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On line communication and new media: Different using between companies in three important Italian wine districts

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Abstract. With the growth of the Internet and the technology, the relationship between companies and consumers evolves by providing more and more the use of new strategies and forms of communication. Companies are increasing the use of the Internet so that it is possible to give the highest number of information in the faster way possible. This work wants to focus on the attention paid by wineries to the network by checking if there are some important differences between differing Italian production areas.

1. Introduction

Because of the progress and the spread of new technologies, communication strategies have undergone a noticeable revolution. The Italian wine industry in the past years has been subject to strong pressures from the consumer to innovate their own forms of communication. The channels offered by the network, are always used by those who seek information through the Internet. Social networks and social media in general, thanks to the easy access, have become gradually more and more important in the process of acquisition and sharing information, experiences, characteristics of products and initiatives, and they now represent effective marketing. The network, with its accessibility becomes a communication tool with no geographical borders and accessible at lower cost than traditional approaches. Electronic commerce has gone through a rapid growth in terms of both volume and value gradually including the wine market. All these changes have been processed differently by each company. Until a few years ago a website containing few information on company products was more than enough, nowadays we can say that it no longer is. The demand of innovation needs to be satisfied with compelling content social sharing, e-commerce, videos and other original activities. The present case study aims to underline differences in the use of the network by companies identified in three important production sites in the north, center and south to see whether or not there is a different level of Internet usage and network communication.

2. Material and methods

First, after selecting the production areas, a list of wineries was created. The list was obtained thanks to public directories in the Internet or wine guides [1–3]. On the model of a similar study conducted in 2014 [4], two different spreadsheet were written down; both the email addresses and the websites were added together with the company name. The companies identified in Tuscany were a total of 591 while in Puglia 140. The parameters analyzed in each website were:

- presence of translations,
- usage of a blog,
- presence of a online shop,
- links to social networks,
- usage of video reviews,
- company description,
- products description,
- information about the opportunity to visit the company,
- overnight accommodation.

To complete the study and to evaluate response rate and time, an email was sent to each company. The following information were required:

- presence of retail shop in Rome area,
- chance to visit the company with the related costs,
- chance to purchase goods with postage and handling.

In order to ensure uniformity in the calculation of the response time, all the emails were sent by 10am on Monday morning. After acquiring all the data, an analysis by region was first made and then a comparison of Tuscany, Puglia and Piedmont (production area of the Langhe and Roero) already analyzed in a previous publication.

3. Data analysis

The companies identified and studied in Puglia and Toscana were a total of 730 to which an extra 224 companies of the Langhe analyzed previously was added. In order to characterize and identify all the possible

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differences between the three production areas, we will proceed to a separate analysis of the two regions by comparing the results in a second moment. The Region of Tuscany, one of the most important Italian wine areas, is characterized by a strong internationalization of the market and by high wine tourism flows. The companies found were a total of 590 but a total of 19 websites were not available at the time of the visit. First it was verified the presence of any versions of the website in other languages by providing options such as English, French, Spanish, German and Chinese. English is used in this 434 websites at 76%, followed by Germany in 125 (21.9%), then French in 34 (6.0%), China in 18 (3.2%) and eventually Spanish in 9 (1.6%). The second point being verified, was the presence of a business and products presentation. It sounds obvious but the description was found only in 457 websites (80%) while the description of the wines is present in 468 sites of 82%. An avant-garde tool is the video presentation of the product but only 28 websites (4.9%) use it. The video reviews are helpful in assisting the consumers to find out more about the product without being necessarily in the same place. In the last period, even video conferencing was used by some company to introduce products to journalists and bloggers. One of the pillars of wine tourism, is the chance to visit companies and discover products directly. Consumers who visit the sites, are often willing to receive more information about the opportunity to visit the company and its costs. Among the Tuscan companies, those that have created a space to describe such activities are a total of 82 or 14.4%, while 218 websites (38.2%) offer overnight accommodations. In some cases, companies can be even compared to luxury resorts. The use of e-commerce has gradually spread over the world of wine. Companies that allow the purchase of their products directly through their website are a total of 76 of 13.3%. 30 companies also provide users a list of retail shops and distributors. Social networks and social media in general, are more and more a tool of communication and promotion for the company as it surely improves its visibility. While analyzing the use of this instrument we found out that Facebook is the most used one (190 websites, 33.3%), followed by Twitter (113, 19.8%), then Google Plus, Pinterest, and Instagram (95 websites, 16.6%).

Following, we sent 590 email all from the same address and with the same content. Incorrect addresses or not working were a total of 20 (3.4%). The responses received were a total of 324 (54.9%). The remaining ones were 41.7% which did not respond. The responses received on the same day were a total of 215, the next day 58, the second day 24, the third day 8 and 19 within the 7th day. The survey was closed after 7 working days after the email was sent. As for content, we found companies that answer in a clear and detailed way, while others do not. Specifically, we identified 167 companies that offer a visit and a tasting with costs ranging from 5 euro per person until 150 Euros depending on the proposed activities. Most companies were willing to sell their wines through delivery couriers.

In Puglia where only 140 companies were found. Of these, three had an email address but not a related website.

Table 1. Using of different languages.

AREA	EN	FRA	DEU	CNH	SPA
Piemonte*	89.0%	8.2%	26.2%	2.4%	1.5%
Toscana	76.0%	6.0%	21.7%	3.2%	1.6%
Puglia	76.7%	5.1%	16.8%	4.4%	2.2%

Table 2. Presence of products description and company profile.

