

How to Get a Bartending Job with Little or No Experience

Contributed by B.J. Williams
Saturday, 16 February 2008
Last Updated Saturday, 16 February 2008

Lots of people want to get a bartending job but don't know how to go about doing it. This article will expose some of the myths of bartending jobs and show you the steps to getting your first bartending job.

The first step in getting a bartending job is getting an interview. Without putting yourself in front of the people who do the hiring you can't get a bartending job. This step seems simple enough but many would-be bartenders get caught up in the myth of "they won't hire me without any experience." Please don't misunderstand me - some bartending jobs require experience, but most do not. Experience is required at high volume, super fast paced establishments. For these bartending jobs you must be extremely efficient at making drinks and serving customers - there is just no time to learn on the job. But most establishments are not high volume and super fast paced. So why are you still hearing that they want experience?

Employers often use the "no experience" reason for not hiring as a polite way to end the conversation. The truth is that in most establishments your Attitude is way more important than your experience. Experience breeds bad habits. Many owners and managers would rather hire a "blank slate" and train them properly. But this "blank slate" must have a phenomenal attitude. It is your duty to not only develop this phenomenal attitude but to make sure it shines through during the application process so that you can put it on full display during your interview.

Here are two tools that will make sure your great attitude is conveyed during your job search. Write a cover letter and a resume. Many bartending jobs will only require that you fill out their application. If you want to be included with the group of people applying for the job and don't want to stand out - then by all means, fill out the application. If you want to elevate yourself above the crowd - then have a really great cover letter and resume than separates you from the pack.

In order to have a great cover letter and resume you must design it specifically for getting a bartending job. Do not be generic. To write a compelling cover letter you need to tell a compelling story. Remember all the challenging situations you have been in. Try to remember even the smallest details. Is the story about how you handled an aggravated customer? Is about some obstacle you overcame? Does it show how you are a great team player and employee? Your cover letter must show -not tell- that you are a great hire. The employer needs a reason to hire you; you must give them that reason by showing how you will be an asset to their organization.

After you have told a compelling story in your cover letter you must back it up with a solid resume. This resume doesn't have to have bartending experience on it, but it must be tailored to bartending. It should never have irrelevant information (i.e. type 90 words a minute; proficient in excel; etc.) You would be amazed at how many resumes get thrown in the garbage because the applicant doesn't bother to even list relevant information. Examples of relevant information and experience could include: used upselling techniques to increase sales per customer visit, learned customer satisfaction is exceeding - not meeting - customer expectations, voted "easiest to talk to" in my high school yearbook. Notice that none of these bullet points requires bartending experience. You need to tailor your previous experience, no matter what it was, to fit the skill sets of bartending.

Once you have gained an interview for a bartending job by using the above mentioned tools you must then ace the bartending job interview. Interviews for bartending jobs are very different then interviews for traditional jobs. Bartending requires that you put your personality on display and you must do this in the interview. The tools that you created to get your bartending job interview will come in very handy in preparation for the interview. Since you have created a compelling cover letter and resume all you need to do to prepare for the interview is review them. Have stories ready. Be able to speak intelligently about your experiences and how they relate to bartending. And most importantly, get the interviewer to like you. If they feel like you are likeable and have a positive attitude they will think that their customers will like you and spend more money. Also, people want to work with people they like. Make it your priority in your interview to make the interview feel more like a conversation. Don't give one word answers, put your opinions and personality on display. Talk to the interviewer about bartending and topics most likely to interest them. If you seem more like a friend then like an applicant you will get the job.

In conclusion, bartending jobs are not as hard to get as it seems. Aspiring bartenders just don't usually know where to start. This article lays the foundation for beginning your bartending job search. For more detailed information and techniques check out my free newsletter and program at www.getabartendingjob.com

Brian Williams has over 12 years in the Bar, Bartending and Food and Beverage industries. He has helped dozens of people get a bartending job through his Seven Secrets Program. His program and free "Get a Bartending Job" Newsletter are available at <http://www.getabartendingjob.com>