



Multiple Points of Intervention: Boulder, CO

A Holistic Approach to Addressing DUI and Underage Drinking

At the time of acceptance as a demonstration site for the NHTSA project, Boulder, CO had been looking for ways to address impacts of alcohol abuse following a series of alcohol-related deaths. A community survey identified underage drinking and driving under the influence as the two top problems in Boulder. By City Council resolution, participation by the City in public/private efforts to address these problems was mandated. As part of the NHTSA project, a hospitality zone assessment was conducted involving 65 community stakeholders. Recommendations from this process took a holistic approach to addressing issues, including prevention of underage drinking and DUI. Beginning from server contact to door security, and from transportation and policing, there are concentric nets that can capture underage and intoxicated patrons that might drive. Repairing gaps in these multiple points of intervention is key to this holistic approach.

Problem Statement

Boulder, CO is a college town with two established entertainment districts and another that has just been developed, 29th Street. While University Hill used to be the hotbed of nighttime activity, patronage gradually shifted to Pearl Street's open-air pedestrian mall.

Student population grew, house parties ran rampant and, despite some worthy efforts, intoxicated and underage persons were admitted into some licensed establishments. The University of Colorado at Boulder gained a reputation as a party school.

With a new cadre of students to educate each year, it was a challenge to reverse the image. Like many other cities, the street became the party as much as the venues themselves. Lines became blurred and licensed venues gained a negative image as the community associated all the alcohol issues with the bars.

At bar close, the corner of Broadway and Pearl was chaos with hundreds of patrons exiting the establishments all at once, fighting over the few cabs that roamed downtown and throwing rocks at the last buses that were packed to capacity.

The environment was ripe for addressing gaps in points of contact where potential intervention existed with underage drinkers and intoxicated individuals who might drive.

Intervention points include servers, bouncers, valet, parking, business operators, transportation and district policing.

Stakeholders

- **Responsible Hospitality Group (RHG)** - An organization of 41 liquor licensees in the City of Boulder who work together to achieve responsible service of alcohol in licensed establishments. The RHG sets certain standards for membership.
- **City of Boulder Downtown and University Hill Management Division** - A City Department responsible for programs, enforcement, maintenance and parking for the Downtown and University Hill communities. Division Director, Molly Winter, was the key person who acted as Boulder's site administrator for the NHTSA demonstration project and coordinated the implementation plan from RHI Hospitality Zone Assessment.
- **Boulder Police Department (BPD)** – Reconfigured staffing for Pearl Street, provided DUI Last Drink Information, partnered with University for student education and continues to participate in RHG monthly meetings.
- **City of Boulder Liquor Licensing** – Promotes RHG membership information to new licensees, partners in Liquor License Summit and attends monthly RHG meetings.
- **University of Colorado (CU) Police Department** – Provided Last Drink Data.
- **University of Colorado (CU) Student Affairs** – Organized last drink data from University and Boulder Police and shared information with RHG.
- **City of Boulder University/City Liaison** – Responsible for building relationships and acting as liaison among CU, the city and the community regarding student-related issues, as well as developing outreach programs and educational tools for University of Colorado students who live off campus.
- **Downtown Boulder Inc. (DBI)** – As business advocates for the Pearl Street District, DBI outreached to those business on the Last Drink list to invite them to partner with RHG in creating Best Practices in DUI Prevention.
- **Special Transit and Go Boulder** – Doubled capacity for rider ship by reconfiguring the Night Hop to increase frequency at the most popular corridors of the route and decrease it in the least used corridors.

Process

The Hospitality Zone Assessment (known at the time as Hospitality Leadership Summit) conducted by RHI in Boulder as part of the NHTSA demonstration site project, played a key role in identifying the gaps in intervention opportunities. The Hospitality Zone Assessment (HZA) uses four stakeholder groups to target and prioritize issues, gaps in processes or partnerships and highlights resources within the community that can work to address the priority areas.

With no professional development group like an active tavern association, there was an opportunity for a coordinated central communication point among the hospitality sector. Though the city had a server training requirement, the Police Department training was the

only approved provider to serve a growing dining and entertainment sector with high server turnover. The safety sector was challenged with adequate staffing for Pearl Street and lacked staffing to collect and analyze last drink data. Late-night transportation demand exceeded available service. Waits for taxis exceeded one hour and The Hop (capacity 38) consistently would take on 50 plus riders during the last hour.

The resultant report generated from consensus among the groups provided a 6 month action plan with five goals: Formulate Codes of Conduct and Community Standards, Educate Residents, Enhance Safety and Security, Analyze Hospitality Markets and Economic Impact, and Improve Communication.

Following the third RHI facilitated visit, The Leadership Summit, the Boulder group created task forces around each action item and determined the top priorities to be Enhance Security and Safety and Improve Communication.

The group created a timeline to achieve the action steps and the Director of the Downtown and University Hill Management Division coordinated the task force meetings and their work plans.

The first point where the group galvanized was in the first Liquor License Summit which RHG members co-organized and donated lunch. Various regulatory representatives introduced their agency, their agency's rules and regulations and invited licensees' questions. The Summit served to improve relations by opening up lines of communication and clarifying rules and regulations. It worked to dispel some "us vs. them" defensiveness and allowed both parties to see each other as resources. After this event, the RHG was seen in a different light: as an effective partnership. Improving communication also served to RHI Leadership Summit Case Study - 3 April 4, 2008 enhance security and safety as owners and managers had a clearer understanding of expectations and safety officials understood their challenges and could make adjustments.

