

A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master Degree in Management from the NOVA – School of Business and Economics

Digital marketing and the construction of brands for small wine producers



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Project carried out on the Master in Management

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05.01.2019

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Digital wine marketing and the construction of brands

Abstract

Digital marketing has become an important advertising and information tool, as interactive communication between producer and consumer can be generated. This paper develops a strategy for digital and social media marketing in order to gain the attention of consumers and to develop a brand image in the wine sector. Two studies were conducted in order to analyse what consumers seek and what producers in Germany currently do to build their brand image via digital channels. Findings reveal that producers in most cases do not satisfy the needs of consumers, hence a digital marketing strategy needs to be established to build a brand image.

Keywords: Digital wine marketing, Brand image, Social media, Consumer behaviour

1 Introduction

Consumers currently choose from over than 10,000 wine brands, which leads to a phenomenon called “confusion of choice” (Tach, 2016). The diversity of varieties is massive, so how do consumers select which wine they want to consume? Grape variety, country of origin or the brand image – different factors influence the purchasing decision. Wine is a complex product and the perception of it has changed in the last decades. Thus, consumers’ new buying behaviour which is nowadays influenced by variables like social media or word of mouth (WOM) affects the way to market wine, and tools like the internet with social media platforms and other digital marketing channels can be used to influence buying decisions. A brand name needs to be familiar in order to choose a bottle of wine in the shelf or in a restaurant. Consequently, the objective for producers of any kind is to establish brand awareness. Consumers’ assessment of wine is guided by different factors, the best quality or the lowest price will not make the pick (Bruwer, 2016). A combination and mixture of tangible and intangible values derived from the wine play a role in the consumption experience (Duquesnois, 2008). Tangibles such as the label, the grape and other factors can influence the perception (Fournier, 2008). However, consumers have changed their way how to seek information about wine. Leigon (2011) states that consumers are used to get their knowledge and recommendations about wine from magazines and newsletters. Nowadays, consumers increasingly consult social media to get recommendations from friends and family (Thach,

2013). Social media and other digital channels are common to promote and advertise products. Companies need to strive to have a strong brand in order to enhance relationships, loyalty and most of all penetrate the market with their message (Laverie, 2011), hence digital marketing is highly suited for that purpose (social, 2018). The change in gathering information needs to be acknowledged by wineries. By going digital, wineries can be effectively and easily share information about events or new wines. Yet, marketing used to be a lower priority task, as the focus was on grape production and the work on the vineyard, thereby giving the product the primary attention and letting the customers out of sight (Macionis, 1999). Wineries need to focus more attention and interest in marketing and relationship management, thereby building a brand image, a name, that can differentiate their products (Bruwer, 2005). The question which needs to be answered is how do wineries build their brand through these digital channels? What factors are important to attract the attention of consumers? The product needs to be physically, but especially mentally available to be successful and bought. A digital marketing strategy needs to be built to create a strong brand image and gain competitive advantage (Tiago, 2014). Researchers have found that the personality factor of the winery, of the family behind the estate, creates the brand and builds an emotional relationship with it (Kuhn, 2012). This paper will focus on the questions how to tailor brands on different attributes and how to create a brand on digital platforms.

2 Literature Review

This presentation will not give the full picture of research done in the field of digital and social media marketing in the wine business. The goal is to give an overview of the change in consumer behaviour and the perception of wine marketing, which benefits the adoption of digital channels for marketing purposes in the wine industry. Furthermore, selected studies will be presented which developed models with the utilisation of digital channels to market wine. The following part will be divided in different sections to present past research in order to build upon past wine brand and consumer literature.

2.1 Customer wine behaviour 2.0

Wine is a complex product, which inherits different definitions and values at once. It is a luxury item, a symbol of status, a fashion item, a living experience and yet a commodity (C. Hall, 2008). It is an information-sensitive product (Lockshin, 2001), with consumers demanding sufficient details about the wine. On the other side, wine producers need to know which and especially how to transfer information about their products. Lockshin and Hall (2003) present an outline of the change in consumer buying-behaviour in 2003. Lockshin and Corsi (2012) provided a new and updated version of the study, which gives an extensive overview of the change over the last years end especially since the last published article. The authors review 100 articles about different research fields in the wine business and divide those in different sections. Lockshin and Corsi (2012) summarise the results of different studies and state that consumers look for recommendation if advice by service personnel or sommeliers is not available, or they try to remember what they saw and read in the past. Moreover, several studies from Thach and Olsen (2005), Bruwer and Wood (2005), Van Zanten (2005), Johnson and Bruwer (2003) find that wine became a lifestyle product in developed wine drinking countries and thus platforms to transfer the brand message need to be amended and matched to these new customer needs. Digital and especially social media is suited to build brands and to reach consumers on a new level that can satisfy these altered needs. WOM has a strong effect on consumers and digital platforms, especially social media is suited to assist with marketing and wine sales (Leigon, 2011). In addition, platforms like Facebook are socialising tools with the purpose to exchange information and opinions. Wilson and Quinton (2012) highlight that this is a perfect match for wine, hence supporting Lockshin and Corsi (2012) and Atkin and Thach (2012) who found personal recommendations and in particular those of friends and family to be one of the most influencing drivers when purchasing wine. If recommendations are exchanged in a social network, the perception of the brand will be influenced and shaped upon that information given about the wine.

