A Reusable Wine Package That Also Serves as a Wine Rack

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Abstract

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The purpose of this study was to design and create a prototype of a reusable wine package that would be used primarily to transport a bottle of wine home, but also serve as a piece to build a wine rack when it reaches the consumer’s home.

This study investigated the factors to take into consideration when designing a wine package and coming up with a plan to build a product that met all those needs. One hundred questionnaires were sent to people over the age of twenty one to find out what they thought of the prototype and idea. The respondents showed a strong liking of the prototype and also provided information on where to sell the product as well as showing who to market to.

In addition to the survey responses, interviews were conducted with professionals in the wine marketing field in the areas of packaging, building, selling, marketing and branding wine. Using the research found on the current wine packaging markets and trends, as well as the opinions and expertise of the professionals in the wine industry, a prototype was built and tested in both functionality and consumer preference.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Purpose of Study

The variety of wine packaging has grown immensely in the past few years. This has not only been due to the functionality of the package to protect its contents, but also to the customer’s interest in the attractiveness and uniqueness of a wine bottle display. Since there are many different types of wine, consumers usually take the label and presentation of the bottle more into consideration than they do with other products.

Current packaging of wine has changed drastically over the years. We have come a long way from just a bottle and a cork. New trends of wine packaging have emerged. Bottles have been replaced with cans, making it easier to transport wine from your home to the party. With cans have come stackable, portable single-serve wine containers that provide major convenience. The once infamous cork has now been replaced by “zorks” and synthetic caps to make the resealing process easier. Flexible packaging has also entered the marketplace through the introduction of stand-up pouches that are unbreakable, lighter and easy to chill before serving. The latest trend for wine packaging is wraps. Instead of having a naked bottle with just a pressure-sensitive label, wineries are putting their product in a wrap. This allows them to keep their label standardized and uniform, but gives them the chance to brand each bottle for a specific buying occasion. This personalized approach to branding wine gives wineries another advantage to catch the eye of the customer.
Significance of the Study

Even though the current wine packaging market is expanding, there is room for improvement. For example, additional packaging creates more waste. This goes against the concept of sustainability in the wine market. Sustainability is defined as being “beneficial, safe & healthy for individuals and communities throughout its life cycle, meets market criteria for both performance and cost and optimizes the use of renewable or recycled source materials” (SPC, 2005). Reusable wine bags found at the local grocery store are sustainable. However, that is not the type of luxury packaging that is going to catch the eye of consumers, since minimal effort goes into the design of these bags. Whether the wine is coming from a box or a wrapped bottle, waste is a problem that winery owners and bottlers need to take into consideration. Nevertheless, wine package developers must keep in mind the presentation of that bottle on store shelves when coming up with a design to market their product.

Not only is sustainability an issue for wine bottle distributors and designers, but shipping is as well. For the common bottle there are three ways to ship wine: corrugated, molded pulp, or expanded polystyrene. This creates a limited delivery method of getting wine bottles where they need to go. Creating an aesthetically pleasing package that will protect its contents has become a problem that designers are running into. Designers must come up with a package that is sustainable, stable and cost effective.

“There are more than 31.2 billion bottles of wine consumed worldwide each year; 70% of them retail for under $12 a bottle, 70% are consumed within 28 minutes to 3 hours of purchase, and 70% of the cost goes to packaging, shipping and related expenses” (Kapnick 2012). This shows that not only is packaging crucial for shipping and promotion, but it is also an important
economic consideration. Therefore, it is imperative to the company’s financial success to package correctly the first time.

“Sales of wine are directly related to brand recognition” (Westling, 2001). Wine customers either choose a wine that they are familiar with or pick up a bottle, check out the label and decide whether or not to put it in their basket. Instant connection with the bottle and its presentation is key to reaching the customer and making them want to buy that wine. Shoppers are not sampling every single type of wine in stores so their decision on a wine they have never consumed before is based on what they can see alone. People also often give wine as a gift and want to make sure that the outside of the wine bottle is as luxurious and classy as the wine it holds.

