



## Think Bigger: Avoid the Incremental Mind-Set

By **Bill Marvin**

We have a tendency to think incrementally. That is, we project what we want to do in a future period by using a prior period as a base. So we think in terms of a 10 or 20 percent sales increase, but is that number really relevant? Does it serve us? I think not.

The problem is you can achieve an incremental sales increase by continuing to do what you've always done with just a bit more intensity. The ease of this plan is comforting, but it rarely produces spectacular results. It certainly isn't likely to produce any major breakthroughs. To your staff, 10 percent probably just sounds like more work.


What would happen if, instead of projecting a 10 percent increase for next year, you committed to DOUBLE your volume?

For one thing, you would start thinking in a very different way. You would start to look at how you're spending your time and eliminate or delegate activities that wouldn't move you toward a 200 percent increase. Some

staff members would run away screaming, but I'll bet more of them would be excited by the challenge and want to be a part of it.

You would have to think much larger, be more aggressive and make seriously significant commitments. You would have to ask more questions, listen to more people and seek to understand suggestions more clearly. You would have to create a very rigid support system to keep yourself on track. And you would have to implement all kinds of new revenue-generating programs.

During this process, the whole operation would pull together, become more focused and everyone would approach their work in a very different way. At the end of the year, you may or may not have a 200 percent increase, but I bet you would do a lot better than 10 percent!

It's your business, your life... and your choice. 

## Back to School: Make Sales This Season


Some parents will celebrate – and some will cry – but all will prepare for the back-to-school season. Here are a few ideas for how you can maximize sales in your operation during this time:

- **"I've been accepted!"** Run a promotion where you invite customers to bring in their acceptance letters to colleges and offer a discount for the family to celebrate. You can even extend this marketing idea to offer catering discounts for "going away" parties or free appetizers to large parties.

- **Go local.** If you have a college near you, market to parents a "Feed Me" fund. For the punch card of 10 paid meals (courtesy of Mom and Dad), you provide one free. You'll gain new customers – and their friends – while easing Mom's worry that Junior will eat right while he's gone. Mar-


ket to these parents by purchasing a mailing list (often available at universities) or contacting the school's promotions department. Often there are opportunities to insert ads in outgoing materials or sponsor (and even cater!) parent-student orientation events.

- **Be kind.** Back to school supplies are a drain on many parents' budgets. Offer discounts — free appetizer or drink or 25 percent off the entire check — for parents or students who bring in the receipts for their school supplies.

- **Set up signage.** Promote your business at colleges and universities near you as well as high schools. Offer job interviews and lunch discounts. You'll attract new customers – and they may become regulars if they're new to town – and you may even gain new employees. 

## Put It To Work

For most operators, the biggest hindrance to increased bottled wine sales is the inexperienced server too intimidated to make suggestions from the wine list. Break the mystique by teaching your servers the basics of wine and how to make simple, low-pressure suggestions that would complement the guests' meals.

Wine sales training will be welcome by all your servers once you explain that selling just one bottle to every fourth four-top per shift could increase their tips by \$2,000 this year. It also saves the server time, since he or she won't need to run back and forth for additional wines by the glass. Be sure to cover food pairing (including desserts) and bottle opening to boost your servers' confidence. 

*Excerpted from **Pour It On: 52 Ways to Maximize Bar Profits**, Red Book Solutions. Call 800-207-8140 to order.*

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