

SURVIVAL KIT ITEM ONE

Archipelago Table Mat

These teaching notes were prepared by Lau Geok Theng.

Item Description, Use and Preparation

- A 22 cm by 14 cm colored paper sheet (those included in the survival kit are laminated) with descriptions of three types of Archipelago beer (Traveller's Wheat, Trader's Brown Ale and Straits Pale) and spaces for three glasses or bottles to be placed beside the beer descriptions.
- The mat can be used for discussion on topics directly related and unrelated to the mat. Some suggestions are provided in the next section.
- Preparation:
 - It is best to reproduce the mat for each small group of students in the tutorial or discussion class. This can be done by scanning it into an image and then printing with a color printer (try to avoid black and white version of the mat).
 - Students should be asked to examine the Archipelago website (<http://www.archipelagobrewery.com/>) carefully before coming to this class. Students can also be encouraged to go see the Facebook Archipelago fan page: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?ref=logo#/pages/Archipelago-Brewery/90333198769?ref=nf> (hopefully it is still valid).
 - Beer can be a sensitive topic so students should be reminded that they should not consume beer especially if they are below the age limit for drinking beer. They should be briefed that the exercise examines marketing process and strategies and it treats beer as a consumer product, like other consumer products. For countries and societies where beer drinking is more commonplace, the instructor can seek to get a few bottles of the beer stated in the mat and students can sample very small quantities of these beers. This should be done with great caution to avoid complaints from parents, school administrators or even the students themselves.

Some Possible Topics for Discussions

Product Characteristics and Attributes

- Ask the students to read the description of the beer on the mat and comment to the similarities and differences of Archipelago compared to other mainstream beers, such as Tiger, Heineken and Budweiser, which they know.
- Solicit words to describe Archipelago as a beer. Appropriate words are special, specialty, unique and customized.
- Students who have studied the website carefully will come out with the term 'crafted beer'. A discussion of what crafted beer is can be carried out. Crafted beer is made in small batches, one at a time, by brewers. Special ingredients are selected to create more complex taste. It tends to be more customized for specific groups.
- The crafted beer can be assessed and evaluated by examining its (a) color – light or dark, (b) carbonation (crisp and mellow), aroma (fruity and flowery or malty and roasty, (d) body (light or heavy) and (e) flavor (bitter, sweet or sour). It uses a combination of all these to create complexity and uniqueness.
- The interesting thing for Archipelago is they have a designated brew master, Mr Fal Allen. His credentials and particulars can be found at the Archipelago website.

Usage Occasions

- The concept of usage occasion can first be discussed, using examples of other products (example, clothing – formal, leisure and sports; chips – snacking and cooking).
- The usage occasions for beer can then be discussed. Some of these are:
 - While working at the desk
 - While watching television
 - While chit-chatting with friends (perhaps in a pub)
 - While having meals
 - While having a celebration such as birthdays and weddings.
- The usage occasion focused by Archipelago can then be discussed. This can easily be identified from the mat: while having a meal. The three types of Archipelago beer featured in the mat can be used as follow:
 - Traveller's Wheat – for consumption with food which is sour and spicy.

- Trader's Brown Ale – for consumption with roasted meats or food cooked in sweet brown sauce.
- Straits Pale – for consumption with curried dishes.

Target Customers

- Students can be asked who the target customers of Archipelago are. Are they similar or different from those for mainstream beers?
- Archipelago is targeted at food lovers and discriminating beer drinkers who are interested in sophisticated taste. These are likely to be more educated and have higher income.
- Archipelago is competing more directly with wine than with mainstream beer in their product positioning.

Product Education and Tasting

- Students can be asked what they think the mat is used for in restaurants selling Archipelago.
- This mat can be used to create product awareness. The students can be asked to comment on the design of the mat for this purpose. The Archipelago logo on top of the mat – is it prominent and attractive enough?
- The mat can be used for product education. It is used to introduce three different versions of Archipelago. The mat provides details on the ingredients, characteristics and usage of these three versions of Archipelago. Are the explanations clear and easily understood?
- The mat can be used for product tasting. Customers can order small glasses of the three different types of beer and taste them separately, rinsing their mouth with water after each trial. They can then decide to order a large glass of their selected version. Is this a good way to introduce these three versions of Archipelago? What are the roles of product tasting? Is such tasting appropriate in a restaurant environment?
- If samples of the beer are available, the instructor can ask students to taste very small quantity of the three versions of the beer and comment on their tastes generally and also to evaluate whether their descriptions on the mat are accurate.

NOTE: The suggestions for the use of the mat above are only guidelines. I have deliberately written this note in outline form, so you can vary some of the ideas or try other ideas. I have not provided detailed descriptions or suggestions as I do not wish to bog you down with reading of unnecessary details. You can provide your feedback on the use of the above item for classroom discussion to McGraw Hill or myself (laugeoktheng@hotmail.com) so we can decide whether to include this item for future editions of the book and if yes, how to modify the suggestions for its use in the classroom.