



**Siebel Institute**  
OF TECHNOLOGY

# Sensory Station Guidebook

A step-by-step approach to conducting  
simple beer sensory training



# How to use this Guidebook

The **Siebel Institute Sensory Station** program is designed to make conducting basic sensory training as simple and fun as possible. It is not a replacement for formal sensory training conducted as part of a brewery quality program, but rather it is used to introduce tasters to common flavors and aromas found in beer. As well, it can be helpful in building taster recognition of key attributes in beer including off-flavors, and these tastings help prepare beer judges to be more effective in spotting beer characteristics prior to judging in beer competitions.

*Contents of this guidebook include sections regarding:*

1. Reusable equipment needed to conduct a Sensory Station
2. Calculations of required consumable goods
3. Set-up and operation of a Sensory Station environment
4. Using Sensory Station materials to train tasters
5. Printable materials for display and use in the Sensory Station

## 1. REUSABLE EQUIPMENT NEEDED TO CONDUCT A SENSORY STATION

Some of the preparation and costs of running a Sensory Station is found in reusable equipment required each time a session is run. Once a panel manager has purchased the required goods, those goods will form a Sensory Station kit for future use.

Tables in a serving area for set-up of pitchers – It is important to have a sturdy table, bar or counter area with the right features to conduct the Sensory Station taste panel. It is good to have about 12 to 18 inches between each pitcher once the panel is set up.

Frames or holders for signage – Having signs printed and displayed in key locations helps inform tasters of how the Station operates while keeping the line moving as tasters sample each beer.



Source One 8.5 X 11-Inches Acrylic Slant Back Sign Holder, Brochure Holder, Pack of 6 (SB-85X11-6P)

by SOURCEONE.ORG  
★★★★☆ 344 ratings  
| 14 answered questions

#1 Best Seller in Business & Store Sign Holders

Price: **\$17.99** ✓prime FREE One-Day & FREE Returns

Get \$125 off. Pay \$0.00 upon approval for the Amazon Business Prime Card. Terms apply.

Size: **6 Pack**

**6 Pack**  
\$17.99  
✓prime

6 Pack Unbreakable  
\$39.99  
✓prime

12 Pack  
\$43.95



**Pitchers** – These are key to the speed of service flow. Having ample correctly sized pitchers allows for samples to always be available for tasters. A one-liter pitcher allows for 20 samples to be poured, but two-liter pitchers cut mixing times down substantially. For very high-volume service such as a beer festival, 2 pitchers should be used for each sample to allow one to be refilled as another is in use. Many bars and restaurants may already have suitable pitchers for use.



**Arrow Home Products 00234 60 Ounce, Clear 60 oz Stacking Pitcher**

by Arrow Home Products  
 ★★★★★ 1 rating

Price: **\$8.43** ✓prime FREE One-Day & FREE Returns

Get \$125 off: Pay \$0.00 upon approval for the Amazon Business Prime Card. Terms apply.

Note: Available at a lower price from other sellers, potentially without free Prime shipping.

Eligible for **amazon smile** donation.

- Made in USA
- BPA-Free food safe material
- Durable and break-resistant
- Dishwasher safe

**Dump buckets** – Several are needed in key locations surrounding the table. Most of each sample will be dumped rather than consumed, and the buckets are used for dumping rinse water as well. Small and large buckets are both valuable. Cloths for cleaning spills are also important to have at the panel area.



**Argee RG502 Plastic Pail, 10-Pack, White**

by Argee  
 ★★★★★ 41 ratings | 20 answered questions

List Price: ~~\$33.99~~  
 Price: **\$17.98** ✓prime & FREE Returns  
 You Save: \$16.01 (47%)

Get \$125 off: Pay \$0.00 upon approval for the Amazon Business Prime Card. Terms apply.

Eligible for **amazon smile** donation.

- 2-gallon pail
- Heavy-duty plastic
- Metal handle with a plastic grip
- Reinforced upper rim
- Great bucket for a variety of jobs
- 2-gallon pail
- Heavy-duty plastic

Compare with similar items

Used & new (14) from \$17.62 ✓prime

Report incorrect product information.

A dispenser for chlorine-free water – Tasters are encouraged to rinse their tasting cups between samples, and they may want to clear their palate with sips of water between samples. Tap water with chlorine should be avoided as residue can affect the aroma of samples. A carbon filter system can remove chlorine from tap water, or water from water cooler bottles should be used at water stations. Water can be poured from pitchers, but large-volume water servers are recommended.





## Igloo 5 Gallon Seat Top Beverage Jug with spigot (Pack of 2)

by Generic-

★★★★☆ 25 ratings

Price: \$50.67 & FREE Shipping

Get \$70 off instantly: Pay \$0.00 \$50.67 upon approval for the Amazon Prime Rewards Visa Card. No annual fee.