2.2 Digital and social marketing for wine - Definition and benefits

Brand awareness is the starting point to build loyalty and positive conversions (Chen, 2003; Malik et al., 2003). Consumers have changed their buying behaviour when it comes to wine. Automatically marketers need to align to these new needs. Gergaud and Chossat (2008) state that wine consumers are more willing to rely on friends and family in order to decide which wine to buy instead of magazines or books. Therefore, the development of a digital marketing strategy is a good fit for the wine product. Digital can create value at new levels (McKinsey, 2015), but especially social media, which is defined by Kaplan and Hanlein (2010) as "user generated content delivered via the web and mobile based technologies, [...] allows users to communicate, discuss, recommend, co-create, and modify content" enables companies to stimulate consumer generated discussions. The survey within the scope of this study will focus on digital channels including e-mail marketing (newsletters), TripAdvisor and similar other platforms. However, social media will be one of the key components that is analysed with regards to the research question. Kaplan (2010) notes that social media is the perfect tool for marketing purposes, as consumers who are in the same social network, share the identity that is related to the brand. Furthermore, a digital or social media marketing strategy potentially enhances visibility and awareness and information can be shared and exchanged (Berthon, 2012). The supply of information needs to be done in an early stage of the consumer's decision-making process (Power, 2011), whereby social media is the perfect tool to reach a broad audience due to its high user number, which is growing 13% every year. Researchers found several benefits that are generated by the usage of digital channels: New distribution channels, sell local wines to a global market, transparency and interactivity between and with customers (Gebauer, 2003).

2.3 Wine brand characteristics and experience-driven marketing

There is a growing amount of research on digital marketing and especially social media with regards to wine (Reyneke et al., 2011; Nicolls, 2012). Wineries need to be able to understand

the changing needs of their consumers and try to play a role in managing it. However, this activity is complex and new tools and strategies are necessary to build a brand with a clear message. The construction of a brand is the first step to get the customers' attention and stay ahead of the competition. Several brand characteristics influence consumer behaviour, including, identification, experience, service and emotion (Laverie, 2011). The image of the brand needs to be connected to the consumers' needs, as "followers" are motivated to share their opinion and positively influence the reputation of the winery. Laverie et al. (2011) provide an outline of which characteristics need to be generated to cultivate identification. If consumers identify with the brand, the submitted emotions while speaking, posting or reviewing about "their" wine will automatically deliver WOM that generates high value for producers. Brand characteristics are intangible factors, yet wine is a complex product composed by intangible and tangible elements. Several studies analysed tangible assets such as the quality or the label of wine (Mccutcheon et al., 2009; Boudreaux and Palmer, 2007; Orth and Malkewitz, 2008), yet Gronroos (2000) points out that the physical product is just one element in the range of the development of a brand. Charter (2006) states that the intangible and, thus, the emotional and symbolic content is the main value provider. Other studies cover online marketing strategies for wine that aim to influence these elements through digital channels. Gebauer (2003) concludes that online strategies, whereby wine is classified as look-and-feel good, should mostly focus on transferring a message and important information via the wine brand. The usage of the internet enables wineries to build their visibility through digital marketing. Despite providing a high amount of information and content, a larger audience can be reached. Additionally, marketing campaigns performed by the company itself or from external providers require high investments, small wine producers oftentimes have a limited budget though. Thus, social media platforms and other free digital marketing tools give smaller companies the opportunity to be competitive and build upon the potential digital has to offer (Begalli, 2008).

Hall and Mitchell (2008) give recommendations about wine marketing based on wine characteristics. They suggest to adopt a market-driven and, moreover, experience-driven approach to market wine. Wine is a highly emotional product and consequently, the authors emphasize the importance of the moment and the experience that the wine delivers. Supporting this, Charter (2006) concludes that experiential motivations about wine consumptions are more important than utilitarian. Hall and Mitchell (2008) support Wilson and Quinton (2012), that WOM recommendations are the most credible source to transfer the brand image. Experience-driven marketing through digital channels, whereby electronic word of mouth (eWOM) recommendations can be given by the brand community, can be seen as the perfect approach to start brand building.

2.4 Digital marketing in the wine business and cross-cultural usage

Several studies have been conducted to analyse the digital activities of wineries in different countries. In 2009, Thach analysed over 200 U.S. wine blogs and concludes that there is little use of social media in the wine business at that time. The adoption of digital marketing methods (a transformation in the industry with regards to the previous study) can be observed in Thach (2014). Thach and Lease (2014) investigate the impact of social media practices on wine sales in U.S. wineries as perceived by winery owners and general managers. The findings show that 87% of wineries report a perceived increase in wine sales due to social media, and recommend the usage of multiple platforms.

Szolnoki et. al., conducted two studies. The first study in 2011 examined the attitudes and opinions of 321 wineries in Germany about social media. The second study in August 2012 analysed the value derived by Facebook fans. Findings from 2011 show that 60% of wineries in the sample did not use social media. Social media users in the sample have a clear preference towards Facebook, followed by Twitter and YouTube. The second study revealed that Facebook fans generate more revenue and turnover than consumers, who are not part of the

Facebook community. The findings were published two years later composed in one paper in the International Journal of Wine Business Research.

Another study by Bouquet (2012) analyses over 200 U.S. and French wineries and concludes that American wine owners are much more likely to use digital channels than French ones. Results show that wineries in the U.S. generated benefits from social media and increased sales through the usage of these channels. Compared to that, Szolnoki (2014) infers that Germany ranges between France and the U.S. in terms of digital wine marketing.

Several studies identified a significant difference in the usage of digital media between countries, as well as different reasons to use them. The research survey done in the scope of this paper will focus on the German wine business. However, studies following up on the topic of digital marketing are mostly conducted in English speaking countries, thus it is important to give an overview about the cross-cultural differences in digital marketing usage.

Szolnoki, Thach and Hoffmann (2016) compared the cross-cultural differences of social media usage between the U.S. and Germany. First, the overall communication done via social media channels is significantly different: 33.7% of German wineries use social media to communicate with their customers, compared to 86.9% in the U.S. Secondly, in Germany, social media is mostly used as an information system, e.g. informing customers about public activities and events. In the U.S., digital channels are used for customer acquisition primary followed by communication. Thirdly, in Germany, social media is seen as a tool to advertise, not to communicate in a two-way conversation with customers. An interactive communication could enhance their customer relationships, and thus loyalty to their brand. Wine producers are curious, yet hesitate to use digital channels in their business. Uncertainty about the impact of digital marketing and the return for the winery is hard to prove (Thach 2016). However, positive digital marketing results were reported by New World wineries, like La Crema in Sonoma City, which established a digital marketing campaign to engage customers in the wine making

process by generating a crowd-created wine (Businesswire, 2014). After three months, the family reported 15,000 email subscribers, 300,000 social media engagements and an increase in e-commerce sales by 134% over the previous year (Swindell, 2014).

