

BREWERY GUEST EXPERIENCE STRATEGIES:

The Playbook for High-Volume Taprooms & Beer Gardens



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GoTab was founded in a brewery and built alongside operators navigating the realities of high-volume taprooms, beer gardens, and brewpubs every day.

After nearly a decade working with some of the busiest hospitality-driven brewery concepts in the industry, we've seen firsthand which operational strategies actually improve guest experience, increase guest spend, and reduce guest ordering friction.

This short playbook shares the key best practices, service models, and operational insights leading operators are using to deliver faster, more flexible, and more profitable guest experiences. Inside, you'll learn how modern breweries are combining hospitality, mobile ordering, real-time communication, and smarter operational workflows to drive stronger results without sacrificing the human element that makes taprooms successful.

*Disclaimer: This guide is for informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for any audit, tax or other professional advice, consultation or service.



What You'll Learn

How high-volume breweries reduce ordering friction.

Why hybrid ordering increases average tabs.

How modern beer gardens improve throughput.

What operators are doing to reduce kitchen bottlenecks.

Why guest flexibility drives higher spend.

MORE ORDERING OPTIONS. LESS FRICTION. BETTER RESULTS.

Hybrid Ordering Works—The Proof

 **46%**

Average Lift on Hybrid (Mobile & POS-initiated) Tabs

Operators using **hybrid tab flow** see significantly higher per-tab revenue compared to single-channel ordering.

 **96%**


Average Tip Attachment for Mobile Orders vs 72% for POS-initiated

Tip attachment for **mobile orders** vs. POS-initiated—a 24-point difference.

 **36%**

Higher Tabs from Membership Club Members vs. Non-members

Guest enrolled in **membership clubs** spend significantly more per visit—loyalty pay off directly at the tab level.

 **0.8 - 1.1%**

Lower Processing Rates with GoTab's Easy Tab Mobile Ordering vs. Competitor QR Systems

GoTab's Easy Tab mobile ordering delivers lower processing rates than competing QR systems—meaningful savings at scale.



The Four Service Models Defining Modern Taprooms and Beer Gardens

High-volume breweries are moving away from one-size-fits-all service models and adopting more flexible guest experiences based on the flow of their venue. After nearly a decade working alongside busy taprooms, brewpubs, and beer gardens, GoTab has identified four primary service models leading operators are using today.

1. **Full POS:** Traditional POS-forward service with bar ordering, check-in, and handheld POS support
2. **Easy Tab®:** Bartender opens the tab; guests reorder and close out on their phones
3. **QR Self Service:** Guests scan, own their tab, and move freely throughout the venue
4. **Full Service Hybrid:** Servers manage full-service dining while guests can still add items and pay from their phones

The most successful operators aren't choosing just one model—they're combining service flows to match the unique needs of their space, staff, and guests.

6 Best Practices for High-Volume Taproom & Beer Garden Operations





1. Flexibility Beats One-Size-Fits-All Service

Modern breweries are no longer operating with a single service model across the entire venue. The most successful taprooms and beer gardens are blending different guest experiences based on the flow of the space, staffing realities, and guest expectations.

Today's Breweries Often Operate Across:

- Taprooms
- Restaurants
- Beer gardens
- Patios
- Full-service brewpubs
- Event spaces

The most effective operators use different service flows for different spaces instead of forcing every guest into the same experience.

The Result:

- Faster service
- Better guest flow
- Higher average tabs
- Less staff friction

2. Hybrid Ordering Drives Higher Guest Spend

The highest-performing taprooms and beer gardens are making it easier for guests to order however—and whenever—they want. GoTab data consistently shows that breweries using a mix of guest- and server-initiated ordering see larger average tabs, stronger tip performance, and better overall guest flow than venues relying on a single ordering channel. The key is not replacing hospitality with technology, but using flexible ordering experiences to reduce friction while preserving the human interaction guests expect. Guests order more when they can choose how they interact with your venue.

