

Revisiting the History of TIPS



History of the TIPS Program

TIPS was born in 1979 during the course of a small dinner party among colleagues. Among those present were Dr. Morris Chafetz and Howard Blaine. Dr. Chafetz had spent his career working in the field of alcoholism and alcohol research and was the founding director of NIAAA, the National Institute for Alcohol and Alcohol Abuse. Howard

Blaine was a big player in the alcohol treatment field and a professor of clinical psychology. The evening's discussion had turned toward the idea of prevention and the role that servers and bartenders might play in preventing the abuse of alcohol. From there came the idea of developing a program to teach servers and bartenders to look for signs that people are misusing alcohol.

TIPS and the Early Years

Obviously, one of the first steps was to secure funding for research. Dr. Chafetz worked through the Health Education Foundation to raise the necessary funds. Three years later, in 1982, the Foundation unveiled the first TIPS program. Originally, the TIPS information section was a slide show with separate videotape for the scenes, known then as vignettes. The core goal of the TIPS program was to establish acceptable standards of practice for the service of alcohol. An essential part of the program was the idea that people around the drinker, specifically bartenders and servers, could use their people skills to help ensure the safe and responsible service of alcohol.

This was a radical idea that had never before been explored as a part of server education. CPR had shown us that people around a person in trouble could have a lifesaving effect and TIPS eventually became known as the CPR of alcohol abuse. Another revolutionary idea behind TIPS was that the program recognized bartenders and servers as experts and professionals. For many in the hospitality industry, this was the first time people in these professions were fully valued in this way.

TIPS and the Industry

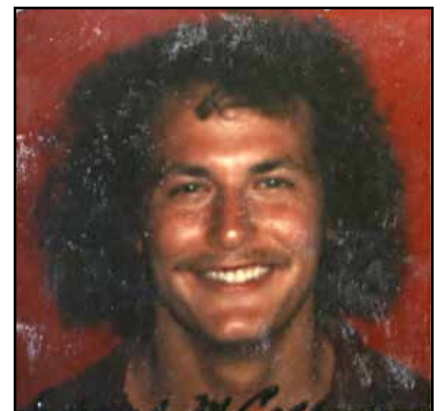
Within 12 months after the initial launch, various industry groups wanted programs tailored to their environments with specific scenes for their industries. In this way, the Concessions, Off Premise, and Social Functions (originally called Free Pour) programs were born. As a prelude to developing our first consumer program, we also experimented with some scenes focused on university students. Those early years were pretty hectic as we responded to the various factions seeking TIPS.

By the mid-80's the commercial programs were doing well. The message that there were acceptable standards of practice related to the service of alcohol and that all servers and bartenders should adhere to them made good sense in the commercial world. We were also hearing back from establishments that their servers were giving better service and, somewhat surprisingly, selling more. As restaurateurs and other licensees watched their check totals rise, they theorized that the increased professionalism of their TIPS-trained servers and bartenders was at least partially responsible for the spike in sales.

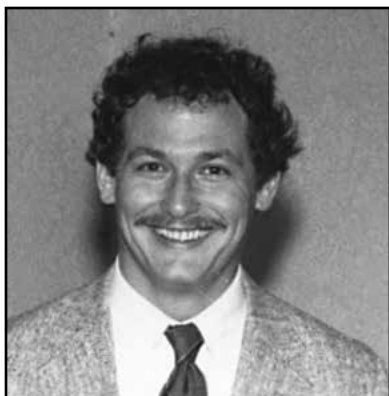
TIPS and Consumers

We always believed that the training and responsibility message should be extended to consumers, so, in 1990 we developed the Parents, Workplace, and University programs. Early tests showed a strong response, particularly for TIPS for the University. Much of the effort directed at alcohol information for college students had involved top-down dictatorial approaches in which administrators laid down the rules for the students

to follow. Then, as now, college students didn't like to be told what to do and were eager to make their own decisions as adults. Still, they knew they needed new skills and techniques and, especially, confidence to step



Adam before TIPS, during bartending days.



Adam in 1984, early TIPS.

into situations where one of their friends or fellow schoolmates was getting into trouble with alcohol. TIPS was a good match and students responded well to its collaborative approach.

With the consumer programs, the value of TIPS shone through on two fronts. First, as expected, TIPS-

trained individuals brought a new level of attention to their interactions with people on their jobs and at special events where alcohol was served. In addition, the TIPS message of responsibility also affected their interactions with friends and associates whenever the scenario involved alcohol. People were really owning the message of responsibility and applying their changed attitudes about drinking.

TIPS and the Computer

By the mid-nineties, TIPS was really “on the map” and we expanded our ability to support compliance tracking and answer the needs of our varied customers and partners across the country and even worldwide. This led to our training portal, which offers 24/7 access to TIPS information for our trainers, their managers, and other corporate users.

The TIPS community was also pushing hard in the mid 2000’s for an online program. In many ways, online training seems incompatible with the hospitality business, which is, after all, about people. We still encourage people to go through a TIPS session or workshop when they can, and many within the TIPS community believe there’s no substitute for the classroom experience. But in today’s world, businesses demand flexibility and we couldn’t ignore that demand. So we worked hard to create an online program that would deliver on the TIPS promise and still retain that essential human touch. The online course can be a very powerful and flexible tool to support corporate training initiatives and goals.

TIPS in the Community

One of the early forces behind sparking interest in TIPS was the outcry by groups like MADD and other grassroots organizations to do something about drunk driving. While preventing drunk driving is certainly one of our goals, our focus was always on the idea of drunkenness, not just drunk driving. We work hard to change attitudes so that people can enjoy alcohol

safely and responsibly and avoid over-drinking. We always remind people that the problem is not drunk driving - it’s drunkenness.

In recent years, we have expanded the concept of TIPS training to ever more collaboration among varied sectors such as law enforcement, retailers, and the insurance industry. Grass roots organizations and coalitions often find common ground for their individual goals through TIPS. As a result we are seeing entire communities come together as a whole to deal with preventing over-consumption. We always make it clear that we are not out to discourage drinking. Our message is all about responsibility.

TIPS and the Future

With the latest version of TIPS for On Premise, we realized that it was time to change our goal statement. Our original goal was to establish acceptable standards of practice for the service and sale of alcohol and most would agree that the original goal has been met. Our next challenge is to work toward ensuring that people go the extra mile and live up to those standards. Nowadays, many people know what they need to do, but stepping in and doing it is another cup of tea. So with our new goal statement we want to highlight that TIPS training empowers participants. With TIPS training, people are confident to actually go that extra mile and step in to difficult situations and prevent alcohol-related problems.

We thank all of the people who have been a part of the TIPS story. TIPS trainers and participants and all members of the TIPS community are playing a big part in the effort to stop drunkenness and drunk driving and ensure that people enjoy alcohol only safely and responsibly. We all should feel very proud of our accomplishments. As we move into the next decade, we hope to continue to build partnerships that allow people to work together... There’s no doubt that TIPS saves lives in communities across the world and that feels great.

