



# KMA

## CONSULTING GROUP

### *Presents Beverage Education for Operators by Operators ...*



*Photograph by Lorraine London*

#### **What's the big idea?**

My company, KMA Consulting Group, created a beverage education program for leaders, bartenders, cocktail servers and anyone else who wants to learn more about this major profit center. To sell a product, or manage a product, you need to *know* that product. Unfortunately, when instructors start talking about the history and production of beverage—countries, mash bills, etc., our cast members' eyes glaze over. The story of beverage IS fascinating and dark, though—it's about resourcefulness and determination, but also about war, plague and colonization. We focus on storytelling because those stories should be told, and our ultimate goal is for our cast to become confident guides to fantasyland.

Our 20-hour course covers beer, wine, spirits, mixology and menu creation for the entire team, as well as leader-oriented modules on inventory, pour cost, pricing, bar setup, controls and more. We pull it all together with service, because if we're not using the tools and the knowledge to make a connection with our guests, we're fumbling at the goal line.

#### **What inspired you to create a beverage school?**

The rest of the hospitality industry has left adult clubs in the dust when it comes to beverage programming. Even the corner pub has a "signature cocktail menu," and many restaurants dedicate significant labor to prepping fresh ingredients and creating hand-crafted drinks. I've been to bars where it takes it takes twenty minutes to make some specialty concoction that arrives blinking, smoking and changing color before your eyes. We all know that won't work in our businesses, so I began to think about how we could leverage the public's interest in cocktail culture and borrow some of those concepts to create what I call "everyday mixology." These are programs anyone can be taught to execute.

There are operators who believe all that effort is a waste of time—guests come for the entertainment, after all—but I respectfully disagree. Let's put in the work and step up our game! We want to charge crazy premiums, but we should earn it by delivering a superior guest experience.

#### **What differentiates your course from others?**

This course is designed for operators BY operators, which means everything we teach is ultimately geared toward making money—despite the daily challenges we face. It is conceived so cast can learn alongside their leaders. Not everyone who works in our clubs excelled at school or has the best attention span—and that's ok! This is an immersive, interactive and, at times, competitive experience that promotes team-building and personal development. Whenever possible, we use your venue as the learning environment, and strive to leave it in a better place than we found it. That means improved inventory protocols, a more efficient bar setup, a framework for training future cast members and a brand-new specialty cocktail menu—guaranteed!

#### **Why are you qualified to teach this course?**

I've formally participated in national and global programs such as the Wine & Spirits Education Trust, the Society of Wine Educators and the Court of Master Sommeliers. I've also taught bartending school and am a certified TIPS trainer. Much of what I know, I've learned in the field, though, sponging up knowledge from the age of seventeen. For me, it's less about getting a pin or a certificate and more about having genuine passion and the desire to keep learning. I've operated clubs for decades, so I understand that point where the practical and the theoretical bump against each other—I live in that space between fantasy and reality.

#### **Why beverage in particular?**

KMA offers complete training programs in marketing, promotions, entertainment, hospitality technology and finance. Training is an area where we, as an industry, have failed. We encourage leaders to hire personalities because you can't *teach* personality—but you are also making a commitment to take that raw material and shape it! The issue is, not everyone is a natural-born teacher—even those who are rock stars in their area of expertise. We are here to fill that void. We offer customized recruiting, development and retention solutions for *all* areas of operation. For me, however, beverage will always occupy a special place. The story of beverage is the story of civilization, period.

*Want to know more? Ask us anything! Visit [KMAConsultingGroup.com](http://KMAConsultingGroup.com) or call Kelly directly at 917.324.0893.*