



# ENSURING THE QUALITY OF YOUR BEER

Ruth Evans MBE  
Chief Executive, BFBI



# INTRODUCTION

BFBi is a Trade Challenge Partner with UKTI

Created a set of best practice guidelines, to new and experienced brewers, ensuring that every pint of British beer consumed around the world is ultimately experienced as the brewer intended.

This presentation aims to provide guidelines and some tips to ensuring your beer quality is preserved throughout the export supply chain.



# BEER – THE PRODUCT

- ❑ British beer is an iconic product and, as an industry, we wish to ensure that British beer is experienced and consumed in its optimum condition.
- ❑ Beer is a perishable product and, as such, many factors can contribute towards diminishing quality from the time it is brewed to the point of consumption.

# YOUR BEER – ITS DESTINATION

## RESEARCH THE MARKET

You would not hand your child over to a babysitter you knew nothing about so why sell the product you have spent so much time and resource in to somebody you do not know; into a market you know nothing about and a point of sale you have no control over.

Some basic research into the person who is promoting your product; the market they are selling into, consumer expectations of that market will provide you with invaluable insight as to whether your product best fits that market and, ultimately, whether the market best fits your product.



# QUALITY, QUALITY, QUALITY

Reputation and success of a brewery relies upon consistency of product and that product's quality. Factors that challenge the quality of your beer on its export journey include:

- Light
- Heat
- Air
- Physical agitation
- Poor hygiene

Ensure that your distributors and point of sale staff understand all these factors.



# PERCEPTION OF YOUR BEER

Whoever is serving your beer needs to understand how you, the brewer, wishes it to be served, what the “story” is behind the beer.

- Colour and clarity
- Head
- Aroma
- Carbonation
- Body and balance
- Flavour

Everybody within the export supply chain should understand what your beer should taste like at optimum condition.



# ON & OFF FLAVOUR CHART & RECOGNITION

## Negative Flavours:

Term	Description
Flat	Lacking of Gas / Condition
Acidic / Sour	Vinegar / Plain Yoghurt
Medicinal	TCP / Disinfectant
Phenolic	Clove / Dentist like
Sulphur	Drain / Cooked vegetables
Thin	Watery / weak
Astringent	Harsh and Mouth Drying
Stale	Wet Paper / Cardboard
DMS	Sweetcorn
Diacetyl	Butterscotch / Buttery

## POSITIVE FLAVOURS:

Term	Description
Sweet	Sugary
Bitter	Tonic water
Hoppy	Floral , Grassy, citrus
Tropical	Peach /Pineapple /Banana
Malty	Toffee. Biscuit
Burnt	Coffee , Burnt Toast
Body	Fullness / Thick
Alcoholic	Spirit /Warming

# DISTRIBUTION BEYOND THE BREWERY GATE

The distribution supply chain should be coherent and unified.

- Brewer
- Shipper
- Distributor
- Wholesaler
- Point of Sale
- Staff

All need to be on message. Take the time to educate all points within the supply chain in order to ensure maximum control over quality, and perception of your beer to ensure maximum reception by the consumer.



# DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

Distribution channels need to:

- Maintain integrity of the beer
- Maintain optimum temperature control of the beer (i.e. refrigerated) whilst shipping and warehousing
- FIFO stock rotation. Wherever possible, a system should be in place that ensures only beer true to brand specification and "in date" should be made available for sale.
- Ensure excellent communication between you, the brewer and your points of contact through ALL levels of the distribution channel

# DELIVERY OF THE BEER AND DISPENSE AT POINT OF SALE

- ❑ Each style of packaging has its own challenges but the over-riding message for keg, cask, bottle or canned beer is that it should be kept cool throughout the export process.
- ❑ Keg and cask beer present extra challenges at point of sale. Hygiene becomes paramount in order to ensure beer quality and not just the beer lines.
- ❑ Glassware, gas pressures will both affect presentation, taste and aroma.



Dispense of the beer is as important as delivery. As the brewer, you should be in control of or understand the conditions in which your beer is being dispensed and consumed.

- Storage of product
  - Temperature of dispense
  - Time on tap
  - Carbonation at point of dispense
  - Head of the beer at point of dispense
  - Glassware
  - Hygiene of the beer lines, glass washer
- 



**CONTROLS FOR  
MAINTAINING BEER QUALITY  
IN TRADE THROUGHOUT THE  
EXPORT SUPPLY CHAIN**

<b>Shipping; Storage; Dispense</b>	
Well ventilated, clean shipping containers, cellars, storage areas, point of sale cabinets	<p>Ensure storage, throughout the supply chain, is dry and mould free. Floors and mops should be regularly cleaned.</p> <p>This avoids infection. Infection can quickly contaminate an entire draught dispense system.</p>
Trays & Cans	Define tray specification and high wall trays to add extra protection given long distribution routes and thinner cans
Pallets	Define Euro /standard Heat Close boarded Pallets . Close boarded = more rigid distribution lack of movement
Temperature control	<p>Ensure a consistent temperature control. If you can afford it, keged beer should be transported in refrigerated containers (reefers). <b>If you deem that water line is sufficient, understand that you cannot ensure your pallets will not be near to the engine room.</b></p> <p>This avoids oxidation and flavor tainting.</p>
Used containers	<p>Empty kegs and casks should be sealed or sensed and stored separately from fresh beer.</p> <p>This avoids cross contamination.</p>
Cleaning and sterilising facilities	<p>All couplings, and fittings should be regularly cleaned (UK industry standard is every 7 days).</p> <p>Beer lines should be flushed clean at the end of every day and cleaned, with approved cleaning solutions, every 7 days. Lines should be rinsed after cleaning to remove any taints from the cleaning solutions.</p> <p>This avoids infection, flavour tainting and cross contamination.</p>

