Social media marketing: a pathway for winery brand growth

Steve Goodman, Rebecca Dolan, Cullen Habel

The project
THERE IS A LOT of hype surrounding social media, be it Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube or Instagram. Along with this buzz, there is increasing pressure for brand owners to use it because of the perceived holy grail marketing effects it is expected to have. Perhaps that’s easier said than done and perhaps many people are yet to be convinced. Most have an opinion about social media but the reality is we really don’t know how it works, how to use it and if it can have an effect on consumer attitudes towards our wine brands.

We have been researching in this field for the past two years and now have GWRDC funding to be able to extend the project to a scale that will be representative of the wine marketplace. In this article we will outline what is happening, what you can expect the project to assist you with in your marketing activity and how you can get involved.

What the project entails
A Marketing Communication Typology was developed in earlier research (Dolan & Goodman 2011, 2012; Dolan, Goodman and Habel 2012) that identified three different types of Social Media Communication Orientation: Event, Sales or Relationship Oriented. Our qualitative research allowed us to assess how consumers perceive each orientation, and the next quantitative phase will allow us to dig deeper. We will be able to see how the photos, updates, videos and links that you share with your friends through social media impact on their perceptions of your brand, how it might impact on their purchase behaviour and in short, how each of the communication orientations impact on the growth (or otherwise) of your brand.

How to benefit from the research
We have established a Facebook page that has the specific purpose of keeping the wine industry up to date. We’ll be using this as a platform to share updates, recorded seminars that present the findings, ask questions when we see results but need input from those actually involved in the marketing of wine brands. In short, the Facebook Page (Australian Wine and Social Media – AWSM) exists to ensure that our research feeds into your marketing efforts, to increase the opportunities you have for growing your wine brand.

Keeping up to date and reaping the benefits is as easy as finding us on Facebook (if you’re not on Facebook, you should be! See Habel and Goodman 2010 for a beginners guide to Facebook for Wineries) and click ‘like’. Check your Facebook and you’ll see news from us in your news feed – or you can go straight to the AWSM page.

Are you involved in social media marketing?
If you are, then please drop us a line. We are hoping to be in regular contact with those involved in social media and wine. We’d love to discuss findings as they arise and also work together to build the research. We need industry to inform the design and execution of the research project. Industry involvement is key to the success of this project.

We’ll be running web-based seminars as ‘Master Classes’ for those at an advanced level of social media use as well as a forum for sharing thoughts, problems and successes. Email addresses are given below, or message us through Facebook.

There are some hard benefits to be had if you are operating your social media marketing; we will be able to run diagnostics and analysis on your activity specifically to generate tailored findings for your brand – which will of course be confidential!

Where to now?
As this goes to print we are running the first set of quantitative data that will show how our model can be applied across the industry. We’re looking for wine brands to work with on analysis of their actual social media marketing activity and we’d love to discuss your own wine brand communication.

Either way, you can count on some interesting insights coming out of this exciting project. Insights you can immediately apply to your own business.

Rebecca Dolan is a PhD Candidate at the University of Adelaide, researching social media and wine marketing, she has worked with Dolan Family Wines and Treasury Wine Estates. rebecca.m.dolan@adelaide.edu.au or facebook.com/dolanfamilywine

Steve Goodman’s wine business research includes tourism, cellar door, social media and management strategy. steve.goodman@adelaide.edu.au or facebook.com/stevegoodmanwine.

Cullen Habel is an, independent market research consultant and adjunct lecturer in marketing and market research at the University of Adelaide, specialising in generating insights from quantitative data – see www.cullenofadelaide.com

References