**Interest in the Study**

The idea of this wine rack came to me when my dad and I were sitting at a restaurant looking at the labels on the wine bottles that were displayed behind the bar. We witnessed people bringing in wine to the restaurant in either gift bags or just carrying them in with no outer protection or holder. We noticed that there is a need for something to protect the bottle when it is being transferred, but also it would be nice if the package would serve another purpose if you are giving it away as a gift.

This project is very important to me for a number of reasons. The first is due to the fact that my father and I came up with the idea so I have a personal determination and motivation to see it work and come alive. I want to be able to take an idea, turn it into a reality and see how it works in both the wine marketplace and in people’s homes. I had the opportunity to work with Central Coast Packaging in Santa Maria, California as well as Rancho Sisquoc Winery in Orcutt,
California. Getting to work with people in both the packaging and wine industry will be both beneficial to my education as well as this project and paper. Eventually, I want to work in the wine business designing and producing labels for wineries. This project will provide me with insight into this field as well as give me a better grasp on the process of fully producing a wine bottle package.

**Benefits of Study**

There are many benefits to introducing this project to winery owners and customers. The wineries like it because it provides a new way to market their brand after their wine bottle leaves the store. This container also gives wineries the opportunity to be more “green.” Customers benefit from the production of this project as well. They can see the wine rack in a friend’s home and immediately ask about where they received it. It offers a way to store wine by simply using the package that the wine originally came home in. By offering this package that has a double purpose, customers will be able to tell that the company cares about sustainability and the convenience they can offer customers.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Wine is a breakable product so a package is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Wine also is a complex chemical that needs to be stored in a specific environment so it does not spoil. Bottles, bags, flexible packaging and boxes are the four main ways that wine is presented to customers in stores. Additional packaging is added when the wine is transported and shipped across the country because it needs to be in a sturdy container to ensure that it arrives at its destination safely. The type of packaging used to protect the product and the type of packaging used to promote the product are two very different things. The outer layer of packaging serves only one purpose; to protect. The more intricate style of packaging used in stores has numerous purposes and takes more consideration in the design process. Each different type of consumer package has both advantages and disadvantages when it comes to functionality, branding and sustainability.

Bottles are the most common form of packaging when it comes to wine because they provide chemical stability. “Glass was quickly found to be a good medium for storing wine - it did not affect the wine's flavor, you could easily see what wine was inside the bottle, and so on” (Gordon, 2009). Bottles have been around for so long that both tradition and history are associated with wine presented in this way. According to the CIA Flavor Summit conducted in April 2010, the Baby Boomers, ranging from ages 46-64, are currently the biggest wine drinkers. With this information, it makes sense that wine drinkers would appreciate a container that is timeless and familiar. It has also been said that bottles are more chic than boxes. “There was a time when box wine was mostly popular among wine drinkers on a limited income; college students, seniors and low budget restaurants serving "house wine" (Blair, 2010). Since wine is
considered a very classy beverage, it is often expected to be in a bottle and can portray a negative impression if it is not.

Not only is the culture bottles represent a good selling point, but also their ability to keep wine in the best possible environment for the chemical processes they undergo. “The bottle is what affects the aging process of wine. Glass bottles protect the quality of the wine by reducing oxygen permutation through the container. While other containers might be more economical and lighter in weight, they often do not preserve the quality of wine like glass bottles” (Thompson, 2009, p.4). Wine is an expensive product that you keep for a long time, so it is imperative that it is in the right conditions to age well. “Wine that has the potential to be aged longer than a year should be bottled in glass because of its superior ability to prevent deterioration due to oxygen” (Thompson, 2009, p.4). Bottles, however, do have their disadvantages. Since the grapes used for wine are only able to grow in certain areas, wine must be shipped around the world. Bottles are both heavy and breakable which makes shipping an obstacle and also something that packaging designers must consider when coming up with container designs. They are also heavier than the alternative packaging options which makes transporting them more expensive.

