includes a number of security best practices and mitigation strategies to consider, including the use of video surveillance, security alarm systems, and deadbolt locks. Proactive mitigation strategies can help to best position retailers to deter crime and educate employees as to what action to take, or not take, if a crime is being committed.

AGLC continues to work with local law enforcement, the Alberta Liquor Store Association and liquor store licensees to develop solutions and to ensure open lines of communication on this important subject. We encourage licensees to report all liquor thefts to local law enforcement to combat and strategize against this type of crime. Licensees should be prepared to proceed with charges against all shoplifters. By working together and taking action, we can help prevent and reduce these crimes of opportunity.

WHAT'S Coming?

by Marina Lecian

Wine

Freakshow Zinfandel Dazzling Fire Mistress This 2017 Zinfandel spotlights the varietal's blazing red berry, cherry, and dark fruit with light pepper and spice notes. Medium-bodied with fine tannins, it has toasted oak hints and a lingering spice-laced finish. Released in September. 12x750ml \$21.50 whsl +816740

Villa Sandi Asolo Prosecco Superiore D.O.C.G. Brut has an intensely fruity aroma with clear hints of ripe golden apple. Fresh, slightly sweet, and soft to the palate, with a fruity, harmonious finish. Released in September. 6x750ml \$14.51 whsl +821928

Straccali Pinot Grigio is a bright pale yellow with golden-copper and slightly pink shades. Its bouquet has hints of fruit and flowers, and the palate is balanced with a pleasant finish. Released in September. 12x750ml \$9.99 whsl +818416

Beer

Off Axis Double IPA Double dry-hopped with Galaxy, Cashmere, and Cascade, this unfiltered IPA has floral and passionfruit notes with hints of lemon and lime. Released in October. 4x473ml \$11.72 whsl +823790

RTD

Valveran 20 Manzanas Ice Cider is a blend of 20 varieties of apples. The result is a clean, bright cider. It has aromas of dried apples, peaches, and citrus notes with hints of honey and citrus zest on the palate. Released in September. 12x375ml bottle whsl \$23.94 +808992

Twisted Shotz Chocolate Box has four new flavour variants of Twisted Shotz liqueurs only available in this 8-pack "Box of Chocolates". 2 units each of:

Mint Chocolate - white chocolate and peppermint

Chocolate Mousse - a chocolate on chocolate combo

Mocha Chocolate chocolate liqueur and coffee cream

Salted Caramel - rich, chocolate cream combined with a caramel mix

Released in September. 8x30ml pack \$13.07 whsl +820268

Spirits

Gin Rummy takes your holiday fruitcake spices and makes a tasty seasonal hot or cold spirit. Artisanal and hand-crafted, its flavour is reminiscent of spiced Christmas cake. Released in October. 6x750ml \$39.02 whsl +796399

Christmas Gin This newly redesigned holiday gin is flavoured with Frankincense and Myrrh and now also includes 24k edible gold. This seasonal spirit has a beautiful mouthfeel with ancient spice resins as well as a hint of lemon and balsamic and finishes off with flakes of 24k gold for a special take on a wintry snow globe scene. Releasing in November. 6x750ml \$41.50 +823736

NAMES IN THE NEWS

by Marina Lecian

New ALSA Members

ALSA welcomes the following new members:

BSW Salisbury, Sherwood Park

BSW Sherwood, Sherwood Park

Easy Liquor, Edmonton

Liquor Baron, Cochrane

Liquor Depot at Jagare Ridge, Edmonton

Liquor Lodge Connaught, Jasper

Nap Liquor Discounter, Cold Lake

New Happy Liquor Store, Red Deer

Rex Liquor, Calgary

Wine and Beyond, Lethbridge

Wine and Beyond, St Albert

Awards

2019 National Wine Awards of Canada

The WineAlign National Wine Awards of Canada, the country's largest competition of Canadian wines, is held annually in June. Over 1,815 wines from 259 wineries across 8 provinces entered the 2019 competition. Wines were entered from BC, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.

Congratulations to Alberta's Spirit Hills for winning a silver medal for their **2018 Yeahaa! Cowboy's Sangria**.

For a complete list of winners go to

www.winealign.com/awards/2019/07/31/2019-nwac-results

LIQUOR SALES TRENDS

SALES JUNE – AUGUST 2019 IN HL, WITH % CHANGE OVER 2018

159,945	→	Beer	-3.28
113,765	→	Wine	0.94
106,049	→	Coolers	12.10
22,229	→	Cider	-8.63
3,285	→	Gin	7.20
12,097	→	Rum	0.19
23,199	→	Vodka	-3.61
18,229	→	Whisky	1.96
3,231	→	Liqueur	2.11
1,853	→	Tequila	4.01

Source: Connect Logistics



DEALING WITH WORKERS' PSYCHOLOGICAL INJURIES

by WCB-Alberta, Introduction by Joyce Hayne

Traumatic onset psychological injury or stress can be personally devastating to workers.