2.5 Summary and research gap

In the last decade the concept of digital wine marketing and online purchasing received attention in the literature. Several studies determined digital marketing utilisation in wineries all over the world. However, no study gives recommendations on how to explicitly use these new digital platforms. Wine producers are uncertain how to address the wine audience, through which channels and, most importantly, what kinds of consumers can be attracted by a brand and which types of marketing would cause them to buy a wine. So far, there is no well-known research paper that focuses on brand building. Thus, both surveys carried out in the scope of this paper will be used to develop recommendations on how to build a brand based on different attributes and reveal implications for wine managers in terms of which marketing approach is practicable and effective for wine.

3 The wine brand

Experts estimate that consumers are exposed to between 4,000 to 10,000 advertisements a day (Simpson, 2018), thus getting customer attention is a challenge. In order to compete with this massive number of brands, fighting for customer attention, it is necessary to have a strong brand to enhance and build relationship and loyalty (Laverie, 2011). New marketing practices provide the opportunity to strengthen customer experience and transmit the value given by the product. Some wine producers have implemented innovative approaches with a combination of direct distribution, consumer relationship marketing, visits to the vineyard and digital channels to develop a strong brand and a positive reputation (Duquesnois, 2008). Further, there are several ways to connect to customers. Fountain, Fish, and Charters (2008) find that the visit to the winery can be a way to build loyalty. Other factors like trust and the quality of the wine are influencing the consumers' perception of the brand image. Wineries need to be able to provide

knowledge and competence in a series of elements like the production, design and management to convey an appealing customer experience and, thus, to cultivate a brand with engaged followers (Olsen, 2009).

3.1 Brand hierarchy and the 8P's of the wine marketing mix

A brand consists of a variety of elements, which reflect values for consumers. A brand is the assembly of those elements, which can be described as “brand hierarchy” (Keller, 1998). Some brand elements can establish a preference if knowledge about the product is acquired by past consumption experience, WOM or media influence. Keller's concept has also been used to describe and market wine. Spawton (1990) and Lockshin et al. (2000) add additional elements to the original concept to incorporate wine elements. Spawton (1990) includes country and region of origin, estate, producer, and distributor and retailer label. The element of grape variety was added by Lockshin (2000) in order to differentiate between New and Old World wines. Yet, the wine brand hierarchy still misses branding elements that take place in the service (shipping, tourism experience) of wine. Another widely known concept in the marketing business are the 4P's (price, promotion, place, product) by McCarthy (1960). Kotler and other marketing experts added other elements like people and process to the marketing mix. Hall and Mitchell (2008) adjust the traditional marketing mix to be applicable to wine marketing. Place applied to wine can be referred as the terroir. The place in addition to the estate and the family gives the wine its heart and soul, which is one element that can be promoted through marketing. This paper will focus on promotion. Thus, a recommendation for digital brand construction will be given based on the results of the survey. Furthermore, an example using the brand hierarchy and some of the 8P's that influence the brand image will be illustrated in table 1.

3.3 Characteristics of the wine brand

A solid definition of brand is hard to find; thus this paper will take into account two definitions. First, David Ogilvy defines brand as “the intangible sum of a product's attributes” (Lloyd, 2017). Second, the dictionary of brand's definition is “a person's perception of a product,

service, experience, or organization.” (Lloyd, 2017). Wine is a product that is composed by several attributes, of which some can only be learned after consumption. Hence, consumers are evaluating a range of factors to assess the quality of the wine inside the bottle (Atkin, 2012). The complexity of the product results in the demand for information and transparency by consumers, yet Spawton (1991) points out that although wine is a complex product, the brand of the wine is most important for the relationship with consumers and their loyalty. The purpose of this paper is to develop a recommendation based on wine brand characteristics which can be used to build a brand through digital channels. Below, different brand characteristics are explained from past research and literature. Following this, the findings from the survey will be analysed and a model will be developed on how to build a brand through digital marketing.

3.4 Quality

Wineries need to be competent to produce and offer a quality product, as the consumption experience is the first step for consumers to “touch and feel” the brand. Fountain et al. (2008) state that the tangible elements of wine like the label or the design of the bottle can influence the evaluation of the quality. O’Mahoney et al. (2006) find that a quality product leads consumers to put trust in the brand they are buying and to ultimately identify with the brand itself. Wineries that are seen as competent will build a positive reputation, resulting in strong relationships and brand loyalty (Laverie, 2011).

3.5 Reputation

Reputation can be built by the interaction with an organization and the consumption of the product. Particularly, reputation is linked to evaluation, past consumption and other information consumers receive from friends, media and other sources. Laverie et al. (2011) and Hall and Mitchell (2008) point out, that wine critics and ratings can be a tool for building a strong brand reputation and presence. Image agents who are not in control of the winery provide external validation which is an applicable source for consumers. Furthermore, these agents or ambassadors can influence a wide range of high involvement customers. Those can lead the

opinion of consumers with a medium knowledge, yet interest in wine. Thus, consumption and preference can be influenced by exchanging information between high and medium involved consumers (Laverie, 2011). Digital channels and especially social media enables consumers with different involvement to follow and share information on a viral basis. This indicates that wine is suited for digital practices as social networks consist of consumers with all kinds of wine involvement.