Bags and flexible packaging are a new and growing form of packaging in the wine industry. Flexible packaging is a new trend that is making its way into all areas of food production and has recently became popular with the wine makers. Flexible packaging offers advantages in shipping because products can lay down flat in a box which means that more fit when shipping. Flexible packages are also not breakable like bottles, so less care is needed when transporting them. When it comes to gifting wine, bags have been used to give a bottle more like a present rather than just bringing in a naked bottle of wine to a house or party. “Mini-barrels and bags without boxes are among the newest ideas in wine packaging” (Gordon, 2009, p.1). These
reusable bags are not much different from normal gift bags, except in the way they are shaped perfectly to fit one bottle. The problem with a bag is that it is not the most sturdy when carrying the heavier bottles and cannot serve any other purpose. Wine bags that hold multiple bottles have been introduced and are often both recyclable and reusable. The recent green movement has a lot to do with the push behind using reusable wine bags and also is credited to why they have become so popular.

The last type of packaging is a box that can usually hold anywhere from one to three bottles of wine. These are most often seen at old-style wineries in a tasting room. People can usually buy a set of bottles that come in this gift box with a brand on the front. Boxes range from a very sturdy paperboard to actual wood. The wood boxes are usually used for more expensive wines. Unique wines that are of high quality should be marketed better, and this all begins with packaging on the shelf. “In making a brand recognizable and developing a relationship with consumers, the decision making process for wine purchases becomes simpler and more direct for the consumer” (Westling, 2001). Boxes, however, do not create the best conditions for wine bottles. For the most part, the bottles are laid on their side in the box which can alter their taste if left for too long. Boxes can also reach high temperatures and, depending on the type of wine inside, can spoil the product. They are also heavy to carry and are not reusable. This old custom of having a wine box is enshrined in tradition, but it has proved to be a less than acceptable method of packaging because “recession, global warming and a new consumer willingness to experiment seem to be conspiring to make wine packages more varied, less expensive, lighter weight and higher tech than ever before” (Gordon, 2009, p.1).

With technological advances and the explosion of social media, consumers are becoming more educated when it comes to brand awareness and quality control of everyday products.
However, the wine market is a unique place when it comes to analyzing customer decisions and identifying the driving factors behind their purchases. One of the reasons is because of the many different choices there are in choosing a brand of wine. Most food products in the grocery store only have a limited number of options where “wine typically has over 700 and in some supermarkets well over 1000 different types” (Mitchell & Greatorex, 1989, p.2). This makes a customer’s decision overwhelming and can cause them to base their decision on factors unrelated to brand recognition or familiarity. “In that sense, regions that have been able to build a strong reputation using one particular feature are able to not only distinguish themselves from other regions, but also create a ‘hook’ that will impact consumer purchase decisions” (Lockshin & Remaud, 2008, p.3). This hook is seen in the package development advances that companies have made in order to differentiate themselves in the marketplace. “The result is that consumer choice for wine is more complex than the choice for many other products. It might be argued that automobiles are one of the few product categories that rival the complexity of the wine category, but cars are not purchased so often” (Mitchell & Greatorex, 1989, p.2). Every bottle will seem the same to a customer’s eye until their focus is broken up by something unique on the shelf.

Since purchasing wine is a complex decision, both time and money need to be set aside for the packaging decisions and logistics. Shoppers buying everyday groceries often have made up their mind on what type of brand they are getting for each product prior to reaching the aisle. Wine however, is much different. The wine aisle is browsed more than any other aisle due to the plethora of wines and labels offered and also due to the lack of information about each wine. Since there are numerous types of wine and wine companies, customers often rely on the appearance of the bottle and its packaging to make their buying decision. Consumers only make new purchases if there is a unique feature on a bottle that their old bottle did not provide.” When
a product has a high proportion of attributes that can only be assessed during consumption (experience attributes) as with wine, then the ability of consumers to assess quality prior to purchase is severely impaired, and consumers will fall back on extrinsic cues in the assessment of quality” (Lockshin & Remaud, 2008, p.3). Basing a decision on what they can see rather than what they can taste explains why packaging is key. Proof that packaging is a main ingredient in a wine’s success can be seen in the current wine industry and the marketplace. “The appearance attributes together provide the consumer with an overall impression of the product” (Blijlevens, 2009). This proves that it is not just the brand that makes the sale, but also the package that a brand is housed in. “Packaging is one of the few touch points outside of the store and branded web sites that upscale brands can directly control and therefore cannot afford to skimp on extending the luxury experience after customers leave the store” (Hutzler, 2011). There is a need for luxury packaging in the wine industry because of the atmosphere that wine is consumed in. “Package design is an intricate part of the luxury brand customer experience” (Hutzler, 2011). People want to come home with a wine that spoke to them as much in the store as it does when the cork is unscrewed at home.

