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» ABLE BC INDUSTRY UPDATE

by Jeff Guignard



Quarterly Publication for the
Alliance of Beverage Licensees

2nd floor 948 Howe Street, Vancouver, BC V6Z 1N9
T 604-688-5560 F 604-688-8560
Toll free 1-800-663-4883
info@ablebc.ca www.ablebc.ca @ABLEBC

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Sales Marina Lecian
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If you're reading this, you probably already know first-hand the economic devastation this pandemic has caused BC's hospitality and liquor industries. The recent travel restrictions and "Circuit Breaker" Public Health Order banning indoor dining have further injured BC's beleaguered hospitality industry. Since the current PHO was introduced:

- 99% of pubs, bars, and restaurants have reported declines in revenue.
- Over 85% report revenue has declined by more than 25% during this period.
- More than half of industry report revenue has declined between 50-100%.
- Two-thirds of industry have reduced staff hours, and over half have laid off staff—impacting over 120,000 workers.

This is on top of the already overwhelming impacts of prior Public Health Orders, which has led to shocking declines in revenue, reduced staff hours (or layoffs), and permanent or indefinite closures of nearly 25% of industry. By this point in the pandemic, the vast majority of survey respondents are open only because they have exhausted supports such as provincial grants and the federal wage and rent subsidies.

While there is light at the end of the tunnel—government anticipates having enough vaccine for all British Columbians by June—I know that's small comfort to businesses that are currently on the brink. We know the pain you're feeling, and are doing everything possible to support you during this ongoing crisis.

Our priority over the past several weeks has been to secure sufficient financial support for you to make it through until the current orders expire so we can begin the work of recovering. Programs like the Circuit Breaker Grants, expanded eligibility for the Small Business Recovery Grants, and extension of federal supports are all a direct result of that work.

Rest assured we will keep pushing in the days ahead.

Vaccine Priority

Our LRS and LP members have asked why their workers are not receiving priority access to vaccines. The logic of protecting our industry's essential frontline workers is straightforward and persuasive: about two million British Columbians visit a private or government liquor store every week, and 3.5 million access a pub, restaurant, café, or other hospitality business every single day. Protecting our industry's 190,000 workers would go a long way toward increasing public safety.

Unfortunately, **Dr. Henry** has confirmed there simply isn't enough vaccine available in BC to

consider vaccinating by sectors. The good news though is that officials expect we are weeks away from having enough vaccine available to offer every British Columbian at least their first dose. In the meantime, our industry's COVID safety protocols continue to be our best defence against viral spread.

Anti-maskers

On top of everything else, we've heard increasing reports of challenging interactions with customers who refuse to wear a mask due to a self-declared exemption. Some customers have even threatened legal action if you do not honour their exemption by allowing them into your business.

To be clear: you are not obliged to confirm a customer's alleged mask exemption. You are also not required to allow them into your LRS or LP business without wearing a mask, given that your government-mandated COVID Safety Plan requires patrons to wear masks. There is also no legal basis for arguing that denying service to anyone not wearing a mask is either discriminatory or a violation of human rights.

To help avoid conflicts, we recommend making reasonable accommodation to serve your customers (i.e. offering take-out, roadside pick-up, etc.), but remaining clear that masks are required in accordance with current Provincial Health Orders. If you are encountering these challenging customers, do not hesitate to reach out to me directly.

You may also wish to download our guide to "Responding to Difficult Guest Situations during a Pandemic," available on ablebc.ca/covid-19-resources.

Policy Progress Amid a Pandemic

While **ABLE BC** remains deeply involved in advocating for urgent financial support for our hardest hit industry, we have also been working on short-and-long-term policy solutions to support you. For example, we have already secured permanent wholesale pricing for hospitality licensees, the ability to sell alcohol with take-out and delivery meals, as well as expedited and more flexible patio rules.

In the months ahead, we will continue advocating for licensee-to-licensee sales, sale of cocktails to go for hospitality licensees, an extension of the moratorium on new LRS licenses, and an extended cap on third party liquor and food delivery fees. We will keep you apprised of our progress during our Monthly Q&A **Zoom** calls, hosted at 10 a.m. on the last Thursday of every month. I hope you can make it.

As always, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me at jeff@ablebc.ca. **P**

Wholesale Sales: October – December 2020

	Litres	increase/decrease over previous quarter	increase/decrease over previous year
Beer - BC Commercial	29,764,750	- 23.5%	- 10.2%
Beer - BC Micro Brew	6,591,706	- 21.7%	- 0.8%
Beer - BC Regional	11,056,950	- 17.3%	- 5.3%
Beer – Import	6,176,714	- 41.0%	- 33.6%
Cider - Domestic & Import	3,600,972	- 37.2%	- 4.8%
Coolers	11,603,790	- 50.1%	+ 32.2%
Gin	490,804	- 11.5%	+ 6.8%
Rum	1,285,161	+ 36.6%	+ 7.3%
Tequila	250,908	- 30.5%	- 2.0%
Vodka	2,477,541	- 4.3%	- 0.1%
Whiskey	2,389,765	+ 37.5%	+ 7.0%
Wine – BC	11,312,724	- 3.8%	+ 1.9%
Wine – Canadian	358,093	+ 31.0%	+ 15.2%
Wine – USA	2,316,012	+ 35.6%	+ 5.9%
Wine Total	22,090,054	+ 5.3%	+ 2.1%

Hospitality Sales - October - December 2020

	Litres	increase/decrease over previous quarter	increase/decrease over previous year
Beer - BC Commercial	2,861,126	- 22.0%	- 51.3%
Beer - BC Micro Brew	1,427,566	- 28.8%	- 44.1%
Beer - BC Regional	1,444,077	- 31.3%	- 52.0%
Beer – Import	644,196	- 44.7%	- 69.0%
Cider - Domestic & Import	231,429	- 46.0%	- 56.6%
Coolers	45,496	- 62.1%	- 44.2%
Gin	33,765	- 32.6%	- 60.5%
Rum	40,997	- 34.7%	- 55.0%
Tequila	43,818	- 43.0%	- 51.7%
Vodka	122,123	- 31.5%	- 53.8%
Whiskey	67,288	- 5.3%	- 56.4%
Wine – BC	686,102	- 22.4%	- 54.4%
Wine – Canadian	9,479	- 52.2%	- 51.6%
Wine – USA	99,153	+ 3.0%	- 49.3%
Wine Total	1,238,230	- 17.3%	- 52.0%

An interesting trend that emerged in wholesale was the increase in sales of rum, particularly over the previous quarter. Not surprisingly, spiced rum was big in the build up to Christmas, but amber, dark and flavoured all reported increases too.

Tequila, however, saw declines after a long run of strong increases each quarter.

Coolers declined in popularity over the cooler months but spirit-based coolers still showed a strong increase from the previous year.



MAKING F&B DELIVERY PROFITABLE

BY DAVID HOPKINS

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the growing market segment of food delivery to the forefront of operators' attention. With various forms of lockdowns in place across the country, and people concerned about health and safety, delivery became an excellent option for consumers who wanted to outsource cooking while supporting their local establishments. Many pubs that never considered delivery before, even high-end operations, pivoted to this new style of service to survive.

Even pre-COVID, food delivery was on the rise, and third-party providers had become a mainstay of consumers' options. No longer was ordering-in limited to just pizza or Thai food. Now, pretty much anything a consumer could want is available through an app on your phone.

Providing delivery through most of these apps is not cheap; the major players charge upwards of 30% of sales revenue as a fee to the restaurant. Based on this, many operators make the mistake of thinking that it doesn't make any sense to do delivery, that 30% is too much to pay with such tight profit margins in the industry, to begin with. But for more operations, that is incorrect thinking—offering delivery through third-party services is an absolute must to remain competitive in today's foodservice environment. While the service fees are significant, there are two other important considerations to take into account.

Firstly, the profitability on delivery is better than you think because it is incremental revenue. Your profit in a pub on incremental revenue is not equal to your entire operation's profit. You may be making 15% profit on your sales overall, but your incremental revenue profit is actually 50% of revenue. That is because the majority of your expenses are already paid for.

With incremental revenue, your only costs are the product cost, some marginal labour (but not typical labour as your kitchen is already staffed and operating—if you do a single takeout order, you are not scheduling any additional labour) and a few other small expenses such as takeout supplies, etc. Your profitability on an incremental \$100,000 in revenue might actually look like this:

	Incremental Revenue	
SALES REVENUE	\$100,000	100.0%
Product Cost	\$32,000	32.0%
Labour Cost	\$10,000	10.0%
Paper/Takeout Supplies	\$ 2,500	2.5%
Credit Card Commissions	\$ 2,200	2.2%
Repairs and Maintenance	\$ 1,000	1.0%
Promotions	\$ 1,400	1.4%
PROFIT	\$50,900	50.9%

So even factoring in the high delivery fees from third-party providers, that still leaves you with 20% profitability on that incremental revenue.

The second consideration is consumer buying habits. Delivery sales for most operations won't cannibalize eat-in sales. Generally, people aren't debating between ordering in from your pub or coming for dine-in on any given night—they will have already determined that, so it's just a decision of whether to order from you or from somewhere else. So, if you do not "win" a consumer's delivery order, it is completely lost revenue for you (and lost profit).

Based on this, it definitely makes sense for most foodservice operations to offer delivery. But the overall concept of delivery still doesn't help the industry. While it is logical for an individual operator, the concept of delivery and third-party fees, on the whole, is "stealing" profits away from the pub.

