



**Park Street CEO
Dr. Harry Kohlmann
and President Chris
Mehringer, photo-
graphed at Bodega
Taquería y Tequila in
Miami Beach.**

Filling a

NEED

LEADING BEVERAGE
SOLUTIONS PROVIDER
PARK STREET FREES
BRAND OWNERS TO DO
WHAT THEY DO BEST

by Lana Bortolot /
photos by Vanessa Rogers



“Full transparency.” Mehringer and Kohlmann discuss strategy at Bodega Taquería y Tequila in Miami Beach. Park Street is based a short distance away in downtown Miami.

With a demonstrated expertise in navigating the tricky waters of alcoholic beverage compliance and logistics, Park Street, in its 12-year life, has become the go-to solutions provider for helping spirits and wine brands go from zero to 60.

Call it the ghostbuster of the wine and spirits industry: It takes just one call to start the process of solving problems and clearing a path for brand owners to do what they do best. And, says Park Street CEO Dr. Harry Kohlmann, that’s not mastering the complexities of the regulatory and logistics landscapes.

“A lot of our clients are coming from high-level executive positions in some of the bigger companies—the Bacardis and Diageos of the world,” Kohlmann says. “They are expert marketers, but they don’t know all the micro-level technical details that are required to sell product in each of the 50 states, like ‘What alcoholic beverage licenses do I need to do business in Kentucky?’ or ‘How do I get a formula approved for a new product?’ We take care of all these items and provide them an operating platform like

the one they had in their former large supplier jobs, but it is now for their own projects.”

With names like McKinsey & Co., Coca-Cola, Bacardi and Harvard on their collective resumés, Kohlmann and President Chris Mehringer bring hardcore global business sense to the table, and have a read on what companies large and small need. Park Street offers a complete suite of back-office services and solutions including compliance, logistics, accounting, importing, warehousing, order-fulfillment and distribution, as well as strategic advisory and working capital.

Thus free of the red tape and the nitty-gritty, brands can dedicate themselves to promotion, sales and scaling up. Ironically, promotion is an area in which Park Street itself has been modest, admits Kohlmann. “From our history, we never liked to talk too much about ourselves,” he says. “And now things have changed: You get to a certain size or position within the industry and sometimes you have to talk about yourself a little bit.”

And, happily, they have a lot to say. As customer service and

PARK STREET CLIENTS SPEAK



PHOTO COURTESY OF MALTE BARNEKOW

Malte Barnekow, co-founder and CEO of The 86 Co., says Park Street “speak[s] our language.”

MALTE BARNEKOW

Co-founder and CEO of **The 86 Co.**, a portfolio of craft spirits specially created by bartenders for bartenders.
Launch: 2012
Employees: 12

“With our specially distilled products for bartenders, provenance is important—the story is important. The operation side of things has become tedious and quite heavy for a small company like us. Compliance is a jungle for a small company, and we needed a company that was nimble and very good. Having Park Street as our back-office partner enables us to focus our resources on strategic priorities rather

than managing the complexities of administration and regulatory compliance.

“We started with another company, but were sold by Park Street with better service and the promise of a modern approach to things. They are very good about putting their information on a portal—everything you need and nothing you don’t.

“They are doing things in our industry that is sorely lacking. It’s not quantifiable—it’s more about all of us having a clear insight into our cost of doing business.

“It’s a cultural thing—they speak our language and they understand our position.”



Silvio Leal (foreground), founder of byejoe, enjoys a cocktail, featuring his product and made by noted mixologist Philip Khandehrish at The Setai in Miami Beach.

SILVIO LEAL

Founder of **byejoe**, an Asian-fusion white spirit.
Launch: 2012
Employees: 19

“Being a small company, we are lean and mean. So in view of that we’re always trying to use third-party partners when we can for support with supply chain, marketing and logistics. Let me tell you, Park Street really revolutionized the whole back office and supply chain part of the business for small and medium-size brands. They are experts in the industry and logistics and having come from big consultants and suppliers, they know how to help smaller companies coming in with new brands—from regulatory counsel to logistics information.

“They have a lot of relationships in this business. There were some markets where we didn’t have the connections and turned to Park Street. In this business, talking to someone with a recommendation means a lot more than going in cold turkey.

