Haven Hospitality
COLLECTIVE

The twelve numbers every venue owner should know weekly.

What to measure, how to calculate it, what good looks like, and what to do when it is off. Written by operators who run their own venues.

BEFORE YOU START

Most owners look at one number. It is the wrong one.

Sales is the number every owner knows by heart, and it is the number that tells you the least. A record week can lose money. A quiet week can be your best margin of the quarter. Sales tells you what happened at the front door. It tells you nothing about what happened to it on the way to the bank.

The twelve numbers in this guide are the ones we track in our own buildings. None of them require software you do not already have. Most can be pulled from your POS, your scheduler, and your invoices in under an hour a week once the habit is set.

How to actually use this

Do not try to implement all twelve at once. Pick the first three, track them for four weeks until the number is boring, then add the next three. An owner who reliably knows three numbers beats an owner who theoretically tracks twelve. The last page has a one-page scorecard you can print and fill in by hand.

TRACK IT	BECAUSE
Weekly, not monthly	A month is four chances to fix something you have already lost. A week is close enough to the shift that people still remember what happened.
Against a target you set first	A number with no target is trivia. Write the target down before you look at the actual, or you will rationalise whatever you find.
Same day, same way	Consistency beats precision. A slightly wrong number measured identically every week still shows you the trend, which is the part that matters.

Where the margin actually goes.

01 Prime cost as a percentage of sales

Cost of goods plus total labor, including taxes and benefits, divided by net sales. This is the single most important number in the business. Everything else on this list is a diagnostic for why this one moved.

FORMULA `(COGS + total labor) ÷ net sales`

TARGET 55% to 65% for most full-service independents. Under 60% is healthy. Over 70% and the business is not paying you.

IF IT IS OFF Do not guess. Split it into numbers 2, 3 and 4 and find which half moved.

02 Food cost percentage, actual versus theoretical

Actual is what you spent. Theoretical is what the recipes say you should have spent for what you sold. The gap between them is waste, theft, over-portioning, and comps. The gap is the number, not the actual.

FORMULA `actual food cost ÷ food sales` vs `recipe cost of items sold ÷ food sales`

TARGET 28% to 33% actual for most independents. Gap to theoretical under 2 points.

IF IT IS OFF A gap over 3 points is almost always portioning or waste, not pricing. Weigh ten plates of your top seller before you touch the menu.

03 Beverage cost percentage by category

Split beer, wine, and spirits. A blended beverage cost hides the category that is bleeding, because draft beer and well spirits behave nothing alike.

FORMULA `category cost ÷ category sales`

TARGET Beer 20% to 25%. Wine 28% to 35%. Spirits 15% to 20%.

IF IT IS OFF Spirits over 22% is free pouring. Beer over 28% is usually line loss or foam, not theft.

04 Labor as a percentage of sales, by daypart

A blended weekly labor percentage tells you almost nothing. The number that matters is which daypart is carrying the others. Lunch usually is not.

FORMULA `daypart labor cost ÷ daypart sales`

TARGET 25% to 32% blended for full service. Any daypart over 40% needs a decision, not a schedule tweak.

IF IT IS OFF The fix is usually closing a daypart or changing its format, not cutting an hour off each shift.

What each hour and each guest is worth.

05 Sales per labor hour

Total sales divided by total hours worked. It is the cleanest measure of whether your schedule matches your demand, and unlike labor percentage it does not move when you change wages.

FORMULA `net sales ÷ total labor hours`

TARGET Set your own from your best four weeks, then hold it. Most full-service independents land between $45 and $75.

IF IT IS OFF Compare it shift by shift. One badly built Tuesday can drag a whole week.

06 Average check, or per-cap

Sales divided by guests. In an entertainment venue, track it per person rather than per ticket, because a party of eight that spends like a party of two is the problem you are hunting.

FORMULA `net sales ÷ guest count`

TARGET Trend matters more than level. Flat per-cap against rising costs is a slow loss.

IF IT IS OFF Falling per-cap with flat covers is a service problem, not a menu problem. Somebody stopped asking.

