

Top Tips for Running a quiz

We have years of running fantastically successful quizzes heres a few tips to help you make the very best of your quiz



Why run a quiz?

Quizzes are one of the most popular and cost effective ways to generate trade or revenue on a quiet night, the quiz is a great way to entertain your customers.

Running a successful quiz is not an exact science. The format you choose will depend on the type of customers you aim your quiz at. Take the time to plan and organise a fun and enjoyable quiz and your customers will keep coming back and bring others with them. We have started many venues quizzes from scratch and built them into pack fun nights for all.

Whether you decide to run you quiz weekly, fortnightly or monthly, be consistent with the day you hold it on (for example every Monday night or the first Sunday of each month). If people turn up at your pub expecting a quiz and you've moved it to a different night that week they will probably go away disappointed.

Advertise your quiz

Advertising is important and doesn't have to cost lots of money. Provided your quiz is fun and enjoyable, word of mouth will be your most effective method of advertising. If people have a great night they will talk about it to their friends.

Put posters up around the bar or town to promote your quiz and maybe one or two in the window facing out. A free poster can be downloaded here.

Depending on your location, an A-board outside your pub can also be a good form of advertising, particularly if you are in a busy location with lots of people or traffic passing your pub.

Social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook are becoming an increasingly popular way for pubs to keep their customers up to date with what's on but make sure you keep the pages current and up to date as an outdated page with old postings can make it appear that you have stopped trading.

We give warm up teaser quizzes for Facebook and Twitter to maximise takeup.

Also consider using the free listings in local What's On guides both printed and online.

Finally, you might want to consider a local leaflet drop to houses in the area around your pub or even local newspaper advertising if the size of your venue warrants it.

Venue

Loads of pubs should have a free venue room, usually upstairs or at the back. For a successful and competitive quiz, I would recommend trying to get around 50 or more players, so plan on maybe 10 - 20 teams of 4 or more. Remember, you will need enough tables and chairs for everyone too. It would be good to have somewhere with a microphone, and ideally a music system so you can have some tunes playing at the start/the end/ the break and maybe between rounds or questions.

The Quizmaster

You need a quiz question master and he or she needs tools.

Who?

- Someone who won't be fazed by public speaking
- Who can confidently and clearly read out the questions
- Who won't get led of track by banter or phased (hopefully not) by a heckler or argumentative know it all quiz geek.

Where will the quizmaster sit?

- Make sure space is kept for them.

One that can't be overlooked by team spies!

How will they be heard?

- Unless it's a really small venue, you will need a P.A system capable of being heard above general pub conversation – not everyone will be taking part in the quiz.
- Many pubs will have this sort of thing.
- If not see if they can hire one or check out your local Yellow Pages on or offline and look for disco or PA hire suppliers.
- A simple system will be pretty cheap but be sure to practice with it first so you don't get



embarrassing sound losses or ear bashing feedback.

Quiz entry charges

You may decide to not charge a fee at all in which case more people might turn up to enter and you could take more in sales over the bar. However, if you don't charge anything you will have to fund the prizes yourself so the cost of the quiz will go up.

Alternatively, you could charge a nominal entry fee for each player (say £1 or £2) to fund the prizes, good causes or the jackpot (if applicable).

If you are offering bigger prizes (perhaps for a special event such as Christmas) then you may want to charge a higher entry fee to cover it.

Prizes

Two approaches to this. Firstly you can simply give back all the entry money - secondly you can add prizes.

You can try to acquire some from companies. Don't go to the big retailers as they will have central policies on what charities they donate too etc, try and target smaller, independent stores. They might want to know what the prizes are going towards, so do a bit of research on the website and former Borneo blogs about what Raleigh does as a youth development charity, not only do we work on really worthy projects in developing countries but the charity also gives young people between the ages of 17 and 24 (and many from socially excluded or disadvantaged backgrounds) the opportunity to take part and foster their own personal development. Reinforce the fact that this is not going to be a holiday for you! Remember the prizes you want will be for a winning team - so for more than one person. To keep the mystery, you could always wrap the prizes and have them as a lucky dip for the winning team? I had advent calendars at Christmas and chocolate Easter bunnies at Easter...

You could always get someone to sponsor you and use the money for prizes. This would be money well spent as it is a means to accruing even more money! If you do have alcohol as a prize, then make sure the management of the pub are cool about it (they may not appreciate everyone cracking open bottles of wine at the end). A raffle is also a good idea, if you have plenty of prizes!

Quiz Format

Simplicity is key. If people don't understand what to do they won't play. Other factors such as the length of your quiz, difficulty level, etc. will depend on your customers. Get feedback from your customers and change things around if you need to. As a rule of thumb we find that most teams like to get between 7-10 for every round. scoring 2-3 is demoralising.

Try to keep the rounds varied by having different themes or concepts. For example a picture round, anagrams round, puzzle round, etc. Make sure you have plenty of breaks to allow people time to buy drinks, have a cigarette or visit the loo.

The questions should ideally appeal to a broad spectrum covering a range of age groups and subjects that will appeal to most (young, old, men, women, sports fans, TV buffs). The difficulty of the questions should be varied with some easy ones for everybody and harder ones to determine the cleverer players.

However, if the same team keep winning every week your customers may get bored. To counter this you could introduce a handicap system where the previous winners are given a 10 point handicap.

Some quiz organisers recommend starting a quiz with a picture round or similar where teams can read and answer questions on the sheet. It can help people get settled and ready for the questions to be read in later rounds.

