

**Organization for Inebriation**  
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**Overview:**

There are many different types of bars such as dance bars, karaoke bars, and pubs. The organization of each type of bar will differ slightly as the resources, target clientele, and supported interactions vary between bars. The goal of this case study is to look at a fairly standard pub-like bar that focuses on the serving of alcohol, but also offers music via jukebox and sports games on television. The bar will be located in a college area and is therefore quite busy. There are plenty of resources that go into running and maintaining a bar, and I will focus on the most important ones: the alcohol, mixers, and glasses. These are the essential and most used physical resources within a bar. While the first part of my study will focus on how these resources are organized across the bar, I will also discuss the reason that people frequently choose to pay \$8 for a beer they could get at Ralph's for \$3. People return to a bar with excellent service supported by proper organization, but why do they walk in to begin with? This is where the human element comes in. Bars are not purely transactional like a grocery store, but instead they offer a social aspect that convinces people that the \$8 beer is worth it. People go to bars with groups of friends, dates, or alone to people watch; and a successful bar should enable and encourage all these interactions and more.

***Part 1: Maximizing transaction efficiency by organizing physical resources***

**What is being organized?**

The scope here is narrowed to a mid-sized (~2200 square foot) local college bar that caters primarily to a younger crowd. The pub-like bar offers beer, wine, and spirits but focuses on beer and spirits. I have also narrowed the scope to exclusively physical resource organization, as opposed to including possible digital resources. While there are many possible physical resources including everything from menus to napkins, what makes the bar operate efficiently is the exchange of money for alcohol. What are the essentials for making this happen? The alcohol, of course, and the glasses. These are the resources used in virtually every bar transaction. Additionally, mixers are often used in conjunction with the alcohol and glasses. This organizing system that I will discuss is created by essentially organizing a collection of resources from a superset of existing resources. The superset is the collection of all alcohol options and glasses, and here we are focused on the essentials within each. The resources must be organized effectively and with respect to their relevance to one another, and within a logical space.

## **Why is it being organized?**

A bar's physical resources must be organized to support the necessary interactions for transaction. This means organizing the back bar to best display the products offered by the business to incite purchases from customers and organizing the under bar so the bartender can most efficiently make drinks to deliver to customers. An unorganized bar leads to frustrated employees and collisions between bartenders and this ultimately impedes service and leads to unhappy customers. When a bar is busy, its organization shows. A well organized bar will be able to handle the rush, the bartenders will show emergent coordination, and the customers will be surprised by the speed of service. This results in repeat customers and more money for the bar. Additionally, organization helps to ensure cleanliness. If staff knows where everything is and has it organized properly, maintaining cleanliness will be much easier. Imagine a messy room where someone has one pile on the floor for clean clothes and another for dirty. There's bound to be some crossover, and the clean clothes lying on the ground are ensuring that the floor beneath it cannot be cleaned and the clean clothes just accrue dirt. The same goes for alcohol glasses. Bars that store their glasses upright on shelving are allowing them to accrue dust and bacteria, while also making sure the shelf itself is never cleaned (see Figure 2). Additionally, those glasses in the back never get used. This is why overhead glass racks (see Figure 1) are essential and the glasses must be stored upside-down and used in a first in, first out fashion. The business needs to make money and in order to do so, it needs to uphold efficiency and cleanliness to encourage repeated patronage and happy staff.

## **How much is it being organized?**

### *Back Bar:*

The organizing principles guiding the organization of this system vary depending on the goals of each station at the bar. The back bar is designed and organized for the customer. The goal of the back bar is to be an advertisement for the products and the business. It should be aesthetic, not cluttered, and it should showcase the most popular alcohol in an interesting way to entice customers to spend. The alcohol displayed on the back bar is used primarily to look aesthetically pleasing to the customers, but some of the alcohol here is also used by the bartenders when it is an alcohol that they do not keep on hand in the under bar. An expensive whiskey like a Glenlivet would be an example of an alcohol kept on the back bar for display and use that would not be kept in as accessible a location as the under bar.

