



Beyond

the beer garden

How
Mocktails
Can Boost
Inclusion
and
Revenue at
Your Fair

CREATED BY ANGELA MILLER



This eBook was designed for fair boards, event committees, and coordinators who want to create more inclusive and profitable beverage experiences. Each chapter builds on the next; from understanding the movement, to building your own setup, to measuring success.

Welcome

I do not consume much alcohol. In fact, after some personal choices and life changes, I realized how rare it was to find enjoyable, non-alcoholic options at adult-oriented events. Whether I was at a fair, a festival, or a professional convention, I noticed the same pattern: the social hours, mixers, and networking gatherings all centered around alcohol.

At first, I brushed it off. But the more events I attended, the more I noticed how many others were quietly in the same situation - attending but not fully included. Some people were sober by choice, some for health or religious reasons, some were simply taking a break from drinking. Yet, in most cases, the only alternative offered was water, soda, or maybe a basic lemonade.

That's when it hit me - it wasn't just about what was being served; it was about belonging.



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Angela

“
BECAUSE EVERYONE
DESERVES TO RAISE A
GLASS - AND FEEL LIKE
THEY BELONG
”

INTRODUCTION

Why This Matters

In the fairs and festivals world, we pride ourselves on being inclusive, community-driven, and family-friendly. Yet, our beverage culture often leaves out a growing number of attendees who want to participate in the fun without alcohol. The “sober curious” movement is no longer a niche trend; it’s a cultural shift that’s shaping how people socialize, celebrate, and connect.

When I began suggesting that fairs and events include mocktails or non-alcoholic (NA) beverage options, the feedback was often the same:

“That won’t bring in revenue.”

But I saw the opposite potential. When guests who don’t drink are given premium, creative beverage options, and invited to stay in the same spaces as those who do, they stay longer, spend more, and feel more welcome. Offering mocktails isn’t about taking anything away; it’s about adding experiences, adding choices, and adding value.

This eBook was created to help event organizers, fair managers, and festival planners explore how to bring that inclusion to life - in a way that makes financial sense and enhances the overall guest experience.

Inside, you’ll find practical steps to design your own mocktail program, insights on how it can drive new sponsorship opportunities, and real-world examples from my own trade show and convention experiences. My hope is that by the end, you’ll see how small changes in your beverage program can have a big impact on your event’s culture, community, and bottom line.

Clubs and other venues are already paying attention to the mocktail demand, with even non-alcoholic breweries seeing an explosion in revenue. Alcohol sales are healthy, but non-alcoholic sales are no slouch.

This year, the revenue generated in the non-alcoholic drinks market is projected to reach \$1.45 trillion in the US alone. Non-alcoholic adult beverage sales rose 33 percent this year, accounting for a mammoth \$331 million. Online, the number was even higher, where non-alcoholic/low-alcohol sales spiked 315 percent!

-Greenbook.org



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There's a quiet but powerful change happening across the event world. It's not a rebellion against alcohol, but a reimagining of what social connection looks like. More and more people are identifying as sober-curious. What does that mean? They aren't necessarily sober for life, but they're *choosing* to drink less, or not at all, and still want to be part of the social scene.

The key word here is choice.

A Movement, Not a Moment

In the last few years, the non-alcoholic beverage industry has grown exponentially. Major beverage companies, craft brewers, and mixologists are investing in this category because demand is no longer a passing fad. According to recent industry reports, sales of non-alcoholic drinks have increased by more than **30% since 2022**, and the number of adults identifying as "sober-curious" continues to rise each year.

You can now find sophisticated alcohol-free spirits, canned mocktails, zero-proof beers, and sparkling adaptogenic drinks in nearly every major grocery store and bar menu. It's not just about "not drinking" anymore. It's about being mindful, healthy, and social in new ways.

This shift isn't just happening in big cities or trendy restaurants. It's reaching small-town fairs, community events, and state expos. Guests of all ages are looking for ways to celebrate responsibly, and they're bringing those expectations to your events.

3 QUICK TIPS

TIP #1

Try This - Ask your attendees what non-alcoholic options they'd like to see next year.

TIP #2

Mocktails don't compete with alcohol. They compete with leaving early.

TIP #3

Start with your audience and create one drink inspired by your fair's theme.

Chapter 1: The Sober-Curious Shift

Why It Matters for Fairs and Festivals

Fairs have always reflected the heart of a community as a place where everyone feels welcome. But if someone who doesn't drink can't find a beverage that feels special, they're quietly excluded from the social energy that happens in your beer garden, hospitality area, or VIP lounge.

When guests feel excluded, they often leave those areas earlier, or skip them altogether. That means missed opportunities for *revenue, engagement, and connection*.

On the other hand, when non-drinkers are welcomed with thoughtfully crafted mocktails and NA options, it changes everything. They linger longer, spend more time with friends, and share positive experiences online. It's not uncommon for these offerings to become conversation starters: something guests photograph, post about, and remember.

You're not just serving a drink. You're creating an experience that includes everyone.



Chapter 1: The Sober-Curious Shift

Beyond Health - It's About Belonging

Not everyone who chooses not to drink is doing so for health reasons. Some are in recovery. Some are athletes. Some are pregnant, taking medication, or simply not interested in drinking that night. Others are staff, volunteers, or performers who want to stay clear-headed while still being part of the fun.

Providing inclusive beverage options sends a strong, silent message:

"You belong here."

That message matters - especially in community events built on togetherness. When we look at inclusion, we often think about accessibility, language, or physical space. But emotional and social inclusion is just as important. If guests see that your event welcomes them as they are, they're more likely to return, bring friends, and talk about it long after the gates close.