In the current wine market, there are not many packages that serve more than the purpose of keeping the wine safe during transportation. Wine bags and boxes have a short lifespan, and once they are used are usually thrown away. This creates a void in the industry for a wine container that can have another purpose once the wine has made it to its final destination. Customers’ attention will be physically drawn to a wine package that is displayed in a way that exhibits how it can be used on the outside of the package. The more useful a customer sees an item, the more likely they will be to buy it. “Eye movement experiments have been used to evaluate usability of packaging design, which makes it possible to analyze and evaluate
packaging design by quantitative and more reliable methods, and promote packaging designed for customers’ needs” (Rayner, 1998, p.629). Customers are more willing to buy something that will meet more of their needs. “Even during this time of rethinking and pulling back on convenience expenditures, most consumers are willing to pay more for packaging with attributes or benefits that are meaningful to them” (Doyle, 2008). The more needs a package can meet for a customer, the more willing they will be to buy it and possibly pay a little extra upfront in order to save time and money in the long run. We live in an era where convenience is key. People are always looking for a way to do something faster and more efficiently and packaging for wine is no different. Reusability is something that customers also strive for. “The high response rates for “reusable” items is attributable to at least three factors: the perception that reusability justifies many packages because they aren’t just used once and thrown away, the nostalgia halo that makes reusability stand for thrift and good homemaking traditions, and finally the meaning of “reusable” as durable throughout the active life of the product is appealing to customers” (Doyle, 2008). Finding an alternative use for a wine package that makes sense and gives customers an easier way to store their wine is essentially bulletproof in the fact that it will appeal to customers.

When thinking about what it will take to create a multi-purpose package for wine it is good to keep some important factors in mind. Functionality is key in the package design and there are a lot of attributes that play a part in building a successful container. First, the package should be able to store the product for a long period of time both in the store and the home. Since wine has such special instructions for storage, these needs must be met through packaging. “Product design is a broad term that includes a considerable range of engineering-related attributes such as ergonomics, production-efficiency, strength, recyclability, and distribution ease as well as aesthetics” (Bloch, 1995, p.3). Designers and engineers must keep all of those in mind
when coming up with a design. Consumers want something that is going to make their lives easier. “Both economic theory and current market research techniques predict that increasing the number of features will make products more appealing” (Srinivasan & Lovejoy, 1997, p. 432). The more a product can do for customers, the more willing they are going to be to make the purchase. Also, the functions of the product must be relevant to the target market that the company is trying to reach. “Rather than giving gifts which are of no use to consumers, they should be given useful products” (Khaled, 2010, p. 87).

A package is also responsible for getting a product from point A to point B. “The logistical function of packaging is mainly to protect the product during movement through the distribution channels. This could cause added packaging expense, but serves to reduce the incidence of damage, spoilage, or loss through theft or misplaced goods” (Silayoi & Speece, 2007). “The importance of packaging design and the use of packaging as a vehicle for communication and branding is growing” (Rettie & Brewer, 2000, p.56) and designers must think about how their product will be presented along the way by making sure that brand recognition and visibility is achieved at all stages of travel. In a world where people are being bombarded with brands everyday, a designer should never miss an opportunity to catch the eye of customers whether the product is in a grand store display or in the back of a delivery truck.