3.6 Identification

Wineries need to be competent in wine making, logistics, and management to create a customer experience (Olsen, 2009). The design of the bottle and the whole package transmits the personality and the message of the brand. If wineries are competent to deliver this personality, consumer's likeliness to trust the brand will increase. Additionally, commitment and satisfaction can be developed, which will result in brand identification. Bhattacharya, et al. (1995) define identification as "a form of bonding between individuals and the brand". Wineries should seek to develop a personal, emotional connection with their consumers or visitors (Laverie, 2011). Therefore, identification with the brand and the personality is the ultimate goal (Boudreaux and Palmer, 2007), which results in openness to brand experience and digital media exposure (Nowak and Newton, 2008).

3.7 WOM and eWOM

WOM is a particularly powerful tool of wine marketing, as recommendations via friends and family are seen as credible. EWOM is communication through digital channels which is perceived as a reliable and trustworthy source (Thach, 2016). Recommendation given voluntarily by friends and family which are not in the control of the winery. Thus a third party can be used to effectively promote one's brand (C. Hall, 2008). The effectiveness of WOM recommendation has already been addressed. However, if consumers are talking about a wine experience it will automatically shape the perception of consumers and will influence their opinion about a brand. If target groups exchange their feelings about brand attributes and if

producers shape and modify that information given on digital platforms, a wine brand can be built.

3.8 Experience

Identification with the brand is a stepping stone to convey a brand message. Once identification with a brand is given, consumers will want to experience the brand by consuming, visiting the winery, attending events or browsing the wineries' digital channels (Laverie, 2002). The experience of the brand should be authentic and real. Consumers want to know the story behind the wine, the work on the vineyard, the history of the wine and other stories that can be transferred and be told to provide authenticity (C. Hall, 2008). Lockshin and Corsi (2012) find that images and statements are seen as more appealing than traditional factors like country of origin or grape variety. Accordingly, describing images and stories of the product perform better than other expressions. This supports the idea of adopting digital channels to market wine, as the internet puts strong emphasis on the sense of seeing and experiencing pictures or videos in an interactive way.

3.9 Trust and loyalty

The complexity of wine as a product has already been addressed. Following this, researchers found that the perception of risk is particularly important when purchasing wine (Lockshin, 2006). Consumers want to reduce this risk by reviewing cues like the label, the grape or other factors influencing the perception of the wine's quality. The winery needs to provide sufficient information for consumers to assess these elements, which enables them to build trust that the wine will satisfy their needs. If consumers trust the wine producer, loyalty and positive WOM will be generated. Yet, Mitchell and Hall (2008) point out that consumers doesn't need to trust the wine nor that the product is the driving force behind the relationship. In fact, the brand is the element which needs to be trusted.

3.10 Approach to wine marketing

Wine can be marketed through various channels, offline and online. As pointed out earlier, wine is information-sensitive. Thus, the adoption of digital channels creates international

opportunities as digital content on social media can go viral and thus reach users all over the continent within seconds. Additionally, a high number of indicators and a large amount of describing information can be provided to followers and consumers.

Hall and Mitchell (2008) explain different kinds of wine image agents including traditional marketing, sommeliers, wine influencers or product placement. Some are in the control of the winery itself. Advertising via television, promotion on the point of sale, wine critics or e-mail marketing can be managed by the owners. The control is in the hands of the producer. However, users trust user-generated content more than company created advertising (C.M.K Cheung and M.K.O Lee, 2012; C.M.K Cheung and D.R. Thadani, 2012). This indicates, that social media channels, where comments, sharing and recommendation can be generated by users for users, is a more reliable source of information. Although the winery cannot control what consumers post or say to their friends, family or social networks, they can influence rational factors that drive the image of the brand. Consumers who are active on social media channels expect to see shots of appealing and fun moments, they desire to experience themselves. Another feature which can enhance offline and online sales of the winery is that platforms like e.g. Instagram and Facebook can be easily connected with the original website or e-commerce store (Viana, 2016). In addition, social media can be used to trace back the information published by users about their experience to assess the credibility of the claims. Consumers are more likely to trust previous experiences of other consumers. Thus, wineries need to carefully manage and pick the information they want to be visible and may go viral on the internet community about their brand characteristics (Szolnoki, 2014). Social media offers organisations several benefits: It allows them to respond in a short amount of time and to address each customer's needs at relatively low cost, which traditional channels cannot provide at this intensity. In conclusion, digital marketing in the range of other advertising channels can be seen as the best targeted opportunity wine producers can use for brand building purposes (C. Hall, 2008).

4 Methodology

Two online surveys were conducted to measure digital usage and to evaluate what consumers expect from a wine brand and what producers offer. The studies mentioned in this paper (Szoloniki et al., 2014; Thach, 2014 and Hoffmann, 2016) solely focused on the producer's view, whereby the purpose of this paper is to show what consumers value and what producers currently do and should do in order to cultivate a brand image.

The survey was developed based on the review of the literature. The consumer survey covered some demographic and generic questions, but overall the survey asked in particular how consumers decide which wine they buy at different occasions, if they use digital channels to inform themselves and their overall perception about digital wine marketing. The second survey asked if wine producers currently use digital channels, what purpose they have and other questions in order to generate a knowledge how they use it and in particular if they try to build a brand image and if so, how they do it. Both surveys were pretested and revisions were made. It was launched on soScisurvey for 3 weeks in October 2018. An email was sent to several wine producers, aimed at owners or general managers in the Baden-Wuerttemberg, Palatinate and in the Rheingau region. The consumer survey was posted on Facebook, sent by email to Geissenheim University's database and was additionally carried out at a wine event in Heilbronn. A total of 50 producers and 100 consumers participated.

4.1 Demographics of Survey Respondents

The consumer survey was completed by 100 respondents, out of which 62% were aged between 19-29. The second biggest age category is 30-39 with 18% (Table 2). However, all age groups are presented in the survey. Gender wise, 58% were female and 42% male (Table 3). The producer survey was answered by German wineries producing up to 8000 hectolitres with a mean of around 3200 hectolitres. Since mostly small wineries completed the survey, the recommendation given in the end is applicable to wineries who range in this category. Wine producers with more sales have other possibilities. They can hire a company to manage their

digital accounts or the digital transformation of their whole wine business and supply chain is already in a more developed stage.