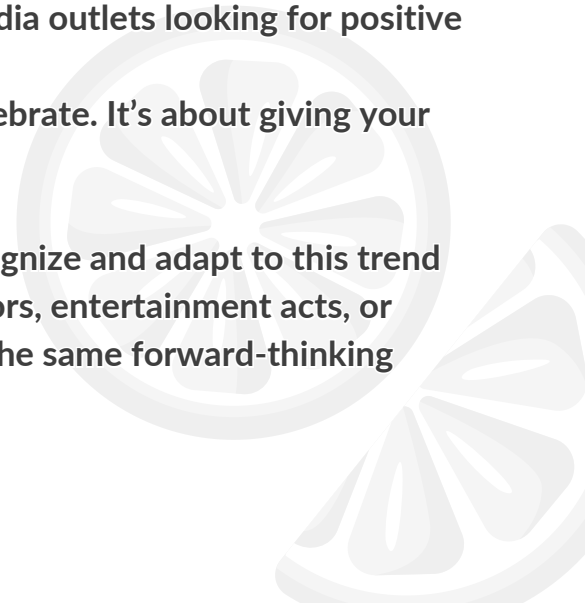
A Win for Business and Branding

From a business perspective, offering premium non-alcoholic beverages isn't just a nice gesture - it's smart strategy.

- Higher Per-Capita Spending: A \$9 craft mocktail often has a higher profit margin than a beer or soda.
- Extended Dwell Time: Non-drinkers stay in beer gardens or VIP areas longer when they feel included.
- Brand Image: Events that promote choice, safety, and wellness earn better PR and attract a wider demographic, including families, sponsors, and media outlets looking for positive stories. This is GREAT for the fair industry.

This isn't about eliminating alcohol or policing how people celebrate. It's about giving your guests *more options* to enjoy themselves.

As the sober-curious culture continues to grow, fairs that recognize and adapt to this trend will stand out as innovators. Just as you'd add new food vendors, entertainment acts, or technology to stay current, your beverage program deserves the same forward-thinking attention.



Mini takeaway:

The future of
fairs is inclusive.

Inclusion isn't just
about who's
allowed in. It's
about who feels
welcome to stay.

chapter two

The Case for Mocktails at Fairs

When people think of fairs and festivals, one image comes to mind almost instantly: food, fun, and cold drinks. For decades, those drinks have primarily meant beer gardens, local brews, or wine tastings. And while those aren't going away, the definition of a great beverage experience is expanding.

Adding mocktails and non-alcoholic (NA) drinks to your fair isn't just a "nice touch." It's a *smart, forward-thinking business decision*. Beyond inclusivity and guest comfort, it opens new avenues for revenue, sponsorship, and branding.

Breaking the "It Won't Make Money" Myth

One of the most common responses I've heard when suggesting NA options is:

"That won't bring in revenue."

Here's the truth: it can, and it does.

When someone who doesn't drink walks into a beer garden, they have two choices:

1. Leave and find something else to sip elsewhere.
2. Stay and drink water or soda, usually at a much lower price point, if there is even an option to purchase these within your beer garden

Neither of those options adds much value to the space or the bottom line.

Now imagine offering a small, creative mocktail menu with three to five options, crafted with the same care and branding as the alcoholic drinks. Suddenly, you're giving non-drinkers a reason to stay. You're transforming them from bystanders into active participants in your revenue stream.



Most guests don't hesitate to pay \$8–\$12 for a visually appealing, well-presented drink, even if it's alcohol-free. When priced properly, the cost of ingredients and labor for mocktails often equals or undercuts that of cocktails, leading to stronger profit margins per drink.

It's not just about what's in the cup, it's about how the drink feels.

If it's crafted, garnished, and served with the same care as its alcoholic counterpart, guests perceive it as part of the premium experience they came for.

Keeping Guests Where the Revenue Is

Beer gardens and 21+ areas are designed to generate income and create lively atmospheres. The problem is that attendees who don't drink often skip those areas entirely, meaning lost potential for:

- Food purchases
- Merchandise sales
- Additional beverages
- Social engagement

When your mocktail program gives these guests a reason to stay, it increases *dwell time* — the single biggest predictor of higher on-site spending.

If each non-drinking guest buys two mocktails instead of leaving the area after one soda, that's not just a good experience, it's measurable growth in revenue.

Think of it this way: you've already paid for the space, the staff, and the setup. Mocktails maximize what's already there.

Find a local run club, or other health conscious organization. Collaborate with them to serve drinks during one of your grandstand or beer garden events.



Sponsorship and Partnership Potential

Adding non-alcoholic experiences also opens doors for new sponsorships and partnerships.

Wellness brands, sparkling water companies, kombucha brewers, and local juice makers are eager to find places where their message fits, and fairs have huge reach. These businesses often don't want to sponsor beer gardens but would gladly align with something labeled "The Refresh & Recharge Lounge" or "Mocktail Mixer Garden."

Imagine your fair's signage saying:

"Presented by [Local Wellness Brand] - Enjoy a Fresh Twist on Fair Fun."

That's not just smart branding, it's a new line item in your sponsorship budget.

*We will touch
more on this in
chapter 4*

Inclusivity Is Good Business

Offering NA beverages signals that your fair values every attendee, not just those who drink.

It's inclusive of:

- Sober guests
- Designated drivers
- Pregnant women
- Attendees with health or religious restrictions
- Younger adults transitioning into 21+ areas

Each of these groups represents paying guests who want to be part of the experience, not left out of it. When they feel seen, they stay longer, recommend your event, and return year after year.