Packaging also creates another opportunity for on and off site promotion. “Since we live in a world dominated by cutthroat competition, superior brand visibility will determine how well your business survives in the industry” (Connolly & Davison, 1996, p.100). Just because the package is leaving the store site, does not mean that its job is done. In-home display of a brand is just as important as in-store. Wine is often served at social events, so the impression it gives on your kitchen counter can be just as effective as an end of the aisle display at your local grocery
store. Brand and package designers must think about the way the bottle will be stored both on the shelves and in your home. A package “remains in a consumer’s home after they take the product out, offering a constant reminder that can increase brand recall” (Hutzler, 2011). In doing so, the package’s branding is making the same amount of impact no matter where it is being seen. “When a buyer leaves the store the only way to control a brand’s image is by what they take home with them” (Hutzler, 2011).

Finally, sustainability is a trend that is directing the purchases of consumers; however, the wine industry is behind in finding ways to be more “green.” “While there are more than 300 million cases of wine sold in the U.S. each year, virtually none of those bottles are reused. An increasing number are recycled, but most--EPA has estimated 70 percent--end up in landfills” (Penn, 2009). Since people are not taking the time to reuse bottles, a way must be found to reuse the packaging in order to help the environment. A wine package that can be used as something else once you get it home is one way to not only serve the customer, but also reduce some of the waste created by excess packaging. Most would assume that getting rid of the packaging would be best since minimal packaging would mean minimal waste however, this is not the case. Packaging is needed in order to make the product useful and keep it safe. Therefore, the wine industry must find a way to still utilize a package but justify that package by having it serve another purpose.

It can be said that packaging plays a vital role in the prosperity of a brand of wine. Bottles, bags, flexible packaging and boxes all have pros and cons that relate to the economic success of a wine product. However, there is definitely a need for something new to get the attention of the wine clientele. Since the wine industry is a place of great competition, it is crucial to find a package that is a good display of the wine inside and also catches the attention of
customers. Thinking about wine packaging in a way besides for storage is where revolutions in this field can take place. Functionality, promotion and sustainability are all factors that can play a vital role in the success of a wine brand. Remembering that the effects of a brand of wine are not just created in stores but also in a home display allows for improvements to be made to the current wine packaging industry. Since there is a void in the industry for a multipurpose package, creating one is a great approach to setting a company apart from rival companies and providing customers with something they can use again and again.
Chapter 3
Methodology

The goal of this study was to find a way to create a re-useable package that could transport wine home from the store or winery and then serve as a wine rack once it was placed in the customer’s home. With the trend in the wine packaging industry to be more green and creative, this package would be a way to unify both trends. Considering functionality, sustainability, brand recognition and promotion, a package was created to be displayed in both homes and winery store fronts. The objective of this study was to design and create a prototype of a reusable wine rack and through potential customer’s opinions and product experimentation determine its potential in the current marketplace.

Data Collection Plan

Although there have been advances in the wine packaging market, there is not a package that can turn into a wine rack once the consumer gets it home. Through secondary research and data collection of previous experiments and case studies, information was acquired about what components customers gravitate to. From those details, it could be said that wine is a luxury item that is often chosen based strictly on appearance of the bottle since there are so many different wines in store shelves.

The design process for the new bottle started by interviewing Central Coast Packaging’s head packaging designer, Hector Ramirez. Central Coast Packaging is a company who makes wine containers in Santa Maria, California. This idea and design was brought to him and he was able to turn it in to a file that his company could build upon. “Wineries are always looking for the
next big thing, and in order to be the next big thing, it has to be different but it also needs to make sense” (Ramirez). Sarah Holt, head marketing manager from Rancho Sisquoc Winery was also contacted and interviewed about the prototype. She brought with her Becki Rodriguez, head tasting room manager as well as Mary Holt who is the winery owner. Both parties had opinions on what the package needed in order to be stable and secure as well as promote the wine in an effective way. Based on their opinions on what would work best, the prototype was designed to achieve the correct balance between functionality and brand experience.

The original sketches started with drawing the hexagonal design of the portable barrel. The barrels connect and build upon each other by having a slide-in latch device that would be easy to use, but would also be strong enough for the mini-barrels to hold full bottles of wine. The outside of the barrel would have the wine’s name and type on it so that when it is displayed as a rack, the owner would know what bottle was inside without having to pull the bottle out. The bottle will lay on its side when the package is used as a rack but then will stand straight up when it is being carried. Each time the consumer receives or buys one of these containers, they could either lay it right next to the other ones or attach it to the top and build upon them in a pyramid fashion. This wine holder will be as stable as it is appealing to the eye.