More and more, people are ordering delivery for convenience. And while operators still make money off of that, an operator would much rather have guests come into the pub, which would result in much more incremental profit. So how do foodservice operators make this work for themselves? How do we still service this growing trend and keep our overall operation profitable?

Here are a couple of things to consider to make this work for you:

First, charge more for delivery items to offset the delivery fees. There is no rule that you need the same prices for delivery as for eat-in items.

Your prices still need to be competitive with similar concepts on delivery platforms, however, make it more worth your while if you can. You will probably find that many of your competitors are doing the same, and you will also probably find that consumers don't mind paying a bit more for the convenience of ordering in. You may not recoup all of the delivery fee, but certainly recapturing even one-third of it would make a significant impact on profitability.

Second, utilize alcohol to your advantage. Recent rulings have allowed BC operators to sell alcohol directly to consumers with delivery orders, even once COVID is behind us. And with the new wholesale liquor pricing

DELIVERY SALES FOR MOST OPERATIONS WON'T CANNIBALIZE EAT-IN SALES.

in place as well, this could give you a competitive advantage over other operations (and provide some more revenue and profitability versus an "alcohol-free" order).

Third, make sure that you put as much care into delivery as you do into your entire operation. Delivery is still all about the guest experience and your value proposition. While you can't control the service that the third-party companies are providing, you can control the dining experience: the quality of the food, the temperature of the food, the presentation, etc. A poor guest delivery experience reflects poorly on your brand and can affect not only future delivery orders but eat-in visits as well. Make sure that every guest's dining experience is the best it can be. Only include items on your delivery menus that you know are going to "travel" well. Also, put care and consideration into the guest experience when they receive the food—how it is packaged, the containers that you use, etc.

All in all, delivery is here to stay. It may not be like it has been during COVID, but certainly in a bigger capacity than pre-COVID. It is essential that you incorporate it into your operation's strategy and profit model to continue to maximize your overall profitability. **P**

David Hopkins, President of The Fifteen Group, is a hospitality financial expert specializing in menu engineering and systems and procedures to increase profitability.



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DRIVING TRAFFIC THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

BY LEEANN FROESE

Social media is here to stay as a legitimate part of your marketing agenda, but implementing social media can be very much like grocery shopping with no list if you don't know where to start. Using social media for your business requires focus and a plan.

Start with your customer. Every outward communication you do, regardless of how you communicate, needs to be customer centric. Start by giving yourself an informal social media audit. Look at each of your social media platforms. Which ones get you the most engagement? This doesn't necessarily mean the most followers or likes, but ones where people converse with you and give you real-time feedback. Which platforms align the best with your target demographic? Those are the ones you should be focusing on for your business.

You need to get to know your audience and consistently engage with your followers. Know what networks they use and meet them there. (If they are online at 7pm, be online then too.)

To be clear: this is not a how-to article about how to specifically use any of these networks, but rather how to approach them from a strategic point of view. And social media is not the only solution; rather it is one tool in your toolbox that is part of your integrated marketing plan. Social engagement is meant to complement your use of traditional public relations and all that you do to advertise and market yourself on paid media.

Know Your Goals

If you are looking for brand awareness and wish to drive traffic to a physical location, social media can go a long way for you. You can build a community that interacts with your posts, the products you carry, and the updates you share. It is a great tool to get instant feedback on a

project you might be implementing, whether it be a new menu item or a special promotion at the point-of-sale.

If you are looking for direct sales, social media may not be the best channel because you can't sell liquor directly on social platforms. You'll instead be able to drive users to your website, but it can be tricky to track and measure if a customer bought a product specifically because of a post on social media.

Get Personal

One of the most important things that you need to know about using social networks and putting your best foot forward on behalf of your brand is that it takes a person. It's about honest engagement, meaning not using a one-way broadcast method of communication (the old way) but rather a one-to-one dialogue, where a real human is there to respond and reply (today's way).

Provide Funding

You also need to fund social as part of your marketing plan. The cost of the networks is incidental (until you get into advertising on them), but it's important to note that the person who will run your social media is the cost of a real person's time. Put a line item in your marketing budget just like you would for advertising, signage, or events.

Here are some ideas to raise your profile and drive sales using social:

- First, make sure you have excellent photos—you want to stop people from scrolling too fast.
- Use multiple platforms. Find out what platform your audience uses the most and dive into this, but don't forget to post on other channels. You need a well-rounded social media landscape to reach all your potential customers. Depending on your neighbour-

hood and demographics, your target customer might be millennials or Baby Boomers, and they may not frequent the same platform, so you have different messaging on each platform.

- Ask your audience what they want. For example, post Instagram stories with a poll asking what new items they'd like to see offered, or what new drinks they want featured on the menu. Use the poll feature on Instagram and ask, "Do you want to see this product in our store or this product?" 'This or that' stories always do well, and are helpful when getting to know your social audience. Your followers will engage with your content while you are learning their preferences. If you feature an item they chose, then you can re-engage and tag those people who voted.
- Showcase your new menu items/products and link to your online store.
- Showcase any deals or special pricing.
- Offer a deal for your followers with a discount code or downloadable coupon.
- Repurpose Google reviews and other praise as posts. Give people the reasons to choose you.
- Get creative by creating an Instagram Reel or Tik Tok that highlights what you want to promote in a fun way. Get into the app and use stickers and guides. Using all parts of social platforms like Instagram will also help you increase your visibility, as its algorithm favours those that use their newest features.
- Share posts and content from your suppliers and customers.
- Try using the 'live' feature to talk to some of your suppliers; for example: interview the distiller who makes your best-selling vodka.
- Show your on-site experience and get people excited about visiting:
 - o Do you offer a girls' night discount on Mondays? Show this through your platforms.
 - o Do you offer a COVID-friendly environment? Show those

coming to your store enjoying your offerings in a COVID-friendly way. Reassure your followers that you have a safe and friendly place that follows health orders.

- Offer flash giveaways. Gain followers and help your reputation by garnering comments, likes, and saves. For example, offer a chance to win a prize or a gift card by following, liking, and saving one of your posts on Instagram, or post an image to your story and use a certain hashtag to be entered. Be careful not to offer too many giveaways, and know the laws surrounding giveaways and alcohol. It is illegal to give away alcohol online, but you can get around this by offering a "gift basket" prize with other swag items included.
- Work with influencers
 - o For new businesses, a nano-influencer may be the way to go, especially nano-influencers who reside around the establishment. Nano-influencers are your everyday social media users, with anywhere from 100 to 10,000 followers. They aren't professional "influencers" in any way, but they are thought leaders with small but loyal followings that can help persuade other users to come to your business. You can often work with these individuals by offering gift cards in exchange for social promotion, but this content must always be disclosed by them as "gifted" or as dvertorial.
 - o Working with an influencer on a giveaway could help drive followers from their account over to you, and you may get some new customers out of it. People trust their favourite influencers and they're always looking for recommendations.

Engaging with your social audiences will allow you to broaden your awareness. Word-of-mouth is a useful tool, and the more people that know about your business, the higher the chances that more people will visit your website or walk through the door. P

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INSPIRING CONFIDENCE

BY JOANNE SASVARI

Photos Courtesy of The Black Bear Neighbourhood Pub

It was just a few hours after the provincial government shut down indoor dining that **Justin Reid** snapped. “Out of pure selfish frustration” over the latest pandemic pivot to hit his year-old restaurant, the owner of **Charley Victoria’s All Day Après** allowed a crowd of young people to hold a party. Not long after, someone posted video of guests dancing on tabletops, swigging beer, hugging and, needless to say, not wearing masks. The blatant violation of COVID-19 policy got the **Big White Ski Resort** restaurant closed.

“The entire management team [is] absolutely disgusted, appalled, embarrassed,” **Michael Ballingall**, senior vice-president at Big White, told **CBC News**. Meanwhile a shamefaced Reid wrote on **Facebook**, “My decision to let [this] happen was wrong.”

Whether the episode actually spread COVID-19 around the resort community remains to be seen at press time. But what it does spread is the kind of distrust, fear, and uncertainty that has kept so many consumers at home since the pandemic was declared over a year ago.

So what is a responsible publican to do to counter bad publicity like this? It may not feel like it, but until recently BC has been in an enviable

situation compared to other jurisdictions. Aside from the recent closure and the first few weeks of the pandemic in 2020, pubs and restaurants have been able to stay open, while those in places like Toronto, Paris, and New York have been forced to close again and again. At the same time, and in addition to federal initiatives like the wage subsidy, the provincial government has enacted a number of changes to help the

hospitality industry, among them introducing wholesale pricing on liquor and allowing alcohol to be sold with takeout meals.

In return, pubs and restaurants have been careful to follow the guidelines for opening, even when they change on a dime. And these, more than anything, are the reassurance customers need.

IT'S ESSENTIAL TO RESPOND TO CRITICISM IMMEDIATELY AND TRANSPARENTLY...

Best Practices

Take **The Black Bear Neighbourhood Pub** in North Vancouver's Lynn Valley. The rules are posted on the door. Step inside and there's hand sanitizer right there. The masked server takes a name and phone number for contact tracing, and casually chats about the rules. Tables are spread out and separated by plexiglass. Up above, ceiling fans keep

the air moving. Tables are restricted to small groups. Even the regular old timers, so familiar to almost every pub, are separated by dividers, exchanging wry banter through panels of plastic.

