

# Digital wine marketing: Social media marketing for the wine industry

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**Abstract.** The wine industry recognizes the increasingly relevant role of digital marketing as a valuable and appropriate tool to reach (adult) consumers. This paper intends to trace a brief analysis about Digital Wine Marketing and Social Media Marketing contribution for the Wine Industry to increase brand awareness and sales and develop a short guidance to digital marketing as well. When consumers search for wine and wineries on internet they are bombarded with an massive volume of brand messages, meaning that delivering creative, polished content is key if a brand wants to capture people's attention. So, make a good wine is a important part of the work, but after this is necessary to give it the presentation it deserves, communicating accurately to consumers and have in mind that digital marketing activities are in a state of evolutionary development, where new trends are likely to occur rapidly and wineries have to adapt.

## 1. Internet

The world population exceeds 7 billion people where 42% actively use the Internet and 1,75 billion people use social networks through mobile phones. If we have a close look, this shows us the importance of wineries has online presence and responsive sites which allows a proper navigation through access from mobile devices.

### 1.1. Interaction with mobile phones

- 150 interactions per day.
- 177 minutes per day using mobile phones where each session lasts average 1.18 minutes.

## 2. Millenials

The millennials are the demographic cohort between Generation X and Generation Z. They are people of a generation with ages between 21–34 years. This is the largest generation in history, reach about 2.5 billion people, being that 90% use the internet, they are the “digital natives”. Characterized by being confident people, well informed and want to make a difference in the world through their work.

This generation consumes wine, but introduces a new standard of consumption compared to the previous generation. They prefer information/ recommendations obtained through friends and familiars; give less attention to geography as a quality factor and brands are important as well as prizes and competitions medals. With strong aesthetic sense, they value the image/ design of labels. Aware of the new legislation and the health, they value the percentage of alcohol contained in the drink, verifying a preference for wines with lower alcohol content and organic wines also are highlighted (for health and environmental reasons).

### 2.1. Target – Millenials are the main target

Wineries have to deconstruct the formal stereotype of wine consumers, making the new generation identifies with the drink, maintain proximity to this new generation. In addition, the millennials consumes and learn differently about wine, whereby social networks will be increasingly important to impact these younger consumers.

**Foodies:** millennials are very interested in wine and food. A good technique will be publish wine pairings and wine suggestions to be served with gourmet dishes.

**Diversity:** millennials are not as committed to the brands, they want diversity and value, so they are open to know and test new products.

**Drama:** the physical spaces of the stores must be stated as a destination, bringing visual, social and intellectual stimulation. According to a survey by the University of Leicester in the UK, the mere fact of putting background music of a particular country has the power to increase sales of wine of this origin.

**Values:** millennials create stronger bonds with brands which they share values. One of the values most shared by this generation is sustainability and environmental responsibility, which is reflected in different aspects such as: organic grapes, wineries with a fair trade policy and environmentally friendly packaging (see the example of wine packaging of Bota Wines).

## 3. Wine digital marketing

Nowadays, consumers have many more quality wine choices. They can count with apps, blogs, and online product reviews to be informed about the products and brands. In this scenario, being fearless and adaptive, using new technologies to communicate your band is the way for independent family winery to succeed in this highly competitive global market.

### 3.1. Content

The wineries should create content that create interaction, lead consumers to share their experiences on social networks and position the brand as relevant to the target. Note that the contents created for millennials should have quality, good presentation, aesthetic sense, but may be simpler without so many big productions, may have a simpler and closer language. A more personal approach captures more attention and yields more interaction in social networks. Thus, if the objective of the campaign is to have more clicks, more action by consumers, the company should adopt the direct speaking to the camera, communicating directly with the consumer.

Man is a social animal, so the digital content should create a sense of community and customization. Consumers are online for “Be to see” – socialize, shop and have entertainment – and “be to be” – saving, reduce costs and save time without intermediaries. Note that currently the dimension that distinguishes more online of offline is the potential community. Consumers generate content, talk about brands and products, and we should give more power to consumers, allowing them to participate more in the creation and dissemination of content.