07 Covers by daypart, against the same week last year

Raw covers tell you volume. Covers against the same week last year tell you whether you are growing, and they control for seasonality in a way that month-over-month never will.

FORMULA `this week covers ÷ same week last year`

TARGET Positive. If not, you want to know within a week rather than at year end.

IF IT IS OFF Check whether the drop is one daypart or all of them. One daypart is operational. All of them is market or reputation.

08 Menu contribution margin, not food cost percentage

A 22% food cost item that sells four a week is worth less than a 38% item that sells ninety. Rank by dollars of margin contributed, then decide what to promote.

FORMULA `(price − plate cost) × units sold`

TARGET Know your top ten by contribution and your bottom ten by units.

IF IT IS OFF The bottom ten by units are candidates for removal, and every removal simplifies your prep, your inventory, and your training.

The four that tell you about next month.

Everything above is a rear-view mirror. These four are the windshield, and they are the ones most independents do not track at all.

09 Waste as a percentage of sales, by reason

Not just the total. Log a reason on every entry: spoilage, prep error, comp, over-prep, breakage. The reason column is where the money is, because it tells you which fix to make.

FORMULA `waste dollars ÷ net sales`, split by reason

TARGET Under 1% of sales. Under 0.5% is well run.

IF IT IS OFF Spoilage means ordering. Prep error means training. Comps mean either service or a manager who is buying peace.

10 Forward booking pace

Events, parties, and reservations confirmed for the next ninety days, compared to the same point last year. This is the only number on this list that gives you time to react.

FORMULA `confirmed forward bookings ÷ same point last year`

TARGET Flat or up. A soft pace found in July is fixable. Found in October it is not.

IF IT IS OFF This is the trigger for outbound group sales, not a discount.

11 Cost per booked event

All marketing and sales spend divided by events actually booked and paid. Most operators track cost per lead, which flatters the number and hides the fact that the leads are not closing.

FORMULA `total marketing spend ÷ events booked`

TARGET Under 5% of the average event value.

IF IT IS OFF If cost per lead is fine and cost per booking is not, the problem is your follow-up speed, not your advertising.

12 Review velocity and rating trend

New reviews per week and the rating of the last twenty, not the lifetime average. The lifetime average is a fossil. The last twenty is your current reputation.

FORMULA `new reviews this week` and `mean rating of last 20`

TARGET Rising count, last twenty at or above your lifetime average.

IF IT IS OFF A falling last-twenty is the earliest warning you get before covers drop, usually by four to six weeks.

PRINT THIS ONE

The weekly scorecard.

Fill in the target column once. Fill in the rest every Monday for the week that just closed. Ten minutes, and you will know more about your business than most owners know about theirs.

NUMBER	TARGET	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	OFF?
1. Prime cost %				
2. Food cost % (actual)				
Gap to theoretical				
3. Beer / wine / spirits %				
4. Labor % (worst daypart)				
5. Sales per labor hour				
6. Per-cap				
7. Covers vs LY				
8. Top item by contribution				
9. Waste % (and top reason)				
10. Forward pace vs LY				
11. Cost per booked event				
12. Last 20 reviews, avg				

One rule for the Off column

If a number is off two weeks running, it goes on the agenda with a named owner and a date. If it is off once, watch it. Nothing on this scorecard should stay red for a month without somebody being accountable for it by name.

IF YOU WANT HELP WITH THE LIST

We run these numbers in our own buildings every week.

Haven Hospitality Collective owns and operates Lakeside Social in South Haven, Michigan and MidDay + Good Impressions in Dayton, Ohio. We also manage, advise, and build software for other independent operators across the Midwest.

If any of the twelve are off and you would rather not chase them alone, the first conversation is a 45-minute working call at no charge. You leave with a written point of view on what we would prioritize, whether or not you hire us.

hhsoha.com/contact

CALL OR TEXT
(269) 759-3700

EMAIL
info@hhsoha.com

FREE TOOLS
tools.equitygpllc.com