It makes a guest feel as safe as it's possible to be in these uncertain times. "We are doing all we can to follow the PHO and our internal standards go above and beyond the requirements mandated," says **Grant Dawson**, the pub's general manager. "It has been a very challenging and difficult year and this last round of orders from the province has been doubly difficult, but we are doing our best to maintain and serve guests—be it through the limited sit-down dining on either our outdoor patio, which accommodates 24 people, or on our verandah, which is even more limited at 16 seats. We pray for nice sunny weather every day."

He adds, "All in all we will weather this storm and are not about to give up. We are very fortunate to have an extremely loyal community guest base that continually goes above and beyond to support us."

Dealing with Public Opinion

But sometimes it's the guests who are the problem. Almost every server has dealt with customers who refuse to wear masks or stay in their seats, guests who are rude and abusive, guests who lose their judgment after a few pints.

This, apparently was at the root of the outbreak at a Port Moody pub earlier this year, when an asymptomatic guest insisted on getting up and mingling during a socially distanced trivia night. The resulting outbreak was eventually linked to 300 cases and affected a day care and other workplaces. Perhaps worse, though, was the condemnation through social media: "You should be ashamed!" one person wrote on Facebook. "Absolutely appalling to be so careless," said another. "Your patrons can only act how you allow."

Judgment these days is swift and merciless. It's essential to respond to criticism immediately and transparently, to apologize when necessary and not just to fix the root problems, but to be seen to have done so.



Adapting to New PHOs

True, some of the new rules can be so vaguely worded as to cause confusion. And when Provincial Health Officer **Dr. Bonnie Henry** issues new orders, they can come down with just hours' notice, as they did at New Year's Eve and again on March 29. That doesn't allow for much time to change practices, or for customers to catch up when they do. That's why **Jeff Guignard**, executive director of **ABLE BC**, works so closely with the government to define the protocols and translate them to members. After the trivia night outbreak, for instance, he realized that because the word "trivia" isn't mentioned in the kinds of gatherings

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that are currently banned, the event fell into a kind of grey zone. “In our industry, even prior to the pandemic, we’re highly licensed, so we adhere to these guidelines strictly,” he told **Tri-City News**. “Maybe we should have known that, but there’s hundreds of bars and pubs across the province that didn’t know.”

Despite hiccups like these, the good news is that customers are anxious to return to pubs and restaurants when it seems safe to do so—especially once they’ve been vaccinated.

Consumer Optimism

The global management consulting company **McKinsey & Co.** released a US-based survey in March that found consumer optimism remains steady and discretionary spending is bouncing back. They also found that 33% of those who have been vaccinated are engaging in out-of-home activities compared to 22% of those who are intending to be vaccinated—and are also likely to spend more on activities like restaurants when they do get out of the house.

Still, McKinsey & Co has also identified some global patterns that could have a depressing effect on consumer habits. Among them: price sensitivity, a move away from consumer loyalty, a rapidly accelerated flight to digital, and what they call the “homebody economy.” “Consumers’ intent to engage with out-of-home activities varies by category and country,” it reported in October. “Most intend to leave home to shop for necessities but maintain low engagement in shared services.”

Canadians specifically reported increased pessimism around the economy, but noted that masks, barriers, and cleaning procedures were the most important factors when deciding where to shop in person. And, they noted, we’re hungry to start socializing again.

What that means for BC’s pubs is that nothing can be taken for granted. Even when we see a return to whatever the new normal will be, things will be different. The pubs that build the greatest consumer confidence will be those who follow the rules, display transparency, and make customers feel as safe as they possibly can. Until then, no more dancing on tabletops. **P**

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Clear and Hazy: Today's IPAs Include a Broad Range of Flavours

Hazy IPAs first began appearing in BC about five years ago. Back then they were called New England (or Northeast) IPAs because the style originated at **The Alchemist Brewery** in Vermont, which created a beer called Heady Topper that was cloudy, hoppy, and full-bodied with very little bitterness. Other breweries in the region followed suit and a whole culture of New England IPAs developed a cult following there.

So-called White IPAs had been brewed in BC for a while before that, of course, but their origin is different since they were brewed with Belgian-style ale yeast, which imparts a lot of the unique flavour and cloudy character.

Essentially, this new type of IPA was all about showcasing hop flavours, but without the potent bitterness usually found in extremely hoppy beers. They are sometimes described as “zero-IBU” beers because the process used to brew them results in virtually none of the bitterness—as measured in IBUs—being extracted from the hops, just all the fruity, citrusy, tropical flavours and aromas. The haze is a result of the brewing process, as well as the purposeful lack of filtration or fining, which would reduce some of those big, juicy flavours. Indeed, the term “juicy IPA” is often used too, because they can resemble pulpy orange juice in both flavour and consistency.

Since I first wrote about the Hazy IPA as a coming fad in the spring of 2017, the style has become one of the most

popular in the beer marketplace, but it didn't happen overnight. Brewers had to learn new techniques, and they also had to come to grips with just how expensive these beers were to produce because of the huge amount of specialty hops they had to use.

When Saanichton's **Category 12 Brewing** brewed its first batch of Juicy Data Hazy IPA in 2018, owner/brewer **Michael Kuzyk** said it would be a one-off because it was the most expensive beer he'd ever made. Of course, consumer demand led him to change his mind, and today, Category 12 has produced a whole series of hazy IPAs, including Cloud Data, Compressed Data, Skewed Data, Variable Data, Vivid Data, and Fresh Data.

Category 12's two most recent hazies are both fantastic in my opinion: Frequency Imperial Hazy IPA (7.7% ABV) and Diversion Hazy IPA (7.4% ABV). Kuzyk says Frequency beats out Juicy Data as the most expensive beer they've made ingredient-wise. And Diversion, he notes, “is certainly the most heavily dry-hopped beer we've ever made. It all depends where you add the hops. If you were to add that amount at the beginning of a boil you'd have an undrinkable bitter beer. However, we're adding that to the fermenter near the end of fermentation so we only pick up aromas from the essential oils.”

Today, most breweries in BC brew at least one Hazy IPA, if not several versions like Category 12. The reason is simple: consumers love them. Similar to sour beers, the Hazy IPA style is a “gateway beer” for many people who previously could not find a traditional style of beer they like. They typically would have

gravitated towards cocktails, cider or wine in the past, but now they flock to brewery tasting rooms or liquor stores to seek out these beers. As their beer palates mature, they will often find other more traditional beer styles they like too, perhaps a more traditional IPA that would have previously been too bitter for their tastes, a cloudy wheat beer, or a spicy, fruity Belgian beer. Hazy IPA lovers often gravitate towards sour beer styles, especially ones with berries or fruit in them.

In addition to Category 12, several other BC breweries have made a name for themselves because of their highly regarded (and sought after) Hazy IPAs, including **Superflux**, **Boombox**, and **33 Acres** in Vancouver; **Backcountry** in Squamish; **Field House** in Abbotsford; and **Twin Sails** and **Yellow Dog** in Port Moody.

And the fact that the price point of Hazy IPAs has rocketed up to more than \$4 per tall can (sometimes even over \$5!) does not seem to be a deterrent, especially if stores are able to break up four-packs and sell them as singles. After all, consumers know what they like and are willing to pay for it. **P**

HAZY PICKS:

33 Acres Fluffy Cloud
Backcountry Widowmaker
Boombox Juicy AF
Category 12 Juicy Data
Field House Nordic Hazy IPA
Superflux Colour & Shape
Twin Sails Dat Juice
Yellow Dog High Five

Neighbourhood Pub and Liquor Store Sales



John Johnson
T 604.421.1010/604.319.2504
801-220 Brew Street, Port Moody, BC.



SHOULD YOU BE SPOOKED BY GHOST KITCHENS?

by Joanne Sasvari



A new type of food service is haunting the restaurant industry, and it's one that presents both challenges and opportunities for pubs. Ghost kitchens are easy to run, potentially profitable, and increasingly popular, thanks to the boom in takeout.

Even before the pandemic, brick-and-mortar restaurants were expensive and time-consuming to operate. Labour especially was not just a major cost, but difficult to find, keep, and manage. Then the pandemic brought with it a series of restrictions—early last call, reduced seating, small groups limited to households only—that have hit pubs especially hard. Add to that the concerns many consumers have about dining out, and it's no surprise we've seen a massive increase in takeout business.

That has coincided with the rise in third-party delivery apps such as **Uber Eats**, **DoorDash** and **Skip the Dishes**. DoorDash, which was founded in San Francisco in 2013, is the biggest, with some 20 million customers served and US\$2.866 billion in revenue for 2020. That's a lot of burgers, pizza, and tacos.

But while those apps deliver restaurant meals, they don't need actual restaurants to do so. Instead, they often use virtual restaurants, places guests can't visit, but can order from. This has led to a growth in ghost kitchens, also known as dark or virtual kitchens, all over North America.

Over the past few years, ghost kitchens have proved to be easy and inexpensive both to set up and staff. All that's needed is a concept, a

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commercial kitchen, and a few cooks. If the concept fails, it's easy to change at almost no cost.

According to Restaurants Canada there are basically two kinds of virtual restaurateurs: incubators and entrepreneurs.

Incubators use existing staff and kitchen facilities to launch new concepts for takeout only, either to supplement or replace dining in. Dixie's BBQ in Vancouver did this when they switched to a ghost kitchen model in 2019.