No food	<p>Do not store beer alongside food.</p> <p>This avoids growth of microorganisms, flavour taint.</p>
Clean facilities	<p>Storage and dispense facilities should be cleaned, in line with advice above. Use industry recommended cleaning agents and avoid strong detergents that could taint the flavor of the beer.</p> <p>This avoids infection, flavour tainting and cross contamination.</p>
Avoid light	<p>Bottled beer should not be exposed to excessive sunlight.</p> <p>This avoids beer becoming “light-struck” – generation of light induced Sulphur flavours.</p>
Inspect and taste	<p>Cellar/bar staff should inspect and taste beer to ensure it is fit for dispense. Education in how the beer should be served and should taste is imperative.</p> <p>This ensures the beer is served at its optimum quality and as the brewer intended.</p>
<b>Dispense System</b>	
Beer line	All beer lines should be approved, food grade material, clean and free from taint.
Python runs	Python runs should be as short as possible in order to hold the least amount of beer between pours and avoid issues of fobbing.
Start of session	Beer lines should be free from final rinse water, with the first “pull” of the session inspected for odour, taste, visual by staff to ensure optimum quality and consumer experience.
New casks / kegs	Staff should inspect and test beer from new casks/kegs, clean/seal and store old containers as above.
<b>At the bar – point of sale</b>	
Glasses	Use clean, undamaged glasses, free of detergent and chlorine. Do not place coffee cups in the same dishwasher as beer glasses. Do not dry glasses with towels washed with fabric softener.
Training of bar staff	Bar staff must be trained and educated about the beer being served. This manages the expectations of the consumer. Bar staff must be able to assess the smell, taste, colour, clarity, head and quality of the beer in order to resolve any dispense issues.

# IN CONCLUSION

- ❑ Do not sell your beers without undertaking due diligence of the market – no matter how easy/reactive the sell is. Ensure the integrity of shelf life and quality of product. Visit the market – this is invaluable in understanding the consumer, dispense challenges, suitability of beer style to market.
- ❑ Ensure that logistics from your brewery to the market is fit for purpose so that the quality of beer and dispense point is as you, the brewer, intends.
- ❑ If you can afford it, refrigerated transport is a MUST. Don't rely on weather patterns to regulate the temperature of your product.
- ❑ Control the quality of your product as much as possible, from brewery gate to point of dispense.
- ❑ Don't overly worry about transportation costs. A premium beer needs to be dispensed at premium quality, which will then enable premium price.

- 
- ❑ If you are starting on the export road/market – do not take a volume approach.
  - ❑ Ensure quality/freshness of product and education of the consumer/market are in place. The consumer will pay a higher price for a higher quality, fresh imported beer.
  - ❑ Investigate where other brewers are having success.
    - Sweden is a good market as they are “early adopters” of new beer styles.
    - Italy has a blossoming beer culture but there are significant issues with dispense/keeping the beer cool.
  - ❑ Remember to factor keg return costs into the price of your beer. One trip kegs save a lot in transportation costs. Or, look for reciprocal arrangements with brewers in export market so kegs can be back-filled for return journey.
- 

- 
- ❑ In new, emerging markets export smallpack to start OR put a lot of resource into the training of local staff – wholesaler/distributor in the handling of your draught beer.
  - ❑ Be firm on “best before” dates. Ensure your best practice is acceptable, taking into account the length of journey to market / storage temperature en route and in place and the number of points within the supply chain. Try to ensure that the beer will taste the same in market as at home. Certain beers will withstand higher temperatures better than others – i.e. barley wine/imperial stout will last longer than IPA.
- 

Optimum Brand Quality

E  
D  
U  
C  
A  
T  
I  
O  
N

R  
A  
T  
E  
O  
F  
S  
A  
L  
E

P  
R  
O  
G  
R  
E  
S  
S  
I  
V  
E

R  
E  
T  
A  
I  
L  
S  
T  
D  
S

BRAND SPECIFICATIONS



# CONTACT US

## **BFBI –**

Ruth Evans MBE

Tel: 01902 422303

Email: [ruthevens@bfbi.org.uk](mailto:ruthevens@bfbi.org.uk)

## **UKTI –**

Tel: 020 7215 5000

[www.ukti.gov.uk](http://www.ukti.gov.uk)

UKTI Regional Offices –

[http://www.ukti.gov.uk/pt\\_pt/export/unitedkingdom/contactus.html?null](http://www.ukti.gov.uk/pt_pt/export/unitedkingdom/contactus.html?null)