“But what they do, honestly, is they give you that support you need as a smaller brand owner. With their experience working for multinationals, you feel like you’re in the same quality environment.”

technology needs have evolved over the past decade, so has the company, often taking a prescient step. For example, when transparency shifted from being just another business buzzword to a real-world protocol, it was already a part of Park Street’s core culture.

“We took a position very early on that providing clients full transparency would be a hallmark of the company,” Mehringer says.

Kolhmann added, “Clients are not competing with each other [for attention] at Park Street. Our platform is build and continuously enhanced for the benefit of all clients. We also enjoy tremendous economies of scale which results in cost savings which we pass on to clients.”

Silvio Leal, a former executive with Allied Domecq and Seagram, who



Asian-fusion spirit byejoe quickly reached “economies of scale” thanks to Park Street’s help.

co-founded byejoe, an Asian-fusion white spirit based on baijiu, the ancient Chinese spirit, is one such example. Based in Texas, he has product in more than 30 states.

“We were able to reach economies of scale more quickly than if we had not worked with them,” Leal says. They advised on what inventories to keep and move, and how to reach the scale as quickly as possible and reduce fixed costs.”

Hans Holst, CEO of Arctic Beverage, a multi-brand portfolio of wines from the U.S., E.U. and Nordics, also used Park Street’s core back-office services



Park Street was critical to the success of The 86 Co. and its lineup of bartender-driven spirits.

to quickly get to scale with Beso del Sol sangria in a box.

“We saw an opportunity to launch the first premium, 100% natural bag-in-box sangria in the U.S.,” Holst says. “However, in order to be first-to-market we had to rollout very quickly. Park Street understood the strategic relevance of being a fast-mover and enabled us to open more than 30 markets in just a few months, which was essential to our success.”

Park Street works with more than 1,000 brands, ranging from the mega-global suppliers and centuries-old family businesses to craft distillers, winemakers and entrepreneurs. Even long-established brands benefit from Park Street’s nimbleness and efficiency. Whyte & Mackay and Royal Dutch Distillers are but two large suppliers using Park Street’s platform to increase the performance of their back-office and avoid large overhead investments.

Mehring says the company’s large investment in IT-driven systems benefits not only them as a company, but helps their clients stay competitive. “Our clients are from all over the U.S. and world, and having access to all of their data to track the performance of their back office and business is extremely important to them,” he says.

Park Street’s secure portal keeps data, charts and results at clients’ fingertips so they can pull presentations together fast. Kohlmann says, “We launch certain business management tools that don’t sound huge, but they make a huge

difference. Every month you might save a whole day of work.” At the end, as you utilize more and more of the tools, he says, you could easily have an extra productive week per month.

He says the ongoing innovations—a constant tune-up, if you will—were in response to customer feedback. One such advance was a proprietary

tool developed just for handling chargebacks.

“One of [clients’] chronic problems was managing chargebacks from their distributors, so we built a management tool that aggregates all the chargebacks, invoices and supporting data in a single easy to access place—everything from menu shots to product floor placements,” Mehringer explained. “It gives clients the whole picture—a complete scenario that they can’t otherwise ascertain from an assortment of emails or chargeback memos.”

Such innovations and attention to client service have helped the company double in size in just the last year. Most of their business comes from existing client referrals, and about 60% of their clients are international. With 70 employees on staff in Miami, the company already has an excellent institutional knowledge base and is positioned for more growth.

Says Mehringer, “We are pleased to have a very diverse staff, which was a priority for us when we founded the company.” He notes they will continue to recruit people who are “a good fit with our organizational culture, which emphasizes meritocracy, integrity, and putting clients’ interests ahead of all else.” ■■

The PERSONAL Side

THE TASTING PANEL asked Park Street principals to share the less serious side of doing business.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Harry Kohlmann: Spending time with family and friends, exercise and happy hour.

Chris Mehringer: Family and friends, running, reading and traveling.

Favorite place to travel?

HK: Wine country.

CM: Italy.

Which beverage(s) are always in your bar or refrigerator?

HK: Cabernet, tequila.

CM: Beer, gin.

A personal goal you’d like to accomplish?

HK: I’d like Park Street to stay on its growth path. While it’s a company goal, it’s also personal for me as well because it would be a testament to how clients value our service, which is a great motivator.

CM: I’d like to finish the Berlin Marathon in September with a respectable time—or perhaps just finish!