



Seizing the Season: Minnesota Summer Edition

A Strategic Guide for Minnesota Restaurants

Prepared in partnership with Performance Foodservice Minnesota and Hospitality Minnesota

We send this every month for one reason: we want this industry healthy — not just busy, but healthy. So here are a few tools to help you get the most out of July and set up what comes next.



SAINT PAUL BREWING - PHOTO CREDIT - EXPLORE MINNESOTA

Turn summer guests into lasting ones.

Summer brings people who don't come the rest of the year — make the visit memorable, then build a system to bring them back. A QR code on the table tent, receipt, or room folder gets them on your email list; give them a reason to scan it, like a discount or first crack at fall events. Train your team to ask for a Google review at the table, right when a guest says they loved it. And send everyone off with a next step — a return-visit card, a "book before you check out" rate, a fall-calendar invite. A first-timer in July becomes a regular in November.

Lean on your supplier.

Summer is when Minnesota product sells itself — sweet corn, berries, and lake fish. Call your Performance Food Group rep now, ask what's at its peak and best-priced, and build a limited summer feature around it. Pre-order ahead of holiday weekends so a Saturday rush doesn't leave you short and ask where you can cut waste during the crush. That's what the partnership is for.



Get ahead of the staffing handoff.

Staffing is the hardest part of this business. Turnover runs about 75 percent a year, each replacement costs three to six thousand dollars, and accommodation and food services has the highest job-vacancy rate of any industry in Minnesota. You can't count on a quick backfill in August, so move now: ask each key person if they're staying past Labor Day, cross-train so two people can run every shift, and post fall openings while the pool is active — leaning on referrals and break-hungry students. Give people a reason to stay, too; clear advancement paths help operators keep 60 to 70 percent of their crew long-term. Nobody hires well in a panic.

Plan around the Fair.

The Great Minnesota Get-Together runs August 27 through Labor Day — twelve days that change the math. In the metro, give regulars a reason to choose you over the fairgrounds: a fair-week special, a locals' night. Up north or on a lake, the metro's heading your way, so market to those travelers and keep your hours and listings current. Caterers, lock contracts and confirm staffing now — the surge and the crunch arrive together. Plan for it.

Protect your crew — and yourself.

A stretch this busy can wear good people down — and a worn-out team in July is a short-staffed one in October. Build real days off into the schedule. Cross-train so nobody's irreplaceable. Feed your people, cover the rough shifts yourself, and say thank you out loud. And watch your own tank; owner burnout is just as real, and the business needs you healthy most of all. That's not soft — that's how a healthy operation runs.



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One more thing...

Invite your local legislator or candidate to your place of business. Pick a slow afternoon, walk them through the kitchen, show them the schedule, open the books if you're comfortable — and tell them your story, the good and the bad. What it really takes to run a hospitality business in Minnesota: the jobs you create and the pride you take in it, and the costs, rules, and margins that keep you up at night. Let them see the whole picture, not the version from a committee hearing.

And it has to be now. Every seat in the Legislature is up this cycle — EVERY SEAT. The candidate knocking on doors in your town this summer may be the one voting on swipe fees, PFML changes, liquor laws, and wage and tipping issues next session. Reach them while they're still listening, before the gavel falls and positions harden. A legislator who's stood in your kitchen votes differently than one who's only heard from lobbyists. Be the operator they remember.

Want help setting it up? That's what we're here for — Ryan Hamilton and I are here to help and may be coming to your town this summer on our listening tour. Check here for more details - www.hospitalityminnesota.com

Here's to a strong, healthy summer.

See you around the table!

Angie Whitcomb, IOM
President & CEO, Hospitality Minnesota



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