This inclusivity also extends to your staff and volunteers. Having NA options available in after-hours gatherings ensures everyone can participate comfortably — a small but powerful step toward healthier workplace culture in the events industry.



- Sip Smart. Celebrate Big.
- Zero Proof. Full of Flavor.
- Everyone Deserves to Raise a Glass.

Sample Sign Ideas:

Add one more:

Public Relations and Safety

Offering alcohol responsibly is part of every event's duty of care. Introducing mocktails and NA options enhances your safety record and community reputation.

Local news outlets and sponsors love positive stories about innovation, inclusion, and community well-being. It's not hard to imagine a headline like:

"County Fair Leads Trend with Sober-Friendly Beer Garden Experience."

That kind of coverage brings lasting value which goes far beyond drink sales.

Brainstorm Session

Who could sponsor your mocktail station?

- ☐ Local grocery store
- ☐ Health clinic or wellness brand
- ☐ Insurance company
- ☐ 4-H / FFA alumni group
- ☐ Farm-to-table restaurant
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

A Shift in Culture, Not a Loss of Tradition

Adding mocktails doesn't mean taking alcohol away. It means expanding what celebration looks like. Guests who do drink will still have their favorite options. But those who don't will finally feel like they're part of the moment, not watching from the sidelines.

At its heart, fair culture has always been about community while bringing people together to share joy, laughter, and local pride. Offering mocktails simply continues that tradition in a modern, more inclusive way.

Mini

takeaway:

Mocktails don't compete with beer sales - they complement them. The real competition is disengagement and early exits.

Fairgrounds

philosophy

Fairs have always been about more than rides and ribbons - they're about connection.

Adding a mocktail menu is one more way to keep that spirit alive. Whether guests are raising a glass of lemonade or a zero-proof fizz, the message is the same: everyone belongs.

chapter three

How to Add a Mocktail Experience to Your Event

Once you understand why non-alcoholic options matter, the next step is learning how to build them successfully into your event. The good news? It's easier than most planners think. With a little creativity, planning, and the right partners, you can design an experience that feels polished, profitable, and perfectly on-brand for your fair.

Step 1: Define Your Vision

Before you start mixing drinks, define the purpose of your mocktail experience.

Ask yourself:

- Is this a stand-alone mocktail bar or an add-on inside the beer garden?
- Is this presented to our 21+ audience, or to any age fairgoer?
- Do you want a casual fair-style setup or a premium lounge atmosphere?
- Is the goal to increase inclusivity, create sponsorship opportunities, or add a fun novelty to your fair?

Your answer determines how you design the space, market it, and train your staff.

Tip: Give it a memorable name! Examples:

- The Dry Garden
- Refresh & Recharge Lounge
- Sip Station: Alcohol-Free & Full of Fun
- The Mocktail Barn

A strong name makes it easier to brand, promote, and attract sponsors.

What name ideas do you think would be a good fit for your fair?



Step 2: Plan the Menu

Start simple. You don't need a 10-drink lineup to make an impact. Three to five high-quality options are enough to start.

Menu Guidelines

- Use *fresh ingredients* when possible, like fruit purées, herbs, or fresh juices.
- Offer *variety*: something fruity, something citrusy, something sparkling.
- Create a *signature drink* that ties into your fair theme.

Creating a signature drink creates buzz amongst fairgoers.

EXAMPLE MENU

<i>Drink Name</i>	<i>Flavor Profile</i>	<i>Description</i>
County Cooler	Citrus + Mint	Sparkling lemonade with cucumber, mint, and a lime twist.
Blue Ribbon Fizz	Berry + Herbal	Blueberry and basil soda topped with sparkling water.
Sunset Spritz	Tropical	Mango nectar with coconut water and a splash of ginger ale.

What are some local ingredients that may add flair to your drink menu?

BONUS IDEA:

Create a mocktail competition for your staff or community and let attendees vote for the winning drink!



be sure to check out the additional contest ideas I have created for this chapter

Step 3: Source Ingredients and Supplies

Basic Equipment Checklist



This doesn't need to be complicated or expensive. Many standard bar supplies work perfectly for mocktails.

You do NOT need to bring in a blender!

Step 4: Train and Empower Your Staff

Your mocktail program succeeds or fails based on how it's presented. Train staff to talk confidently and enthusiastically about the options.

Quick Training Checklist

- Teach servers to describe mocktails as premium and not "just soda."
- Encourage upselling: "Would you like to try our Fair Signature Mocktail tonight?"
- Make sure pricing matches the presentation. Mocktails should be treated as equals to alcoholic drinks in both style and tone.

When staff are proud of the product, guests notice.

Step 5: Design the Space

Even a simple booth or pop-up can feel elevated with small details. Think about:

- Color and texture: Pastels, fresh greenery, or fruit displays make the space inviting.
- Lighting: String lights or neon signage help attract attention.
- Signage: Use professional fonts, fun names, and clear pricing. Avoid handwritten signage whenever possible.

Vendor Tip:

Offer a mocktail happy hour for vendors and volunteers during special hours. It boosts morale, encourages networking, and keeps your team refreshed and engaged.

Ingredient Tips

- Partner with local grocers or farms for fresh produce AND, they may even want sponsorship visibility.
- Consider NA spirit brands like Ritual, Seedlip, or Lyre's if you want to offer elevated "zero-proof cocktails."
- Pre-batch high-demand drinks to speed up service.



Step 6: Price and Promote

Pricing is key to both perception and profit. If you underprice your mocktails, they'll be seen as "less than."

Price them similarly to beer or cocktails - you're selling the experience, not just the drink.