Note: Not eligible for Amazon Prime.

Size: 5-Gallon-2Pack

Color: Orange

- 5 Gallon Beverage Cooler Igloo

[Compare with similar items](#)

New (86) from \$50.00 & FREE shipping.

[Report incorrect product information.](#)

## 2. CALCULATIONS OF REQUIRED CONSUMABLE GOODS

The panel requires the use of disposable goods that are calculated into the cost of running each Sensory Station panel. The primary consumables are:

**Siebel Institute sensory training kits** – These are concentrated aromatic and flavor compounds added to accurately-measured beer in pitchers to create the tasting experience. They are available in multiple kit configurations with between 6 and 24 vials of spiking compounds.



**Cups** – Reusable 7 to 10-ounce cups can be used, but disposable clear plastic cups are far more convenient to use for large groups. While tasters can use a new plastic cup for each sample, these tastings are best conducted with tasters rinsing out a single plastic cup between each use. Taking the time to do so allows time for aromas to liberate from their palate to prepare them for the next sample. If glasses are to be reused, it is good to calculate on using 3 glasses per attendee as people may use more than one glass.



100000 50 Pack Clear Disposable Cups 10 oz, Premium Quality Plastic Tumblers, Recyclable and BPA- Free

by 100000  
★★★★★ 14 ratings

Price: \$13.99 ✓prime FREE One-Day & FREE Returns

Get \$125 off: Pay \$0.00 upon approval for the Amazon Business Prime Card. Terms apply.

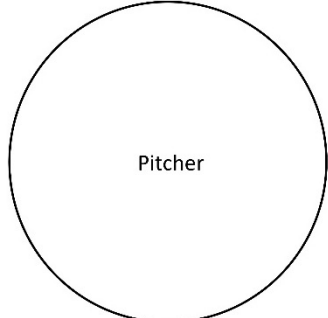
Eligible for [amazon smile](#) donation.

- SAFETY PRODUCTS: Made of 100% food grade, non-toxic, BPA Free plastic.
- PREMIUM QUALITY: Heavy duty plastic allows the cups to be reused without breaking.
- AFFORDABLE PRICE: 50 pack cups for a good price will add elegant to your party.
- CONVENIENCE: Clear disposable drinking glasses save you time and energy.
- SUITABLE FOR ANY OCCASION: Clear plastic cups are great fit for any beverage: wine, beer, juice, smoothies.

**Labels and pitcher place mats** – A removable label identifying the contents of a pitcher should be attached to both sides of a pitcher, and one label is applied to a matching place mat on the table. The panel manager could also choose to write the sample name on the pitcher and sheet using an erasable china marker. The manager will need to print one or more placemats per compound tasted, with 3 to 5 labels per pitcher (one for the placemat and 2 for each pitcher).


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<b>Rinse water for tasting cups</b>		

VIAL #1



Pitcher

**Acetaldehyde**





**Signage** – The panel manager will need to decide which signs to print and how best to place them for panelists to see and read them. Adhering them to posts nearby at eye-level is helpful, and signs regarding service at the table can be placed in frames in the immediate panel area.



**Beer** – One liter of beer is required for every vial of sensory compound used. If tasters pour samples correctly, one liter serves 20 people. A sample of calculations for beer requirements is shown here.

**How much beer will you need?**

The chart below shows an estimate for the amount of beer required to prepare the Sensory Station samples depending on the amount of people being served and the amount of samples served.

Probable amount of people participating in the taste panel	12 samples consumed per person= oz. of beer needed per person	24 samples consumed per person= oz. of beer needed per person
20	360	720
30	540	1080
40	720	1440
50	900	1800
60	1080	2160
70	1260	2520
80	1440	2880
90	1620	3240
100	1800	3600



### 3. SET-UP AND OPERATION OF A SENSORY STATION ENVIRONMENT

There are so many possible configurations and locations where a Sensory Station panel can be presented that it is impossible to give a single suggestion for set up. In essence, the panel will look like a food buffet and it will be up to the tasters to serve themselves and keep track of what they have tried. Let's look at some of the important aspects of setting up a panel environment for maximum service efficiency and taster experience.

