

Suggested Topics for the 2023 Craft Brewers Conference

The suggestions below have been outlined by the Seminar Subcommittee for the 2023 Craft Brewers Conference. 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 subcommittee 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

Every distinct beer style has a unique history and characteristics, and is brewed using specific techniques. Similarly, every brewery—from the smallest local brewpub to the largest regional or national packaging brand—has its own set of brewing processes and engineering challenges. Brewing experts in this track will highlight current beer styles and the techniques used to brew them, as well as ways to maximize quality and efficiency in your brewery operations, no matter the size.

Suggested topics for this track:

- Fermentation metrics you should be tracking and why they are important
- Small-scale yeast management
- CO₂, including reduction and alternatives
- Filtration for very small breweries
- Brewhouse preventative maintenance, including heat exchanger maintenance
- Managing a brewing schedule
- Variable Frequency Drives (VFDS), including where and how where to use them
- Using enzymes in the brewing process
- Considerations for moving your production facility and/or bringing in new equipment
- Equipment procurement, including assessing and addressing used equipment
- Brewhouse data to collect and what to do with it
- Glycol chillers
- Using technology in the brewhouse and when/how to consider new technology as you scale
- Best practices for maintenance planning for maximum up time, including back up spares
- Brewing recipes at different scales
- Batch blending
- High gravity brewing
- Pasteurization methods and equipment
- Centrifuge optimization and maintenance
- Packaging line maintenance and quality
- Decoction brewing and step mashing
- Beer foam, including creation, retention, standards, measurement, and consumer perception
- Chemicals used in the brewery
- Oxygen, including when to measure, targets to ensure proper fermentations, acceptable levels for packaging, and how to find where you're picking it up
- Cold IPA: History, tips for brewing, tricks of the trade
- German-style lager beers
- Combatting increased cost with creative recipe design
- Non-alcohol (NA) and low alcohol production for the craft brewer
- Steel material selection for different applications

Business & Leadership

Running a brewery is about more than just making good beer. Things like finance and accounting, hiring and staff motivation, and change management are all just as important to keep your business healthy. This track is intended for owners, managers, and leaders in the craft brewing industry. Join these sessions to open your mind, be inspired, and learn to be a more effective leader.

Suggested topics for this track:

- Succession planning, including a comparison of the many options available
- Connecting to your community and demographic area
- Challenges and things to look for/address when buying an existing brewery
- Transitioning through a change of ownership or management
- Fostering a culture of continuous improvement in your business
- Open book management, including success stories from breweries who have implemented it
- Strategies for creating successful habits, both in your personal and business lives
- Creating a mission and vision statement with your staff and setting clear goals
- Establishing a strong company culture to empower your employees for success
- Work/life balance, including setting boundaries, effective delegation, and time management
- Business technology and project management platforms
- Walking the fine line of leadership and friendship
- Leadership training and developing leaders in your brewery
- Parenting and supporting families in the beer industry
- Leading through grief, including supporting staff and tools available
- Strategies for sustainable growth in a maturing market, including ways to reimagine, reinvent and innovate
- Setting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for your business and finding the right industry benchmarks
- Data-driven decision making, including getting buy-in for hiring new employees
- Change management
- Cash is king – planning brewery cashflow
- Setting up a chart of accounts (COA) for a successful business model; How to read/navigate your profit and loss (P&L) statement and balance sheet
- Calculating the return on investment (ROI) of purchasing new equipment and evaluating when and what to buy
- Establishing diverse revenue streams to support your brewery
- Lessons learned from the pandemic, including how to develop your assets to help sustain your business during economic downturns
- The reality of inflation and planning for how and when to raise your prices, including how to communicate value to your customers
- How to properly forecast and write a budget, and how to use your budget to transform your business performance

Export Development

American craft brewers are widely recognized as pioneering the now global craft beer revolution, and demand for high-quality innovative craft beer grows the world over. Seminars in this track aim to educate U.S. craft brewers about opportunities, regulations, and best practices for marketing and selling your beer abroad.

Suggested topics for this track:

- Developing a plan to consistently market and sell your beer abroad
- Evaluating potential import partners
- Importer/distributor relationships and expectations when exporting
- Navigating export compliance and regulations
- Evaluating the return on investment (ROI) of overseas marketing opportunities like festivals, trade shows, and competitions
- Understanding the logistics of exporting beer
- Overview of opportunities for American craft beer in specific markets

Government Affairs & Legal

It's essential for every small business to stay up to date on the rules and regulations affecting their operations. Attend the seminars in this track to make sure you're aware of the risks and opportunities in today's national environment.