Entrepreneurs, on the other hand, purposefully rent and operate restaurant facilities solely to focus on digital delivery, and can pack several concepts under one roof. For instance, in March 2020, restaurant conglomerate **Recipe Unlimited** opened the first Toronto location of **Ultimate Kitchen**, a delivery-only hub for **Swiss Chalet**, **East Side Mario's**, and others. CEO **Frank Hennessey** told The Canadian Press that the experiment was so successful they'd soon be opening more Ultimate Kitchens in Toronto, Montreal, and Calgary.

Another Ontario company, **Kitchen Hub**, opened a virtual food hall gathering that co-founder and COO **Oren Borovitch** calls "a collective of small local tastemakers" in Etobicoke. Now Kitchen Hub has ambitious plans to expand across Canada, offering opportunities for small, independent restaurants.

Here on the West Coast, the big player has been Surrey-based **Joseph Richard**



What you Need to Know About the Virtual Restaurant Concept that is Changing the Industry

Group, which opened 100 delivery-only virtual restaurants on a single day in April 2019. They include **Obey Poke**, **STAK'd Sandwich Co.**, **Sweet Tooth Desserts**, and even the Master Chef Canada-winning fried chicken from JRG corporate chef **David Jorge**. (Daily Hive reports that JRG will also operate the new 26,000-square-foot food hall at The Post in downtown Vancouver, so expect some of those virtual concepts to become physical ones when it opens in 2023.)

These are all fairly big concepts, but a ghost kitchen can be small, too, like **Urban Tadka**, a successful virtual Awadhi restaurant

opened by two chefs, **Tushar Tondvalkar** and **Evan Elman**, early last year in the Coho Commissary.

So what does all of this mean for you?

There's no doubt ghost kitchens are creating serious competition in the important takeout market. But if nothing else, 2020 has shown how deftly pubs can adjust to changing circumstances. Ghost kitchens also offer the opportunity to try a new concept, outsource some tasks, partner with like-minded colleagues, or even pivot to an entirely new model. In short, don't let ghost kitchens spook you. **P**

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SAHALI LIQUOR STORE

by Jacquie Maynard

Located in the hub of the city, **Sahali Liquor Store** in Kamloops, BC has become the go-to place for wine-lovers and craft beer connoisseurs alike. It's been serving the area for 18 years, and its prime location in an established neighbourhood near Thompson Rivers University means everyone from university students to business professionals come through the doors. With 28 cooler doors and almost 6,000 square feet of floor space, Manager **Linda Coles** tries to stock the best of the best from local craft breweries and wineries as well as customer favourites from around the world.

Hub of Knowledge

Coles has been a huge part of Sahali Liquor Store from day one, 18 years ago, and since then she has been constantly learning. In that time, she completed her WSET Level 3 and has transferred that knowledge into many avenues. Not only is Sahali Liquor Store known to have an expert on staff, which customers utilize daily, but Coles hosts a weekly wine tasting radio show and, before the pandemic, won Kamloops' Iron Sommelier contest two years in a row.

Coles, who says she has always been a wine enthusiast, was happy

to take her passion to the next level and be able to share it with others.

"I wanted to take the stuffiness out of it. I want wine to be fun for people, that's my philosophy," she says. "I don't want people to be intimidated, because I know wine can be intimidating, so my goal is to make wine approachable and fun."

Part of the Local Scene

The Okanagan Valley is known for its wine, but with the recent addition of the Kamloops Wine Trail it has flourished in the last decade. According to Coles, the popularity of craft beer has exploded as well, resulting in more and more local breweries popping up every month, with diverse types and flavours of beer.

"In the beginning, I was a little worried that [craft beer with new flavours] would be a novelty, that customers would buy one to try it out and then not buy again," she describes. "But people have really embraced local industry and use the products as their go-to wine or beer, not just to give as a gift or buy for a special occasion."

Coles loves to bring new and exciting products into the store, such as an Australian "bloody" gin made from Shiraz grapes.



Photos Courtesy of Sahali Liquor Store

"That's what I like about it, it's ever-changing," she says. "With trends and new products it's very exciting—it's not the same every day." The store also partners with its sister business, the **Fox & Hounds Pub** next door, by selling some of the wines and craft beers patrons may have sampled there.

Adjusting to COVID Times

A lot has changed in the past 12 months, not least of all in the bar and hospitality industry. Sahali Liquor Store is making due, though. Fairly quickly, the store implemented a delivery service that offers delivery seven days a week, which was, luckily, fairly easy to get going. On top of that, it's one of the only liquor stores in the area that offers all lottery products as well.

"With COVID, people like one-stop shopping," Coles explains. "They don't want to have to make a lot of stops, which is why we also sell things like mix, tonic, snacks, and lottery tickets."

She says that COVID-19 has definitely put a damper on the blossoming food and wine scene in Kamloops, but even though customers are cooped up inside, they aren't going back to basics. According to Coles, she has been seeing customers consistently treating themselves during these stressful times to a BC wine, craft beer, or a premium spirit.

Through it all, though, the store's number one priority is keeping its team and customers safe and healthy, and getting through this time in history together. Safety protocols are important, but having a great staff makes a huge difference as well.

"We look for great people who already have a passion to learn about the industry," Coles says of their hiring philosophy. "It can be hard to get good staff, so we start with good people."

The store's philosophy must be paying off because, after 18 years, Sahali Liquor Store and Fox & Hounds Pub have cemented their spot in the Sahali neighbourhood and established themselves as the go-to spots for quality service and products. **P**



CREATING A SUPPORTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

BY ANDREA HINCK

There is no question that COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on the tourism and hospitality industries. As restrictions ebb and flow, it may seem challenging for employers to provide a supportive work environment amid such uncertainty. But with a bit of creativity and adherence to a positive corporate culture, there are many things an employer can do to create a supportive work environment for everyone.

It is important to note that there is a distinction between motivation and support. At first glance, it's easy to confuse the two. Motivation suggests an action; central to its meaning is getting an employee to do something. For example, you might incentivize employees with a bonus for target sales met. Support, however, runs much deeper. Synonymous with caring, being supportive means caring about the overall employee, not just his or her performance at work.

Walk the Talk: Be sure to align the workplace culture with the overall values and mission of the organization. Reinforcing these foundational pillars of your organization in your own workplace behaviour communicates volumes to staff.

PRO TIP: By modelling the supportive and caring behaviour you want reflected in your workplace, you send a strong message to staff of its overall importance to you and to the organization.

Facilitate Learning Opportunities: By creating a culture of learning in your workplace, you illustrate the importance of continuous growth to staff. Professional development serves to both motivate staff as well as to make them feel supported by their employer, who invests time into their professional growth.

PRO TIP: There are a myriad of online learning tools to offer to staff. Identify which ones would work the best for your organization and

encourage staff to sign up.

Encourage Empowerment: Give employees autonomy and the tools they need to empower them to succeed. By creating a strong sense of autonomy, employees will feel empowered rather than micromanaged. Fostering an environment where employees can try and fail without fear has many additional benefits too, as staff may have innovative and creative ideas to bring forward and ultimately benefit your business.

BY CREATING A STRONG SENSE
OF AUTONOMY, EMPLOYEES
WILL FEEL EMPOWERED.



PRO TIP: Professional development opportunities are a great way to cross train employees on different skill sets. Not only does cross training benefit the organization overall, it helps to foster empathy among employees as they learn more about each other's jobs.

Provide Flexible Schedules: By adjusting your scheduling to allow for more employee flexibility, you are inherently sending a supportive message about the importance of creating work/life balance.

PRO TIP: Recognizing the importance of work/life balance helps to create a family atmosphere at work. When team members feel close to one another, they are less likely to leave if they are feeling frustrated. Allowing for a flexible schedule is another form of supportive behaviour in the workplace.

Celebrate Success: Recognizing employees' achievements helps to create a positive organizational culture. It also encourages employees to excel in their jobs. It is easy to implement and does not necessarily have to cost a lot of money.

PRO TIP: Institute an internal recognition program where employees' achievements are publicly acknowledged. Whether it is in a staff meeting, or through a virtual recognition application, like kudoboard, a free online tool to gather a group and send digital appreciation. These small steps can go a long way in building a supportive workplace culture.

Support Mental Health: Understanding that employees may have different levels of anxiety during the pandemic is another important step in creating a supportive workplace. An open-door policy to have one-on-one conversations with strict privacy can help. Be sure to share tools and resources to educate the team on maintaining mental well-being. Start this practice off by conducting regular check-ins with staff.

PRO TIP: There are a number of high quality free mental health resources for you and staff to access (see www.workmentalhealthbc.ca). By demonstrating your organization's commitment to mental health and wellness, you are signaling the importance of the overall health and wellbeing of the individual, not just their performance and outputs.

Employers who demonstrate effectively to their staff that they are much more than just resources, but thinking, feeling, human beings will see the return in employee retention and performance. **P**

Andrea Hinck is the Director, Industry Training with go2HR, the human resources and health and safety association for the BC tourism industry. go2HR supports employers to apply sound HR and health and safety practices and offer employee training in the areas of customer service (SuperHost), health and safety and FOODSAFE.

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HOW TO RESPOND TO A COVID-19 OUTBREAK

7 steps to Effective Crisis Communications

by Danielle Leroux

COVID-19 outbreaks in the workplace are unfortunately now a fact of life. Effective crisis communications—how you respond to an outbreak—has never been more important. You cannot bury your head in the sand and hope the issue goes away. Instead, you need to respond quickly and address it head on.

What is Crisis Communications?

Simply put, something bad has happened, someone has been impacted, and your brand could be hurt. This could range from a COVID-19 outbreak or violence in your workplace to a negative review about your business or a damaging post on social media. Crisis communications is how you respond.

