

## Success Factors in a Seasonal Tea Program By Jordan Scherer

### *The Importance of a Separate Menu*

*This is the first post in a series all about success factors. Stay tuned for more updates from us!*

Over the past year, I traveled 15,000 miles across the continental United States, immersing myself into the coffee scene of each city I visited. My goal, beyond strengthening our relationships was to test a hypothesis for success factors concerning how to drive volume on the tea menu for our cafes nationwide.

One of the primary goals of creating an intentional, thoughtfully-crafted tea program is to help cafes drive an afternoon rush that is as busy as the morning's. Many cafes I talked to cited that their upgraded tea program is the catalyst to build this afternoon/evening audience.

According to Square, tea drives 8-10% of overall sales in the average US coffee shop. Also on average, matcha alone accounts for 2% of this - followed by black tea, green tea, oolong tea, and white tea. As a general benchmark for Spirit, I like to believe we can get this percent closer to 15 in the near future.

One of the most important factors in driving this exchange is having environmental cues to show that you can accommodate tea lovers and take your tea program seriously. Today's first tip: the importance of a separate tea menu.

Most often, I encounter cafes that have offered a consistent and flavor-driven tea menu for years, but are now interested in a program that aligns more closely to their coffee portfolio. This includes full transparency, seasonality, training and education, and an intentional service method. A traditional program often is an easy way to differentiate from neighboring cafes that offer flavor-driven menus.

I have visited cafes in the past few months that have had as high as 20% overall tea sales, and others as low as 2%. One consistent factor I identified in the top tier was that most of these cafes had a separate menu from their coffee/food options, highlighting the tea program.

Here are the most important factors of a separate tea menu:

1. Include the type of tea - keeping it categorical and simple will help customers identify familiar terminology (e.g., white, green, oolong, black, herbal tonic.)
2. Include the name of the tea with a transliteration next to it. Without a quick parenthetical, a tea can appear intimidating if customers feel self-conscious about their choice.

**Gui Fei** (*GWAY-fay or GWEE-fay*)

**Qi Lan** (*CHI lan*)

This will help customers feel comfortable exploring outside their comfort zone with ensured confidence that they are pronouncing its name correctly.

3. List three distinct tasting notes underneath. These tea taste traits will help customers relate more to flavor profiles they are already familiar with and love. We provide suggestions on the box --

### **Koushun Sencha** (*KOH-shoon*)

Notes of collard greens, sweet cinnamon and caramelized Brussels sprouts.

4. Keep categories small - remember that less is more here. Generally speaking, I suggest a menu that updates throughout the year. Four to seven options are typically plenty.
5. Know your market and know the appropriate price points. Some markets have no problem selling our tea at \$4.00+ per cup, but most find that the sweet spot is \$3.75. Even on our Tier 3 options, this still allows for a very healthy profit margin per cup.

Thank you for joining me on the first installment of our series on success factors. Please let us know your thoughts on our tea program - what's worked for your cafe, what hasn't, and/or what your customers are looking for. We'll appreciate any feedback at [orders@spirittea.co](mailto:orders@spirittea.co).



## TEA MENU

### WHITE

**Nepal White**  
\$4.50  
White Peach,  
Honeydew, Cantaloupe

**Daliensis  
Silver Needle**  
(Dah-Lee-En-Sis)  
\$3.50  
Cinnamon Spice,  
Vanilla Frosting, Hay

### BLACK

**Spirit Red**  
\$4.50  
Orange Blossom,  
Maple Syrup,  
Pine Needle

**Sunstone**  
\$3.50  
Cocoa, Sweet Potato,  
Caramel

### OOLONG

**Thunder Aroma**  
\$4.50  
Buttery Popcorn,  
Caramelized Sugar,  
Jasmine, Peach Fuzz

**Li Shan  
Water Sprout**  
\$4.50  
Toffee, Edamame

**Golden Water  
Turtle**  
\$4.50  
Toasted Coconut,  
Honey, Maple Syrup

### GREEN

**Kojima Aged Sencha**  
\$4.50  
Nori, Toasted Chestnut,  
Cucumber, Buttery

**West Lake  
Dragonwell**  
\$3.50  
Toasted Sunflower  
Seeds, Water Chestnut,  
Buttered Asparagus

**Crescent Green**  
\$3.50  
Toasted Almond,  
Seaweed, Morning Dew

### HERBAL

**Rosella**  
\$3.50  
Hibiscus,  
Lemongrass,  
Licorice Root

**Malabar**  
\$3.50  
Chinese Ginger,  
Turmeric,  
Malabar  
Black  
Peppercorn

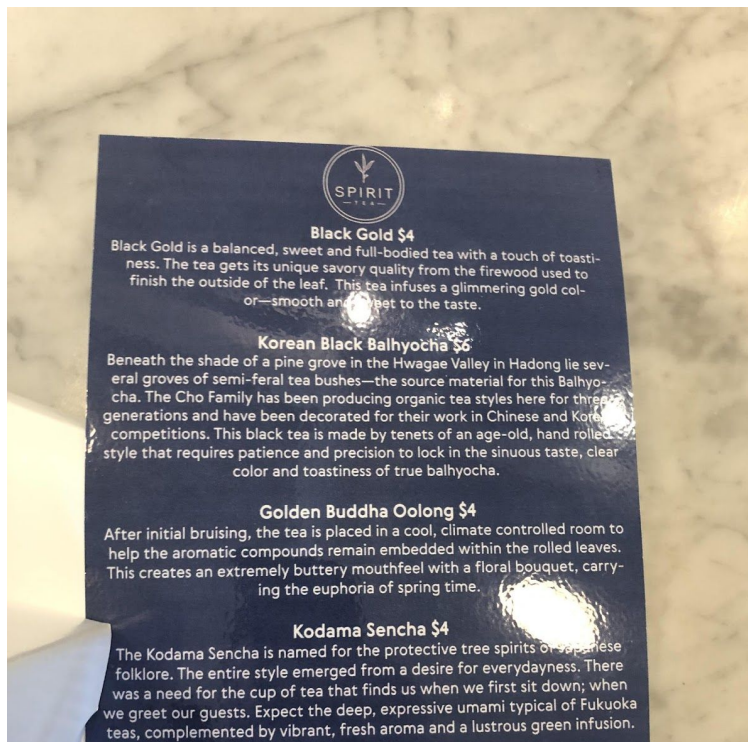
**Chamomile**  
\$3.50  
Soft, Sweet,  
Honey

**Saigon**  
\$3.50  
Saigon Cinnamon,  
Sichuan Peppercorn,  
Lemongrass

Tea menu at Huckleberry Roasters in Denver, Co.



Gaslight Coffee Roasters Tea Menu Chicago, IL



Lost Larson Tea Menu Chicago, IL