To organize the back bar, the alcohol bottles' labels should all be facing out so they are visible to the customer. For my organization, I divided the back bar space into 3 tiers of shelving with the bottom shelf being the cheapest alcohol, the tier 2 being mid-priced alcohol, and the top shelf being the most expensive. I chose to organize by price because it is culturally expected, and

changing this system could cause customers to be confused or upset by their unexpected bill if they had chosen a bottom shelf alcohol that ended up being the most expensive. As previously mentioned, the design of the back bar should be interesting and this means organizing the bottles in a more complex fashion than a simple lineup. To solve this problem, I used an upside-down V structure which looks like a caret (seen in Figure 3). The caret design not only allows more bottles to be displayed, but it also allows each of the bottles to be more visible. In addition, the free space caused by the design makes the back bar look less cluttered and the arrow-like design points attention up to the upper tiers which causes customers to scan more of the area. Figure 4 shows the consequences of a poorly designed back bar. It looks cluttered, you cannot identify any bottles behind the front row (which hides the expensive products), and it is not interesting nor aesthetically pleasing.

In addition to organizing by price and within the physical space, I also organized taxonomically. While the horizontal organization is by tiers of price, the vertical organization is done taxonomically by type of alcohol. Then, I organized by color with the lighter alcohols “fading” into the darker alcohols for aesthetic purposes. Another organizing principle is designing the back bar according to cultural knowledge. People in America (and most other parts of the world) read from left to right, and thus they also scan from left to right. It is also the general rule that younger people prefer lighter spirits to darker spirits. Therefore, since this is a bar in a college area it is likely to be frequented by a younger crowd and thus it makes sense to organize the lighter (preferred) spirits on the left so they are the first seen when the back bar is scanned by the clientele. Brandy is usually a less popular drink of choice and it is also darker so it is logically placed to the far right.

#### *Under Bar:*

The under bar also organizes alcohol as a physical resource, but it also organizes the glasses and mixers as well. The alcohol in this case is organized with taxonomic organization as well, as the types of alcohols are grouped together. However, the alcohol is also governed by different organizing principles because the goals of the under bar differ from those of the back bar. While the back bar was organized for the customer, the under bar is organized for the bartender in a way that he/she can make a drink most efficiently. As shown in Figure 5, the alcohol and glasses are organized taskonomically. The Martini glasses in overhead glass rack 1, for example, are organized on the right in the artifact which is where the back bar vodka and gin is located as well. Thus, if the bartender needs to make a high end Martini, he/she does not need to traverse to the opposite corner of the back bar to get a glass leading to efficient service and organization of the bartenders (less likely to run into one another). The Margarita glasses can be found at this overhead glass rack as well to the left of the Martini glasses. The Margarita glasses will be used in conjunction with tequila which can be found parallel to the glasses on the back bar or attached to the ice bucket in the right under bar. This glass rack maps the organization of

the alcohol on the back bar to the appropriate glasses on this overhead rack. The same taskonomic organization occurs with the other overhead glass racks 2 and 3. Additionally, the glasses are organized by frequency of use. The beer glasses can be found on both racks 1 and 2 as beer is a frequent order at all hours of the day and these glasses can also be used for water. The well alcohol is also organized in the under bar. An attachment to the ice bucket can hold the well alcohol so it is easy to access for the bartenders. This is organized by frequency of use, as cheaper alcohol is more commonly ordered and the alcohol on hand is vodka, gin, and tequila. This is because lighter spirits are preferred by youth and tequila is often used for shots. The two beer taps are also accessible due to frequency of use and the beer taps contain a hose for seltzer water which is a common mixer for light spirit drinks. Between the two beer taps is a fridge for the mixers which is organized taskonomically as it is between the two stations where a bartender would be making a well drink.

### **When is it being organized?**

The alcohol on the back bar is organized all the time and it is replaced when it is used. For example, if a bottle of whiskey runs out, the bartender would want to replace this whiskey on the back bar for both aesthetic purposes and for actual use. In the under bar, the alcohol will be frequently used and replaced with more of the same types of alcohol. The organization of both is both in part shaped by industry practices, as it is common to have a well with the most popular liquors and a back bar of some sort is standard; however, this study focuses more on the specific organization depending on the clientele and goals of the bar.

