

Accounting: Taking Action

by Mary Brettmann, Beverage Business Builders

Moving right along! You have put your plans in place and now it's time to act. You'll want to ask yourself questions such as, how should we manage the taproom? What should our website provide? What's our Strategic Vision?

Taproom (Tasting Room) Management

Proper taproom management is the difference between sort of making money and making a lot of money. The choice of a proper point-of-sale system is the difference between just documenting sales receipts and truly running the business.

- **Point-of-Sale System (POS) and setup.** The choice of a POS system is critical to establishing good data. Remember, you cannot measure what you don't manage.
- **Merchandise.** Believe it or not, merchandise can be a money-maker.
- **Webstore.** Some of your fans will not be local. Creating a good website gets the brand out to more people in different markets quicker.
- **Food.** The decision to offer food is a big one and should not be taken lightly.

Website

Does your website have a user-friendly e-commerce system? Some of your fans will live outside of the area and the more people wearing your branded merchandise, the better. Ensure that your brand shines through on your website. Spending time and effort on a good website will yield great dividends. In addition, invest in a reputable webmaster; the correct setup, maintenance and security measures will save thousands down the line. Last but not least, include a beer finder. There should be a way on your website for your fans to find where they can purchase the beer.

Forecasting

How do you know that you have enough for payroll next month, next quarter, next year? Forecasting is a complex monster, but it is critical to the long-term success of the company. You need to understand the working capital drivers of the business. Going to sleep at night knowing that you understand what's going on is very powerful.

- **Start Now.** Don't worry if it's not perfect. You need to understand your future. Forecasting is like a muscle: The more you use it, the stronger it will get.

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- **Budgets are important.** Create a budget for next year. It's worth the time and effort. Share it with everyone. That way everyone will be singing the same tune, and they will know what they are responsible for.
- **Forecasts work together.** Someone should be comparing the budget against the sales forecast. If you don't have anyone to do the work, find someone now.

Strategic Visioning

What's next? Are you planning to add different businesses onto the main platform? Is the expansion external (second location) or internal (new accounting system)? Walk through your options and cost/benefits of those options.

- **Bigger Isn't Always Better.** Think long and hard before you make an expansion plan. The secret is to make sure that they are well planned.
- **Embrace Expansion.** Once you decide to take on an expansion (either external or internal), look at all the places in the company that will be affected and help everyone adjust to the change.

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Mary Brettmann is an accounting professional with over 25 years of corporate experience. By combining corporate best practices with entrepreneurial spirit, Mary develops efficient, profitable solutions for her clients and guides their decisions with practical advice and clear financial metrics. Mary is an expert in financial and operational consulting for breweries and is President of [Beverage Business Builders](#), her company that guides breweries through any stage of their lifecycle: startup, established local, or expanding.