According to GoTab Data:

- Guests using both mobile and in-person ordering generated significantly larger average tabs—in some cases as much as **72% higher**
- Mobile-closed tabs produced **tips 13-21% higher on average**
- **91-98% of mobile orders include a tip** compared to 60-83% of POS-only tabs

The Best-Performing Breweries Combine:

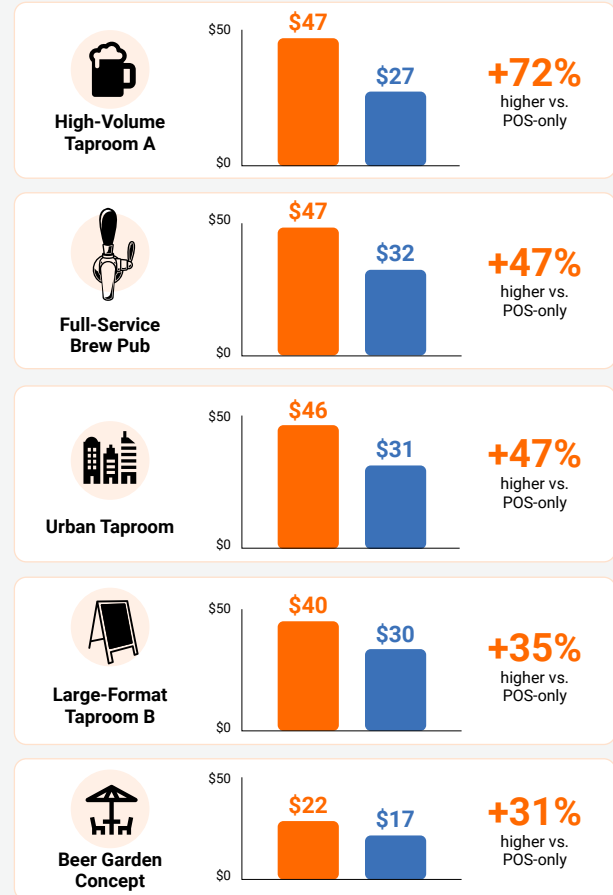
- Bar ordering
- QR ordering
- Mobile reorder functionality
- Tableside ordering
- Mobile payment

Without sacrificing hospitality.

Average Tab by Taproom Type

Mobile-inclusive tabs are higher across all taproom types

Mobile-inclusive avg tab POS-only avg tab



Average tab in USD

Processing Rate Comparison

GoTab Easy Tab offers lower rates and fees



Average Blended Rate—Lower is Better

1	Competitor QR/ Mobile Ordering		3.2–3.5% <small>with variability</small>
2	GoTab Standard QR		2.5%
3	GoTab Easy Tab		2.4%



GoTab Easy Tab has the lowest blended rate.

Per-Transaction Fee—Lower is Better

1	Competitor QR/ Mobile Ordering		\$0.25
2	GoTab Standard QR		\$0.25
3	GoTab Easy Tab		\$0.15



GoTab Easy Tab has the lowest per-transaction fee.

GoTab Easy Tab Delivers the Best Value

- ✓ Lowest blended rate: **2.4%**
- ✓ Lowest per-transaction fee: **\$0.15**

3. Mobile Ordering Doesn't Have to Mean Higher Processing Fees

Many QR ordering platforms process each mobile order as a separate card-not-present transaction, which typically carries higher processing fees and creates multiple transactions throughout a guest visit.

GoTab's Easy Tab® is different. Guests can order from their phone, the bar, or a server while every purchase remains connected to a single shared tab. Because mobile orders are tied to an authenticated tab, transactions are processed as card-present, helping operators reduce payment costs.

The Result:

- Lower processing fees
- Fewer transactions and tab closeouts
- Higher average guest spend
- More flexibility for guests

The best operators give guests the freedom to order anywhere while keeping every purchase connected to one Easy Tab.

4. The Best Guest Experiences Allow Guests to Move Freely

Today's best performing taprooms and beer gardens are designed for movement, not static dining experiences. Guests naturally shift between patios, bars, fire pits, event spaces, and communal seating throughout their visit—and the best operators are building service models that move with them instead of creating operational bottlenecks. Modern ordering systems that allow tabs, orders, and guest communication to follow the customer throughout the venue help improve throughput, reduce confusion, and create a more seamless hospitality experience at scale.

Modern taprooms are dynamic spaces.

