



IS YOUR HOTEL MAXIMIZING YOUR LIQUOR LICENCING OPPORTUNITIESTO IMPROVE YOUR BOTTOM LINE?

Over the many decades we have been in this industry there have been many changes to liquor licencing, policies and regulations. We often find that hotels are not maximizing licencing opportunities or maintaining current compliance standards. The following are a few areas we find that hotels and resorts are missing out on licencing opportunities:

HOURS OF LICENSING

Many establishments are not maximizing their hours of licensing. The Liquor Branch now allows liquor sales and service to commence at 9:00 am. Which is important for breakfast, brunch and special events service. Many hotels are not maximizing their hours at night which can have an impact on banquet and various celebratory events.

LICENSED AREAS

Many establishments are not maximizing the licenced areas in their hotel and outdoor areas that could be permanently licensed for events and/or general guest use. This could allow you to market additional areas at your property. Right now patios are very popular and we expect this trend to continue after COVID-19. Another option is to expand business through the addition of a manufacturing license so you would produce your own beer and wine on site. We can assist with the entire process from business plans, licensing, and operational and manufacturing advice.

STRUCTURAL CHANGES

Hotel management may make changes to their license areas that are frequently not reported to the liquor branch as a structural change. This can potentially place the establishment “offside” with the Liquor Branch and could result in enforcement action.

CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP, SHAREHOLDERS, LICENSEES, REPRESENTATIVES AND THIRD PARTY OPERATORS

Changes to these four items require applications and approval by the liquor branch as they want to ensure that anyone who has a beneficial interest in a licensed establishment is what is what they consider a “fit and proper person”. Also by having a licensee representative appointed (usually the Hotel General Manager) allows them to sign basic applications on behalf of the hotel ownership.

BANQUEST ROOMS, MEETING ROOMS AND PRE-FUNCTION AREAS



Hotels sometimes do not have their banquet rooms, meeting rooms and pre-function areas properly license to maximize the potential service of patrons. This includes potential outdoor licenced areas. Also hotels have what the branch calls a 'Patron Participation Entertainment Endorsement' on their Food Primary to permit dancing, comedy and karaoke events. This is important for fundraisers, celebratory events and conferences.

COVID-19 CHANGES

We are doing a substantial number of Temporary Patio Extension applications for hotels in response to the pandemic, for some for hotels these temporary patios will become permanent licensed spaces.

THINKING OUT OF THE BOX – HERE ARE A FEW ITEMS YOU MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER

- Licensing a portion of your lobby as a lobby lounge area.
- Consider installing in your Liquor or Food Primary Licenced area a mini brewery or winery to produce your own product in a small space.
- Convert a Liquor Primary area to a Food Primary area given the recent changes in legislation to obtain greater operational flexibility.
- If you have an off sales endorsement on your liquor license are you maximizing this opportunity? This is of particular importance now that hotels can purchase liquor at wholesale prices.

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Compliance can be a challenging topic, however, reviewing whether or not your hotel set up to pass an inspection can save you a lot of hassle later on. We do audits of licensed establishments to ensure they are in compliance with the Liquor Branch's requirements.

The hotel industry has to be ready to welcome the world back in the coming months! We would welcome the opportunity to work with you and your team to make sure you are maximizing your opportunities and are also compliant with the liquor branch requirements so you can "hit the ground running" when the world opens up again. We would love to help you in your project and identify where we can support you.