The goal of crisis communications is to provide clarity on the incident, restore calm, increase confidence, and protect your brand. This doesn't just mean how you respond to your customers. Everyone is watching! You also have to consider your response to staff, media, friends, and family.

7 Steps to Effective Crisis Communications

Follow these seven steps to effectively communicate during a crisis, like a COVID-19 outbreak.

1. Get the Story Out First and Get it Out Yourself

A crisis will not go away until you make it go away. You need to explain what happened and the actions you are taking to resolve the situation. Do not hide information from people. If it is pertinent to that crisis, the information will inevitably come out.

What happens when you don't communicate about a crisis immediately? You may recall the trivia night at a Port Moody pub that became a COVID-19 'super-spreader.'

On February 14, 2021, the pub was flagged for a possible COVID-19 exposure, but they said nothing about it. On February 17, media reported 24 new cases of COVID connected to the pub. While they were working behind the scenes with **WorkSafeBC** and public health,

the pub still had yet to publicly respond.

By February 18, the trivia night was considered a COVID-19 'super-spreader' and on February 26, media reported 300 cases linked to the night. On March 2, the BC Government released a widely shared infographic showing how one trivia night led to 300+ infections. The pub still had yet to respond, leading to significant reputation damage.

But, on March 3, the pub released a statement addressing the situation. Within 36 hours, no one was reporting about it.

2. Be Prepared to Respond Quickly

Don't get stuck in anger, denial, or indecision. The crisis has already happened, and you need to reply. 'No comment' to the media is not a sufficient answer. The longer you leave an issue unanswered, the strong and angrier your audience will become.

Prevention and preparation are key. Some situations are preventable with proper preparation, like being stringent with your COVID-19 health and safety protocols. Take some time to imagine the worst case scenarios and how you would respond. Identify who will be on your crisis communications team, such as a spokesperson who can make decisions, respond on social media platforms, and speak on behalf of the business.

During your preparation, brace yourself. Expect backlash, questions, and confusion.

3. Prioritize Your Audiences

The three main audiences you likely need to communicate with are your staff, patrons, and then the general public and media. Go to your staff first and assure them that their health and safety is of the utmost importance.

You may also need to call public health and WorkSafeBC. Consider calling your industry association, like **ABLE BC** for additional support.

4. Craft Your Message

Take a moment to assess the situation and get your message right from the start. You can start with a brief holding statement to buy you time and acknowledge you are looking into the situation, as you work on your actual statement.

To get crisis communications templates, purchase ABLE BC's Crisis Communications webinar in our online store. If you are a member, contact info@ablebc.ca for your free copy.

Keep the following in mind when crafting your message:

- Put the victims first, this is not about you. Consider how they have been impacted and what they may be experiencing.
- Be honest, sincere, personable, and positive. Remember your goal is to get through this, not fight a battle of who is right and who is wrong.
- Apologize and acknowledge the crisis happened. Don't deny or assign blame.
- Be accountable and show the action you are taking or changes you are making to restore confidence.
- Avoid saying too much! Limit yourself to three main messages.

5. Share Your Message

Now it's time to get your message out. Consider all the channels you can use to reach your audiences. Examples: letter to staff, social media, newsletter, loyalty program, contact tracing records, etc. Adapt the message as needed for each channel.

Ensure your spokesperson is ready to go. You may want to consider media training as part of your preparation.


6. Monitor the Impact of Your Response

Did the message land with your audience or do you need to do more? Did it resolve the situation and restore confidence, or do you need to try additional tactics? Examples: new policies, staff training, make a charity donation, etc. You should also check in with your staff during this time, see how they are doing, and discuss any changes you may need to implement.

7. Navigate the Aftermath

When the crisis is over, debrief and learn from what happened. Ask yourself what you can do to prevent this crisis from happening in the future. Check in with staff on what you can do to improve and what else may need to be done to restore confidence. Take what you have learned and build a crisis management plan for future use.

If you do crisis communications well, there is an opportunity to spotlight your brand values and professionalism with your audience. The **best** crisis communications strategy can enhance your business, while a bad plan can create a new crisis.

For support in crisis communications, please don't hesitate to reach out to ABLE BC: info@ablebc.ca. 

» BC HOSPITALITY FOUNDATION

News from Your Hospitality Charity

Are you looking for a fun way to improve your physical and mental wellbeing? The **BC Hospitality Foundation** (BCHF) has just the ticket! Our #HospitalityHustle presented by **Odlum Brown Limited** is now underway, but it is not too late to get involved and feel the benefits. The province-wide FREE virtual event started in mid-March, and there are already tons of great social media posts to check out under the tag #HospitalityHustle. Participants set a physical activity goal and then post training videos on social media with the hashtag to be eligible for a daily prize draw.

The grand finale is an online dance party hosted by a live DJ on Sunday, May 30th. This year's event also has a fundraising component and a raffle draw of trips, culinary equipment, VIP treatment and meals out. The BCHF thanks all our sponsors and participants for contributing to this fun and safe way to get active and connect with others in the local hospitality industry. We hope to see you online!

We would also love to hear from you if you are interested in getting engaged with your community by volunteering. Please contact lucy@bchospitalityfoundation.com to learn about current opportunities to help. If you do not have time or energy to assist as a volunteer, you can still help by spreading the word about the BCHF and what we do among your friends and coworkers. The BCHF's core mission is to aid hospitality workers facing financial crisis

due to a serious health condition experienced by themselves or a family member. Let us know if you know someone who could use our help! We also administer a scholarship program for students enrolled in hospitality-related fields of study.

There are a couple of current promotions that will result in donations to help us continue our charitable work. We hope you will support our supporters by choosing their products at your local liquor outlet.

- Throughout the month of May **Ridge Vineyards** and **Vintage West Wine & Spirits** will donate \$20 for each case of Ridge Vineyards purchased. Stock up on Ridge in May.
- From June 6th to July 3rd, 2021, **Lulu Spritz** will donate \$1 per 4-pack sold to the BCHF, to a maximum of \$5000. They also have a \$1.50 LTO on. This tasty 'Apero spritz style' refreshment beverage is a great way to try something new and help hospitality at the same time.
- **Trialto Wine Group** has organized a display program for private liquor retailers this spring and summer. For every bottle sold of a selection of Trialto Wines through retail partners Trialto will donate \$1.00 per bottle to BCHF. Please reach out to your local Trialto Wine representative for more information on the program.

We thank everyone for their amazing generosity, and we wish all of you a safe and busy summer ahead.

www.bchospitalityfoundation.com 





» LDB UPDATE

by BC Liquor Distribution Branch

Celebrating 100 Years

2021 represents a very special time for the Liquor Distribution Branch (LDB) as we mark 100 years of operation. The Liquor Control Board was established as prohibition came to an end in 1921, and ushered in a new era for BC's population of nearly 525,000 residents. Since then, the liquor industry has seen tremendous change: from a period of prohibition evolving into increased access of select liquor products; through a modernization of liquor policies kick started by Expo 86; to another round of regulatory changes aimed at sustaining a vibrant industry.

The Beginning 1920s to 1970s

This June 15th marks 100 years since the first government liquor stores opened in BC. They looked a lot different than they do today with fewer than 100 products being offered for sale behind the counter. Government regulation required customers (aged 21 or older) to buy an annual permit for five dollars or a one-time permit for 50 cents. If you wanted to purchase and consume liquor by the glass, you had to wait a few more years for it to become legal, when beer parlours were established under the Government Liquor Act.



Photos Courtesy of LDB

To help store, handle, bottle, and distribute all the liquor across the province, the first two government liquor warehouses were established in Victoria (1019 Wharf Street) and Vancouver (847 Beatty Street). The main Vancouver warehouse opened at 3200 Broadway in 1964, around the same time as the first "self-service" liquor store opened, and alcohol sales moved out from behind the counter.

In the mid-1970s, the Liquor Control Board head office relocated from Victoria to Vancouver, and the government separated the regulation of control and licensing from distribution, thereby creating the Liquor Distribution Branch (LDB) and the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch (LCLB).

Growth and Evolution – 1980s to 2000s

The next four decades marked a period of further growth and evolution of the liquor industry in BC, including the birth of BC craft beer and increasing popularity of BC wine. The LDB opened the Kamloops Distribution Centre in 1981 to better serve the growing communities in the interior and northern regions of the province. And after having produced more than 250 million bottles, the LDB stopped bottling its own liquor.

In 1988, the provincial government allowed for the introduction of private retail liquor stores into BC. The LDB quickly adapted to the changes in the industry and marketplace and established the Wholesale Customer Centre to help service the diverse and growing wholesale customer base.

Technology and computers were transforming society, as it did our operations at the LDB. The distribution warehouses switched from paper to their first computerized warehouse management system called Radio Beacon. In 2008, LDB launched Web Store (ldbwholesale.com) making 24/7 online ordering available to wholesale customers.

Additional changes designed to increase convenience were implemented in 2015, such as expanding the operating hours of liquor stores; allowing grocery stores to sell wine, and giving all wholesale customers a common price to purchase their products under a new wholesale pricing model.


It was evident that the BC beverage alcohol industry was quickly growing in size and complexity, with 600 breweries, wineries, and distilleries, 8,000 licensed bars and restaurants and 1,200 liquor stores. The LDB moved its Vancouver warehouse to a larger distribution centre in Delta to better handle the increasing volume and flow of product.