### 3.2. Types of content

Identify the subjects and themes that arouse more curiosity and interest of the public is fundamental to trace the content strategy to explore on social medias. Winemaking, viticulture, culinary, food pairings, hospitality and design are trend topics. The public used to like to learn more about people behind the wines, family stories, historic facts and food pairings through “when to drink” and “how to” videos.

Focus on consistency and quality content is very importante. Have a blog to post recipes, updates from the winemaker, harvest notes and something that’s educational is a good way to reach the public and get more shares on social medias.

To create a digital brand essence, wineries should have their mission clarity, refuse to compromise quality, focusing on quality even on online approach, and be authentic. It will still be important to develop a content strategy, predefining topics and content schedule, defining brand tone and voice – what and what not to talk about – and determining what to do when negative comments arise.

### 3.3. Platforms

The Wine Digital Marketing can develop via the following platforms:

**Online Advertising:** online advertising can be a valuable choice for wineries looking to promote their brand to specific audiences or with specific keywords. We have several different types of digital advertising as: Search Engine Advertising (Google AdWords); Website Announcements (Slide-outs, Banners and Pop-ups); Social Media Advertising (Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest) and through association/ partnership with specific sites for ad placement.

**Email Marketing:** the common practice for most successful wineries in the world. The email marketing is a very powerful generator of online wine sales and a critical component of digital marketing because it reaches

the perfect audience and save time and resources. It is worthwhile to create a database with consumers’ emails to promote products, events, sales and keeping in touch occasionally building a good relationship.

**Social Media Campaigns:** consumers expect and demand wineries online interaction, so they should be using social media frequently. Wineries should create an editorial schedule, develop the content needed to make an impact on each post, ensure that social media management should originate from an authentic voice and have systems in place to leverage its functionality.

### 3.4. Media strategy management

Digital marketing is a strategy that requires ongoing campaigns incorporating all techniques from the online marketing tool kit and every action take on social networks should be a part of a larger social media marketing strategy.

Create a social media marketing plan will guide wineries online actions, but it will also be a measure by which they determine whether they’re succeeding or failing at social media. This plan is a summary of what wineries expect to achieve for theirs business using social networks and serves to establish objectives and goals to achieve (which should be aligned with their broader marketing strategy) and prove the ROI.

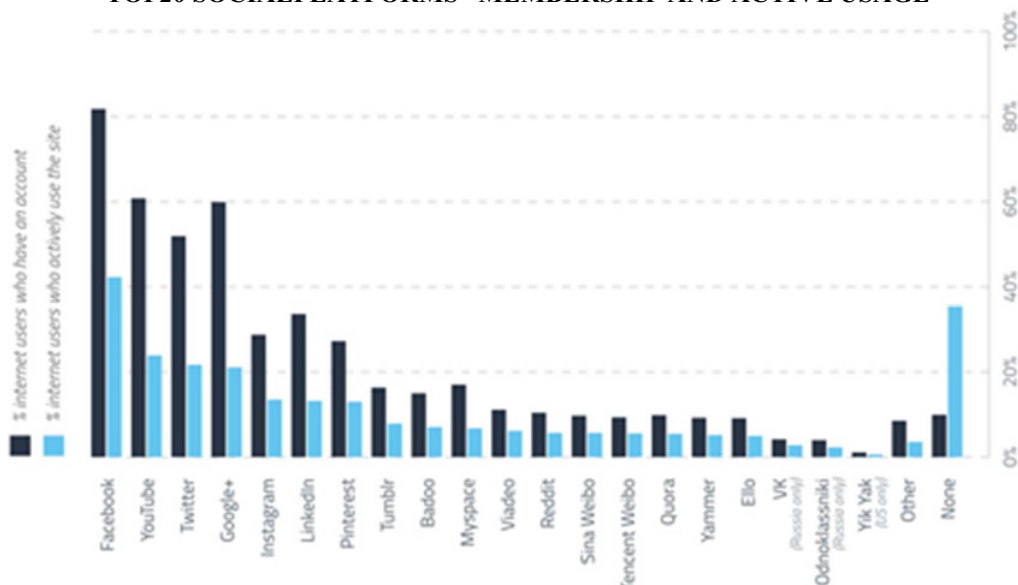
The key is setting specific business goals, embracing new technologies and using data to understand what works and what you can do without. It is necessary to prepare your winery culture, rule which information would be online as a visit card and create or improve your social accounts with your broader goals and audience in mind.