- Tasters should not form a line that moves along the pitchers in sequence. This would cause those in line to have to wait for others to taste and move onto the next sample. Instead, tasters approach the table from the front, starting with any available pitcher. After taking a sample, they move away from the table to conduct their own evaluation using either printed posters or online materials for more information about the sample.
- Water rinsing stations and dump buckets are placed away from the table to attract tasters away from the sampling area. After rinsing glasses, they go back to the table to try the next sample. The panel manager can choose to use single-use plastic glasses for each sample but this can be costly.
- Those involved in running the presentation should be behind the pitcher table and monitoring when empty pitchers occur towards preparing another pitcher. For groups of more than 20, it is a good idea to have extra pitchers to allow a fresh pitcher to be prepared and immediately substituted for an empty vessel.
- Empty cups should be made available in multiple locations, and garbage cans labeled "empty cups with no liquid" placed in logical traffic areas. Cups should be empty before disposal as leaking trash bags will cause odors to permeate the tasting area.
- Signs should be on the tables showing the correct level to which cups are poured. Overpouring will potentially lead to running out of samples to pour.
- Dump buckets and water supplies must be monitored to make sure water is available and buckets don't get too full to move. Panel staff must be able to access a sink or a large leak-proof bucket to dump waste liquids.

#### *A sample floor layout for the tasting station*



## 4. USING SENSORY STATION MATERIALS TO TRAIN TASTERS

Rather than have busy panel managers answer questions, the Siebel Sensory Station system has a variety of materials available for reference by tasters. Printouts of PDF materials can be placed in locations near the glass rinse stations or other areas where people can learn about the nature of the compound without disrupting the flow of tasters at the sampling table. Siebel Institute has also created a YouTube channel where tasters can watch instructional presentation on each compound, describing the typical characteristics of the flavor and aroma as well as listing causes and control factors for each compound. Signs allow tasters to access the YouTube channel through a variety of easy methods.

## 5. PRINTABLE MATERIALS FOR DISPLAY AND USE IN THE SENSORY STATION

**Self-directed beer tasting guides** – These are small posters instructing people on how to move through each of the samples, how to pour their samples, and how to smell and taste beer like professional tasters.

**Placemats** – Used to locate and identify pitchers. As these get wet quickly, it is a good idea to have extra copies on hand to replace placemats that get damaged. If the panel manager intends on running more than one panel, it is a good idea to get placemats laminated in plastic.

**Labels** – The label sheets are available in both PDF and Word format depending on the needs of the panel manager. These are formatted for Avery standard label sizes, and it is recommended that managers purchase the removable labels to make cleanup easier at the end of the panel.

*Compatible Avery-made labels for this pre-formatted file are:*

15660, 15700, 15960, 16790, 18160, 18260, 18660, 22837, 28660, 32660, 38260, 45160, 48160, 48260, 48360, 48460, 48860, 48960, 5160, 5260, 55160, 5520, 55360, 5620, 5630, 5660, 58160, 58660, 5960, 6240, 6521, 6525, 6526, 6585, 75160, 80509, 8160, 8215, 8250, 8460, 85560, 8620, 8660, 88560, 8860, 8920, 95520, 95915

**Aroma guide handout** – These small documents can be printed out for each participant to read and keep after the panel concludes, and they can be posted on walls or in frames in different locations.

**Links to the Siebel Sensory web site** – These sheets offer links to the narrated videos on the Siebel Sensory web site. The videos are on YouTube and should run on any web-enabled device.

## SIGNS AND PLACEMATS

The printable signs in the following pages can be used for a variety of purposes. After printing, you may wish to laminate them for resistance to liquids and to allow them to be used in future Sensory Station panels.







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PLEASE ***POUR***  
***ONLY THIS MUCH***  
***BEER OR LESS*** FOR  
EACH SAMPLE.

***PLEASE MOVE AWAY  
FROM THE TABLE  
AFTER YOU POUR  
YOUR SAMPLE.***



# How to Taste Beer in Brewing Sensory Panel Training.

## Step 1

The Evaluation  
Process

- *Swirl the sample to release the aroma*



## Step 2

The Evaluation Process

- *Do a Drive-By*

Wave the sample  
from side to side  
under nose while  
sniffing



## Step 3

The Evaluation Process

- *A couple of Short, Sharp Sniffs*

Hold the cup  
steadily beneath  
the nose and sniff



## Step 4

The Evaluation Process

What aromas are you picking up in this sample?

The Evaluation Process

- *Taste the Sample*

Take a sip, let it  
linger, then swallow  
and evaluate.  
Breathe in and out  
through the nose



## Step 6

The Evaluation Process

- What flavors are you picking up in this sample?
- Are there differences other than in the flavor?
- *Mouthfeel?*



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# **Fresh Water Rinse Station**

- Rinse tasting cups between samples (conserve water, please)
- Water is suitable for drinking between tasting samples

Alert an event organizer if water is out or a dump bucket needs to be replaced



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See video presentations on each Siebel Institute Sensory Compound along with other important sensory-related information on YouTube using the QR code below