Today and into the Next 100 Years

This past year may have seemed like a century to many in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic! Further to maintaining the liquor supply chain, while adhering to increased health and safety measures, LDB Wholesale Operations has focused on rolling out government initiatives designed to support those impacted by the pandemic in industry, such as bringing in the hospitality pricing model. Work is also continuing on implementing many of the recommendations provided by BTAP and Deloitte to improve warehouse practices.

The LDB Wholesale team remains committed to consistently meeting performance targets in price changes, import shipments, on-time delivery, and customer returns. Resources are also being invested into upgrading old technology and replacing legacy systems, which will improve processes for both vendors and customers.

As the LDB celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, the Wholesale Operations team recognizes the importance of its industry partnerships with associations such as ABLE BC to best serve our mutual customers, and we look forward to working together over the next 100 years! 



The provincial government continued to work together with industry to further modernize the industry and created the Business Technical Advisory Panel (BTAP). BTAP included representation from the province's liquor industry associations, and was tasked with providing advice and recommendations on issues related to liquor policy and legislation.

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New Members

ABLE BC welcomes the following new members:

Cook Street Liquor
Copperpenny Distilling
Frankie G's Boilerhouse Pub
Jimmy's Liquor Store
Nancy O's
Pandosy Creative Agency
Refuge Taproom
Renaissance Wine Merchants
The Capital
The Living Vine
Vita Pro 21

Awards

2021 Canadian Whisky Awards

DEVINE Distillery & Winery was delighted to be named Artisanal Distillery of the Year

at the 2021 Canadian Whisky Awards. The accolade was one of several for the Vancouver Island venture, as DEVINE experienced the best showing ever for its small-batch craft whiskies. In addition, DEVINE Distiller Ken Winchester received a special Lifetime Achievement Award.

Canadian Club Chronicles, Canada's oldest whisky at 43 years, has been named by nine independent whisky experts, Canadian Whisky of the Year. With the highest overall score among over 130 Canadian whiskies entered in the competition, they were also honoured as Connoisseur Whisky of the Year.

Gibson's Finest Bold was named Sippin' Whisky of the Year for the Canadian market.

Shelter Point Distillery in Campbell River

BC, and **Two Brewers** from Whitehorse Yukon, tied for Best Single Malt of the year.

2021 Canadian Artisan Spirit Competition

Ampersand Distilling Company won the Canadian Artisan Spirit of the Year for their Nocino!, a complex and exceptionally balanced spirit. Located in the Cowichan Valley, Ampersand Distilling is a family-founded craft distillery on a five acre farm.

Maple Leaf Spirits Inc. in Penticton, BC was awarded Gold and Excellence in Terroir and Distinction honours for their masterfully aged wine brandy, Lady of the Cask.

Monashee Spirits Craft Distillery from Revelstoke, BC took home Gold honours for their Ethos Gin, locally sourced from surrounding nature.

Working with Local Government to Help Your Business

by Bert Hick

The challenges of the past year have pushed many municipalities to move forward with changes in policies and processes to help the hospitality industry, an industry suffering significant losses due to COVID-19. The rapid rollout of temporary patio permits on sidewalks and streets is a good example of how local governments can respond in crunch times.

As we start to see a light at the end of the 'pandemic tunnel,' licensees should ensure they are ready to maximize their licensing opportunities and work with local government in any of the following ways:

- Look at your eligibility for a patron capacity increase
- Apply for a COVID temporary or permanent patio extension and understand what size, design and layout would be allowed. Can you design your patio for inclement weather, while keeping it designated as a patio space?
- Maximize your hours of licensing
- Convert to a Liquor Primary, Food Primary, or dual licence for all or part of your establishment
- Apply for a Family Food Service Endorsement on your Liquor Primary licence
- Install a small micro-brewery to offer a new feature and service in your establishment

If your municipality has a process or policy that restricts the advancement of the hospitality industry, then you should reach out to see if changes can be made. There is an old saying in politics: "There is a time to leave a policy alone and there is a time to bring it out as a new policy."


How you approach your local government, whether it be for a policy change or approval of a specific application, depends on several factors. A policy change will generally require the approval of a city council or regional district board. The elected members will rely upon the advice and expertise of their senior staff. They may also seek approval from other agencies, such as the police and health officials.

If you are seeking a policy change that will be for the betterment of the industry in your local government jurisdiction, it is wise to meet your mayor and council to see if they would generally be supportive of your proposal. It also helps if you have the broad support of the hospitality industry in your community. Examine the backgrounds or resumes of the elected officials and seek out an initial dialogue with one or several that would be most likely to support the policy change. Usually these are elected officials with a business background. Your group would also have to approach the municipality's senior management team to brief them on the proposed policy change and try to get their support prior to it going to council for a decision.

For approval of a specific application that requires council approval, it is imperative that you have municipal staff support and recommendation for an approval (i.e., applying for a permanent Liquor Primary patio increase in capacity or new Liquor Primary application.)

It will further benefit you to get letters of support from your neighbouring businesses, residents, local Business Improvement Association, and Residents Association. Generally, the length of time for an application approval process at local government has slowed down considerably during the past year (except for temporary patios), so be patient.

Seize this momentum and work with your municipality toward more change in your community for the positive advancement of the industry and your business.

Let's work together to come out of this pandemic hitting the ground running! 

Bert Hick is former General Manager of Liquor Branch and President & Founder of Rising Tide Consultants.

BC: Sparkling into Summer

by Timothy Pawsey

Around the world, sparkling wines are on a serious roll. From Cava to Crémant, Prosecco, Sekt and more, affordable fizz is now abundant in myriad styles—and at every conceivable sweetness level. More important, amongst a pandemic weary public these days sparkling is no longer just for celebrations. It's the perfect post all-day Zoom pick-me-up—and the unsung hero of weeknight food and wine pairings. We've learned that a bottle ready and chilling in the fridge will go with just about anything you want to cook—or order in—from pork chops to chili or curry to quesadillas.

No wonder that sparkling wine counter sales at the LDB increased by 11.4%—and, overall, BC VQA wines increased by 10.1%—although that grows to 16.7% when International Canadian Blended (ICB) wines are added in. Much of that increase in sparkling production has resulted from the boom in Prosecco sales. Initially driven by soaring popularity in the UK, the Brits' penchant for all things sparkling has ricocheted around the world.

Nor is it restricted to cheaper 'fizz'. Despite the challenges posed by COVID, especially in north-east Italy, even Prosecco Superiore D.O.C.G. is enjoying increased sales, as are other premium denominations, such as Champagne and, yes, those elevated and often costly British sparklers. Ultimately, however, it's Charmat and carbon-injected techniques that are driving the bubble boom—a fact not missed by most BC wineries. Charmat's main appeal is its lower cost—thanks to far quicker production, which generates a quicker return than the traditional method.

Here in BC, a broad spectrum of styles comes not only from the Okanagan but also Vancouver Island and the Fraser Valley. The Grape Growers of BC advises there are now over 100 BC producers making more than 300 SKUs of sparkling wine.

"A lot of producers are coming to the realization that our region is perfectly suited to bubbles of all sorts," says **Okanagan Crush Pad's (OCP) Christine Coletta**. "From Pet Nat, to traditional method and Charmat, we do it all really well—and increasingly with different varieties. We use Pinot Blanc, Pinot Noir, and Chardonnay—and for the future have planted Pinot Meunier." Coletta says her perennially popular XC is made with Chardonnay and Pinot Noir (the same base as most traditional method sparklers). However, OCP's unique, horizontal Charmat tanks allow much more lees contact that contributes greatly to mouthfeel. Coletta says she's "delighted to see more and more people getting into the sparkling wine game, including on the Island and in the Fraser Valley. It's just a great category; and more people understand it every single day."

At **Intrigue Wines**, winemaker and owner **Roger Wong** is seeing similar numbers, with great response to their 'Social' and 'I Do' sparklers. The latter, a vibrant pink blend of Riesling, Merlot and Gewurz—in a delightful frosted bottle with heart insignia—has turned into a mainstay. Also taking off is a new 200ml format, which Wong says is proving really popular for virtual wedding celebrations (everyone gets a bottle!) but also flies out of the tasting

room for picnics, or for the fridge, as an always fresh serving. This year 'I Do' even gets a matching pink crown cap!

How can you catch that sparkling wave? Here are a few ideas for your pub:

- Ideally, try to offer at least two or three styles, including dry and more off-dry—and at least one of something pink.
- Talk up the often lower alcohol option ('I Do' is just 11.1%). Think about those smaller formats, 375 and 200ml, which you can also offer as part of your take-out service.
- Educate and inform: people are often surprised that BC makes sparkling wine.
- Keep spoilage to a minimum by promoting as an aperitif as well as in sparkling cocktails (such as French 75 or Mimosa).
- Always keep open bottles chilled and sealed with a proper stopper that clips onto the lip. Check with your sales rep, who likely has one.


And, above all, remember there's nothing more fun than a bevy of bubbles!