Guests Move Between:

- Indoor seating
- Patios
- Fire pits
- Bars
- Event areas

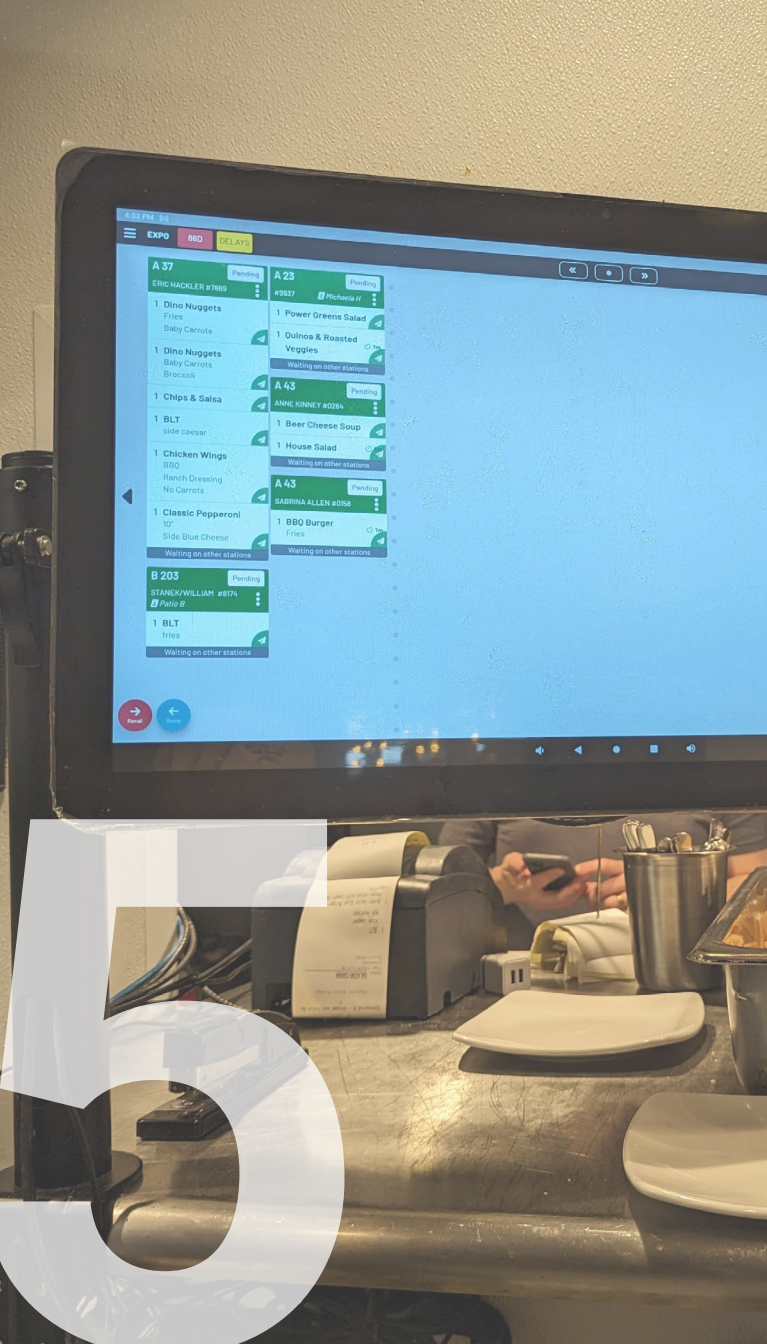
Leading Brewery Operators are Adopting Systems Where:

- Tabs follow guests throughout the venue
- Orders update automatically
- Guests can continue ordering from anywhere
- Staff communication improves in real time

This is Especially Important for:

- High-volume beer gardens
- Multi-zone breweries
- Event-driven venues
- Large-format hospitality concepts





5. Smarter Menu Management Protects the Kitchen

The busiest breweries know that operational flexibility matters just as much as menu quality during peak service. Instead of treating menus as static, leading operators are dynamically adjusting what guests can order—and how quickly they can receive it—based on real-time kitchen conditions, venue flow, and staffing capacity. This helps breweries protect throughput during rushes, improve communication with guests, and create a more consistent hospitality experience even during the busiest moments of service.

Your menu should not have to stay static during service.

Leading Breweries Now Dynamically Adjust:

- Menu availability
- Prep times
- Ordering zones
- Late-night offerings
- High-volume rush menus

This Helps:

- Reduce kitchen overwhelm
- Improve ticket flow
- Set guest expectations
- Increase operational consistency

Real-time prep delay messaging also improves communication and reduces frustration during peak periods.