Wineries need to create a social media content strategy that resonates with their audience and develop a plan determining the audience, frequency of online interaction, contents, approach and platforms is elementary before taking the first steps. To accomplish this task successfully is essential to hire or train skilled professionals with a multidisciplinary background and developing this function with a high quality so can compete on equal terms in the competitive global wine market.

To trace the media strategy is imperative wine companies determine basic principles to be followed in its strategy taking into account the regulation applied in this field, to know:

- Digital marketing communications are intended for adults of legal purchase age;
- Digital marketing communications on a site or web page controlled by the brand advertiser that involve direct interaction with a user should require age affirmation by the user prior to full user engagement of that communication to determine that the user is of legal purchase age;
- Digital marketing communications and product promotions must be transparent as brand marketing by being identified as such;
- Digital marketing communications on sites controlled by the brand advertiser must respect user privacy;
- Create content that people want to talk about. Notice that great content will be essential to succeeding at social media whereby your social media marketing plan should include a content marketing plan, comprised of strategies for content creation and content curation, as well as an editorial calendar.

**TOP20 SOCIAL PLATFORMS– MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVE USAGE**



**Account:** On which of the following services do you have an account? / **Active users:** Which of the following services have you used or contributed to in the past month using any type of device? / **Source:** GlobalWebIndex Q1 2015 / **Base:** Internet users aged 16-64, exc. China.

- Use social media to listen to customers (consumers can also offer social media inspiration, only through the content that they share and in their messages. See how your target audience writes and also learn their habits, when they share and why, and use that as a basis for your social media marketing plan);
- Concentrate on increasing daily updates (ensuring that posts and updates have been seen by your target audience); and
- Use social media to discover how can you could distinguish yourself from competitors and appeal to consumers they might be missing.

**3.5. Sales tools**

It is a challenge to wineries to find a successful way to use social media with tangible results to their income. The wine sector should consider how to use social media strategically to offer customer engagement, grow brand awareness and draw consumers through sales funnel creating loyal customers, brand ambassadors and sales.

Actually, consumer expect to notice appealing photos of products and experiences they would love to purchase. Notice that platforms like Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter and blogs can make sales directly and make it straightforward with a link back to the e-commerce store or website.

Wineries face special challenges in promoting their business on social media because, in some countries – like in the USA-, national authorities considers social media as advertising and regulates what wineries can do online. The regulation mainly affect wineries in two different ways. First, they cannot run contest that give away wine and second, they must monitor user generated content for anything that might promote irresponsible drinking.

Certainly, wine companies should to take strict laws with alcohol in account before undertaking any social media or indeed, digital wine marketing, observing the

laws of the land and also the social platforms guidelines. Although it is not so easy to make consumer wine directly sales through social media, it still should play a strong role in wine sales funnel.

As mentioned, the regulation in some countries prohibit wineries from giving away alcohol, avoiding standard tactics on social media for retail brands (as contests and giveaways). To overcome this challenge wineries can identify complementary brands that fit with their objectives for collaborate and promote contest in partnering with them – investing in corkscrews, wine glasses, cookbooks and wine tasting notebooks, for instance – to reward loyal fans. In other words, the regulation cannot stop them from successfully use social media to foster brand loyalty. The wineries can also rewards fans informally by liking their photos on Instagram and giving shout-outs on Facebook and Twitter. In return, fans naturally share their contents.