In addition to talking with the winery owners and the container manufacturers about what they would want the package to be like, a survey was conducted with potential customers. The package was shown to customers so they could voice their perspective of whether or not they liked or disliked certain aspects of the package. Information was collected by having customers answer specific questions (See Appendix A). People of different ages, genders and people who
buy their wine from both wineries and grocery stores were used in the experiment to make sure the results were valid.

**Data Analysis Plan**

The results from the interviews and customer observations were organized. Information about the customers who evaluated the package was recorded and groupings were made based on similarities in the demographics of the customers. This data was used to determine whether the prototype appealed to customers of certain age, gender, etc. The results were then utilized to find out where the package should be sold and to whom in order to reach its maximum potential. Different prices were also calculated depending on how much it would cost for the container company to make the package and customers were interviewed to find out how much they would be willing to pay for the extra packaging.
Chapter 4

Results

With an increased interest in wine packaging’s functionality, sustainability, brand recognition and promotion, there is a growing need for a package that is built not solely based on getting wine from point A to point B. There are so many other relevant factors that can set a wine package apart and allow it to be used for more than just one purpose. The purpose of this study was to find a way to create a re-useable package that could transport wine home from the store or winery and then serve as a wine rack once it was placed in the customer’s home. Using the information gathered from the interviews of professionals in the packaging and wine industry, this study predicted that there is a place in the wine marketing industry for a package like this one.

The research methods used to gain this information included an analysis of historical research taken from several professional publications, as well as the process of interviewing professionals within the fields of packaging, marketing, and selling wine. From the research, the professionals’ insight, and the survey’s information about the interests of potential customers, there was a better understanding about how this package would fit into the wine industry. From this research came adequate support of the hypothesis which proved that the wine industry would benefit from a reusable package both as a consumer and as a distributor.

When interviewing Hector Ramirez, owner of Central Coast Packaging and a professional in the wine packaging industry, about the design and showing him the original sketches, he came across some problems and had to make modifications. First of all, he observed that the hexagonal shape would not provide enough stability to hold a full bottle of wine. The
design was changed to a rectangle box that had a raised bottom surface and a lowered top surface so that when stacked, the boxes locked into each other. He also noticed that if we put the winery’s logo on the side of the box like it was in the original sketch, once the boxes were stacked next to each other, you wouldn’t be able to see it anymore. This is where the idea of a leather strap came in.

The leather strap allows customers to carry the box vertically out of the winery and then at home the strap lays across the bottle when used as a wine rack, showing customers what bottle is in there without them having to pull it out to check. The leather strap led to discovering that maybe it could also serve a double purpose. The leather strap could be a handle when transporting the wine but then you could snap it off and wear it as a bracelet at home which gives the box even more of an exclusive collector’s feel. Leather jewelry is currently the 8th most popular piece of trending jewelry for women according to Etsy.com and their marketing research. “Fondness for all forms of luxury like fashion products, accessories, bags & cases, cosmetics & fragrances, vehicles, utility gadgets, beverages and interior decoration products, has been seen since many centuries. In economic terms, luxury goods are the ones for which the law of demand is reverse, i.e. the demand for such products increases with price” (Tiwari, 2014). This shows that adding the leather bracelet could possibly make this package even more appealing to young jewelry-wearing consumers who enjoy luxury products.

The remaining driving factor of this product’s success is how much more it is going to cost customers to purchase this box, as well as how much more it is going to cost wine owners to make it. Hector claimed that it only cost his company around six dollars to produce this one prototype. After making ten of them, the cost drops to five dollars. From his experience, wineries usually buy around one hundred boxes at a time. Taking into consideration what he has made for
his existing clients in the wine industry, he predicted that the six extra dollars would not be a problem for most of the wineries he worked with. “The fact that this package is so new and innovative is what makes it worth the cost. You are not just getting a wine box to take home with you, you are getting a box, a wine rack to provide a place to put that bottle and also a leather classifying strap that you can then wear as a bracelet. Wine companies love to be different, it what they strive for and that is going to be what they like most about this concept” (Ramirez).