Marketing Tips:

- Add mocktails to your official fair map or food guide.
- Post teasers on social media: "Which drink will win the Blue Ribbon Blitz taste test?"
- Feature them during family nights, wellness days, or sponsor promotions.
- Offer reusable branded cups for eco-friendly appeal and extra revenue.

Step 7: Partner and Collaborate

Think beyond your staff. Involve your community:

- Local high school or college culinary programs could help craft recipes.
- 4-H or FFA groups could run educational tie-ins about local ingredients.
- Local bartenders could help design recipes in exchange for exposure.

Collaborations build buy-in and generate buzz!



Step 8: Pilot, Measure, and Adjust

Your first mocktail experience doesn't need to be perfect. Start small, measure response, and grow from there.

Track:

- Sales numbers
- Guest feedback
- Social media mentions *#YourFairMocktailGarden*
- Dwell time in your beer garden

*Pro Tip:
Pre-sell reusable
branded cups
through a local bar,
restaurant or your
website to offer a
discount on "refills"
during the fair.*

You'll quickly see where the opportunities lie, and how to make the next year even better.

Mini
takeaway: You don't need a huge
budget to add huge value.
Start small, do it well, and build from there.

A toast to tradition

You don't have to
trade tradition for
innovation.

Mocktails can be a
bridge between
nostalgia and progress -
honoring the past while
welcoming new ways to
celebrate together.

Chapter 4: Marketing & Sponsorship Opportunities

Adding mocktails to your fair isn't just about providing options. It's a chance to build excitement, strengthen partnerships, and expand your event's brand reach.

When you introduce a new concept like this, your goal isn't only to sell drinks, it's to create a story people want to share.

This chapter focuses on how to position your mocktail experience as a marketable feature that attracts guests, media attention, and sponsorship dollars.

Building the Story Around Your Experience

Marketing your mocktail addition should start with one question:

"What does this experience say about our event?"

Here are a few strong narratives that resonate with guests and sponsors alike:

- **Inclusivity:** Everyone deserves a reason to raise a glass.
- **Wellness and Responsibility:** Celebrating smarter, safer, and more sustainably.
- **Community and Creativity:** Locally inspired flavors for all ages.

Pick a story angle that aligns with your fair's brand and community values. Once you have your "why," every social post, press release, and sponsor pitch becomes more cohesive and intentional.

QUICK TIPS

Each drink poured is a chance to make someone feel included. Celebrate the connections you create.

Pro Tip:

Offer tiered sponsorship levels (e.g., "Official Mocktail Sponsor," "Supporting Partner," etc.) to make it easy for brands to participate at different price points.

PR Headline Example:

"State Fair Introduces 'Dry Garden' Experience for Sober and Sober-Curious Guests with A Fresh Take on Community Connection."

Chapter 4: Marketing & Sponsorship Opportunities

Marketing Your Experience

Treat your mocktail program like a headliner, not an afterthought. Highlight it in the same way you would promote a new food vendor or concert act.

Marketing Ideas:

1. *Pre-Fair Teasers:* Share sneak peeks of mocktail recipes or behind-the-scenes prep on social media. Use countdowns: “3 days until you can try our Blue Ribbon Fizz!”
2. *Naming Contests:* Let followers help name your signature drink. Engagement like this increases online buzz before the fair even opens.
3. *Photo-Worthy Presentation:* Design your mocktails to look good. People post what looks good. A garnish or color pop doubles as free marketing.
4. *Menu Boards and Signage:* Use creative chalkboards or banners:
 - Sip Smart. Celebrate Big.
 - Zero Proof. Full of Flavor.
5. *Collaborations:* Team up with food vendors for pairings (“Try Fred’s BBQ Brisket + County Cooler combo”).



Chapter 4: Marketing & Sponsorship Opportunities

Marketing Your Experience

Local media outlets love positive, community-focused stories; and this is one. Offering mocktails ties directly into responsible event hosting, family-friendly culture, and innovation in the fair industry.

When sending press releases or pitching your fair story:

- Emphasize the why: inclusion, creativity, and safety.
- Share real voices with guest testimonials or photos from past events.
- Mention your partnerships (especially local farms, beverage brands, or schools).



Social Media Integration

The modern fair experience lives as much online as it does on the grounds. Make your mocktail program part of your social media strategy.

Sponsorship Opportunities

Potential Sponsors:

- Local wellness or fitness brands
- Health clinics and hospitals
- Beverage distributors (sparkling water, kombucha, NA spirits)
- Grocery stores or co-ops
- Youth organizations and family services
- Insurance or financial companies with wellness initiatives

Sponsorship Perks to Offer:

- Branded signage in the mocktail area ("Presented by ___")
- Logo placement on menus or reusable cups
- Inclusion in press releases or media spots
- Sampling rights for their product
- On-site booth or display near the bar

Social Media Ideas:

- #MocktailMoments: Create a hashtag where guests can share photos.
- Video Spotlight: Short clips of staff shaking up drinks, pouring vibrant colors, and guests smiling.
- Feature Fridays: Highlight local sponsors or NA brands you're working with.
- Recipe Reveals: After the event, share a recipe or two from your fair's menu as a follow-up post.

This builds loyalty and gives attendees a reason to follow your pages long after the fair ends.

Branding the Experience

Think about how your mocktail area fits into your overall fair branding. Use consistent fonts, colors, and imagery. It should feel like an official part of the fair, not a temporary add-on.

Branding Tips:

- Align your mocktail bar visuals with your fair's theme (rustic, modern, farm-to-table, etc.).
- Add your fair's logo subtly to cups or napkins.
- Keep your mocktail names playful but professional. They can become souvenirs on their own!