It is also important to keep an eye on the quality of followers. The experience reveals that is better does not run contests on social media to get new followers (refer-a-friend type of contest) but run contests to reward existing fans, rewarding loyal fans. It is a way to collect email address of current fans for their database to send newsletter and product review, but respecting privacy polices. This strategy to attract genuine fans and quality is preferable than inflate follower numbers with people who are not true fans of the brand. When you have a genuine, an authentic fan, you do not even have to ask them to share your posting, because they will do it on their own.

Wineries, in addition to social publishing platforms, can also use distributor meetings, winemaking virtual tasting videos, QR Codes to give more information about the product and wine harmonization, digital wine lists as a sales tools. Promote the product in different contexts is promoting the consumption of the product as well and thus boost their sales.

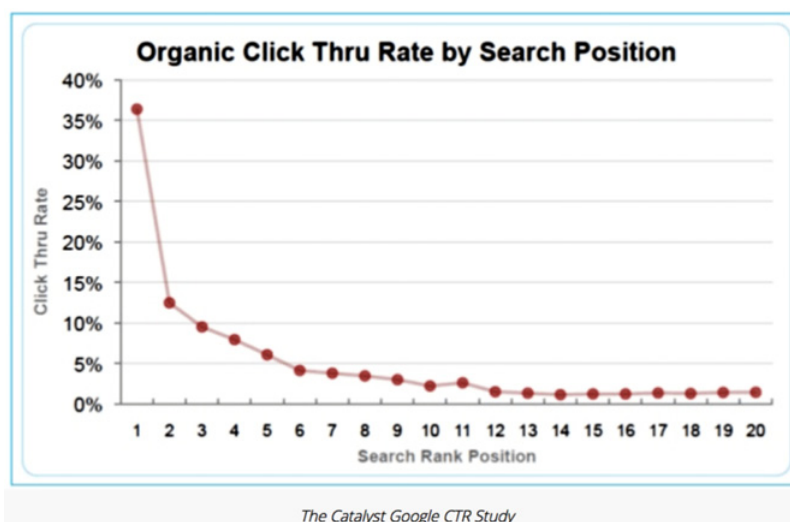


Figure 1. Research based on 10,000 keywords across 250 B2B and B2C companies.

### 3.6. Social media marketing

In this scenario, how can wineries use social media to promote their products and increase sales and brand loyalty as well?

First of all is necessary to have social media marketing concept. Social media marketing is building a social network of fans, followers and connections using proper and interesting content that allows business to reach and engage more people and drive more sales. It is getting people to talk about your brand, creating brand ambassadors will represent a brand in a positive way, promote the identity, philosophy, values and products, helping to create brand awareness and increase sales. Relationships sell wine and the digital wine marketing is the art of making wine sales and increase brand loyalty through communication vehicle.

Note that the wine industry has been one of the slowest industries to adopt social media, but it is relevant to recognize that is a big opportunity for wine brands to engage directly with those who drink the wine. Thus, the mainly social media marketing purpose in wine sector is expressing the wine brand unique value to customers and its digital presence should do it when producers are not talking personally to them.

### 3.7. Social media marketing is storytelling

Consumers expect more than just a product or service, they want a story to engage with. Notice that is a way of approaching the new generations and popularizing wine culture, so it is necessary to wineries have a dedicated marketing manager who creates and publishes content on social networks. It is also important to pay attention on which type of content it will be added value to the customer through tips and advices.

Note that storytelling is about consumers not about marks. Consumers wants to know the history and wine context, to know how is elaborated the wine – traditional methods, organic, biodynamic wines – and know the producers. So, labels can tell them a little bit more informations, telling them the history behind the product (e.g. Colli Ripani Collection).