4.2 Consumer survey

Approximately, 37% of the respondents assess themselves as having a medium knowledge about wine and 22% evaluate their wine knowledge as good (Table 4). This suggests, that the respondents have experience with wine and have a certain knowledge, which, in turn shows that the data is valid and relevant. The data supports Leigon's (2011) statement, as 37% seek their information about wine they intent to buy from friends and family and 23% from online research. This indicates that the trend for consumer behaviour tends to go digital (Table 5). Additionally, 63% of respondents use digital channels (e.g., social media) for purposes related to wine (Table 6). The analysis concludes that respondents trust their peers the most if they decide to buy a wine. More than half of the respondents rated their friends and family as the most trusted source, followed by experts like sommeliers (Table 7). These results provide evidence that awareness about a wine brand needs to be established using digital channels, as the consumer's social network is a trusted source of information when it comes to a buying-decision. Also, social media can be used to initiate conversation and information exchange about a winery's product in order to be mentally available in the minds of consumers.

The results show that digital is the preferred medium to obtain information for buying decisions. Participants were asked which wine recommendation they would follow. Twenty-nine percent rate Facebook, 31% digital wine magazines and 15% wine blogs as their preferred channel (Table 8). This data suggests that the modern wine consumers and especially the younger generation, which is mostly represented in the survey, are likely to use digital channels to search for information and trust these information and recommendation if they are given by peers in their social network. Nowadays, consumers are more likely to be influenced by consumer-generated content, whereby social media is an efficient tool to manage and evaluate information exchange between consumers.

Social media creates awareness and information given by consumers in social networks is trustworthy, yet which characteristics do consumers evaluate as critical for their decision-making process? What should wine producers convey and what wine characteristics should be presented and established on digital channels. The reputation of a wine brand was evaluated by 90% of the respondents as an important characteristic (the question allowed multiple answers), followed by trust (84%), identification (66%) and WOM (50%) as influencing factors (Table 9). This shows that consumers consider the reputation of a winery as particularly important. Yet, other factors like trust, WOM recommendation and identification with the winery are crucial to gain reputation at the first place. These characteristics seem to influence consumers; if wine producers can create and enhance trust in their brand, it is more likely that positive and influencing WOM will be exchanged. If one identifies with a brand, one will talk about the benefits of the products, which influences the reputation. The discussed data showed how consumers search for information and what they value. Further on, the following question needs to be asked in order to give a solid recommendation about brand building in the end: How do consumers want to be addressed?

Almost all respondents answered that an appealing social media appearance would influence them to buy a wine of a certain brand. Consumers want to see stories on digital channels, meaning pictures and videos from the harvest or a story about the vineyard or the production of a certain wine. Consumers want to be entertained by these stories and, further, experience the brand. Survey respondents rated storytelling with 37%, along with the experience on the vineyard (tastings) with 49% as the approaches to spark their interest (Table 10). As already concluded by various authors (C. Hall and R. Mitchell, 2008; Gronroos, 2000), consumers want to feel emotions, have an experience and want to have the “we”-feeling about a brand. One of the last questions was an open-ended question in order to get the consumers’ own opinions and ideas. Surprisingly, events, social media and storytelling were given as the way to catch their

attention. This open-ended question should reveal additional response options, which could have been disregarded in the closed question (Table 11).

Summing up, digital and social media can be used to generate awareness in order to make a product mentally available. Recommendations on digital channels are mostly given by people who act in a social network, which is the reason that these recommendations are perceived as valid and trusted sources. Consequently, especially in the case of Facebook, people are more likely to buy a wine if they receive such recommendations on digital channels. Consumers turn to technology and trust the consumer-generated content on various digital channels in order to assess their buying decision. Consumers rate trust and reputation as important. They want to identify with the brand and trust WOM recommendations. In addition to that, the data shows that social media and online marketing can create awareness, transfer emotion and generate an experience by storytelling using pictures, videos or stories posted online. This facilitates trust and consumers are more prone to talk about the brand they are identifying with, which in turn can improve the reputation of the winery. Digital marketing combined with storytelling can lead consumers to visit the vineyard, where events and the experience with the owners on the vineyard can establish “the” brand of the wine producer.

4.3 Producer survey

Winery owners, managers and sommeliers were the respondents of the survey, since the purpose was to obtain a comprehensive picture from a range of experts in the wine business. The first analysis shows that a wide variety of digital channels are used in the German wine business. Digital channels like Pinterest, Blogs, Yelp, YouTube and TripAdvisor are utilized. Surprisingly, solely 12% of the respondents have a website, although offering a website can be seen as basis for online marketing, whereby social media is one way to strengthen look-and-feel goods on top of general marketing techniques (Table 12). The first discrepancy, that evolves with this examination, is the channels highly used by wineries and those they evaluate as important. Respondents rated their website with a mean of 4.22 as the most important

channel, followed by Facebook with 3.6. Surprisingly, with a mean of 4.2, newsletters are rated as important, yet newsletters represent a one-way communication, whereby no conversation and engagement can be achieved, which is not beneficial for marketing purposes (Table 13, 14). In addition, only 18 % of respondents use Facebook, although consumers rate Facebook as the „gateway“ to earn their trust. Further on, the first indication how wine producers use digital channels can be analysed in the heavy usage of TripAdvisor and Yelp. The data suggest that the respondents rate them as important, as both channels enable the monitoring and responding to customer reviews. This is important since responding to consumers concerns and beliefs can create a feeling of care and attention. Further on, it indicates that wine producers in the sample put attention on after-sales services to satisfy their customers. Furthermore, the potential of digital channels and the benefit which derives is generating new customers and sales. Findings show that these channels are used for post-purchase services instead of using it to attract new leads and to build an appealing perception of wine attributes.