Events could include: being a victim of a robbery or hostage-taking incident; witnessing the death or severe injury of a co-worker; or providing assistance to victims of severe physical trauma or fatalities. Traumatic incident may also include workload or work-related interpersonal incidents that are excessive and unusual in comparison to the pressures and tensions experienced in normal employment.

What you can Expect

When WCB receives information indicating a worker may have experienced a traumatic event at work and may have a psychological injury, WCB may first help start treatment (if necessary).

Next, they will proceed to review the information, ensuring a traumatic incident is confirmed in the course of employment, the psychological injury diagnosis has been confirmed, and there is a reasonable link between the two (cause and effect).

As every worker responds to a traumatic event differently, treatment needs will be diverse. However, most workers will begin counselling with a community psychologist, with any medication management provided by their family doctor. Some workers may be referred to a psychiatrist. In either case, injured workers may select their treatment provider.

If a worker requires more support, he/she may be referred for additional assessment and/or treatment. WCB-Alberta has developed an evidence-based care model to deal with reactions to traumatic events called the traumatic psychological injury (TPI) care model.

This model includes an interdisciplinary team approach to support for recovery and can include a psychologist, an occupational therapist for exposure therapy, and, if necessary, an exercise therapist or physical therapist.

An exercise or physical therapist may be recommended if there is a physical injury, or if a worker without a physical injury requires additional support establishing healthy routines.

How you can Help your Employee

Due to their nature, work-related psychological injuries require unique treatment methods and approaches. Awareness of and sensitivity to your employee's condition throughout the recovery process will enhance their likelihood of safely recovering and returning to work, while minimizing risks for regression or delayed recovery.

Psychological trauma affects everyone differently. What may cause one person to develop a psychological injury may not necessarily affect another person the same way.

Psychological injuries can include, but are not limited to, the following: anxiety disorders, acute stress reactions, PTSD, adjustment disorders, or depression.

Similarly, an effective treatment plan for one worker may not produce the same results in another worker.

How to Support your Employee as they Recover:

1. Find out what will help your employee feel supported.

Talk to your employee as soon as possible (in person, if appropriate) and let them know you are there for support. Listen openly to how they feel. Be reassuring and answer any questions they have. Direct them to your Human Resources department or WCB for questions about the claim process.

Establish a frequency and preferred method of contact that works for all of you. If you can, provide your employee choices that will help them take control over their environment (for example, when and where to meet, whether to fill out claim forms at the office or at home, who they choose to be their point of contact at work).



WORK-RELATED PSYCHOLOGICAL INJURIES REQUIRE UNIQUE
TREATMENT METHODS AND APPROACHES.

A celebratory graphic for 25 years. It features the number '25' in a large, stylized font, with 'YEARS' written below it. To the right of the text are two champagne flutes filled with bubbly liquid, clinking together. The top of the graphic is decorated with a shower of gold confetti. The entire graphic is enclosed in a thin red border.

Proud to support the Liquor Industry
and celebrate 25 years of privatization.



**CONNECT
LOGISTICS**
Alberta's liquor link.



2. Secure resources and information to assist your employee.

Provide your employee with information about your organization's sick leave policy and/or position on paying medical costs, in order to help plan for the financial impact of the situation.

3. Avoid discussing your perspective of the claim with your employee or the employee's co-workers.

Psychological injuries carry a false stigma suggesting personal weakness. Discussing your opinion of the claim or promoting discussion among co-workers can perpetuate the stigma. Discussions such as these can also damage the employer/employee relationship, which is a significant factor in a successful recovery and return to work.

4. Support treatment programming that involves exposure therapy (sometimes referred to as desensitization).

Worksite-based exposure therapy involves the gradual re-introduction of the employee to the feared object or location in order to help work through the anxiety it causes. Supported by a qualified clinician, it is one of the most effective treatment methods in achieving recovery and successful return-to-work outcomes.

5. Contact the assigned WCB adjudicator or case manager to receive regular updates.

Stay connected with the case manager/adjudicator to ensure you understand how you can help and how you should prepare to return your employee to work.

Return to Work

Consider the following to support your employee to prepare to return to work:

1. Participate in all return-to-work planning discussions/meetings with WCB to focus on a return to modified employment.

An occupational therapist will arrange a meeting with you, and, if appropriate, your employee to discuss ideas for modified duties. They will document the return-to-work plan for all involved.

