

To: PRAD 595 & Dr. R, on Culp  
From: JZ Zaeske  
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Subject: Leadership Business Memo

Craft Beer is on the rise with many new small businesses opening up. Some make it while others don't. So how does one cut through the craft beer noise to showcase a lasting brand? Dagbjartur Ariliusson, owner of Stedji Brewery in Iceland, has tips on how to stand out from the competition.

Be bold is the first tidbit offered. Each decision denotes a safe route or a risky move. There are many adages regarding the benefits of taking risks. Ariliusson echoes this sentiment; in his experience, the risk usually pays off. He also notes confidence is a critical component of being bold and taking a step in a direction with confidence at any point in the operations of owning a small business.

“Be a ‘fresh idiot,’” Ariliusson advises when it comes to creativity. Creativity is an integral part of owning a small business, according to the advice he offers. For example, Stedji Brewery offers a non-alcoholic, sugar-free lemonade made from leftover fish skins of local fishers near their brewery in Iceland. In addition, he highly encourages looking at things from another perspective that may not have been considered previously.

While creativity is essential, respecting the rules and regulations set up to protect others is necessary. “Be innovative within the framework” was the advice offered along with the statement of having tremendous respect for those who practice Ariliusson expressed this. He has made himself and his business stand out through three key factors that fall within the framework of the industry; water, brewing process, and flavors. The water used at this brewery is not processed; instead, it is pulled straight from a spring in Iceland. *Reinheitsgeboten* is a traditional German brewing process encompassing barley, hops, and water to brew the beer. Things besides barely are sometimes used by other brewers who do not use the traditional German brewing process. Hops affect the flavor of the beer, so hop choice allows for creativity within the framework.

Being proactive goes hand in hand with the creativity advised offered. Ariliusson takes advantage of this by experimenting with his beer flavors. He incorporates traditional flavors and recipes of Iceland within his craft brews. Whale testicles smoked over sheep dung is a Nordic tradition Ariliusson incorporated into one of his beers. This also sparked a heated debate about conservation rights Ariliusson used to discuss the importance of population control of whales to protect fish populations which is a side of an argument not commonly given a platform when talking about conservation rights. Ariliusson was able to exhibit leadership in his industry

through innovation and traditions and open up a discussion about important issues through his business.

Ariusson expressed he always has fun while brewing and running his business. He described the joy it brings him to watch his beers grow through the brewing processes. Unfortunately, having fun is not something commonly associated with leadership advice. Stress, pressure, and the importance of success all tend to overshadow having fun. However, it is essential to have fun or find enjoyable aspects when stopping to consider this advice.

Leadership advice from a small craft brew owner located in Iceland is not a traditional take. Some of the advice overlaps with high-powered professionals, while other pieces were unique. It is essential to look at leadership advice from all angles to learn to be a well-rounded leader. Unique perspectives sometimes offer insight that would have otherwise been missed.

### **References**

Hamstra, C., Ph.D. (2019, July 06). Beer as an understanding of leadership life-stories. Retrieved from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/beer-understanding-leadership-life-stories-chris-hamstra-ph-d/>