

Your Tap Room: The 30 Second Conversation

By Andrew Coplon, Secret Hopper

Engagement is an essential factor in maximizing your guest experience. Staff have a greater opportunity to build this relationship during slower times; however, even during the busiest shifts, a bartender or server can create a memorable connection with your guests. Here is a formula to maximize engagement during these times.

The first part of your 30 Second Conversation begins with your **greeting**. This doesn't have to be fancy, just a simple, "Hi, I'm Andrew. Welcome to Andrew's Brewery." When staff introduce themselves, guests tip 13.6 percent more and there is basis for connection. It also doesn't hurt to smile. Don't be distant and indifferent, be likeable.

It is your job to acknowledge your guests. Welcome guests upon entering and/or approaching your bar. If you miss this opportunity to create an interaction, you have already reduced your effectiveness. **Begin by being approachable and welcoming.**

Statistically, when a brewery employee greets a guest in this manner, that guest will recommend, and return based on that experience 94.9 percent of the time. When a brewery employee does not begin the experience with a smile, "hello," or other welcoming gesture, that guest will only recommend/return 75.9 percent of the time. This is a difference of 19 percent. A simple greeting let's your guests know that you're glad they decided to drink with you. It matters.

Second, **be friendly**. At this moment, that guest is all that matters. These few seconds should include phrases such as, "How's your day going?" "Have you visited before?" and "What a beautiful evening, glad you came to visit." You will sometimes feel like a broken record as you hold this same conversation countless times throughout the day. However, that doesn't matter during each interaction. Look at each guest as an opportunity to fine tune your conversation skills. Get personal and create an instant connection.

Third, **offer direction**. This can include, "What's your favorite style of beer?" "Looking for anything in particular?" "Want to start with a flight?" This will help you better serve them during this encounter, but also help you better assist them on future visits. Everyone like to be remembered. Retain everything you learn from these brief questions.

The fourth component to this conversation is the **delivery**. Announce to your guest what you are serving. Recite not only the name, but also the style. "Here's your Secret Hoperation, our limited addition Belgian IPA." If serving a flight, let your guest know the order in which their selections have been arranged. "Here's your flight. It goes left to right, starting with our lager, IPA, Belgian dubbel, then stout." This is a short moment of education. For many guests, this could be their first experience at your brewery. Make sure they know what they're drinking.

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Your final element to this 30 Second Conversation is the **finish**. This should be where you wish the guest well. During this portion, include phrases such as, “Enjoy your pint. Thanks again.” “Thanks for coming to visit.” “Come see me when you need another. Cheers!” Let the guest know you value their purchase. Never, ever forgot this.

The data shows that when a guest receives this goodbye, that guest will recommend and return based on that experience 95.4 percent of the time. A guest who does not receive a sincere thank you, will only recommend/return 70.7 percent of the time. This is a 24.7 percent difference. The “thank you” is one of the final moments of your guests’ experience and maximizing it is extremely beneficial in creating a positive memory.

Craft beer is no longer just about great beer. It’s about creating relationships and memories. Taprooms are not just a place to enjoy a pint, but a place where communities gather. You aren’t just selling beer, you’re selling experiences, and **the need to create unique, memorable experiences is a must**. The **30 Second Conversation** is a simple way to build a connection with your guests. While 30 seconds is a very quick interaction, it is possible to achieve the above goals. If time permits, any extension of any step adds more value. Make them feel welcomed, engaged, and appreciated. The moment you freeze and silence takes over, your power to be a craft beer tour guide disappears. It is your job to be an ambassador for your brewery.

This format can be easily applied in any industry to build a quick, but memorable, connection with your customers. Do you part in continuing to help the craft beer industry maximize our reputation for putting out world class experiences. A simple greeting, friendly conversation, guidance through ordering, educational delivery, and thank you.



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