For almost all companies the branding and the message are essential to create awareness and a “name”. The results show that 90% of respondents think they can influence their brand image using digital channels and even 86% try to cultivate their brand (Table 15, 16). This shows that even though digital wine marketing in Germany is not used as heavily as in other countries, yet wine producers acknowledge the influencing strengths of digital tools. With almost 90% of respondents trying to influence their brand image, the approach taken by producers does not seem aligned with what customers want.

The survey included two open questions to get not prescribed answers in order to examine the opinions and thoughts of the respondents. First, respondents were asked what they want to transmit about their brands through digital channels. Twenty-four percent want to convey trust, 18% identification followed by emotion and quality with 16% (Table 17). Trust can be established by external validation of information; hence social media is once again the crucial

tool to establish this characteristic. Wineries strive to convey emotions and build identification with the family and the brand. Thus managers and owners need to employ digital marketing strategies with experiential posts, appealing images and stimulating messages. If a creative marketing strategy is applied and consumers have emotional bonds with the brand and act in a social network, WOM and the exchange of experiences and tasting notes can produce transparency and, thus, shape the perception of the brand. These results match with the expectation and needs that revealed in the customer survey, indicating that wineries communicate the right messages, but through the wrong channels.

Second, participants needed to emphasize the channel they assess as most important for brand building purposes. Facebook took the first place with 54%, website the second (24%) and Instagram the third (17%) (Table 18). The data suggests that managers know what channels they should use but apparently they do not follow their beliefs. To this point, the findings reveal that the producer side seems to have knowledge about their customers' needs, but fails to implement an efficient approach to gain from social media influencing benefits. Not surprisingly, the respondents in the survey do not have a clear picture of what purposes they are trying to serve with their digital efforts. Ninety-eight percent of wineries (multiple answers were allowed) said they didn't define any goal, yet 49% use digital channels for communication with their customers (Table 19). This analysis shows that social media is used as a multidimensional tool for different kinds of purposes, which is not an effective marketing approach. One should define a specific objective and the marketing strategy should be consistent and accordingly aligned on all channels. The customer survey indicated that consumers want to be enchanted and entertained by storytelling and events. Ninety-eight percent of respondents said their marketing strategy and what they want to achieve is awareness. In any case, this should be the first step if one wants to build a brand. Consumers will not buy a product without having any perception of the brand's benefits and reputation. Furthermore,

28% want to tell their story to their customers. Customers should be engaged by stories about the winery, about the owners and about the harvest. This matches with the answers consumers gave on how to catch their attention (Table 20).

Lastly, some universal questions were asked to get a glance of the respondents' opinions about the future of the wine business. Thirty-nine percent said the challenge of the future is to get the attention of the younger generation (Table 21). Producers need to satisfy the needs of the younger wine drinking generation as they will be their customers of the future. Respondents acknowledge that they need to transform the way they are marketing their wine, yet they do not offer what the younger generation wants. In the customer survey more than half of the respondents are millennials. Thus, wine producers should act according to their needs, meaning changing the way they advertise. Through digital marketing and especially social media, transparency and awareness can be built. This means that wine producers should use channels like Facebook and Instagram to convey emotions and tell their story, which will be available to a broad audience if it goes viral. The consumers' perception about the brand will be influenced by the attributes they want to see, which are emotions, experience and reputation. Wine producers should seek to deliver a perception of a wine that fulfils the target's needs. Emotions and experience should be transferred to shape the wine producer's service. Furthermore, the quality of the wine builds reputation and can lead to a perception of a brand that is embossed by positive saying. Hence, a well-known, and positive brand image can be built by the influence of these attributes using digital channels.

4.4 Recommendation and managerial implication

More and more consumers rely on information available on the web. Additionally, they trust their peers in their social network when it comes to wine buying decisions. This indicates that wineries need to act on this paradigm shift. Consumers trust WOM and eWOM recommendations on channels like Facebook and Instagram. They want to see the real story

behind the wine and people having fun while enjoying a glass of it. They want to be addressed through social media channels like Instagram, where they can see pictures or comment and tag friends and family to initiate the same experience with their loved ones. The strategy of German wine producers is currently not aligned with the behaviour of their customers. The data suggest that discrepancies occur concerning the communication channels they are offering and the channels consumers demand. Furthermore, wineries need to define a clear objective which needs to be in line with their message on multiple platforms. Yet, producers know which message and feelings they want to convey, yet they do not use the right marketing approach. The message needs to be relevant and the delivery needs to transfer passion, which in return can lead to resonance and mass influence (Laverie, 2011). Wineries need to create interesting and appealing content, which can be done easily by posting a photo on Facebook or Instagram with a simple question, e.g. “We have snow on the hills... Time for scented candles, log fire and chocolate... Oh and maybe red wine?” (Quinton, 2012). Wine is an emotional product and consumers want to hear and engage with a story. The findings show that storytelling is what consumers want, which can be used to differentiate products. Consumers want to hear about the history, the people, the weather – all factors influencing the soul and the heart of the wine. Storytelling and the transfer of influential characteristics, e.g. trust and reputation, can be built through recommendations and information exchange on social media platforms. Goodman and Habel (2010) compare the importance of a social media presence with the sign on the road of a winery. Consumers who identify with the winery want to interact with their social network and share their experiences (Dehon, 2013). Social media enables manufacturing and sharing of creative content, which will cause consumer engagement. Producers can post the occasion the wine is best suited for, e.g. lady’s night, special moments, read and drink. “Geile Weine”, a wine trading platform from Germany, asks what food will be on the table and then suggests wines with a creative slogan: “Wild meat is intensive, aromatic and savoury, so you need a wine

which doesn't lose its' light" (GeileWeine, 2018). Further on, wine producers can post what other consumers told them after tasting and experiencing it, e.g. "I would drink it with my dad, to thank him for everything with a good wine to create another amazing moment". Furthermore, by producing videos and initiating customers into a conversation, engagement with others and the brand will lead to WOM.

