

# A VIEW ON THE MASTER BREWER, SEEN FROM OUTSIDE THE BREWING INDUSTRY

 SØREN MØRCH, BOARD MEMBER OF THE DANISH BREWERS' GUILD, E-MAIL: SOEREN@MOERCH.COM



It seems in these years that the master brewer is a race that is slowly endangered. Looking at Denmark, I believe there are now more master brewers *not* working in the brewing industry, than there are within the industry. Actually, the number of master brewers working in the

pharmaceutical industry, alone, is probably larger than in any other Danish industry.

In a way, this is a bit sad, but on the other hand, this is something that the brewing industry could choose to be proud of. Because the good news is that these brewers working outside the industry, in general, are highly treasured and most often have high positions, usually as leaders.

So how can this be?

Well, I will give you my opinion. I think there are three fundamental reasons why brewers are so appreciated as they usually are.

1. **The selection** of trainees and candidates is done carefully with interviews and tests by skilled people (often older brewers), and they are chosen from a pool of very talented applicants.

2. **The education** at the Scandinavian School of Brewing is indeed a good education. It is up-to-date, and it has been tested for many years and has been regularly updated to come to its present state. The skills and tools that are taught there are, of course, focused on brewing, but most of them are universal and have great usefulness in many other industries, especially such as other food industries and the pharmaceutical industry.

3. **The trust** a young master brewer is given in his or her first real position is unique. When he or she has been through 'the mill', and has completed the practical and theoretical training, he or she is regarded as fully equipped to go out and take a job with high complexity, high responsibility and great opportunities for getting a lot of experience. Through a young brewer's first few years of work, he or she usually gets several years of experience, which he or she can use for many years to come – no matter what industry he or she chooses to work in.

Actually, this is a historical thing – that the brewing industry brings experience and knowledge out to other industries. Whether this is due to J.C. Jacobsen's ideals about sharing knowledge, I don't know, but it might be a good guess.

A good example is one of this country's largest and most successful companies, The Novo Group (Novo Nordisk and Novozymes), build on technology that came out of the brewing industry's research. Here, I'm thinking of the fermentation of penicillin in the 1920s which was one of the first commercial utilisations of the fermentation knowledge created by the brewers.

Later on, the brewing industry was amongst the first to build quality systems, with all principles and procedures written down in manuals. This was copied 20-30 years later by the pharmaceutical industry who called it GMP.

The brewing industry now also has GMP, but in a larger context with concepts such as BAT (Best available technology), which once more has brought the brewing industry in front.

So, even though we are an endangered species in the brewing industry, we are absolutely still not outside the industry where we are still going strong.

Søren Mørch