SOME EMPLOYEES MAY NOT BE ABLE TO WORK IN THE SAME ENVIRONMENT OR PERFORM THE SAME DUTIES.

2. Offer work with modified hours and/or duties.

After a psychological injury, some employees have less stamina to cope with their job on a full-time basis. By offering modified hours, you help your employee have time to seek medical support for their symptoms, which may help decrease the probability of a recurrence.

Some employees may not be able to work in the same environment or perform the same duties. Modified duties can assist your employee to stay at work. Think about alternate work locations or duties to accommodate a safe and early return.



3. Prepare co-workers for the employee's return to work.

Many people don't know how to interact with a co-worker who is dealing with a psychological injury. Talk to the case manager or exposure occupational therapist about ways to help your employees manage this transition.

4. Follow-up with your employee after they return to work.

Pay attention to changes in work behaviour. For instance, if your employee was never late prior to the accident, but is now frequently late, they could be struggling with their injury. Other signs can include avoiding contact with people, absenteeism, sleep deprivation, or memory issues.

5. Know who to call in a crisis.

To manage psychological injuries effectively, your employee should be followed by a psychologist, a psychiatrist, and/or a family physician.

Available community resources, including family/friends, and your local community distress line numbers are all important numbers to have on hand. This is especially important once the employee is back at work.

Grow Profitability & Streamline Processes
It's easier than you think™

Connect with RH Hospitality
Solutions for liquor and cannabis
licensing advice.

RH Rebecca@rebeccahardin.ca | @rebeccaVhardin | 604.314.0176
www.rebeccahardin.ca

6. Help the employee be prepared with a contingency plan.

The anniversary of an accident can bring on the same feelings that occurred when the accident first happened. There can also be "trauma triggers."

Triggers can be diverse, such as people, places, images, sensory perception, incidents, or circumstances that remind your employee of their accident.

Understanding potential triggers can help you and your employee develop a contingency plan to help your employee deal with a difficult time.

More Information

Psychological disability management and programs:

www.wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/workers/WFS_Psychological_injuries.pdf

Information about modified work can be found at www.wcb.ab.ca under the *Return to Work* section>*Return to work planning*>*for employers*.

When in doubt, please call us.

Your WCB adjudicator or case manager is a great resource for helping you navigate a psychological injury claim and coordinating a safe return to work for your employee.

We care about your employee's well-being and will work with him/her, the treatment provider and you throughout the recovery process. 🍀

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CANNABIS-INFUSED BEVERAGES

by Danielle Leroux

Cannabis edibles, topicals, and concentrates will be legalized later this month in Canada. Cannabis-infused beverages have emerged as a major trend within Legalization 2.0 with beverage manufacturers jumping at the chance to partner with licensed producers and tap into this new market.

For instance, HEXO Corp and Molson Coors formed joint venture Truss and will offer everything from cannabis-infused water to a 'beer-like' product and hot beverages. Alcoholic beverage behemoth Constellation Brands invested \$5 billion for a 38% stake in Canopy Growth and plan to launch a line of cannabis-infused drinks and other products. Tilray partnered with Budweiser producer Anheuser-Busch InBev to research THC and CBD drinks in Canada, each company investing \$50 million in the venture.

New Products Hit Shelves in December

The amended regulations regarding the production and sale of Legalization 2.0 cannabis products come into force on October 17, 2019, but retailers and consumers won't see products online or in stores until December 16 and it will be a limited selection at best.

There are several reasons for the slow rollout. Federal licence holders must provide 60 days' notice to Health Canada informing them of new products coming to market. Provincial and territorial regulators (the sole distributors in every province except Saskatchewan and Manitoba) need time to issue product calls and source new products. Retailers also need time to purchase and obtain the products for sale.

3 Million New Consumers and \$2.7 Billion Market

Based on a 2019 survey, EY Canada and Lift & Co. predict Legalization 2.0 could bring in as many as 3 million new consumers. This new audience is not interested in or comfortable with traditional consumption methods and is drawn to more discreet and accessible ways to consume cannabis.

Deloitte Canada estimates the Canadian market for edibles and alternative cannabis products will be worth \$2.7 billion annually. Extract-based products and edibles account for \$1.6 billion of that number and cannabis-infused beverages represent \$529 million.

Cannabis Beverages Experience Slow Growth in the US

In the US, concentrates and edibles are seeing continual growth and market share gain. According to BDS Analytics, beverages make up a small, but growing, portion of sales: approximately 6% of sales to date with a growth rate of 15% year-over-year.