The Ripple Effect of Inclusion

Here's the best part: once your fair introduces a mocktail experience, the conversation doesn't stop there. Other event planners notice. Guests tell their friends. Sponsors take interest. And soon, your fair becomes known not just for entertainment, but for innovation and community inclusivity.

This positions your event as a **leader in evolving fair culture**, setting the tone for future trends and attracting fresh opportunities.

Work with me:

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"I think it's imperative that people have more mocktail options, ESPECIALLY at events where most of the time, alcohol is involved. A huge goal of mine is to give sober and sober-curious people community, connection, and the option to enjoy beverages just like everybody else - it's a whole market that I wished more businesses tapped in to!"

-Reddit Commenter responding to a post I created on this subject

Having a menu available takes the guesswork out of - what do I order?

It's not that I don't know all of my options, it's the overwhelm I feel when suddenly I'm on the spot. It's easier to order a beer or a standard go-to "rum & coke" when I am already met with so much decision overload. Having a small number of "these are my options" gives me a solid list to choose from when I don't want to consume alcohol.

-Amber

Mini takeaway:

Every mocktail sold is more than a drink - it's a message that your fair welcomes everyone.



The ripple effect

Inclusion starts with something as small as what's in a glass.

But when people feel seen and welcome, that feeling spreads far beyond the bar - into conversations, friendships, and communities.

chapter five

Hosting My Own Mocktail Experience

For the first time in over a decade, I'll be attending conventions not as a Fair Manager, but as a *Service Member with my own trade show room*.

After 13 years of working on the fair management side - organizing vendors, coordinating schedules, and walking the aisles of hotel and trade show halls - it feels different to be on the other side of the table. But with that new perspective came an opportunity I couldn't ignore: to create the kind of space I always wished existed.

From Fair Manager to Service Member Exhibitor

When I attended conventions as a fair manager, one thing always stood out: nearly every social or networking event revolved around alcohol. Beer, wine, and cocktails were plentiful, but if you weren't drinking, your choices were usually water, soda, or nothing at all.

As someone who rarely consumes alcohol, I often found myself holding a bottle of water while everyone else mingled over colorful drinks and plentiful beers. I didn't feel excluded from the people, but from the experience. And I knew there had to be others like me, people who wanted to connect, laugh, and celebrate without needing a drink to do it.

So this year, as I step into my first trade show room of as a Service Member, I'm bringing that awareness with me, and turning it into action!

2025 RMAF Signature Drinks:

- Grand Champion Mango Pal-Oma
- Non-Alcoholic Beer
- Show Ring Spritz
- Grandstand Glow

[click for recipe](#)



Creating a “Sober Space” That Still Feels Social

My goal is simple: to show that a sober-friendly space can be just as lively, warm, and inviting as any other hospitality room. The key is in presentation, atmosphere, and intention.

Here’s what I’m doing in my room and what any event professional can replicate:

1. *Setting the Scene*

The room feels festive with bright colors, welcoming signage, comfortable seating (as much as possible in a double queen hotel room), and upbeat music. I want it to feel like a celebration, not a lecture about sobriety. The theme centers around connection and creativity, not abstinence.

2. *Offering Premium Mocktails & Non-Alcoholic Beers*

Guests will be welcomed with a choice of flavorful, visually appealing mocktails that have been thoughtfully crafted and served just as any high-end cocktail would be. Garnished, chilled, and beautifully presented.

The drinks themselves are conversation starters. Instead of “Would you like a beer?”, it becomes “Have you tried the Grand Champion Pal-oma yet?” That shift alone changes the tone of interaction.

3. *Highlighting Inclusion*

I am sharing small, printed cards explaining why the mocktail experience matters and how offering alcohol-free options creates a more inclusive environment for all attendees. It’s not about judgment; it’s about choice.

This room demonstrates how easy it is to extend that inclusivity to fairs, festivals, and community events.



Grand Champion Mango Pal-oma

Ingredients

- 3/4 oz. Ruby Red Grapefruit Syrup
- 1/4 oz. Mango Puree
- 2 oz. Lime sparkling soda water

Garnish: Grapefruit or dehydrated fruit
Ice

Instructions

- Combine mango and grapefruit syrup in shaker.
- Cap and shake vigorously.
- Pour into serving glass and add any needed ice.
- Top with sparkling water and garnish with grapefruit slice

Option: Rim with sugar or Tajin

The Bigger Picture

My hope is that visitors walk away inspired. Not just refreshed from a good drink, but thinking:

"We could do something like this at our fair."

This isn't just an exhibit for me; it's a live example - a proof of concept that inclusivity can also be fun, profitable, and memorable.

It's also about setting the tone for what modern event culture can look like: professional, welcoming, and mindful of all participants.

cheers!

*The sober
room can be
just as
inviting -
and twice as
memorable.*

What Success Will Look Like

Because this is my first year exhibiting, my version of success isn't about how many NA drinks I serve - it's about how many conversations I start.

If attendees stop by to enjoy a mocktail, learn something new, and walk away rethinking their event hospitality model, that's a win.

If even a few fair managers add mocktails to their 2026 plans, that's real change in motion.

And on a personal level, it's rewarding to finally give back to an industry that shaped so much of my professional life; to offer something new while honoring the traditions that make fairs so special.

Mini
takeaway:

When you change the drink menu, you change the conversation. Inclusion starts with invitation.

What's your fair flavor?