By making round one a 'hand out' round and giving teams 20 minutes - a couple of hours to answer the questions, you also be able to accommodate any late entrants that may wish to take part.

On the night

On the night you will need to setup and test the pa system, collect names and entry fees from each team, hand out answer sheets, write team names on the score sheet, announce the rules and format of the quiz and let people know when the quiz will be starting (20, 10, 5 minutes, etc.).

The quizmaster announces that the quiz will start in 30 minutes, 20, 10, 5 etc. and collects team names and entry fees.

- Give each team some answer sheets for each round. One per player and a couple of spares
- Have a stock of pens for them if needed.
- Quizmaster Scoresheet - Record the team names on your scoresheet
- We can supply a Windows Office Excel computer program for adding up scores and sorting them into winning order
- Get free answer and scoresheets when you sign up to our questions

Read out the names of each team at the start of the quiz or give them a round or two to come up with a name

Ensure that everyone can hear and adjust the volume (up or down) as required.

When reading questions the presenter should call each question twice and at the end of each round ask for repeats.



Marking

Between rounds, answer sheets can be marked in one of three ways...

1. Ask teams to mark their own answers – you would need very trustworthy players and a friendly atmosphere to allow this.
2. Ask teams to swap answer sheets with a team next to them and mark each others. Again, an element of trust and good sportsmanship will be required. Marking can be ‘inconsistent’ if team rivalry is fierce.
3. The quiz presenter marks the answers by collecting them in after each round. This is the fairest way and is less likely to lead to disputes. However, it takes more time so the quizmaster may need help if you have a lot of teams.

Collect sheets from teams for marking (perhaps announcing that if they’re not handed in within a minute, the team gets 0 points) or get teams to swap papers then read out each question then its answer.

Remember the golden rule – the quizmaster is always right and the idea of the quiz is to get the answer on his or her answer sheet.

Totals

Once the questions are marked, announce the results before starting the next round. This adds a bit of excitement to the event, particularly if the scores are close. If teams have swapped sheets for marking, ask teams to raise their hand on their score as you count down.

- Start by reading out team names (giving everyone a name check) and begin the quiz.
- Each question should be read out once, a short break then repeated
- At the end of the round, quickly recap all 10 questions.

The finish

- At the end of the quiz give out final scores with perhaps the top three in reverse order.
- Have a tiebreak question ready (usually a number answer with the first correct answer or closest answer as the winner).
- Run your cash jackpot if applicable, give out the prizes.

Then finally, announce the date and time of the next quiz and start preparing!

Rollover accumulator Snowball

A jackpot is a great way to generate extra interest in your quiz. It is basically a game of chance where teams/players are given an opportunity to win an accumulated cash prize. If they don't succeed the prize rolls over to the following quiz and increases each time until someone wins it.

You could reserve the chance to win the jackpot to the winning team as part of the prize. However, by keeping the jackpot separate and giving all teams a chance to win it you ensure that even those who don't normally win the quiz will still have a chance to win something.

Once the fund builds up, your quiz will enjoy a boost in popularity as people enter just for a chance to win the jackpot.

Higher Lower in particular is a great way to add a bit of theatre to your quiz night. Give all teams the chance to call or higher or lower and if they reach the end of the board they win the jackpot. Start with the winning team and work down through the ranks to the team that came last.

If no-one wins the jackpot rolls over to the following quiz. This gives the best of both worlds by providing an incentive to win the quiz but allowing all teams to take part. Plus, teams are more likely to stay to the end of the night.

Four difficult questions - be the only team to get 4 out of four and yo win the jackpot. This is our favourite snowball.

Think of a number between 1 and 1000 and put it in a sealed envelope. At the end of the quiz each team is allowed on a piece of paper to guess the number. The number is the same every week and stays in the same envelope until it is finally guessed and the jackpot won. You collect all papers and write on each Higher or Lower depending on the guess. I.e. If the number is 50 and they wrote 142, you write Lower on the paper and return it to the team. The beauty of this is that a lucky team could win the cash at any point, a regularly attending team is guaranteed to get the answer within 10 weeks (Because they keep their weekly guesses) and missing a week could lose a team the jackpot. Each week, advertise the ever-increasing cash jackpot prize. Make sure that the person running the quiz knows the number and can be trusted not to sell it or pass it on!

How can I stop cheats

While you can never guarantee that cheating won't occur at your quiz but there are a number of ways to discourage people from using mobile phones to look up answers.

First, make sure everyone is aware that it's against the rules to use a mobile phone to search for answers. Players won't want to switch their phones off altogether as people may need to get hold of them, but you can politely ask that they restrict use to emergencies only during question rounds.

State that any team caught cheating will be either disqualified or given a points penalty (i.e. 20 points). Openly encourage other teams to shop anyone they suspect of cheating and ask bar staff to keep an eye on teams, perhaps by collecting glasses during rounds. If the presenter has a radio mic they can walk around while asking the questions which will put people off mobile phone use. In addition, the radio mic will often pick up the mobile signal and make a noise.

If you catch someone cheating you can shame them in a light-hearted and humorous way. Don't become confrontational. As long as you make it clear from the start that a penalty will be incurred for looking up answers on a phone, the cheats can't complain if they get caught.

Another way to make it harder for cheats is to make the rounds shorter and quicker, collecting answer sheets straight away for marking. This gives phone cheats less time to look up the answers but make sure that players have enough time to answer the questions legitimately.

If the prize for your quiz is modest then people are unlikely to risk the embarrassment of getting caught cheating to win it. Larger prizes might act as an incentive to take a chance.

<http://quizr.webs.com/>

