



# Training boosts upselling in Living Ventures' bars

## Overview

Founded in 1993, Living Ventures Group is an owner, operator and brand developer of award winning hospitality venues across the UK including the Alchemist, Artisan and Gusto brands. The Group employs thousands of staff across its restaurants and bars, which turn over a total of £100 million each year.

## The challenge

Living Ventures Group sees offering choice as much a part of the guest experience as a chance to increase profit. Their extensive drinks lists at their busy and dynamic bars aim to cater to a wide range of consumers' tastes, but bar staff need high levels of product knowledge and flair to be able to give their customers superior service and recommendations beyond the house pours. Colin Knott, Training Manager at Living Ventures, says, "If we can provide a better product and standard of service through training we can improve repeat custom and long term income."

*"Living Ventures has always had a strong commitment to training and it is pleasantly surprising to see that the WSET Spirits course has had a positive improvement on our sales in brands such as The Alchemist and The Botanist which already have an impressive reputation for diverse drinks sales."*

Colin Knott  
Training Manager  
Living Ventures Group



## The solution

WSET approached **William Grant & Sons Ltd.**, a long-established (1887) family-owned premium spirits producer, distributor and WSET Approved Programme Provider, to run a controlled study to assess the impact of training on the sales performance of customer-facing UK on-trade workers. William Grant's WSET-trained team worked with Living Ventures Group to identify 30 members of staff across different outlets to provide two groups for the trial. Two employees from each branch received **WSET Level 2 Award in Spirits** education and brand training from William Grant & Sons, while one employee from each branch was selected for the control group.

**WSET Level 2 Award in Spirits** provides comprehensive knowledge on spirits and liqueurs, from the fundamental principles of production and the main categories of spirits to the skills of tasting and evaluating different varieties, while also exploring key brands and the use of spirits in cocktails.

To find out more visit [wsetglobal.com](http://wsetglobal.com) or contact us at [wset@wsetglobal.com](mailto:wset@wsetglobal.com) or on +44 (0)20 7089 3800

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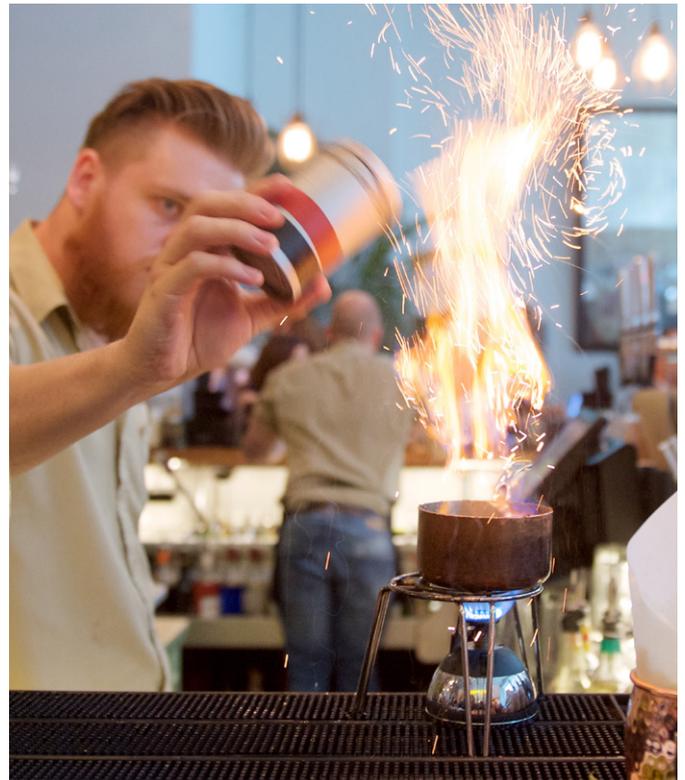
## The results

Sales data for volumes of house and premium spirits sold were analysed for each employee for the three months pre- and post-training. **The results showed that the trained group outperformed the control group by +16.9%**, demonstrating a significant increase in upselling to premium spirits following training. Staff's improved product knowledge increased their confidence to encourage customers to choose a premium spirit.

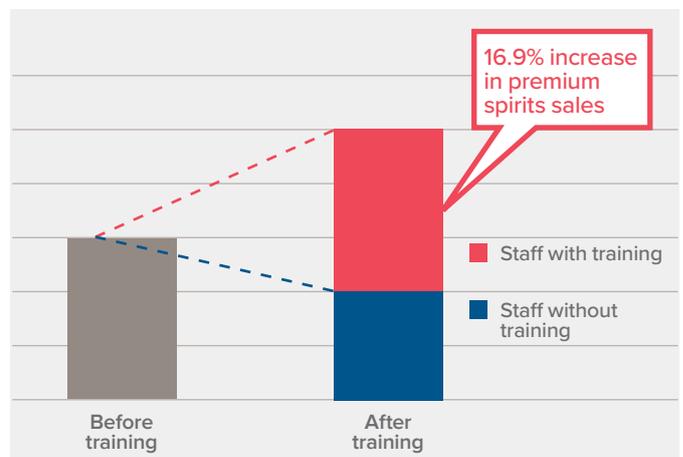
WSET spirits training demonstrated a sustained positive impact on the efficiency and revenue-generating abilities of employees.

*“The WSET course enabled bartenders to gain a deeper understanding of the key categories unlocking the potential to engage and premiumise their sales mix. Whilst the bar teams benefitted from the investment of education and personal development, it has delivered tangible benefits for Living Ventures with significant uplifts in the Rum & Tequila categories, demonstrating the confidence that the bar teams now have with navigating consumers around these categories, encouraging consumers to trade up through the range.”*

Henry John  
Senior Category & Customer Marketing Manager:  
On Trade  
William Grant & Sons UK Ltd



WSET training leads to a gain in premium spirit sales



Some of the brands owned by the Living Ventures Group:

**ARTISAN**  
KITCHEN + BAR

  
THE ALCHEMIST

RED DOOR

*The Botanist*

EST. 2005  
**GUSTO**  
RESTAURANT & BAR

**BLACKHOUSE**

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