In 2018, the YTD tracked edible sales in Arizona, California, Colorado, and Oregon combined was \$612 million. BDS Analytics predicts total US edibles sales will reach \$3.4 billion in 2022 and beverages will account for \$374 million.

Despite these promising trends, the US market has not been without its challenges. Companies are unable to distribute nationally or effectively scale because of federal regulations.

Lisa Campbell, CEO of Lifford Cannabis Solutions and Co-Chair of Cannabis Beverage Producers Alliance, highlights other lessons Canada can learn from the US: "California has faced massive problems with dosage variability in its beverages," she says. "Retailers have learned the hard way—with THC leaching into can linings—that packaging can impact dosage. There have been many product recalls." Campbell notes that lab testing for cannabis food and beverages is also in its infancy making it difficult to get consistent results.

Challenges the Canadian Market will Face

Beyond the obstacles noted above, Canadian producers, manufacturers, and retailers will face a number of challenges. Under current regulations, you cannot consume a cannabis beverage in a bar or restaurant; instead the product must be purchased online or in-person from a licensed store and consumed at home. Yet this is clearly not what consumers want or what the market needs to thrive. According to Deloitte's 2019 report, "Both current (53%) and likely (47%) consumers see edibles as a product to be consumed socially among a small group of friends."

Campbell echoes those sentiments: "In all cultures around the world, adult beverages are used as social ritual and as a means to have fun and come together as a community," she says. "Legalization 2.0 brings a whole revolution of new products and new social rituals around them." Campbell is optimistic regulations may change in the future to allow the consumption of cannabis beverages on-premise.

When it comes to selling beverages, retailers will have to consider refrigeration, storage, and allocating space to maintain profitability. Establishing brand loyalty will also be difficult given marketing regulations. For example, Health Canada regulations prohibit a beverage alcohol company from displaying its logo or brand element on a cannabis beverage and labels cannot reference alcohol in any way.

Customer education and the role of the budtender will be very important to establish relationship with customers and to develop brand loyalty. Beverage companies will need to innovative, clearly articulate what is unique about their product, and continually gather consumer data.

Retailers must also consider how legalization 2.0 will impact their customer demographics. Millennial or younger consumers are generally more experienced cannabis consumers who already consume cannabis products. It is likely that novice or cannabis-curious consumers, often female and older, will be drawn to edibles and alternative products, especially baked goods, confectionery, and tea.

Beverage Trends

What products can Canadians actually expect to see as the beverage market develops?

In the US, cannabis-infused carbonated and non-carbonated drinks are most popular; however, BDS Analytics reports substantial growth in shots (+127%) and powdered mixes (+61%) categories in 2019. Over the past year, low-dose THC product sales and CBD beverage sales have also increased in the US by close to 70% and 75% respectively. BDS predicts continued massive growth for hemp or CBD beverages (+134%) and products specifically labelled as CBD (+1000%).

The types of cannabis beverages we may see in Canada include: drops, mixes, and elixirs, water, carbonated beverages, iced tea, lemonade, and fruit drinks, and tea is expected to be the most popular.

Deloitte's studies show 35% of likely cannabis consumers see cannabis-infused beverages as an alternative to alcohol. Campbell agrees that mocktails are on the rise. "We have already seen the rise of low ABV drinks or mocktails in the hospitality sector," she says. "Cannabis drinks are an extension of that and cannabis cocktails are a future trend."

Consumers will also look for product quality, safety, and potency when choosing a cannabis beverage.

Will these predictions for a multi-billion dollar industry come true? Industry must watch, wait, and adapt as products roll out and regulations shake out. ■

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SPIRIT *Spotlight*

by David Wolowidnyk

Scotch Casks

Every spirit producer is required to follow certain rules and regulations in their production to qualify their products into a category or classification. These regulations are often determined by and/or policed by a governing body of a region, country or category. In June 2019, the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) announced an amendment to the comprehensive, 66 page, Scotch Whisky Technical File. The SWA rarely makes any changes so industry expected this would be big news.

The June 2019 amendment states:

"The spirit must be matured in new oak casks and/or in oak casks, which have only been used to mature wine (still or fortified) and/or beer/jale and/or spirits with the exception of:

- *Wine, beer/jale or spirits produced from, or made with, stone fruits*
- *Beer/jale to which fruit, flavouring or sweetening has been added after fermentation*
- *Spirits to which fruit, flavouring or sweetening has been added after distillation*

And where such previous maturation is part of the traditional processes for those wines, beers/jales or spirits.

Regardless of the type of cask used, the resulting product must have the traditional colour, taste and aroma characteristics of Scotch Whisky."