### **How or by whom is it being organized?**

The organization in the under bar and back bar is being organized by the bartending staff. In both cases, the same people organizing are also the users as the bartenders use alcohol and glasses frequently from the under bar and occasionally from the back bar. However, in the case of the back bar, the customer also uses it in a way. The customer uses it as an informational resource to tell them what products are available at the bar. This is part of the reason why the back bar is organized for the customer because the bar wants to be able to display their varying products.

## ***Part 2: The human element***

### **What is being organized?**

In part 1, we organized some of the essential resources in a bar: the physical resources. However, what good is alcohol without someone to drink it? Next we must consider the organization of the human resources. The human resources include the customers and the bartending staff. The

bartending staff was organized indirectly in part 1 by the organization of the physical resources. Organizing the resources taskonomically allowed bartenders to be able to stay in one section of the bar when making a drink. This organization leads to emergent coordination within the bartending staff and reduces collision amongst them. However, we did not discuss the organization of the customers in the bar. The focus of this part of my case study will be on how to best organize customers within a bar.

### **Why is it being organized?**

The resources to organize are people and these same people are the users of the organizing system. Because they are people and not computational processes, their precise uses are not totally predictable. People cannot be as concretely organized as the physical resources organized earlier. Instead, human resources must be encouraged to follow a certain organization which can be achieved by setting up space to enable and encourage many different possible interactions. The reason to organize people in the bar space is to support as many interactions as possible so that customers are comfortable and happy and thus more likely to return. Many interactions can take place in a bar such as a celebration amongst a group of friends, a first date, a single person going to look to socialize or people watch, and many more. This requires varied seating options and an open environment that encourages socialization. If the bar can support more interactions, that will result in more business which makes the bar more money. See Figure 6 for an example of a well organized bar following these principles. In Figure 7, we can see a bar with poor organization of human resources. There is only one type of seating option apart from the bar counter stools (which appears uncomfortable), not a lot of space to move around, the groups are closed off from one another, and the design is boring. This design does not encourage interaction between groups or allow for movement about the bar. It also does not draw in varied groups because it does not directly support varying interactions.

### **How much is it being organized?**

Some interactions include customer-bartender, date-date, and large groups. These require different seating arrangements such as two person tables, group tables, booths, and barstools. This not only allows customers to be appropriately seated by group size, but it also maximizes space. A group of two will not have to sit at a large group table and waste the rest of the space if there are more comfortable two person tables for them. Thus, the people are organized by group size to make the customers comfortable and to maximize space. Additionally, the space should be open and not close off tables and groups from one another. Having enough space to move around encourages interactions between groups and makes getting to and from the bar easier. You want the space to feel open and not cluttered, but you also want it to look aesthetically interesting. Having differing seating options also results in a more interesting layout that invites

people into the bar. It can also be a good idea to have some taxonomic organization in the seating arrangement. Having barstools grouped together along the bar counter saves space and also tends to group single people (people that came alone) by other single people which can encourage conversation. If not between each other, the barstools allow single people to be able to converse with the bartender easily. Also, having a grouping of two-person tables separate from the large tables is a good idea since it is likely that larger tables will be louder than the couples at the 2-person tables. See Figure 6 for an example of a well organized bar that organizes human resources well.

### **When is it being organized and by whom?**

The human resources, again, cannot be directly organized like the physical resources. Instead, the human resources are organized through the setup of the seating. The customers' choice in seating is somewhat guided by cultural tradition which mandates that groups of two sit at the two-person tables as opposed to the large group tables. The organization is thus imposed on resources when they become part of the collection. This means that when people walk in the door and become potential customers, they organize themselves in the appropriate locations in the bar according to the varied seating options and cultural expectations.

### **Other considerations:**

One more thing to consider when organizing the space in the bar, is the width of the front bar counter. A wide bar is aesthetically pleasing and is found in modern bars often, but it inhibits communication between the customers and bartenders. A narrower front bar counter allows customers to easily get the attention of the bartender, communicate their order, and receive their order. When the bar is busy, a very wide front bar can result in customers having to yell across the bar which complicates the process and discourages them from buying more drinks. See Figure 8 for a bar counter which is too wide. This type of counter not only impedes communication, but it also makes delivering drinks to the customers more difficult as well as retrieving finished drinks. The wide bar diminishes efficiency and can even affect cleanliness if finished drinks are left around the bar and the bartender cannot easily reach to retrieve them. Figure 9 depicts an appropriately sized bar counter.



