

Suggested Topics for Craft Brewers Conference 2021

The suggestions below have been outlined by the Seminar Subcommittee for Craft Brewers Conference 2021. The topics suggested are not intended to be an exhaustive list, but rather a guide to potential speakers to some of the top priority topics that the committee would like to see presented on at this year's event. Hopeful speakers are welcome to submit proposals beyond the scope of these suggestions but are encouraged to keep them in mind when planning their proposal content.

Brewing Operations & Beer Styles

Suggested topics for this track:

- Modern IPA styles, including juicy/hazy, sour, and more
- Evolution of adjunct stouts, including the role they play in brewery identity and process/techniques
- Process approaches and trends towards low alcohol, low calorie, and low carb beers and other products
- Brewing world-class lagers on varied systems
- Lagers beyond pilsners
- Process decisions for additions of adjuncts like fruit, THC, and more
- Indigenous beer styles from around the world
- Incorporating unique/local ingredients into your beer
- Colloidal stability and maintaining haze level
- Cleaning under pressure
- Alternatives to CO₂ for purging tanks and limiting CO₂ usage in general
- Equipment efficiency and designing sustainability into your brewery
- Beer loss reduction for all brewery sizes
- Primer on tank pressure and pressure relief valves
- Maximizing brewhouse production safely
- Equipment procurement, including assessing and addressing used equipment
- Packaging – Could include potential pitfalls, quality considerations, crowler best practices, budget-friendly solutions during the pandemic, etc.
- Production planning related to supply chain – ex: access to cans, cardboard shortage, etc.

Business & Leadership

Suggested topics for this track:

- Assessing your business metrics and growth to know when/if to reinvest
- Tools and strategies for employee and manager evaluation
- Succession planning and other exit strategies
- How community involvement and leadership can contribute to your brewery's bottom line
- Top things to consider before getting into the craft brewing industry; establishing the “why” before the “how” of starting your brewery business
- Navigating the interpersonal relationships of starting and running a business
- Finding and defining ideal investor relationships

- HR considerations in difficult times, including hiring workers seasonally, layoffs/furloughs, and reducing hours
- Open book management: practical applications and examples
- The importance of proper bookkeeping and accounting practices
- Financial modeling during uncertainty, including planning for changing cost of goods sold
- Investing in your employees through leadership development
- Hiring and promoting with diversity in mind
- Establishing policies that ensure a safe and comfortable workplace for all employees
- Leadership and communication: building a foundation for open communication with employees and consumers, and preparing for difficult conversations and situations

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Suggested topics for this track:

- The difference between Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- How to develop and cultivate DEI within your organization
- Promoting awareness and addressing implicit bias in your business decisions and communication
- Rethinking use of language, including inclusive, conscious, and bias-free word choices
- The evolution of the craft beer industry, esp. the history of race and diversity in craft beer
- Authentically representing yourself and your brand in your marketing and communications
- Using your platform as a business to celebrate and share different cultures with your community

Events & Hospitality

Suggested topics for this track:

- Planning and executing virtual events during and after the pandemic
- Logistics of virtual beer festivals and smaller scale festivals post-pandemic
- Reimagining tours and retail sales after the pandemic
- Leveraging festivals and events strategically as part of your marketing plan
- Building philanthropy and nonprofit support/events into your budget
- Designing a profitable in-house event program (including private events) with and without dedicated event space
- Ways to future-proof your brewery through diversification
- Maintaining customer engagement and community support during disruption (the pandemic, natural disasters, etc.)
- Preparing your business for the “new normal” including how to communicate relevant laws and standards
- De-escalating difficult situations in your taproom
- Staff training and motivation
- Creating effective and mutually beneficial loyalty programs
- Expanding the opportunities and occasions for beer
- Removing barriers and reaching beyond the traditional craft beer community
- Engaging equitable practices and hospitality in culturally diverse communities/markets

Government Affairs & Export

Suggested topics for this track:

- Government affairs update for craft brewers
- Regulations on new or controlled ingredients and innovations in craft beer and other beverages
- The evolution of market access in America, including direct to consumer
- Tools for how to prepare for legislation post-pandemic
- How to get involved in government affairs – local, state, and federal
- Developing a plan to market and sell your beer abroad
- Evaluating potential import partners
- Importer/distributor relationships and expectations when exporting
- Navigating export compliance and regulations
- Evaluating ROI of overseas marketing opportunities like festivals, trade shows, and competitions
- Understanding the logistics of exporting beer

Quality & Ingredients

Suggested topics for this track:

- Building a sensory program
- Simple and economical QC techniques for small breweries on a budget
- Practical solutions to monitor and mitigate hop creep
- Maintaining quality during mobile canning
- Overview of oxidation in the brewing process and ways to mitigate it
- Developing traceability and recall procedures
- Burst bottle detection and mitigation
- Inherent food safety barriers with non-traditional beers + sourcing food safe ingredients
- What does “quality” mean in today’s craft beer environment?
- New research on hop creep
- Hazy yeast strains
- Use of extracts, flavorings, and real ingredients to achieve desired flavors in adjunct beers
- Barley and malt research: breeding, contribution to beer flavor, agronomics, etc.
- Raw material analysis and sensory tools
- New hop varieties and alternate hop products
- Kviek yeast, including practical uses, strains, and processes
- Hop contracting and when to attend selection, even as a small brewer
- Choosing the right ingredient vendor for your brewery
- Utilizing brewing COOPs or splitting orders
- Inventory management software, esp. for small brewers
- Nuts and bolts of brewing with reverse osmosis water for all brewery sizes
- Capturing and preparing wild yeast
- Small-scale CO₂ recapture
- Brewing with lager yeast
- CO₂ quality, supply, and engineering
- Brewing with fresh hops

Safety & Sustainability

Suggested topics for this track:

- Simple, inexpensive (or free) things small breweries can do right now to improve safety and sustainability
- How the pandemic has provided lessons and opportunities to improve brewery safety processes and staff training
- Recommendations for dealing with mental health concerns in the beer industry, including workload stress and substance abuse
- Emergency preparedness and disaster prevention/response, including first aid
- Safety, sustainability, and quality considerations when assessing and addressing used equipment
- Hazard assessment and root cause analysis
- Walking, working, and elevated surfaces safety for brewers and customers
- Design and safety of grain handling systems, including ergonomics
- Establishing and maintaining a safety program, including culture, communication, and staff buy-in
- Breakdown of OSHA requirements for all brewery sizes
- Understanding the inputs and sustainability of your raw materials
- How to successfully get rid of side stream waste in both urban and rural settings
- Water treatment for small breweries
- Benchmarking for different levels of levels of brewery sustainability
- Effectively telling your sustainability story
- Sustainability partnerships and the potential circular economy of craft beer
- Examples of sustainable innovations in practical application
- Best practices for CO₂ conservation and supply chain considerations when selecting your CO₂ provider
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- Leveraging your provider to implement and help source energy efficiency projects

Sales & Marketing

Suggested topics for this track:

- Social media 101 for breweries, including setting metrics and objectives
- Navigating online review apps, esp. responding to negative reviews
- Proactive PR and media relations during good times and bad
- Establishing a strong brand message/identity and sticking to it
- Using donations and philanthropy to increase sales and connect with your community
- Authentically reaching out to new audiences
- Using marketing data and analytics to understand your consumer
- Competing with larger, more established brands on a shoestring marketing budget
- Basics of building a successful merchandise shop
- Rethinking your website and e-commerce strategies in a changing world
- Contactless ordering and menu design
- Important sales and marketing tools that can help you sell more beer on- and off-premise

- Pros and cons of self-distribution
- Finding the right distributor for you
- Evaluating new sales models, including delivery, beer to go, and direct to consumer
- Retailer panels – on-premise and off-premise
- Point of sale systems and other sales software, including tracking and reporting
- Importance of setting a sales strategy
- Pricing data and trends for on- vs. off-premise craft beer sales
- Setting incentives for your sales and taproom staff