Prior to June 2019 the Scotch Whisky Technical file stated:

"Most casks will previously have been used to mature other alcoholic beverages: some, for example, will have contained Sherry, and some will have contained American Bourbon Whiskey. Casks must be empty of their previous contents prior to being filled with Scotch whisky or with spirit destined to become Scotch whisky. The type of cask used for maturation will have been determined by the Chief Blender who is seeking a particular character for the final whisky."

"Some companies choose to "finish" their Scotch Whiskies, particularly their Single Malt Scotch Whiskies, to provide additional complexity to the spirit. This is carried out by further maturation in a different cask. The decision as to whether to "finish" a Scotch whisky or not depends on the character of the spirit the company's blender wants to achieve."

"This amendment provides clarity and some additional flexibility on the range of casks in which Scotch whisky can be matured," says SWA chief executive, Karen Betts. "The change is consistent with Scotch whisky's heritage and traditions, and strengthens our foundations into the future."

"The amendment is consistent with the continued use of all those categories of casks where there is evidence of longstanding traditional use in the industry," explains the SWA's director of legal affairs, Alan Park. "It will also create more flexibility, particularly in the range of spirits casks which can be used, subject to a number of safeguards which protect the reputation of Scotch whisky."

Although the amendment certainly provides clarity, it does not provide any additional flexibility with casks as touted by the SWA. Previously, the Scotch Whisky Technical File was vague and did not forbid the use



of specific casks and the SWA only occasionally discouraged some distillers from using them, or advised them to use barrels with "sufficient evidence of traditional use" such as ex-sherry or ex-bourbon casks.

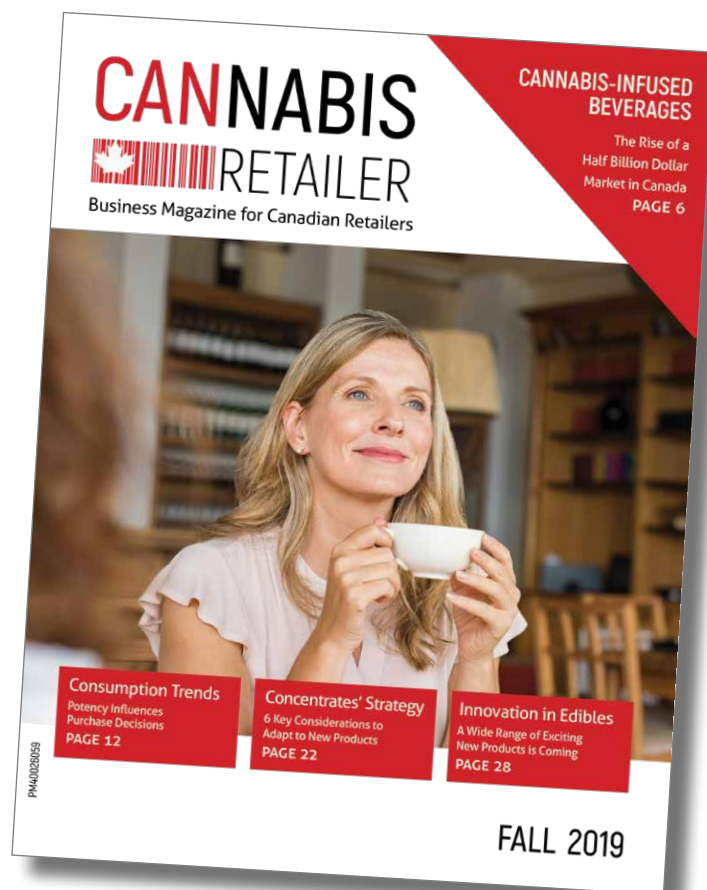
It appears that this clarification legitimizes some long-running practices in Scotch whisky production, rather than creating new options for distillers. I reviewed my Scotch collection and decided to pour myself a dram of Limited Edition bottle 416/620 "The Arran Malt finished in a Calvados Cask" released 03/02/05. That was followed by another dram, this time a Limited Edition bottle 242/486 Arran Malt finished in a Cognac Cask released 06/04/05. I noted that sitting beside the common ex-Bourbon and ex-Sherry cask representations, there also exists evidence of Scotch from Madeira cask, Cider cask, Sassicaia cask, Rum cask, and even Sauterne Cask. Some of these are from known Scotch houses and others from independent bottlers who acquire casks and further mature them, often in interesting, non-traditional casks.

We can help our customers celebrate all the wonderful differences that Scotch has in its spectrum, especially for the interesting casks used by rogue distillers and independent bottlers. You should share the subtle nuances of finishing casks that are gently weaved into the fabric of every bottle of Scotch.

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