

Style Branding For Your Custom Tap Handles

by Ben Weston, Hoptown Handles

Today's craft beverage consumer is becoming increasingly savvy and well-versed in the different styles/flavors or beer, cider, kombucha, etc. They are therefore becoming less and less likely to pick a beer based on the brewery name alone. Make sure you have a plan in place to differentiate between your different styles or flavors on your custom tap handle. Here's a quick breakdown of the most common ways of doing this along with the pros and cons of each.



Permanent Printing directly on your custom tap handle handle

- Pros - No need to keep track of stickers, magnets, or other consumables; No additional costs beyond the handle price.
- Cons - If you discontinue that style/flavor, you have handles you can't use anymore.

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Decals

- Pros - Low cost; Can be used with any of our standard (stock) handles; Removable; Durable; Quick turnaround; Low minimums.
- Cons - Need to manage decal stock; Reliance on bars/restaurants/distributors to ensure that decal gets placed on handle each time with accurate alignment.

Chalkboard/Whiteboard

- Pros - Low cost; Can be done on our standard (stock) handles; No need to order new cards for each flavor.
- Cons - Easily smudged by handling; Not consistent with other branding; Reliance on the bar/restaurant/distributor to actually write the name on the handle.

Magnet

- Pros - Clean looking, durable, magnets are reusable and easily stored.
- Cons - Need to order magnets in bulk (min. 50 per flavor); Higher cost per handle due to added materials/labor (Premium Custom Handles only); Priced higher than decals.

Slide-in Card

- Pros - Low cost to produce cards; Easy to swap out; No alignment issues.
- Cons - Higher cost to produce handle; Cards aren't durable unless laminated.

Custom Removable Topper

- Pros - Looks like a permanent fixture on the handle.
- Cons - Very expensive and require lengthy timelines to produce new flavors and placards; Logistical challenge to manage placards and toppers.

[Look at some more examples of each.](#)



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Ben Weston is the founder and Head Honcho at Hoptown Handles, an American manufacturer of high quality, durable custom tap handles. He is also the co-founder and Director of Direction at SeaThirst Creative, a design firm that specializes in working with craft breweries of all sizes.