



Are you ready for American Craft Beer Week?

BY MICHAEL KUDERKA

May 14th – 20th is American Craft Beer Week, and it is the perfect time to partner with local brewers and distributors to showcase your fantastic beer selection. This allows you the opportunity to establish your store as a beer destination for beer beginners, beer enthusiasts and hard-core beer geeks.

Organizations like the Brewers Association and your state's brewers guild will be running craft beer awareness campaigns prior to and during this week to increase appreciation for the craft and quality behind the beer. As consumers seek out suds to sample, you'll want to make sure your store is ready to take advantage of this yearly event.

Don't underestimate the draw of beer

If ever there was a week to promote limited released or newly released seasonal brands, this is it. More and more beer consumers are lining up just to get their hands on a few bottles of the small batches of these special beers.

When we say lining up we are not talking about being a few hours early for a beer release at the brewery. This is beer consumers with lawn chairs, sleeping bags, camping out overnight in front of a brewery, just to get into the release event to pick up a few bottles of a brand that is only available once a year - rock concert or Tickle Me Elmo levels of craziness.

So, American Craft Beer Week is the

perfect time to work with your beer distributors or brewer to get a few bottles of a special release beer that will make your store a big beer event.

Celebrating the culture and community of craft beer in your store

"There really is something shockingly patriotic to drink American owned beer. It's really a community thing" - Fox & Friends, May 22, 2011. Timed just before the busy summer beer season, the American Craft Beer Week has become the largest national effort focusing on American craft brewers and is a great way to jump start your customers thinking about the upcoming beer season.

Some ideas to consider:

• A Scavenger Hunt

Team up with other local retailers, brewers and distributors creating a list of beers that need to be found, and a list of participating establishments. Offer a few beer prizes for completing the list and for the individual who completes the list first.

• Beer tastings

Focus on a different beer style each day of American Craft Beer Week.

• Meet the brewer

Bring your local brewers in to give away T-shirts and to talk about what is new at their brewery.

Have the brewer raffle off a special brand release or limited release beers in your

store or offer samplings.

- Host special beer dinners.
 - Host a beer and food pairing event.
 - Offer a special beer education evening highlighting styles, glassware and cooking with beer.
 - Offer a home brewing demonstration
- In a few hot spots in the country, communities have progressed to having their own individual Beer Weeks. If your store is in one of the cities below, and you haven't taken part in the event yet, it is time to get on board:

Minnesota Craft Beer Week

May 13-22, 2011

Long Island Craft Beer Week

May 13-22, 2011

San Antonio Beer Week

May 15-22, 2011

Chicago Craft Beer Week

May 19-27, 2011

Seattle Beer Week

May 19-28, 2011

Are You Thinking Out-of-the-Box?

How innovative is your store at selling beer? We would like to know. If you have promotions that go beyond refilling the cold box, we would like to hear from you and share your "out-of-the-box" thinking with our fellow Beer Trends readers.

E-mail me at mkuderka@mcbasset.com with your successful ideas for selling beer, along with your contact information. If we write about your program in our column we will send you a free copy of The 3rd Edition of *The Essential Reference of Domestic Brewers and Their Bottled Brands*.