Pick Your Perfect Fair Mocktail

- If you love bright lights and Ferris wheels → **Blue Ribbon Fizz**
- If you prefer quiet mornings at the barns → **County Cooler**
- If you can't resist fair food → **Sunset Spritz**
- If you're all about the community → **Grand Champion Pal-oma**

Chapter 6: Measuring Impact & Success

One of the most important, and often overlooked, parts of any new program is proving that it works. Whether you're trying to justify the expense, pitch it to a fair board, or expand next year's version, you need to show that your mocktail experience adds measurable value.

The good news? You can track that impact in several simple, meaningful ways.

1. Start With Clear Goals

Before the first drink is poured, decide what success looks like for your event.

Every fair, festival, or trade show will have slightly different priorities, but here are a few examples:

- Increase overall *guest satisfaction* and inclusivity.
- Keep non-drinking attendees *engaged longer* in beer garden areas.
- Add a *new sponsorship stream*.
- Create *positive PR* or media coverage.
- Collect *social engagement* around your fair's modern, inclusive atmosphere.

By setting your goals up front, you'll know which metrics to focus on, and how to tell your story afterward.

2. Track the Numbers

Even a small amount of data can go a long way in making your case. Here's what to watch:

Sales Data

Track the number of mocktails sold, compared to other drinks. If you can, measure:

- Total sales volume (drinks sold)
- Average price per drink
- Ingredient cost per serving
- Profit margin

Even if sales start small, track the trend - if numbers grow each day or year, it shows momentum.

2. Track the Numbers- continued

Guest Participation

How many guests visited your mocktail area or stayed in 21+ spaces longer because of it? Observation or simple head counts during peak times can give a surprisingly clear picture.

Sponsorship Value

Record:

- New sponsors or partners added
- Dollar amount or in-kind value of those sponsorships
- Social mentions or booth visits from those sponsors

Social Media Metrics

Look for hashtags, tagged posts, and mentions of your mocktail program. Those online conversations are part of your event's visibility and reputation.

3. Gather Guest Feedback

Quantitative data tells one part of the story & feedback tells the other.

A few simple questions can provide powerful quotes and insights for next year's marketing materials.

Post-Event Survey Questions

- Did you notice the mocktail or non-alcoholic options at the fair?
- Did you try one?
- How did it impact your experience?
- Would you like to see these options return next year?

Collect feedback via QR codes, printed cards, or digital follow-ups.



Keep an eye on spontaneous compliments. If you overhear someone saying "I love that they have mocktails this year!" - write it down or ask if you can quote them. Authentic feedback is gold for board reports and marketing.

4. Evaluate Staff and Vendor Response

Don't forget to check in with your team and vendors.

Ask:

- Did the addition of mocktails help with guest flow or engagement?
- Were there any logistical challenges?
- What changes would make it easier next year?

Your vendors and staff often see things from a different angle and their input can help you improve operations and presentation.

A Moment of Connection

The magic of fairs has always been found in the small moments; laughter over shared fries, old friends reconnecting, new memories made. Mocktails might seem small, but they create those same moments of joy and inclusion for everyone at your event.

5. Showcase the Impact

Once the event is over, take what you've learned and present it clearly to your board, sponsors, or peers.

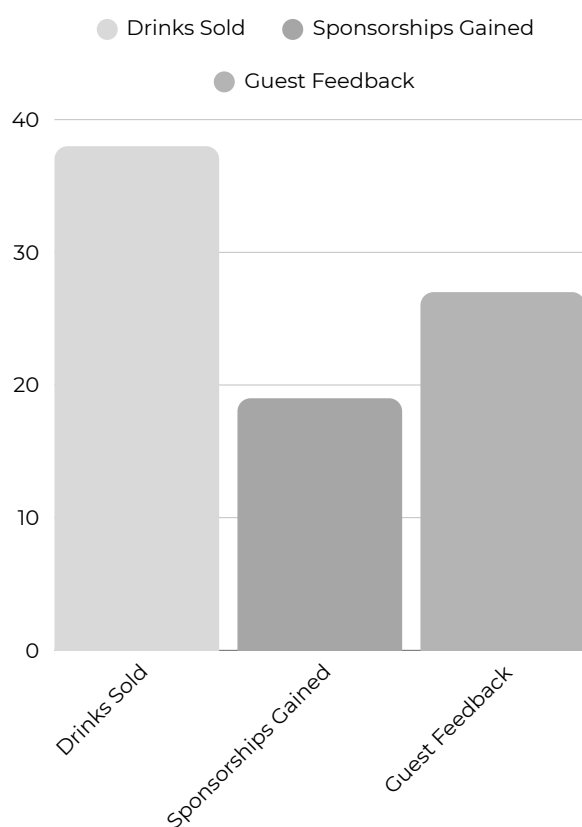
Include:

- Photos of the setup and guests enjoying themselves.
- Sales data and sponsorship figures.
- Testimonials or quotes from attendees.
- Press coverage or social posts.

Put it together in a short report or one-page recap.

This not only reinforces your success but also helps you secure future funding or support for the program.

Mocktail Sales Snapshot Sample



“Every fair that tracks inclusion today builds loyalty for tomorrow.”



6. Celebrate and Build on the Results

Even small wins are worth celebrating.

Maybe you sold fewer mocktails than expected, but you started a conversation that never existed before.

Each event is a stepping stone toward a culture shift in the fair industry; one where every guest, sponsor, and vendor feels included.

Next year, you can:

- Add new recipes or themes.
- Host mocktail-making demonstrations.
- Offer branded keepsake cups or glasses.
- Invite media or influencers to cover your inclusive hospitality model.

The data you collect this year will make it easier to justify growth next year.

Notes

Brainstorms and lightbulb moments that popped up while flipping through this book:



FEELING GOOD, INSIDE AND
OUT, ONE MOCKTAIL AT A
TIME.