In conclusion, wineries need to be present on digital channels and especially on social media, namely Facebook and Instagram. Digital enables to reach a broader audience and with the increase of awareness, products are mentally available. This creates WOM and an exchange of experience through social networks and especially recommendations by friends and family, which can establish trust in the wine and particularly in the brand behind the product. Producers can convey emotions and experience by storytelling on digital platforms, hence showing consumers the passion and love, which influences the taste from harvest to bottling. Identification and trust lead to positive conversations and, thus, to reputation, which is considered by consumers in the decision making process. The internet can enable engagement by creative content. However, it can only touch two out of four senses. The consumer survey shows that one wants to have the experience on the vineyard. Events and tastings are essential to get the full picture of the process and feel the emotion on the estate. Social media creates awareness and can influence consumers to visit the vineyard. However, one needs to keep in mind that in most cases wine isn't a topic that automatically shows up on one's Facebook or Instagram-feed. It is more proactive, and the interest needs to be already established in most cases. Wine producers need to be present on digital platforms and need to create engaging content. Nevertheless, wine is still a product that needs to be tasted. Hence, events and cellar door visits are especially important to create loyalty. Wine producers need to enchant their visitors by further storytelling about the wine, which can lead visitors to identify with the winery and the story, whereby they want to be a part of it (C. Hall, 2008). Wine producers need to

establish one goal for their marketing strategy and need to stick to it. They need to shape important attributes like trust, loyalty and the experience of the wine, which can be done by posting engaging content on digital platforms. Finally, in order to generate crucial benefits wine producers or general managers need to dedicate sufficient resources for digital marketing purposes. If they do so and consumers proactively talk about a winery's product, it will influence the perception of the product and, thus, creates a brand in the minds of a broad audience.

4.5 Limitations and further research suggestions

One of the most crucial results of this research is that wine producers need to change their rather traditional perception of marketing in order to satisfy the needs of their consumers, especially to attract the younger generation. However, one limitation of this study is the number of wineries involved in the survey. Fifty respondents answered the questionnaire, whereby considerably smaller wineries comprise the sample. Smaller wineries do not have the possibilities larger wine producers with higher revenue have, as digital marketing involves investments to generate decisive benefits. Thus, if larger wineries would have answered the survey, other results could have been revealed. However, smaller wine producers could reach a broader and new audience with digital marketing, yet wine producers and even large enterprises doubt a crucial financial return (ROI) of those practices. Additionally, few research papers focus on hard (ROI) values of digital marketing, yet soft values like brand building and positive impacts on wine sales have been revealed by several cases. Thus, determining financial benefits would be a relevant extension to this paper. Further, researchers could investigate the impact of brand loyalty and identification established through digital channels on wine sales, which can strengthen additional interest to adopt an innovative digital marketing approach.

Appendix
Consumer survey


Corporate Brand	ROLF WILLY	
Family brand	Rolf willy	
Individual brand	Pink noir rosé QBA	
Branded features/service	Vintage: 2017 – Black label Grape: Weißherbst/Rosé Country of origin: Germany Region of origin: Heilbronn	
Product	Pink Noir – If you are on... a party, ladies night, date or you just want to enjoy the summer (while day drinking)	<p>WANNA GO PINK WITH ME?</p> <p>Food matching Fish, asparagus, chicken, pasta, vegetarian</p>
Promotion	THINK PINK. DRINK PINK. What else?	
People	My daughter likes to say: „Not a summer day goes by without sitting in the vineyards, enjoying the sun and a glass of pink noir“	

Table 1: Pink Noir – German wine marketing using the brand hierarchy and the 8P's

Age of respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Younger than 19	1	1,0	1,0	1,0
19-29	61	61,0	62,2	63,3
30-39	18	18,0	18,4	81,6
40-49	4	4,0	4,1	85,7
Valid 50-59	11	11,0	11,2	96,9
60-69	2	2,0	2,0	99,0
>70	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
Total	98	98,0	100,0	
Missing Not answered	2	2,0		
Total	100	100,0		

Table 2: Age of respondents (Consumers)

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	55	55,0	57,9	57,9
	Male	40	40,0	42,1	100,0
	Total	95	95,0	100,0	
Missing	Not answered	5	5,0		
Total		100	100,0		

Table 3: Gender of consumer respondents

How would you rate your wine knowledge?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No knowledge	3	3,0	3,0	3,0
	Little knowledge	27	27,0	27,0	30,0
	Average knowledge	37	37,0	37,0	67,0
	Good knowledge	22	22,0	22,0	89,0
	Expert	11	11,0	11,0	100,0
	Total	100	100,0	100,0	

Table 4: Wine knowledge

Information channels

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Winery website	4	4,0	4,0	4,0
	Magazine (Print)	4	4,0	4,0	8,1
	Online research	23	23,0	23,2	31,3
	Friends and family	37	37,0	37,4	68,7
	Wine shop	17	17,0	17,2	85,9
	Other	14	14,0	14,1	100,0
	Total	99	99,0	100,0	
Missing	Not answered	1	1,0		
Total		100	100,0		

Table 5: Information channels

Do you use digital channels for wine purposes?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	63	63,0	63,6	63,6
	No	36	36,0	36,4	100,0
	Total	99	99,0	100,0	
Missing	Not answered	1	1,0		
Total		100	100,0		

Table 6: Utilisation of digital channel for wine purposes

Who do you trust the most if you want to buy a wine?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Friends and family	56	56,0	56,0	56,0
Awards	3	3,0	3,0	59,0
Well-known magazines (Vinum, Winespectator)	4	4,0	4,0	63,0
Forums (customer ratings)	1	1,0	1,0	64,0
Information given by the wine producer	4	4,0	4,0	68,0
Sommelier / personnel at the wine shop	31	31,0	31,0	99,0
Other	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
Total	100	100,0	100,0	

Table 7: Trust

Recommendation to follow

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Facebook	28	28,0	29,2	29,2
Vivino	4	4,0	4,2	33,3
Other apps (z.B.CellarTracker)	2	2,0	2,1	35,4
Wine blogs	14	14,0	14,6	50,0
Forums	8	8,0	8,3	58,3
Wine magazine (digital)	30	30,0	31,3	89,6
Other	10	10,0	10,4	100,0
Total	96	96,0	100,0	
Missing Not answered	4	4,0		
Total	100	100,0		

Table 8: Recommendation to follow

Which characteristics do you evaluate as the most important one?

