

# Basic Tips for Hosting Happy Hours

## 1. Arrive 10 Minutes Early

- Ensure that there is enough space for your group if you are not meeting in a separate room.
- Double check that your spot is reserved.
- Post a sign that says Liberty on the Rocks so people can find you (if it's okay with the management). See Pin-Ups under chapter resources to download one of three pre-made signs or make your own\*!
- Set up a literature table where you can leave out flyers/brochures and other informational materials for guests to take, including information regarding local free market groups and causes as well as educational information.
- Move chairs and tables if necessary (be sure to ask a server or manager before you do this) to make it easier for guests to mingle and walk around. If you have a featured guest who will be speaking briefly and/or if you will be making announcements and/or allowing others to address the crowd, be sure there is a spot carved out for you to do so.

## 2. Make Sure Guests Can Find You

- Let the host or hostess know that your group is there, so they can direct any guests your way.
- Tape a visible sign (or banner) up if you are able (or ask the management to put their reservation sign with your group name, which can be used in lieu of your own sign).
- LOTR pin-ups can be downloaded from the main website under the Helpful Tips & Resources section, or you can create your own.

## 3. Use Nametags if Possible

- Nametags make obvious who is there as a guest of your group.

- Nametags make people feel more at ease with each other, which is conducive to networking. They also assist you in remembering everyone's name, as it can be hard to keep track without them!
- Ask members during announcements if anyone is willing to volunteer to bring nametags and/or pens and markers to keep costs low or non-existent.

#### **4. Watch For Guests**

- Keep an eye out for those who may be looking around or seem unsure about whether they are in the right place.
- Be sure to welcome guests into the group by saying hello and recognizing them so they feel at ease. This will increase the chance that they will return!

#### **5. Greet All Guests & Make Introductions**

- Try not to engage in long conversations with one person the entire night – others want to talk with you too!
- Between all three organizers (or those in attendance), try to at least say hello to every guest if you are able.
- Between the organizers, try and keep track of who is there as well as who should be introduced to whom. For example, if you know someone there is looking to get involved with a cause and another is looking for volunteers or new members, be the one to make the connection!
- Many people who show up will wish to talk to you, so be ready!

#### **6. Give Announcements & Allow Others To Share Information With the Group**

- Ultimately, most people attend your meetings to mingle and network with others; however, each meet-up provides you the opportunity to pass along important messages to guests. This could include an important liberty-oriented event that is coming up, the recognition of a local free market group or cause (non-candidate oriented), or some words of wisdom involving the advancement of free markets and individual rights (we know you've got plenty to say about the matter!). This is also a great way to announce and rally support for activism and educational opportunities organized by your group (if applicable).

- Announcements should also be extended to the group. A great way to ensure that guests have a chance to share important information is by having a “**30-second soapbox**” (it could also be longer, just be sure when people make announcements they are quick and to the point, so as not to bore guests with too much information). This allows members to share information regarding upcoming events, activist opportunities, educational opportunities, news, local free market groups, etc.

## Working With Your Venue

It is very important to **reserve your space** before posting your event.

When you first begin looking to reserve space at a venue it helps to choose nights when they are the most in need of business. When your network grows in size, it is easier to switch nights of the week and/or venues if necessary. In addition, once your group is able to bring twenty or more individuals once or twice each month, you may be able to work out a deal with the manager. This could include the extension of drink specials, happy hour deals, gift cards, appetizers for your group or other friendly accommodations.

### Talk to the manager

- Ask a manager or the person who schedules your reservations whether they would consider extending a drink deal or if they have any special deals they can offer to your group. Let them know how often you will be meeting and how many guests you plan to bring in.
- It is also a good idea to ask permission from the management before doing things out of the ordinary, such as posting banners or signs, moving furniture, etc. They usually don't mind, but appreciate it when you ask.

## It's All About the Volunteers!

If you want your network to grow, especially as an educational and/or activist-oriented group, you are going to need volunteers. You will need to find individuals who are right for your group and must also ensure they are given meaningful roles that they both can enjoy and benefit from.

## **Locating Volunteers**

1. Ask your friends, acquaintances and/or co-workers
2. Contact Local Liberty-Oriented Bloggers
  - Ask around. If they are popular, people will know about them!
  - Once you find a popular liberty-oriented blog, contact the person in charge of the site, introduce yourself and describe your group. Find out if they would consider mentioning your group and the fact that you are looking for volunteers. You should have something written up ahead of time to describe your group as well as the kind of volunteers you are looking for.
  - Look for local blogs on facebook, in person or on the Internet in general.
  - Once you find a popular blog site it will most likely contain links to similar blogs in the area.
3. Send a Message to Your Facebook Group & Post on Your FB page and/or blog
4. Recruit During Your Meetings
  - Consider asking regular guests
  - Seek out individuals who are enthusiastic about the group and/or promoting liberty in general.

## **Attracting Volunteers**

- Create meaningful roles for your volunteers before you begin looking for them. Know exactly what you need your volunteers to do
- When you announce that you are looking for volunteers, include the specific roles you are looking to fill
- Ask interested parties to share why they want to work with you. For example, you can ask them to respond to your volunteer ad with a short description of why they want to become involved with your network as well as what they hope to accomplish. This will not only help you weed out the not-so-good candidates (not that there necessarily will be any), it will also show that you are not just accepting anyone and these are serious volunteer opportunities that you are offering

## Keeping Your Volunteers Around

Volunteers are unpaid individuals who want to get involved because they believe in a cause. But do not assume they don't require feedback, praise or a benefit from the experience. All volunteers must be treated with respect and gratitude and must feel that their experience with your group is both enjoyable and beneficial.

- When first talking with your new or potential volunteers, be sure to find out what they are interested in working on so that you are able to put them in the role that best reflects their interests. Also be sure to determine their skill sets, including their current abilities as well as those they wish to develop
- Be sure that you are clear about what you expect/need from your volunteers once they sign up. Make it easy for them to understand exactly what their role is
- Never take your volunteers for granted! Be sure to provide them with both feedback and praise whenever possible. Always recognize them for their hard work and compliment them when they deserve it, including announcing their accomplishments to the rest of the team via an email or at a meeting.
- Keep your volunteers (as well as members) updated on all your activities so they feel they are a part of the group
- Be sure to invite your volunteers to all activities your group is hosting, whether it is a social meet-up or some event that is co-hosted with another free market group