*Inclusion isn't
about
removing
alcohol - it's
about
adding
belonging.*

Conclusion: Cheers to Everyone!

Every fair, festival, and community event has one thing in common: they're built to bring people together.

We come for the fun, the food, the friendships, and the feeling that we belong. That's why the experiences we offer, even something as simple as what's in a cup, matter more than we often realize.

This eBook started with a simple observation: so many social gatherings revolve around alcohol, and those who don't drink are often left standing on the sidelines with water or soda in hand. But inclusion means more than access; it means belonging.

By introducing mocktails and non-alcoholic options, we're not just adding new beverages to the menu, we're adding new opportunities for connection. We're sending a quiet but powerful message that says,

You're welcome here. You're part of this too!

Whether you're planning a state or county fair, a trade show, or a small community event, every sip of a mocktail can represent a moment of inclusion, creativity, and care. It shows that your event understands the changing culture of celebration - one that values wellness, diversity, and togetherness just as much as tradition.

////////////////////////////////////



Your Role as a Change-Maker

If you've read this far, you're already part of that change. You're someone willing to see things differently and take small, meaningful steps that make your event stand out.

The future of the fair industry will belong to those who evolve, and those who innovate, experiment, and create spaces where everyone feels at home. Adding a mocktail program might seem like a small gesture, but the ripple effects can be huge: happier guests, stronger sponsors, positive press, and a lasting reputation for inclusion.

You don't have to overhaul your entire event. You just have to start. Try one new recipe. Test one new idea. Invite one new type of guest to feel seen. That's how movements begin - quietly, with intention and heart.

From My Perspective

After years of attending conventions and trade shows as a fair manager, I know how it feels to walk into a room and not quite fit the mold. This year, stepping into my first conventions as a service member, I wanted to do something different - something that reflected both my story and the future I want to see in our industry.

Hosting this mocktail experience isn't just a creative project. It's a reflection of what fairs have always stood for: community, inclusion, and celebration.

If this eBook helps even one event organizer see how easy and impactful it can be to make that inclusion visible, then the work has been worth it.

Cheers to You

So here's to you. The planners, coordinators, managers, directors, volunteers, and dreamers who make fairs and festivals come alive every year!

Here's to reimagining traditions while honoring what makes them special.

Here's to raising a glass - whatever's in it - to connection, creativity, and community.



Work With Me

Need help creating your fair's own mocktail program or inclusive hospitality plan? I offer consulting and design services tailored to fairs and events of all sizes.

angelamillermedia@gmail.com | championshowbanners.com

WHAT'S NEXT?

Your Next Steps

- Start small - add one mocktail station this year.
- Download the printable Mocktail Setup Planner.
- Pitch your board using the checklists included.
- Create a “pop-up” at a local festival or farmers market.
 - Generate “buzz” around the topic and share that it is something new offered at the fair.
- Reach out to me if you'd like a custom consulting package or design help.
-
-
-

Download printable versions of the Mocktail Setup Planner and Pitch to Your Fair Board Checklist at championshowbanners.com/mocktails

Take a moment to visualize your event's new look.

Imagine the colors, signage, and laughter when every guest, drink in hand, feels included.

What will that look like at your fair next year?

recipe *ideas*

BEYOND THE BEER GARDEN



Blackberry Basil Fizz

Ingredients

- Blackberries
- Basil leaves
- Lemon juice
- Club soda
- Honey simple syrup

Instructions

1. Muddle blackberries & basil with syrup.
2. Add ice, top with club soda and lemon juice.
3. Garnish with basil sprig & lemon wheel.

*Idea:
Use blueberries and
rename with a blue
ribbon theme*



Blood Orange Mocktail Spritzer

Ingredients

- Blood Orange Juice
- Ginger Beer
- Lemon juice
- Sliced blood orange, sliced ginger, and fresh mint, for serving

Instructions

1. Fill a rocks glass with ice. Add blood orange juice, ginger beer, and lemon juice and gently stir to combine.
2. Garnish with sliced blood orange, ginger, and mint.

[full recipe](#)



Triple- Berry Sparklers

Ingredients

- Coconut Water
- Blueberries, Raspberries, Chopped Strawberries
- Lemon & Lime juices
- Honey
- Seltzer Water

Instructions

1. Make berry ice cubes: Place blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries in ice tray, then fill with coconut water. Freeze until frozen solid.
2. Make drink: In a pitcher or large measuring cup, combine honey with lime and lemon juices. Stir until honey is completely dissolved. Add seltzer and stir gently to combine.

Is your fair celebrating America250? This is a fun patriotic style drink that is also refreshing in the summer!

[full recipe](#)

your own

recipe *ideas*

BEYOND THE BEER GARDEN



Name:

Ingredients

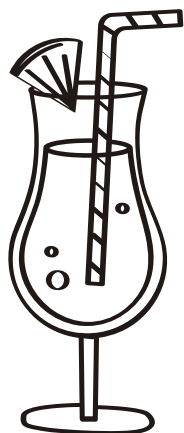
Instructions



Name:

Ingredients

Instructions



Name:

Ingredients

Instructions

your own drink name*ideas*

BEYOND THE BEER GARDEN

Fun & Playful

- Midway Mango Mixer
- Ferris Wheel Fizz
- Raspberry Ribbon Refresher
- Prize Pig Punch
- Carnival Crush Cooler

Come up with some fun & playful names of your own



Elegant & Local

- County Line Cooler
- Harvest Sunset Spritz
- Grandstand Glow
- Fairground Fizz
- Champion's Mango Mixer



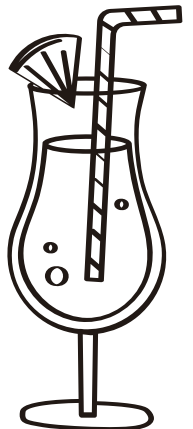
Come up with some elegant & local names of your own



Themed Around Competition & Celebration

- Blue Ribbon Breeze
- Grand Champion Cooler
- Show Ring Spritz
- Raspberry Rodeo Refresher

Bring out your inner competitor and come up with some names of celebration or competition



Checklist #1: How to Pitch Mocktails to Your Fair Board

PURPOSE: HELP READERS MAKE THE CASE FOR ADDING MOCKTAILS AS A REVENUE AND INCLUSION FEATURE.