Employee training was a key next step in assuring a safe environment with staff commitment to prevent underage and over service of alcohol. At the Summit, however, licensees expressed challenges. There were language barriers for some. The Police Department was the only acceptable training provider. In a college community, employee turnover is high and more flexibility was needed. RHG advocated for accepting ServSafe and 'train the trainer' models. Acceptance of these providers has made training more accessible and more businesses are now in compliance with the city requirement. The Boulder Police Department has redesigned the training previously offered to focus more on managers in establishments and on liability, legal aspects, and policy development.

The Door Security training organized by the RHG and funded by NHTSA funds was very popular and served to address this point of intervention and its gap in professionalism. Word of mouth created enough interest to hold a second training 9 months later, which police and many owners attended. The owners used information from the training to change policies and to implement higher patron/staff ratios for better monitoring and intervention.

To address at-risk (a.k.a. nuisance) businesses, the group decided to take a peer approach. Data collected by University and Boulder Police Departments was provided to Student Affairs Office, which through Robert Wood Johnson funding was already collecting a variety of data related to alcohol. This office organized the data and provided the RHG with the top ten businesses named by those arrested for DUI as the place where they had their last drink. RHG along with DBI approached each business owner in person and invited them to participate in a workshop. They took the approach of asking the businesses to help create guidelines that would assure that they and others are not named in the future.

RHG and DBI organized a workshop and facilitated the at-risk businesses in developing a best practices checklist for preventing DUI. Some best practices they suggested include: posting signage in restrooms with taxi and limo phone numbers, and supporting alternative transportation by letting the companies set up tables by exits to create awareness. Dispatching security staff outside at closing to assist patrons in getting home safely was another strategy.

They also created a list of ideas outside of their operations that could assist in preventing patrons driving under the influence. Some suggestions were: to allow free street parking on Saturday mornings until 10am to encourage people to leave their car instead of driving intoxicated. They also suggested increasing frequency and stops of the Late Night Bus (The Hop) and printing transportation options on the back of parking receipts.

Though the NHTSA supported demonstration project has ended, the framework for future work is strong. Boulder continues to communicate through strengthened communication channels and work collaboratively to monitor and fill gaps in intervention points.

Outcome

Student/Patron

- Increased student awareness about responsible citizenship, risks of house parties and greater patron education about zero tolerance policy for fake ids and underage access in bars through door-to-door campaigns in fall.
- Educated student District patrons through CU, media and police presence to correct problem behaviors related to over-crowding and vandalizing public transportation.

Policing

- Created better monitoring of streets, parking lots and alley as well as crowd control by shifting police staffing from Hill to Mall.
- Dedicated Mall Police Crew improved business/police relations and communication.
- Assisted in targeting businesses at high risk for over service by amending DUI citation form to collect place of last drink information.

- Created resource/education relationship with existing businesses by assigning Alcohol Officer to support Responsible Hospitality Group meetings and participating in Annual Liquor License Summit and Door Security Trainings.
- Partnered with transportation and local establishments to secure funding for off-duty officers to RHI Leadership Summit Case Study - 4 April 4, 2008 station themselves at local bus stops to curb disturbances and provide order.

Door Security

- Improved gap in door security point of intervention by providing business owners with hiring guidelines.
- The two door security trainings hosted by RHG served to provide invaluable guidance and tips, reframed security employees' perception of the importance of their role and elevated the standards of professionalism.
- Patron/Security Staff ratios recommended by door security and RHG increased ability to monitor for underage and those who might potentially drive under the influence of alcohol.

Servers

- Filled gap in Responsible Beverage Service training for Hispanic employees by completing videotape and translating written test to Spanish.
- Improved employees' access to Responsible Beverage Service server training by expanding acceptable training providers.
- Addressed server training gap due to high employee turnover by allowing 'train the trainer' programs.

Businesses

- Created mechanism for communication and collaboration by organizing businesses and forming the RHG.
- Maximized access to training by advocating for more accepted training providers.
- Minimized barriers of training costs by doing group trainings and getting discounts.
- To create better self-compliance, collaborated with regulatory agencies to create best practices list for private parties held at licensed venues to prevent over service.
- Addressed businesses who served last drinks to DUI arrestees by conducting DUI Mitigation Workshop.
- Owners evaluated and adjusted operations and hiring policies after going through the door security training with their employees.
- RHG hosted two Annual Liquor License Summits, to increase understanding of rules and regulations and improve communication.
- RHG, DBI and top 10 businesses identified on Last Drink developed Best Practices Checklist for Preventing DUI.

Transportation

- Rerouting late-night bus service allowed for more efficient service and doubled rider numbers.
- Taxi access was made more efficient, pedestrian safety improved by creating cab stand with expediter to facilitate shared rides to common areas. By improving efficiency, more patrons used the service and as a result more cab drivers were interested in providing service.
- Increased temporary police security at bus stops paid for by business owners effectively stopped vandalizing.
- Awareness of alternative transportation providers was created by developing and distributing provider lists to all bars and restaurants.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

There is a new batch of students each year. Constant re-education is necessary.

Last drink data can be a challenge to access. Policies sometimes prevent sharing data, but Boulder's excellent Police and University communication and relations short circuited the challenge and length of time to access the information.

Funding to accomplish all that RHG desires is a barrier that was temporarily eased by NHTSA funding.

Recruiting membership is time consuming for RHG leadership, which are hospitality business owners.

Businesses can be defensive when approached about being identified in Last Drink Data. A pro-business, mentoring approach without enforcement stakeholders present was key to getting them to participate.

Door Security staff are often faced with accepting a \$50 bribe to allow underage admittance. Weighed RHI Leadership Summit Case Study - 5 April 4, 2008 against what businesses are able to pay hourly, they at times make the wrong choice.

Jurisdiction

Business, District, City, County

Funding

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for RHI demonstration site.

Spin-off Projects

RHG would like to develop and implement a DUI Mitigation campaign.

Start Date: 5/1/2005 - 5/19/2008

Contact

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