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Quality	36	7,6%	36,0%
Reputation	90	19,1%	90,0%
Trust	84	17,8%	84,0%
Winery image	47	10,0%	47,0%
Word of mouth	50	10,6%	50,0%
Identification with the winery	66	14,0%	66,0%
Other	99	21,0%	99,0%
Total	472	100,0%	472,0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table 9: Wine characteristics

Which marketing approach would be appealing to you?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Traditional marketing - TV, print	4	4,0	4,0	4,0
Tastings / Tourism - The experience on the vineyard	48	48,0	48,5	52,5
Campaigns / Games on social networks, e.g. How high is your wine IQ?	10	10,0	10,1	62,6
Storytelling / Experience marketing - e.g. pictures and videos from the harvest or the family	37	37,0	37,4	100,0
Total	99	99,0	100,0	
Missing	1	1,0		
Total	100	100,0		

Table 10: Wine marketing approach

What can wine producers do to catch your attention? (Open-ended Question)

	Responses	
	N	Percent
Events (wine tastings)	21	35,6%
Social media	25	42,4%
Reputation	2	3,4%
Customer ratings	1	1,7%
Storytelling	10	16,9%
Total	59	100,0%

Table 11: Respondent's marketing suggestions

Producer survey

Utilisation of Channels

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Facebook	9	1,8%	17,6%
E-Mail	7	1,4%	13,7%
Website	6	1,2%	11,8%
Blog	49	10,0%	96,1%
Instagram	32	6,6%	62,7%
Tripadvisor	45	9,2%	88,2%
Twitter	49	10,0%	96,1%
Youtube	47	9,6%	92,2%
Google+	43	8,8%	84,3%
Pinterest	51	10,5%	100,0%
Yelp	50	10,2%	98,0%
Sonstige	49	10,0%	96,1%
I don't use digital channels	51	10,5%	100,0%
Total	488	100,0%	956,9%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table 12: Wine producers utilisation of digital channels

Importance of digital channels

	Cases					
	Included		Excluded		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Facebook	51	100,0%	0	0,0%	51	100,0%
Website	50	98,0%	1	2,0%	51	100,0%
Blog	30	58,8%	21	41,2%	51	100,0%
Instagram	40	78,4%	11	21,6%	51	100,0%
TripAdvisor	29	56,9%	22	43,1%	51	100,0%
Twitter	31	60,8%	20	39,2%	51	100,0%
YouTube	30	58,8%	21	41,2%	51	100,0%
Pinterest	28	54,9%	23	45,1%	51	100,0%
Google+	31	60,8%	20	39,2%	51	100,0%
E-Mail	43	84,3%	8	15,7%	51	100,0%
Yelp	27	52,9%	24	47,1%	51	100,0%

Table 13: Importance of digital channels

Report of mean and standard deviation

	Facebook	Website	Blog	Instagram	TripAdvisor	Twitter	YouTube	Pinterest	Google+	E-Mail	Yelp
Mean	3,59	4,22	2,87	3,23	2,83	2,23	2,53	2,14	2,97	4,16	2,11
N	51	50	30	40	29	31	30	28	31	43	27
Std. Deviation	,829	,764	1,074	,974	1,284	,845	,973	1,008	1,224	,843	1,013

Table 14: Importance of digital channels (mean)

Do you think you can influence your brand image via digital channels?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	45	88,2	90,0	90,0
	No	5	9,8	10,0	100,0
	Total	50	98,0	100,0	
Missing	Not answered	1	2,0		
Total		51	100,0		

Table 15: Brand image influence

Do you want to build or influence your brand image via digital channels?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	43	84,3	86,0	86,0
	No	7	13,7	14,0	100,0
	Total	50	98,0	100,0	
Missing	Not answered	1	2,0		
Total		51	100,0		

Table 16: Attempt of brand image influence

Do you think you can influence/build your brand image? If so, what do you want to convey? (Open-ended question)

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Experience	6	13%
	Trust	11	24%
	Identification	8	18%
	Quality	7	16%
	Reputation	6	13%
	Emotion	7	16%
	Total	45	100%

Table 17: Message to convey

Do you want to influence/build your brand image? If so, which channel is the most important? (Open-ended question)

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Facebook	22	54%
	E-Mail	2	5%
	Website	10	24%
	Instagram	7	17%
	Total	41	100%

Table 18: Channel to transmit brand image

Goal for digital marketing

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Customer service	17	13,0%	33,3%
Customer acquisition	11	8,4%	21,6%
Identification	7	5,3%	13,7%
Promotion	13	9,9%	25,5%
Information tool	8	6,1%	15,7%
Communication	25	19,1%	49,0%
We didn't define any goal	50	38,2%	98,0%
Total	131	100,0%	256,9%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table 19: Goal for digital marketing

Marketing Objective

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Emotionalize, e.g. enjoy the moment	10	10,5%	20,0%
New and fresh look	22	23,2%	44,0%
Storytelling, e.g. stories about the estate, the owners	14	14,7%	28,0%
Awareness	49	51,6%	98,0%
Total	95	100,0%	190,0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table 20: Marketing objective

What challenges do you see in the wine business in the future?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Digital marketing and online appearance	7	13,7	13,7	13,7
	Digital transformation of the wine business	7	13,7	13,7	27,5
	Get the younger generation's attention	20	39,2	39,2	66,7
	Increase in competition from other countries (e.g. Montenegro)	2	3,9	3,9	70,6
	Price pressure from supermarkets	10	19,6	19,6	90,2
	Other	5	9,8	9,8	100,0
	Total	51	100,0	100,0	

Table 21: Challenges in the wine business

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