Before the Meeting

- ☐ Identify the decision-makers (board, director, or sponsorship chair).
- ☐ Prepare basic data on mocktail trends and non-alcoholic beverage sales.
- ☐ Estimate potential revenue increase from retaining sober attendees.
- ☐ Gather at least one sponsor or vendor interested in supporting the concept.

During the Presentation

- ☐ Lead with inclusivity - "This isn't about replacing alcohol; it's about adding choice."
- ☐ Present a sample mocktail menu with prices and profit margin examples. Don't plan to make them in-house? Have a list of potential mixologists available to share with the board.
- ☐ Highlight sponsorship potential ("Mocktail Lounge Presented by XYZ Market").
- ☐ Show photos or mockups of your planned setup for visual impact.

After the Meeting

- ☐ Send a short recap email with the highlights of your pitch.
 - ☐ Attach photos or links to other fairs offering NA options.
 - ☐ Ask for next steps and offer to coordinate logistics or marketing.
-
-
-

End on the value of community connection and guest satisfaction,
not just sales!

Worksheet #1: Mocktail Setup Planner

PURPOSE: A PLANNING SHEET FOR ANYONE ADDING A MOCKTAIL BOOTH OR SPACE TO THEIR FAIR OR EVENT.

Event Info

- Event Name: _____
- Date / Location: _____
- Expected Attendance: _____
- Total Ingredient Budget: _____

Menu Planning

Drink Name	Ingredients	Cost per Drink	Selling Price	Notes
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Staffing & Logistics

- Who will mix & serve drinks: _____
- How many staff needed per shift: _____
- Training completed? (Y/N) _____
- Setup Time Required: _____

Day	Drinks Sold	Gross Revenue	Notes

Post-Event Notes

- Best-seller: _____
- Attendee Feedback: _____
- Improvements for next year: _____

Worksheet #2: Mocktail Garden Planner

PURPOSE: GIVES IDEAS TO YOUR BOARD AS SUPPLEMENTATION AND SUPPORT

Agricultural Education Aspect

Cultivate herb or mocktail gardens and provide signage that showcases their use in beverages. Expand your offerings by growing various berries, citrus fruits, and more, while educating your audience.

- **Mint:** An essential mocktail ingredient, used for classic mojitos and mint julep-style refreshers. Consider different varieties like spearmint, chocolate mint, or mojito mint for varied flavor profiles.
- **Basil:** This herb offers a peppery kick that pairs well with fruit, especially berries and citrus. Try growing varieties like lemon or cinnamon basil for a unique twist.
- **Rosemary:** Adds a sophisticated, aromatic, and savory flavor to drinks. It can be used to create infused simple syrups or as a fragrant garnish.
- **Lavender:** The fragrant, calming flowers add a delicate floral note to lemonades and spritzers. Use culinary varieties, such as English lavender, for the best flavor.
- **Cucumber:** A refreshing and hydrating addition to a wide range of beverages, including spritzers and coolers.
- **Strawberries, Blueberries, Raspberries, Blackberries:** Classic fruits for mocktails, can be served whole, sliced, muddled or pureed.
- **Thyme:** This earthy, citrusy herb works well with fruits like peaches and blood oranges.
- **Sage:** Offers a robust, aromatic flavor that pairs nicely with fruits and sweeter drinks.

Competitive Exhibit Aspect

- Create classes within your static departments that utilize different “Mocktail Garden” mixes that grow well in pots. Add a class/lot for dehydrated mixer mason jars.
- Bring in local garden groups to plant herb garden displays that can then be used as ingredients in the drinks. A true “fair/farm-to-table” experience.

Other Ideas:

Bonus Idea: Partner with local FFA or horticulture classes to grow herbs and berries for next year's mocktail menu. A hands-on learning project that connects agriculture and hospitality.

MIDWAY MANGO MIXER

FRUITY • SPARKLING • CROWD-PLEASER

Ingredients:

- 3 oz mango nectar or puree
- 2 oz raspberry LaCroix
- ½ oz lime juice
- Splash of honey syrup
- Instructions:
- Shake mango and lime juice with ice. Strain into a chilled glass, top with LaCroix, and garnish with a fresh raspberry and mint sprig.
- A bright, fair-inspired twist on the classic margarita with all the fun, zero proof.

What other name ideas do you have for this?

What 1-2 ingredients would you add or swap?

How could you name or theme this drink to tie in to one of your sponsors?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Angela Miller is a former County Fair Manager with over 13 years of experience in event leadership and community engagement. Through her business, Angela Miller Media & Marketing, she helps fairs and rural events modernize marketing, hospitality, and inclusion strategies all while keeping the heart of tradition alive.

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www.championshowbanners.com

MORE RESOURCES

- The Rise of the Sober-Curious Movement. a NY Times feature
- Zero-Proof Nation by Maureen Dowd
- Better Without Booze by Meg Daly
- Visit: championshowbanners.com/mocktails for printable tools and updates



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