Suggested topics for this track:

- How current and past legislative issues have and can change the face of the brewing industry
- An in-depth look at Commerce Clause issues
- Legal considerations for making other alcohol beverage products in your brewery
- A look at government affairs issues in craft beer through the lens of the overall economic landscape of the greater beverage alcohol industry
- Sustainability and environmental legislation and its impact on the brewing industry
- Cybersecurity and privacy law for small companies
- What does cannabis legalization mean for brewers?

Quality & Ingredients

Quality and ingredient management is critical for continued success in the brewing industry. Seminars in this track will help you build your own sensory and quality programs, as well as source, analyze, and properly use the highest quality ingredients to brew the best beer possible.

Suggested topics for this track:

- The importance of quality training for brewing staff
- Essential lab equipment for various brewery sizes
- Critical testing points in your brewhouse and effective uses for your quality lab and data
- Microbiological plating and analysis
- Training a sensory panel to detect hop smoke taint
- Free amino nitrogen (FAN) in relation to beer flavor and staling
- Can filling quality control and assurance, especially for small to medium-sized breweries
- Pasteurization 101: basic methods and practices
- Consumer sentiment towards bioengineered foods, beverages, and craft beer specifically

- Quality, stability, and food safety considerations for making non-alcohol (NA) beer
- Raw ingredient storage conditions and best practices
- Understanding fermentation profiles, including what pH values mean for yeast health
- Best practices for yeast storage and handling
- Considerations for brewing with experimental and/or unfamiliar yeast
- Effectively utilizing a malt Certificate of Analysis (CoA) with various levels of equipment
- Advanced hop products and usage from the brewery perspective
- Brewing with sugar, including types, options, nutritional considerations, and fermentations
- Flavoring methods for beyond beer products
- Brewing water composition and quality
- Understanding and adjusting water chemistry using different purification processes

Safety & Sustainability

In order to ensure the long-term success of the craft beer industry, it is vital that every brewery is committed to safety and sustainability. Nothing is more important than maintaining a safe and healthy environment for your employees and customers. This track is all about providing you with the resources you need to build a culture in your brewery that fosters environmental stewardship and protects your staff and equipment from harm.

Suggested topics for this track:

- Developing a culture of safety in your brewery, including strategies for effective safety communication
- The financial benefits of prioritizing safety in your brewery
- Safety training specifically for front of house staff
- Physical safety concerns related to burnout
- Emergency preparedness and response, including active shooter training and conflict de-escalation strategies
- Safety and regulatory differences between brewing and distilling
- Compressed gas safety
- Electrical safety
- Hazard communication
- Brewery safety considerations and regulatory concerns for non-employees
- Top OSHA violations in craft breweries and how to address them
- Employee and customer safety in relation to alcohol consumption
- Preventing heat disorders, heat stress, heat exhaustion and stroke
- Using sustainability data to create a culture of sustainability in your brewery
- Sustainability communication, including defining what sustainability means in craft brewing
- Sustainability 201: What's next after the low-hanging fruit?
- CO2 recapture, reduction, and efficiency
- Assessing your environmental impact and the sustainability of your supply chain
- Wastewater and side streaming of brewing byproducts, especially for small brewers
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and bottle bill legislation
- Hosting zero-waste beer events
- Sustainable growing practices and regenerative agriculture in barley cultivation

Sales, Distribution & Marketing

It doesn't matter how good your beer is if no one is buying it. The seminars in the Sales, Distribution & Marketing track will provide breweries with best practices for selling beer on- and off-premise, working with retailers and distributors, and designing successful marketing strategies to grow your brand.

Suggested topics for this track:

Marketing and Branding

- Risks and opportunities of partnering with influencers to market your brand
 - Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) policies for working with college athletes
- Marketing strategies for targeting different audiences, especially age demographics
- Working with philanthropies, including choosing the right organizations to partner with for your brand, budgeting for donations and events, effective messaging, and how and when to say "No"
- Rebranding and/or refocusing your brand
- Social media management and engagement on a limited budget
- How to partner with your distributor on social media efforts
- Staying on top of current social media trends and leveraging them effectively
- Creative video and reel marketing
- The financial and human resources cost of social media marketing, including the cost of "one bad post"
- Legal questions associated with marketing alcohol
- Email marketing content strategies and analysis
- Designing your merchandising program
- Website 101, including essential elements, design, and user experience
 - ADA website compliance

Sales, Distribution and Retail

- Bridging the gap between brewers and sales managers
- Sales considerations for contract brewing and alternating proprietorships
- Structuring the right compensation plan for your sales team
- Successfully partnering with retailers, including exclusive beers, events, etc.
- The many options for distribution and how to find the right strategy and partner/s for your brewery
- Understanding distribution contracts and negotiating mutually beneficial distribution agreements
- Product release planning
- What makes a successful ride-along; best ways to support your distribution and retail partners in selling your beer

Taprooms & Brewpubs

Some of the most important issues for on-premise breweries are simply about hospitality – how can you continue to make meaningful connections with your visitors to keep them coming back for more? This track will include seminars on enhancing your customer experience, training taproom staff, building programs for successful events and entertainment, and maintaining customer engagement during good times and bad.