AREA	Company	Products
Piemonte*	94.7%	96.1%
Toscana	80.0%	82.0%
Puglia	83.2%	83.9%

Of these 137, 15 websites (10.9%) were not available or under construction. English is again the most used language with 105 cases (76.7%), followed by German 23 (16.8%), French in 7 (5.1%) Chinese in 6 (4.4%) and eventually Spanish in (2.2%). A company description was found in 114 websites (83.2%) while the products one in 115 websites (83.9%). The video reviews between Puglia's companies are not very widespread, they are used only in 3 cases (2.2%). Wine tourism is starting to expand in Puglia. A space dedicated to the winery visits directly on the website is found in only 11 companies (8%). Even the hospitality is quite low with only 15 companies that advertise such services.

29 websites (21.2%) have their own online shop. The use of corporate blogs is advertised on 12 websites (8.8%). Again the most used social network is Facebook: 60 sites (43.8%). Twitter is found in 35 websites 25.5% while other less popular social networks are present in 21 (15.3%).

140 emails were sent: 7 had an incorrect addresses (5%). The responses received were a total of 44 with a response rate of 31,5%. So a total of 89 companies did not reply to our emails (63.6%). Considering the response time, we have 35 companies that replied the same day, four companies the next day, three on the second day and one the third day. By analyzing the answers, we noticed that most companies offer the chance to visit, but only 9 told us a delineate cost between 6 and 25 euro. As for online orders 23 companies explained us processes and costs. The presence of retailers in Rome is signaled by 22 companies that in some cases also reported addresses and telephone numbers.

The analysis of the answers permitted a comparison between the different production areas. Table 1 shows the use of different languages in each area. Piedmont (Langhe and Roero area) is the most "international zone" even if Chinese and Spanish translations are less common than in Puglia and Tuscany. Concerning the presence of a description of the company, its history and products (Table 2) the data recorded in Puglia and Tuscany are very similar with differences respectively of 3.2% and 1.9%.

Piedmont has the most complete websites: +14,7% for companies descriptions, +14,1 for products description compared to Tuscany and +11,5 and + 12,2 compared to Puglia. The use of video reviews, Table 3, is still not widely

Table 3. Presence of video reviews.

AREA	Video Reviews
Piemonte*	9.7%
Toscana	4.9%
Puglia	2.2%

Table 4. Information about visits and accomodation.

AREA	Visits	Accomodation
Piemonte*	32.0%	22.8%
Toscana	14.4%	38.2%
Puglia	8.0%	10.7%

Table 5. Presence of on-line shop.

AREA	On-line Shop
Piemonte*	6.3%
Toscana	13.3%
Puglia	21.2%

Table 6. Links to Social Networks.

AREA	Facebook	Twitter	Others
Piemonte*	32.5%	17,0%	15.0%
Toscana	33.3%	19.8%	16.6%
Puglia	43.8%	25.5%	15.3%

Table 7. Response rate.

AREA	Response Rate
Piemonte*	65.4%
Toscana	54.9%
Puglia	31.4%

used in Puglia and Tuscany, but it results to be more used in Piedmont.

Information about the chance to visit wineries and to have an accommodation (Table 4) are very important to develop the "enotourism".

In this case Tuscany is the region where most companies offer accommodation facilities: visits and overnight stays together with gastronomic experiences are often offered. Although the big potential, only in half of the companies we can easily find information about these opportunities. The region with the lower accommodation facilities is Puglia. However, analyzing the spread of online shops in Table 5 we can see that it is more developed in Puglia, followed by Tuscany and Piedmont.

As regarding the usage of links to social networks, (Table 6) wineries located in Puglia use Facebook and Twitter the most. Piedmont and Tuscany use as well more Facebook than Twitter. In all the three analyzed areas only approximately 15% of the sample uses other social networks such as Pinterest Instagram and Google+.

Table 8. Response time.

AREA	Same day	Next day	After 2 days	After 3 days and more
Piemonte*	67.6%	18.6%	6.2%	7.6%
Toscana	66.4%	17.9%	7.4%	8.3%
Puglia	79.5%	9.1%	6.8%	4.6%

*Piemonte: Langhe and Roero Regions.

Looking at the response rate to the emails that were sent, the region with the highest response rate appears to be Piedmont (Langhe and Roero area) with a 65.4%, followed by 54.9% of Tuscany and Puglia with 31.4%.

Analyzing the response times, Table 8, we can affirm that more than 2/3 of the answering companies replied the same day: this proves how much attention is given by the companies to such types of communication. However the Puglia response rate needs to be improved.

4. Conclusions

The analysis performed shows the key role that Internet has now a in the sphere of communication activities of the wineries, which now almost all have their own website. Nevertheless, there are still numerous websites that are not graphically and structurally up to date. The presence of translations in other languages appears to be the only way to trade at an international level and English seems to be the first choice, followed by German. Piedmont is the one who uses English the most: this underline how this region is more in to international trading. Even the Langhe and Roero companies websites are more complete and updated, but we cannot say the same about the e-commerce solutions which are instead more common in Puglia, but is possible to affirm that the use of social networks will gradually increase in each region in the next years. On the other side Tuscany companies, instead, are the best at offering complete "eno-gastronomic tours". Response times are quite good, companies tend to respond the same day or the day after, but response rates need to be improved, especially Puglia where 2 out of 3 requests do not get any feedback.

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