### Virtual experiences

Display videos to people reuse in social media and webcast tasting, explaining details about viticulture and wine.

### Experiential content

Post contents that remind people of a positive memory and share videos/photos to attract attention and encourage customers to share their own experiences and spreading your brand online as well.

### Wine tourism

The wine tourism is an important tool to visitors shares their own experiences on social medias, instigating other people to come to visit the wineries and a path to straight brand/customers relationship.

### 3.8. ROI – social media return on investment

Normally, producers need to expect 6–12 months to see an impact on sales, allowing time to grow their network. Think of building “social currency”, the more good will you generate with fan, the more likely they will share your product.

Measuring social media ROI

- *Online purchases*: is relatively easy to track marketing sources to purchases and correlate which efforts are selling the most wine.
- *Offline purchases*: use a baseline method where you check sales before and after social media campaigns.

### 3.9. SEO – search engine optimization

SEO is the name given to activity that attempts to improve search engine rankings. It is the process of getting traffic from the “free,” “organic,” “editorial” or “natural” search results on search engines.

### 3.10. Search behavior

- 89% of researchers modify the search when they are not successful.

- 89% use another search engine when they have an unsuccessful search.
- 79% do multiple searches.
- 33% of users (aged 18 and 29) know the difference between organic search and paid search.

## 4. Wine industry specific strategies

### 4.1. Responsive templates

At the present time people use mobile devices to connect to Internet so it is important select a responsive template to use in wineries websites. Responsive Web Design makes web page look good on all devices (desktops, tablets and phones) and helps customers consult the websites and take off a doubt when they are selecting or buying a wine on a restaurant or wine store, for example.

There is a huge website template variety, but remember to give preference to elegant, contemporary, dynamic, interactive, efficient, attention-getting, high-quality and productive ones. It will help your online success.

### 4.2. Digital influencers

To telling story wineries can use high-definition videos on their websites or different platforms like digital magazine and blogs. Consider that number one reason people buy wine is based on recommendations and testimonials, revealing the bloggers, digital magazines and social media influence on sales.

Famous professional bloggers are opinion leaders and can influence their target audience turning into brand advocates, promoting the products, events and brand lifestyle. They create powerful content and represent a powerful group in the marketplace because they can impact consumers via word of mouth and brands are noticing it. So is common to find bloggers that signed a deal with famous wine brands to cooperate on campaigns and projects, developing synergies.

For this reason, the opinion leaders play an undeniably important role because they have significant influence on the pre and post-purchase behavior of customers. Through their own social media channels, they create an online community and spread the message to multi-strong- target audiences that are hungry for information. The influencing power of bloggers lies in the engagement with consumers. They produce conversations and are credible because they are “one of us”, the similarity between reader and blogger makes a big impact on the final purchase decision. Professional critics no longer rule wine popularity, but a personal, uncomplicated and unpretentious approach has more effect on sales because it is closer to the average consumer opinion.

Wine brands pay to have bloggers presence in their events like wine tasting presentation and send them products to strengthen bloggers to test and evaluate. They add value and expertise because they discover, evaluate, compare and introduce products to a huge audience.

So we can conclude that bloggers hold the power to format and impact public impression of brands, challenging wine brands to determine how they will work with them and contribute to influencers frame their message honoring the brand to the public.

## 5. Conclusion

As preliminary results we can say that Digital Wine Marketing becoming a complex issue and very current. So, it is time to investigate and help the secular wine sector respond this great and modern challenge. Information is currency and a strong content marketing plan helps wineries engage website visitors and increase their sales.

The world has changed, communication rules have changed and today consumers have more power. To the extent that consumers create content they become the mark, forming opinion about it. The strategic marketing planning should start with a content strategy – this is the essence of strategic marketing planning – and just after setting the content is that we should choose the platforms to be used. The online has created the potential of community and nowadays everything is about relationships, having online presence becomes vital to survive the competitive global market.

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