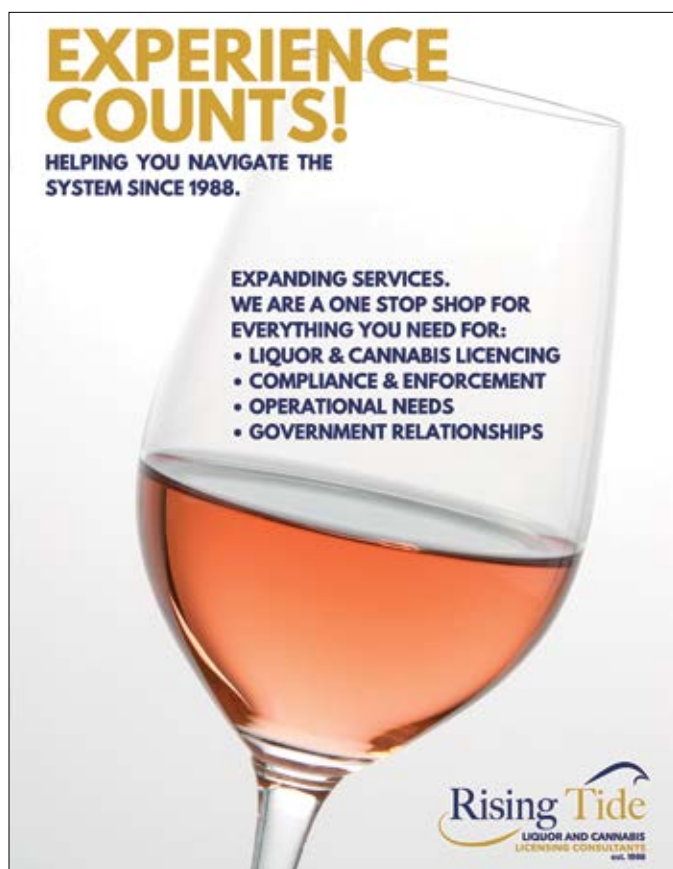
Frind NV Brut - A Chardonnay Riesling blend from one of the Okanagan's newest producers. Some biscuit aromas with creamy texture, orchard and stone fruit with citrus flavours. Very food friendly.

Intrigue Wines 'I Do' 2018 - Apple, berry, stone fruit and tropical flavours: crisp, juicy and eminently quaffable.

Intrigue Wines Social 2019 - Intrigue's 'regular' fizz sports orchard fruits and brioche up front before apple and apricot on the palate, with lots of bubbles and a pretty golden hue.

Okanagan Crush Pad Narrative XC 2018 - Made in state-of-the-art Charmat tanks. Pretty pale rose in the glass, good mousse, persistent fine bubbles with 'strawberries and cream' notes, layered and edgy.

Play Estate Teatro Moscato Frizzante 2019 - Off-dry style, made from three varieties of Muscat. Floral and orange blossom aromas with lots of bubbles before flavours of peach and nectarine through a fresh finish. 



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2021 Spring Updates

Since our last update, the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) has continued to work hard to creatively support our vast stakeholders as we progress through the pandemic. With the vaccine rollout in full swing and as we transition to a new, more hopeful stage of the pandemic, we will continue to support industry as it works towards recovery.

We've ensured continued support for industry through the extension of policy directives including the temporary authorization for extended hours of liquor service for Licensee Retail Stores, Rural Licensee Retail Stores, Wine Stores, Special Wine Stores, and Manufacturer Onsite Store endorsements as well as through the re-instatement of the temporary authorization for liquor manufacturers to deliver liquor products directly to retail customers from registered offsite storage facilities, in addition to onsite stores. Additionally, in response to licensee feedback and to deliver on a mandate letter commitment, we've made the authorization for the sale and delivery of packaged liquor for off-site consumption with the purchase of a meal for take-out or delivery, permanent.

Although much of our work over the last year has been focused on pandemic supports, we've still maintained our commitments to other projects such as modernizing liquor licensing.

We're happy to announce that the third phase of the Liquor Modernization project is now complete. All liquor licence types are now available online and the portal is already helping licensees more easily access our services in new ways. Ensuring licensees could access our services digitally was essential in the new environment we all found ourselves in due to the pandemic. Licensees now have the ability to manage their accounts, keep their contact information up to date, download a copy of their licence, apply for new licences, changes or endorsements, make payments, and renew existing licences online.

In addition, the transition of Rural Agency Stores (RAS), previously authorized by the Liquor Distribution Branch, to new Rural Licensee Retail Stores (RLRS) regulated by the LCRB, is now complete. The new RLRS liquor licence class provides a more consistent regulatory and enforcement approach to liquor retail in BC by ensuring all liquor retailers follow the same regulations. RLRS licences have now been issued to those RAS that met the requirements and new applications for the RLRS licence are now being accepted through the Liquor and Cannabis Licensing Portal.

Over the last few months, the LCRB has also been focused on developing updated social

responsibility materials. Working in collaboration with the Mandatory Display Advisory Committee—consisting of representatives from industry, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Liquor Distribution Branch, and the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research—we've developed updated social responsibility materials for mandatory display in licensed establishments. This year's campaign focuses on messaging about the social pressure to drink or 'have one more' and encourages patrons to seek out additional information on the Alcohol Sense website. Licensees can download these materials anytime by visiting the Alcohol Sense website.

It's been an eventful quarter involving changing restrictions and imaginative pivots, but we're grateful for the strong relationships that we've been able to build upon with our industry partners as we continue to work together through the many challenges that this unprecedented pandemic has brought us all.

We look forward to continuing to work together towards future recovery for the liquor and hospitality sector. **P**

Mary Sue Maloughney is Assistant Deputy Minister and General Manager, Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch.

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A DAY IN THE LIFE:

Jeff Guignard

Executive Director of ABLE BC

by Becky Dumais



As Executive Director of **ABLE BC**, Jeff Guignard jokes that people wouldn't believe the amount of talking he does. What are all the conversations about? Well, it depends on the topic and the audience.

Much of his role is building relationships and knowing who to work with in government or which industry partner can help move things forward. "I spend a lot of time talking to people, figuring those things out and also helping members know what's going on," he says. Major tasks throughout the day fall under the umbrella of communication from phone calls, face-to-face meetings,

webinars, email exchanges, and crafting briefing notes, all to try and support the industry and ABLE BC's membership base. "My days can be all over the place," he describes.

Being as adept at facilitating communication between government and member business owners, Guignard's backed by a team that he can rely on. "I really believe in focusing on your culture and your core competencies whenever you're in a position of leadership," he explains. "When you put the word 'executive' in front of your title (people) suddenly think they're at the top of a pyramid." That's not Guignard's way. "I'm the plug at the bottom to make sure nothing gets through."

Guignard's very proud that soon after he was brought on at ABLE BC, he and his team changed the organization's corporate culture very quickly. "We're positive, passionate, proactive advocates for this industry and we started focusing on the right things: the areas we're competent in (a lot revolving around government relations—dealing with the changes that have happened in lobbying and advocacy over the years). I'm really proud of how we've grown in those areas. We're a true team."

Whether it's during the course of a workweek or on a weekend, Guignard devotes at least one hour every day to be active in some way. "We even talk about this as a team: the importance of moving and the importance of eating well." Living across from Vancouver's Sunset Beach also makes it easy. Then it's back to work. "My days can start early and

end late. People who do these kinds of jobs can be relentless workaholics. I certainly have been over the years as well," he admits. "I think anyone who's going to try and sustain themselves for a long period needs to take care of themselves. There are some really stressful conversations. I need to be at my best for those. Sometimes people just need an ear and they need to know what's going on. I'm happy to do it, but I can only do it if I'm mentally in a good space."

Advocating for the industry with the government is a large part of what Guignard does. "I sometimes jokingly refer to myself as a translator. Part of my job is to translate government speak into business speak and vice versa. Those two audiences don't speak the same language."

What are some of the things that make him proud? Policy wins. "I'm always proud of that," he says. "Change in government policy doesn't just happen. It happens with a lot of work. It's not like a small business where you decide as the owner that you'll do X and it happens that same day. It took five years to get wholesale pricing for restaurants, pubs, and bars. Of course there have been other successes along the way, too."

If someone constructed a list of BC's top liquor lobbyists, they'd be mistaken not to include Guignard. Having worked right in Parliament Hill and now working in government relations, he knows his stuff. "I don't mean that arrogantly, I just mean that's my job. It's interesting because I came from government relations and working in government and it's become a very easy fit. I love this industry and the people I work with. The industry has treated me extremely well." **P**



SPIRIT SPOTLIGHT

OBSCURE LIQUEURS

by Shawn Soole

In this wonderfully modern world of cocktails, the plethora of spirits and liqueurs available in the market seems to be endless. Brightly coloured bottles line liquor store shelves and back bars all over the province, from Chartreuse to Maraschino and Violette to Dry Curacao, these obscure liqueurs have been a mainstay in classic cocktail culture for decades. Obscurity goes in waves. What was once mainstream falls out of favour and is relegated to the bottom shelf to collect dust while the new wave of trendy products hits the market; but with that rotation, ingredients that were once popular return to the bartenders' lexicon, brands reinvest in the production, and buyers start taking notice.

Liqueurs or modifiers have always been in vogue, from the classical styling of the above mentioned Chartreuse, Maraschino, Violette and Dry Curacao in the early days of cocktail culture, dating back to the late 1800s, to the neon coloured, over sugared liqueurs of the seventies and eighties, and finally in the modern era of nouveau style liqueurs such as St. Germain and Italicus. There have always been liqueurs folded into the drinks' culture, but never spoken of in the same tones as the spirits they complement. While base spirits can be changed for personal preference or availability, modifiers and liqueurs can rarely be substituted without completely changing the taste of the drink; fundamentally making liqueurs and modifiers more important in cocktails than the base spirits themselves.

In BC, many of these classic liqueurs have made their way back onto shelves due to the increase of cocktail culture, not just in bars but at home, especially during the pandemic. What and how do you use these modifiers in classic and modern cocktails? Here is your guide to five of the most common yet obscure liqueurs in the province.

