

HOW YOUR BREWERY CAN SERVE AS A BRANDING TOOL

Storytelling is both an art and a science, the merging of words with imagery to craft a narrative complete with feeling and emotion. Your brand functions in the same way. Beyond a logo, a label or a tagline, your brand is the feeling people get when they think about your product, your company, and your people. Your brand tells your story.

So what is your story? While your logo and labels are all part of a branding package, a brand extends to the experience patrons have when they visit your brewery or tap room. Just as the label on your bottle was designed to tell a story about the beer inside, your building plays a similar role. What does someone immediately see when they walk inside your tap room? Or when they

tour your production facilities? How are your seating and merchandising areas arranged? What do you add to the “customer experience” beyond your beer? How does one enter your facility? All of these experiences – from space planning to the smallest of details – impact the perception your customers have when they visit your space.

Branding your space

There are many factors to consider when evaluating how your facility can personify your brand. Think about:

- **Who You Are.** What kind of an image do you want to portray to your customers? Do you want your facility to be transparent, drawing customers into the brewing process, or more private and

separated? What makes your brewery unique? How is that represented through your graphics? The built environment? Do your different offerings have sub brands?

- **Current and Future Needs.** Does your current space accommodate demand and use? Do you intend to grow? Do you need more space to keep up with demand, or more space to promote a specific feature (such as adding space for live performances)?
- **Size limitations or opportunities.** The logistical limitations of a 10 BBL brewhouse will be quite different from those of a 100 BBL brewhouse. Do you have both indoor and outdoor space? Do you serve food or accommodate outside food sales? Do you have multiple locations?



CASE STUDY: Odell Brewing Company

Odell Brewing Company has undergone two major expansion projects in the last six years to accommodate increased demand and visitation to their Fort Collins, Colorado facility. Prior to both expansions, Odell had maxed out their capacity and could no longer comfortably accommodate all who wanted to visit the tap room. The 2008 expansion increased production areas, the bottling line, warehouse space and the public tasting room. The latest expansion added a new fermentation cellar, tap room, hop cooler, brewhouse and grain handling facilities. The beer garden was also expanded to accommodate outdoor activity year round – a major draw for Colorado craft beer enthusiasts.

From the beginning, integrating their unique brand into the new space was a priority. “The Odell brand is not easily articulated – it’s an extended family culture, inclusive. We are a group of people who are excited to

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- Amanda Johnson-King, Odell Brewing Company

make great beer and we want to invite people into our world and get them excited about what we do and who we are. The building itself is a big piece of that – a place to have people experience our culture,” says Amanda Johnson-King, Marketing and Branding Manager for Odell Brewing Company.

“Our mission is to make high quality innovative beers while at the same time taking care of people – both people within the brewery and our extended community

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of Fort Collins. A lot of our beer does not fall into a certain category. We like to foster creativity within our coworkers and allow people to step out of their shell and shine."

The design process began with building the right internal team and identifying one overarching goal: make Odell Brewing Company a destination. Odell hired Fort Collins firm RB+B Architects, Inc. to partner with them and lead the design of both building expansions.

One of the more unique aspects of the latest expansion is the new brewhouse. The brewhouse has become a showcase space for Odell and is really their heart and soul. Johnson-King noted that being able to bring people into the now warm and welcoming space has provided transparency and gives patrons a feel in their brewery that was missing before. It reinforces the goal to show patrons what Odell is all about.

Functionally, areas like the expanded tap room and second bar allow the brewery to partition off private

events from the main tap room while keeping the remainder of the facility open to the public. The backyard beer garden takes cues from European counterparts with long community tables and other creative seating that fosters social connections between patrons. "Craft beer is inherently social. Beer lends itself to these community oriented gathering spaces," says Johnson-King.

Aesthetically, the design team was able to work with Odell's sales and marketing teams to craft details that would make the building unique to Odell's brand. Graphic elements from their bottle labels were woven into the building. Metal detailing showcases cutouts of hops and other materials used in the brewing process. Glass from old beer bottles was integrated into the restroom sinks. There is a "surprise and delight" element as one walks through the space and discovers each intricate detail, such as glass from old beer bottles that was integrated into the concrete counter tops. Discovery becomes part of the patron's experience and people look for and expect those details to surface while they are there.

Behind the scenes, the organization's emphasis on sustainability can be found in both the building and the brewing process itself. Equipment accommodates sustainable methods, such as reclaiming steam, heat exchanges, and re-purposing materials for new uses in the building. A photovoltaic array graces the roof and pervious paving was used in the parking area to reduce runoff. Odell was deliberate and intentional about what materials were used clearly articulating a style, feel and message unique to the company.

Nearly a year after the latest expansion was complete, the building continues to serve its function in helping to market the Odell Brewing Company brand. "We have always had credibility in our ability to craft great beer, and now we have elevated our location to match that. In the same way that our latest packaging redesign sought to tell the story of 'the magic that happens inside [the bottle],' our facility does the same."

The details:

Metal detailing (1 & 2) uses cutouts of hops and other materials used in the brewing process. Reclaimed materials in the taproom (3) show the company's commitment to sustainability. Beautifully detailed ironwork (4) is carried through the exterior while glass from old beer bottles was integrated into bathroom sinks (5). The Odell Brewing Company logo is seen in various areas throughout the facility (6), including the polished concrete in the new brewhouse.