6. Memberships and Loyalty Drive Higher Profitability

The best brewery membership programs don't just reward guests—they change behavior. Analysis of a brewery using GoTab Memberships feature found that membership fees exceeded benefit redemption across every tier, creating recurring revenue while delivering value to members.

Brewery club members at this venue also visit more often and spend more each month than non-members, with higher-tier members becoming highly engaged regulars over time.

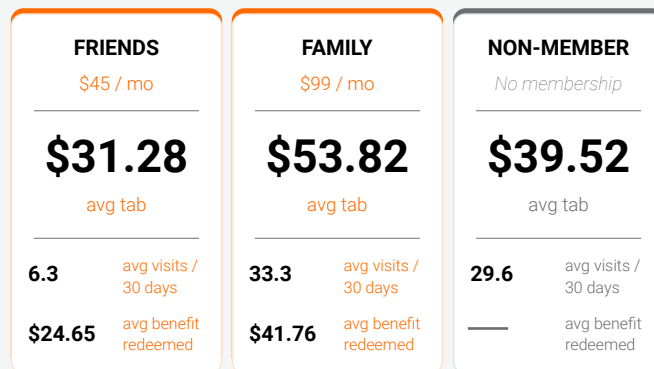
Today's Strongest Membership Programs:

- Apply benefits automatically
- Encourage repeat visits
- Generate recurring revenue
- Increase guest engagement
- Eliminate manual redemption

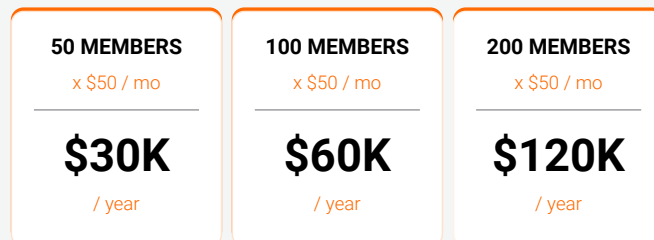
The Result:

- Membership fees exceed benefit redemption
- Higher visit frequency
- Increased monthly spend
- More engaged regulars
- Stronger guest relationships

Membership Tier Performance



Recurring Membership Revenue Adds Up



Loyal members often bring additional companion spend with them.

LESSONS FROM HIGH-VOLUME OPERATORS

Modern Brewery Operations



LESSON 01

Reduce Friction Everywhere

Guests spend more when ordering feels easiest. Every unnecessary step between a guest and their next drink is a missed opportunity.



LESSON 02

Let Technology Support Hospitality

The goal is not replacing staff—it's allowing staff to focus on guests instead of transactions.



LESSON 03

Build Flexible Service Models

Different spaces require different guest flows. Use a system that allows for flexibility.



LESSON 04

Improve Communication

Real-time updates reduce frustration and improve operational efficiency—for both guests and your team.



LESSON 05

Design for Guest Movement

Modern brewery guests rarely stay in one place. Your service model should move with them, not anchor them.

THE GOTAB PLATFORM

Why Brewery Operators Are Moving Toward Hybrid Hospitality Models



The Breweries Creating the Best Guest Experiences Today are Blending:

- Hospitality
- Operational flexibility
- Mobile convenience
- Real-time communication
- Smarter payment flows

The Result is a Service Model that:

- Improves throughput
- Increases guest spend
- Supports staff efficiency
- Preserves hospitality
- Scales more effectively during peak volume

ABOUT GOTAB

GoTab helps breweries, beer gardens, brewpubs, and high-volume hospitality venues deliver flexible guest experiences with:

- Easy Tab® shared tab technology
- Mobile ordering and payment
- QR ordering
- Handheld POS
- Kitchen display systems
- Memberships and loyalty
- Zone-based service models
- Real-time operational controls

The breweries winning today are not necessarily the ones adding the most locations or chasing the biggest crowds. They're the ones building smarter operations, creating better guest experiences, and making it easier for guests to order, stay longer, and come back more often.

To see how leading breweries, taprooms, and beer gardens are putting these strategies into practice, visit [GoTab.com](https://gotab.com) and explore our latest case studies from operators across craft beer and hospitality.



Ready to transform your venue?

Let's create a smarter, smoother guest experience—together.



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