Chartreuse

An herbal liqueur produced by Carthusian monks in the French Alps since 1737, is available as either Green or Yellow Chartreuse and as a special V.E.P. bottling of both varieties, which are aged for a longer period. Green is more predominant in classic cocktails and has a secret recipe of 130 herbs and spices only known by a handful of monks. The most common cocktail that uses Green Chartreuse is the Last Word, an equal parts combination of gin, Maraschino, Green Chartreuse, and lime juice created at the Detroit Athletic Club during prohibition.

Maraschino

Maraschino is a clear, cherry-flavoured liqueur that is made from Marasca cherries. Originating from the Eastern Coast of Croatia, it is now produced predominantly in Italy, but all over the world as well. The liqueur is bitter dry cherry with an underlying almond note, leaning closer to an eau de vie with just a hint of sweetness for balance. This was a very popular modifier in classic cocktail culture and appears in many vintage cocktail books dating back to the mid 1800s. Most notable cocktails are the Aviation, the Martinez, and of course the Last Word.

Violette

A purple, violet flavoured liqueur, this liqueur was very difficult to acquire for decades due to lack of popularity, but with the resurgence of the classic cocktail movement, it gained much needed and deserved attention again. Although only used in minimal amounts, it's a must needed ingredient for the Aviation, the Arsenic, and Old Laze.

Dry Curacao

A reborn classic liqueur, the Dry Curacao from Pierre Ferrand is a must have. Crafted in consultation with cocktail historian David Wondrich and based on a 19th century recipe, it is a traditional French "Triple Sec" with three separate distillations of spices and the "sec" or bitter peels of Curacao oranges blended with brandy and Ferrand Cognac. For any recipe that calls for Curacao or Triple Sec, this will give a classic depth and is perfect in Sidecars and White Lady's.

Cherry Heering

Unlike the Maraschino, Cherry Heering is liqueur produced in Denmark from Stevns cherries, spices, and neutral grain alcohol, the result is a deep and complex cherry with underlying spice notes and rich sweetness. It is the original styling of "cherry brandy" and has regained its popularity over the years with the resurgence of cocktails such as the Blood and Sand and the Singapore Sling.

Liqueurs have been and always will be an integral part of the cocktail scene, whether we are recreating vintage recipes or creating our own; these classic though obscure liqueurs are what makes or breaks many of the classics. And while they spent many years, collecting dust in many bars and stores; they have risen to notoriety yet again.


Last Word

3/4 oz (22.5mL) gin
3/4 oz (22.5mL) Maraschino
3/4 oz (22.5mL) Green Chartreuse
3/4 oz (22.5mL) lime juice

Glass - Large cocktail coupe
Method - Shake all ingredients with ice and double strain
Garnish - cherry

White Lady

1 1/2 oz (45mL) gin
3/4 oz (22.5mL) Pierre Ferrand Dry Curacao
1/4 oz (7.5mL) simple syrup
3/4 oz (22.5mL) lemon juice

Glass - Large cocktail coupe
Method - Shake all ingredients with ice and double strain
Garnish - orange twist 



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WHAT'S COMING?

by Deb Froehlick

Wine

Blue Grouse 2019 Sartier is a light apéritif made with Italian chinotto peels, bitter French gentian, and sweet alpine blossoms infused in a blend of crisp white wine. Release May 2021, 750ml \$24.49 whsl +480440

Emotivo Prosecco Rosé Doc 2019 has pale pink hues. Aromas are delicate and soft, with strawberry notes and floral hints. On the palate it is dry and perfectly balanced with a light body, refreshing acidity and a delicious lingering finish. Release May 2021, 750ml \$13.98 whsl +41737

Grenache Under My Skin 2018 is a blend of 80% Grenache and 20% Syrah, offering a ripe, heady perfume of ripe black cherries, white pepper, dried garrigue, leather, and savoury earth. It's medium to full-bodied, with ample minerality and dried earth, as well as a great finish. It is classic Maury with its richness, minerality, and length. Release May 2021, 750ml \$18.39 whsl +015870

Nostalgia 2020 Kerner Home Vineyard has aromas of ripe pear, tangerine, and honeysuckle. Pineapple, yellow apple, and honeyed pear grace the palate with just a touch of sweetness and a spiced, red-tea-leaf finish. Only 671 cases produced. Release April 2021, 750ml \$16.99 whsl +227915

Villa Sandi Il Fresco Prosecco Rosé Millesimato 2019 has an elegant pink hue with copper highlights and a lively and persistent perlage. Its aromatic freshness offers a bouquet of red fruits and floral scents, in particular notes of pomegranate and rose. On the palate it is silky and full, with a very pleasant balance. Release May 2021, 750ml \$15.40 whsl +72377

Soave Classico - Zeni Vigne Alte is a fresh, juicy white from the Veneto region. It offers honeyed aromas and flavours of apple, pear, quince, and herbs. Elegant and lingering in the palate, this Soave comes from a tuff soil of volcanic origin and stands out for its complex, long, and clean finish. It is made with Garganega, Trebbiano, and Chardonnay grapes, harvested by hand. Release June 2021, 750ml \$14.70 whsl +418828

The Second Act Field Blend Piquette is a naturally lower-alcohol 'petit wine' with a refreshingly crisp finish and a gentle fizz. Originating hundreds of years ago, piquette was often enjoyed by farmhands around the vineyard lunch table. Release May 2021, 750ml \$10.49 whsl +388853

19 Crimes Cali Rosé is defiant by nature, bold in character, and always uncompromising like Cali's own Snoop Dogg who embodies the timeless values of the 19 Crimes rogues who came before him. Fruit forward notes of fresh raspberry, strawberry, and red cherry. Pleasant mouthfeel with balanced acidity and sweetness. Release May 2021, 750ml \$15.61 whsl +62500

RTD

Revized Hard Seltzer has all-natural flavours of hops, lime, grapefruit, cherry, and mango, with 84 calories and 0 sugar. Release May 2021, 12x330ml \$1.76/can whsl +71384/87/90/93 & +88562

Dos Locos Seltzer Strawberry Lime is a lightly sweetened, refreshing take on the traditional margarita. Seltzer made with real tequila. Release May 2021, 4x300ml \$7.59 whsl +87203

Spirits

Dead Man's Finger's Spiced Rum is where a blended rum meets exotic spices to create a unique and distinctive flavour profile. Hints of saffron, notes of Pedro Ximenez Ice cream, a whisper of creamy caramel is followed by vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg, and subtly sweet undertones of orange. Release April 2021, 6x750ml \$22.83 whsl +190716

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» ABLE BC MEMBERSHIP REPORT by Danielle Leroux

With new public health restrictions imposed in April and case numbers on the rise, we know this continues to be a very challenging time for BC's hospitality industry. We want to ensure you are aware of the financial support available to you.

Provincial programs include:

- **Circuit Breaker Business Relief Grant:** grants of \$2,000 to \$20,000 are available to hospitality and fitness businesses impacted by the March 30, 2021 PHO orders. Grants are available until June 4, 2021 or until funds are fully expended. Businesses that partially or fully closed to comply with the March 30th PHO orders are eligible.
- **Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant:** grants of \$10,000 to \$30,000 are available for businesses impacted by COVID. An additional \$5,000 to \$15,000 grant is available to eligible tourism-related businesses. The program runs until August 31, 2021 or until funds are fully expended. Businesses must show a 30% revenue loss.
- **Launch Online Grant:** provides funding for businesses to create an online shop or booking system or improve their existing online operations. The grant will pay for up to 75% of eligible expenses, up to a maximum of \$7,500 per business. The program runs until September 30, 2021 or until funds are fully expended.

In addition to our ongoing advocacy work, ABLE BC continues to work on providing members the tools and resources you need.

Recent resources include:


- **New Monthly Q&A:** join ABLE BC's Executive Director on the last Thursday morning of every month at 10:00 am for a Q&A. During this 1-hour meeting, catch up on anything you've missed over the last month, hear about the state of the industry, get an update on our advocacy work, and ask your questions about liquor policy, public health orders, regulations, and government relations. RSVP: danielle@ablebc.ca.
- **Crisis Communications Webinar:** there is a right way and a wrong way to communicate a COVID-19 outbreak. On March 24, our Executive Director **Jeff Guignard** led a webinar on crisis communications for BC's hospitality industry. Learn the 7 steps to effective communication and get templates to support you. Purchase the webinar in our online store or contact danielle@ablebc.ca if you are a member for your free copy.

• **Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant Info Session:** in an April survey, we were struck by the number of respondents who indicated they were unaware of the recovery grant or unsure how to apply. We hosted an info session for industry on April 13 with the grant program's Executive Director to get your questions answered. Contact danielle@ablebc.ca for the session recording.

• **Workplace Violence Prevention Training:** in April, ABLE BC and go2HR opened up 100 complimentary spots to members to an online, on-demand Violence in the Workplace: Recognize the Risk and Take Action training program. Participants will learn preventative measures, how to reduce the risk, legal responsibilities, and more. Contact danielle@ablebc.ca to learn more about the course.

Join ABLE BC Today!

ABLE BC is the voice of British Columbia's private liquor industry. We are helping pubs and private liquor stores navigate the COVID-19 crisis, advocating on your behalf every day, and fighting for the future of our industry.

We need each other now more than ever. Join the fight and become a member today at ABLEBC.ca or call 1-800-663-4883. 

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