Suggested topics for this track:

- Key performance indicators (KPIs) for on-premise breweries
- Contract brewing options for very small breweries

- Strategies and logistics for successful collaborations with breweries and other industries/organizations
- Front-of-house employee engagement and how to build a team of ambassadors that live and love your brand
- How to design events to attract new customers without alienating regulars
- Successful event promotion and marketing, including communication about taproom closures
- Effective taproom events to keep customers coming back
- Managing live music and sound levels
- Handling buyout request and hosting private events, including pricing and logistics
- Designing your taproom with efficiency, ergonomics, and storage space in mind
- Effective bar design, including draught system layout
- Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for taproom staff training and consistency
- Upselling appropriately: Strategies for maximizing check size per customer, including beer-to-go and merchandise
- Communicating the culture of craft beer to your customers, including encouraging responsible appreciation
- Menu design and integrating your beer and food menus
- Selecting the right service model for your brewery
- Customer service training
- Finding the right people for your front-of-house (FOH) team
- Partnering with food vendors and trucks, including do's and don'ts and lessons learned
- Various food service models and considerations for each
- Contracting out your kitchen
- Advice and laws related to tips and tip pooling

Thrive

THRIVE is a Brewers Association (BA) initiative that takes a holistic approach to addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), human resources (HR), and physical and mental wellness in the craft brewing community. THRIVE recognizes that DEI, human resources, and wellness are related components of the workplace experience that are enriched when developed together. Through THRIVE, the BA seeks to establish “thriving human beings” alongside safety, quality, and sustainability, as cornerstones of a healthy, responsible, and profitable craft brewing industry. Experts in this track will provide informative and actionable content that improves DEI, HR, and wellness-related practices in breweries of all sizes.

All seminar proposals submitted in the Thrive track will be considered for inclusion in the Thrive Workshop, as well as the main conference educational track. The pre-conference workshop is a full day experience tailored toward practitioners and specialists in DEI, HR, and Wellness.

Suggested topics for this track:

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- Ensuring safe and inclusive festival and event environments
- Supplier diversity and creating a values-based supply chain
- B Corp certification and options for small breweries aspiring to become certified
- Community engagement, including how to effectively communicate your charitable/philanthropic efforts
- Corporate social responsibility, especially for small breweries
- Proactively preparing for crisis communication

- Accountability measures and key performance indicators (KPIs) for DEI efforts
- Inclusive recruiting; inclusive onboarding; retaining diverse talent
- Cultivating team and consumer buy-in for DEI efforts
- How to choose the right DEI training for your staff
- Creating inclusive spaces for patrons and employees with disabilities

Human Resources (HR)

- Business ethics and company culture
- Compensation and benefits
 - Cost analysis of raising wages vs. high turnover, especially in times of inflation
 - How to be creative with benefits and/or competitive with other industries
- Effective internal communication
- Employee relations and conflict management
- Train the trainer workshop, specifically for front-of-house managers
- Handbook and policy development
- Attracting and retaining employees, especially in a tight job market
- Hiring and onboarding, including interviewing, screening, and employment paperwork
- Legal compliance
- Payroll
- Performance management and employee coaching
- Recruitment processes, including creative recruiting practices in a tight labor market
- Training and development, especially how to build your own training on a budget
- Workers' compensation
- Inspiring a sense of ownership and empowering your staff to help drive your brewery's messaging
- HR for breweries without an HR department, including options for outsourcing

Mental and Physical Wellness

- How to keep your employees safe in the brewery; Establishing safety policies and procedures
- Substance abuse prevention, including alcohol and controlled substance policies, and recognizing and intervening in problem behavior
- Employees assistance programs (EAPs)
- Supporting sobriety in the craft beer industry; Creating an inclusive environment for sober employees
- Combatting and mitigating stress and burnout in the craft beer industry
- Promoting work-life balance, especially for owners
- Mindful journaling and vision boarding