



Capitol Square Bar and Grill
Washington, DC
Case Study

Produced by



The HNC Agency

[Hospitality Operations & Management Consulting Practice](#)

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Capitol Square Bar and Grill

Service Improvement and Revenue Growth

The HNC Agency provided embedded General Manager leadership for Capitol Square Bar & Grill, assuming direct responsibility for operations at the 137-seat, two-level restaurant. During the six-month engagement, the agency strengthened service standards, activated underused spaces, expanded programming, and built community partnerships, generating more than \$2 million in additional revenue. Guest ratings improved from 3.2 to 4.3 stars within the first three months.

Client Overview

Located in Washington, DC's historic Capitol Hill neighborhood, Capitol Square Bar & Grill offered African-Caribbean-American cuisine. Despite its distinctive menu and prime location, the restaurant struggled with profitability, inconsistent guest experiences, and limited community engagement. The HNC Agency's mandate was to stabilize operations, improve service and financial performance, and establish local partnerships that supported recurring business.



The Challenges

Inconsistent guest experience. Service quality and efficiency varied, contributing to a 3.2-star guest rating. The front-of-house team needed common service expectations, training, and performance standards.

Unprofitable breakfast service. The 8–11 AM breakfast period operated at a loss because of low foot traffic. The existing service model did not generate enough demand to support the daypart.

Underused space and operating hours. The second-floor Italian Marble Room was not being used to generate private dining and event revenue. The venue also had an entertainment license that could support late-night programming.

Limited community demand. Nearby schools, nonprofit organizations, faith-based groups, and community organizations represented an opportunity to build recurring business and stronger neighborhood relationships.

Need for diversified revenue. The restaurant needed additional sources of demand across breakfast, dinner, events, and late-night service to strengthen its commercial performance.

The HNC Agency Approach

Standardize service and strengthen accountability

The agency implemented front-of-house training and an operational overhaul. Daily pre-shift meetings aligned staff on service goals and guest expectations. A standardized Steps of Service protocol addressed wait times and inconsistent execution, supported by quality controls, KPIs, and premium service standards.

Redesign breakfast around convenience

The agency repurposed the underused bar (which is closed from 8-11am) into a Grab-and-Go Breakfast Bar offering packaged breakfast and lunch items, coffee, tea, and juices. A dormant side window was activated for sidewalk service, making the offer accessible to passing customers and supporting a service model with lower labor costs.

Create private dining and event demand

The Italian Marble Room was repositioned as a private event venue. The agency developed an event and private dining program and partnered with local organizations to host curated gatherings and celebrations, creating a commercial use for previously idle space.

Activate late-night trading

Using the venue's entertainment license, the agency launched Friday and Saturday programming from 11 PM to 2 AM. Live music and DJs, drink specials, light bites, and events extended trading activity and attracted a younger nightlife audience.

Build a recurring community fundraising program

The agency identified more than 15 nearby schools and 50 nonprofit, faith-based, and community organizations. A Tuesday Dine-In Series gave groups a venue for fundraisers, supported by rotating prix fixe menus and a contribution of 15% of proceeds after the sales threshold was met. Two dinner services at 5 PM and 7 PM created a repeatable weekly format.

The Outcomes

The engagement improved the guest experience and broadened the restaurant's revenue base through

Performance area	Reported outcome
Overall revenue	More than \$2 million in additional revenue generated
Guest satisfaction	Ratings increased from 3.2 to 4.3 or higher within three months
Breakfast service	More than \$6,000 in added weekly revenue; the loss-making daypart became profitable with lower labor costs
Late-night programming	More than \$25,000 in added weekend revenue
Tuesday Dine-In Series	More than \$12,000 in additional weekly revenue; both dinner services consistently sold out
Private dining and events	New revenue streams created from the underused second-floor room
Community relationships	Long-term local partnerships, broader brand awareness, and increased return visits for regular service, happy hour, and brunch

convenience service, private events, late-night programming, and recurring community dinners. Results included the following.

Expansion readiness. At the time of the case study, Capitol Square was in pre-opening planning for a second location.

The case demonstrates how service discipline and targeted commercial programming can improve restaurant performance together. The agency established clearer execution standards while finding productive uses for underused space, operating hours, and community relationships.