Figure 1: How glasses *should* be stored



Figure 2: How glasses should *not* be stored



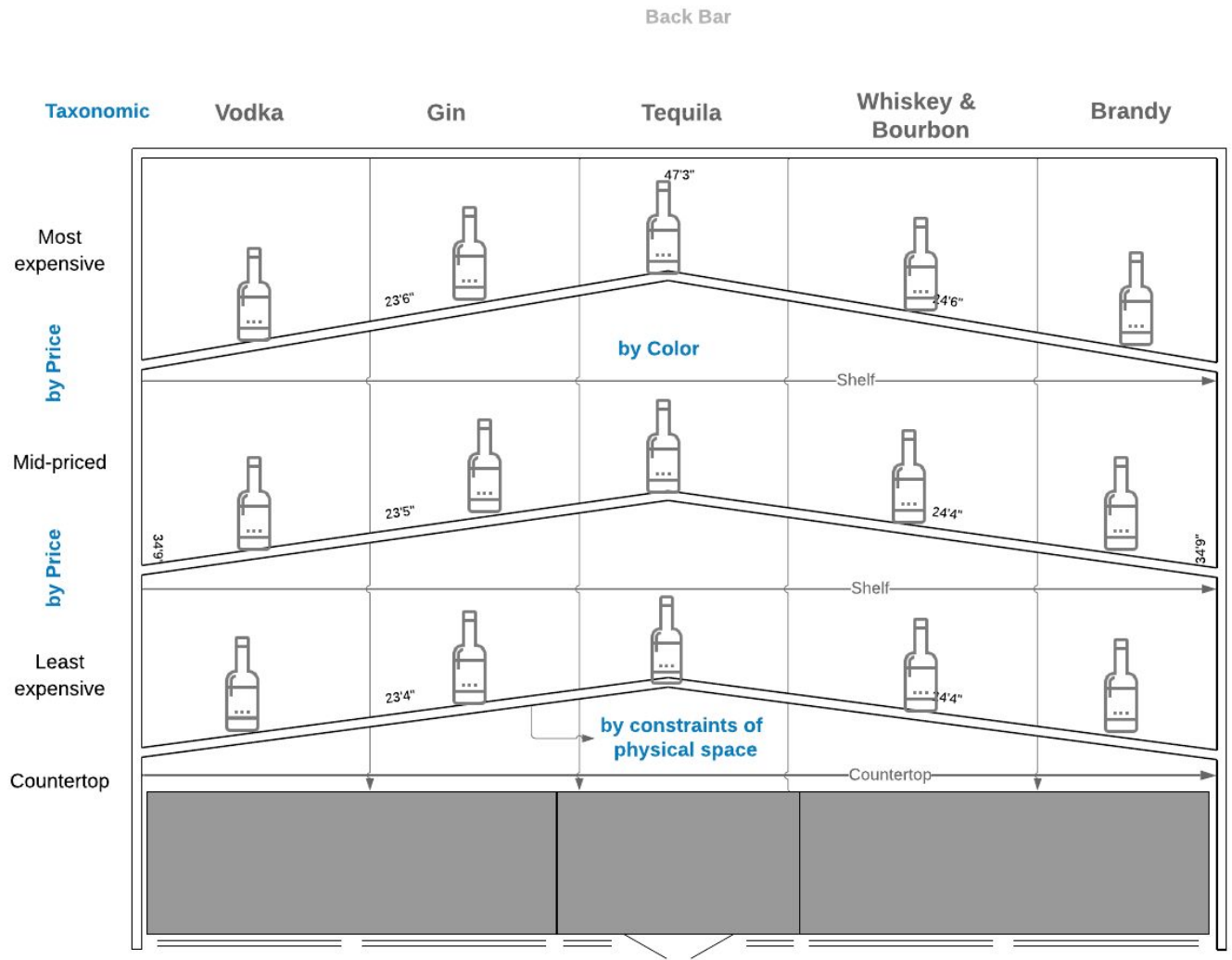


Figure 3: Back bar design and organizing principles

