



AT THE BAR WITH BOWDITCH

A Legal Blog for the Craft Brewing Community

10 Things to Consider Before Opening a Brewery

BY AIVI NGUYEN • MARCH 19, 2018

The post below was originally published by the Worcester Business Journal, titled, “10 Things I Know About Opening a Brewery,” by AiVi Nguyen.

- 10) Choose your name and logo carefully. The end goal is to be able to trademark your identity. In order to do that, you have to be distinguishable from others. Do your research and be creative.
- 9) Size. Be Goldilocks. Like the three bears’ beds, successful breweries come in all different sizes. Be honest with yourself about how big you want to get and how big you think you’ll get.
- 8) Location. What are the zoning restrictions at the location you are looking at? Is there room to grow? Is there enough parking? Pick a city or town keen on the idea of a new brewery.
- 7) Lease or own. There are pros and cons to each. If you opt to lease, go over the lease with a fine-toothed comb. Make sure the landlord is someone you can get along with, someone you can imagine working with for five to 10 years.
- 6) Financing. Whether you are dipping into your 401(k), asking your friends and family for loans, seeking investors, or applying for a bank loan, whatever you think your budget is, increase it by 20 percent. Things cost more than you think.
- 5) Timing. You will not open the brewery as early as you think you will. Plan ahead as to how you will keep your lights on during the process.
- 4) Food. It’s common sense to feed people who are drinking, whether it’s from your onsite kitchen, food trucks, or delivery from local restaurants.
- 3) Keep your circle tight. Make sure everyone on your team is for the team and not themselves. Successful breweries have trade secrets. A formal contract defining rights and responsibilities between the owners is an absolute necessity.

2) Do business with professionals who understand breweries. Starting a brewery is different than starting other businesses. Deal with lawyers, accountants, banks and insurers who know the ins and outs.

1) Make friends with other brewery owners. The craft beer industry in Massachusetts is welcoming and collegial. Join the [Massachusetts Brewers Guild](#). Reach out to owners you admire to pick their brain.