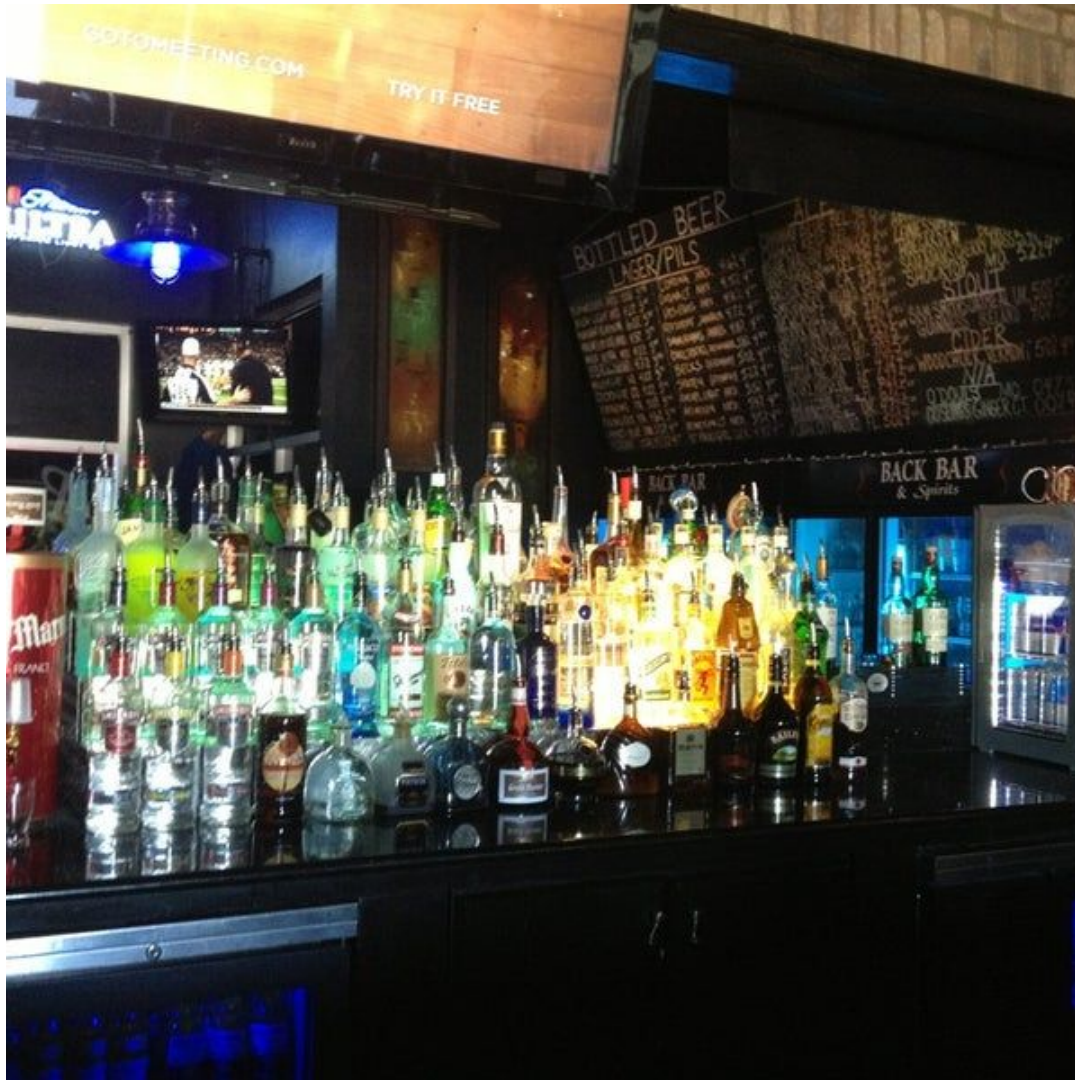


Figure 4: A poorly designed back bar

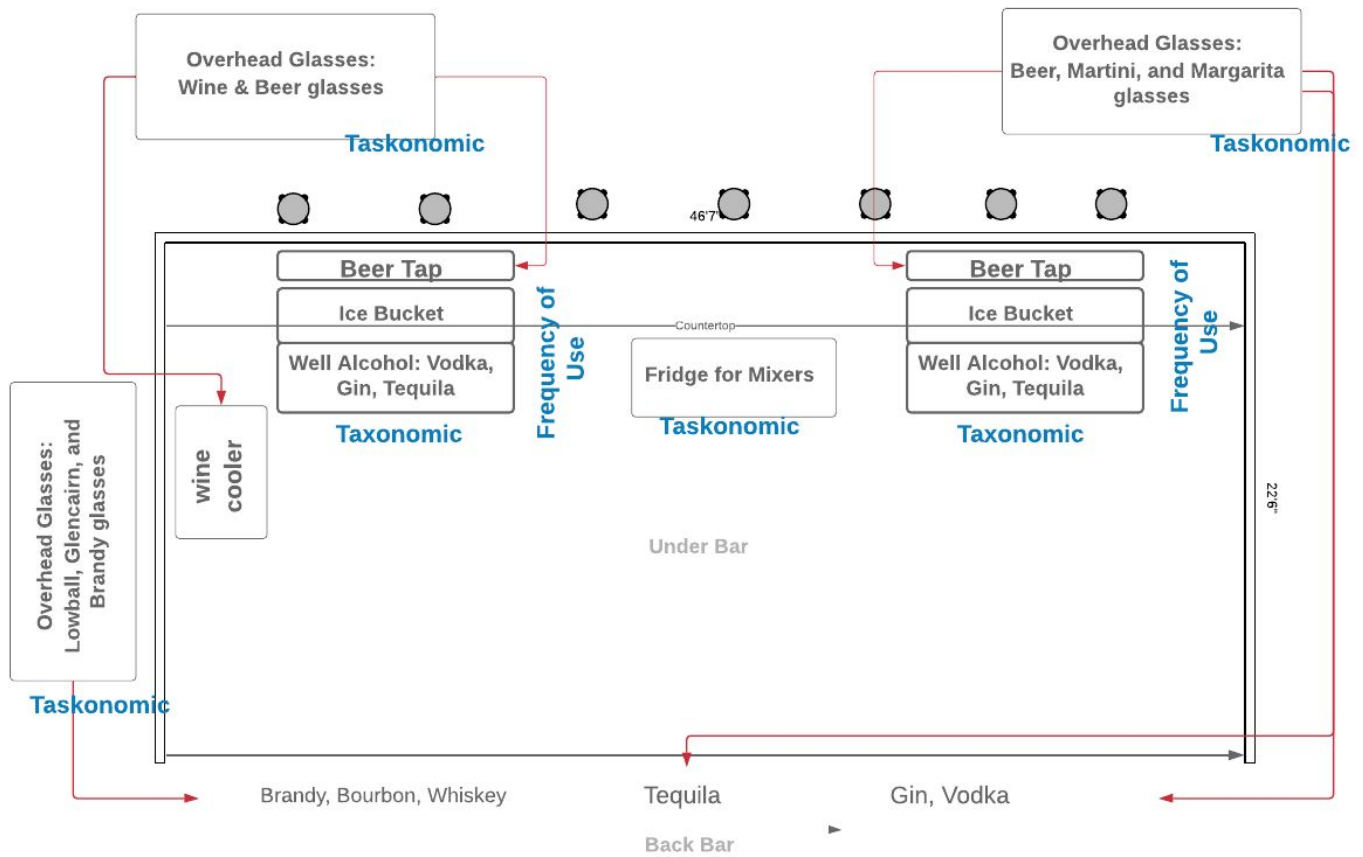


Figure 5: Under bar design and organizing principles with back bar general alcohol layout reprinted for references



Figure 6: A bar with good organization of people



Figure 7: A bar with poor organization of people





Figure 8: A bar counter that is too wide



Figure 9: An appropriately sized bar counter