The overall consensus of the professionals interviewed was that wineries and labels are always looking for ways to change up their packaging in a way that sets them apart from their competition. Along with that comes the idea that the package must also be authentic in the sense that it is able to do its job of transporting wine and keeping it safe. The wine industry is different from other industries because the appearance of the package is so significant. Dr. Jay Singh, Professor and Packaging Program Director at the California Polytechnic State University of San Luis Obispo took a look at the prototype and spoke to why it would work in a higher end wine market. “The key to making a good wine package is making it exclusive. There is a marketing myth that you want to make a package appeal to everyone, when in reality that is not the case. If everyone likes the same things and is willing to spend money on the same things, the quality value goes down” (Singh). Wine packaging companies cannot build a successful wine package that is simply functional without also making it attractive to consumers. “My major concern is stability, but the driving factor to making the purchase is all about branding, convenience and overall charm” (Singh). There is a balance between the logistics and the aesthetics that must be reached when it comes to designing the package.

Sustainability is also a major issue. Since this package can be reused to serve more than one purpose, it allows companies who use it to be more sustainable. Singh expressed that almost
all major brand owners have a special group handling the sustainability initiatives of the company, stating that, “the bottom line is that if they are not in the race right now in looking at sustainability, they will fall behind” (Singh). This means that sustainability and the environment are another one of the factors that wine packaging experts must also consider. With this package serving another purpose and also being made out of recycled wood, it helps to move companies who use it in the right direction when it comes to being more eco-friendly. Customers who are concerned with the health of the environment and only buy recyclable packaging will be drawn to the package as well for those same reasons.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

There are several factors that must be taken into consideration when building a wine package. Functionality, sustainability, brand recognition and promotion as well as overall appearance all play a major role its success in the marketplace. Even though wine packaging has evolved immensely over the past few years, there are still major improvements needed to be made in order to make packages more eco-friendly and functional to consumers. Finding a way to appeal to customers wants and needs but also make a product that is not too expensive is the real challenge. If value is added to the package, that is going to cost the distributor and the consumer money. It is imperative to prove that the money being spent on making the package is going towards an aspect of the package that customers will appreciate and spend their money on.

The survey sent out to potential customers showed that people are interested in the wine rack package especially in the female, younger demographic. 77% of the people in the survey said that they gave wine as a gift in the range of sometimes to all the time. (Figure 3.) This package best serves for that purpose because it can be considered as a collection or limited edition item and once you get more and more of them, that offers something more exciting than just being given in a gift bag or as an empty bottle. The survey’s question about where people buy their wine shows that there is a wide variety (Figure 4.) Since there were diverse answers to that question, the most common answer being “a combination of grocery stores, wineries and places like Bevmo,” it makes it hard to pinpoint where this product would best sell.

However, Melissa Pura, the marketing director in the Phoenix, Arizona branch of the company Southern Wine and Spirits, claimed that “this type of packaging would do best at either a specialty wine store, such as a Bevmo, or in the tasting rooms of individual wineries. This is
due to the fact that this wine would be packaged in a more personal and luxurious way. If you were to put this type of package in a grocery store or somewhere that was not high end, it would immediately lose its value” (Pura, 2014).

The next range of questions dealt with the idea of turning the package into a wine rack once getting it home. 76% of the participants of the survey either displayed the bottles they purchased in their home already, or would like to display them but do not have a wine rack to do so (Figure 5.). 89% of people would love the idea of a multipurpose package but it depended on what the second purpose was (Figure 6.). That lead into the next question in which 43% of people claimed they would pay 5-10 dollars more if the package served another purpose besides just transporting the wine home (Figure 7). The fact that the wine package turns into a wine rack interested 52% of the participants of the survey. (Figure 8). The survey then took it one step further in asking if a collectible leather bracelet was appealing in which 49% of the participants replied “yes” (Figure 9).

Sarah Holt, the head marketing manager, Becki Rodriguez, the tasting room manager, and Mary Holt, the owner from Rancho Sisquoc, provided great insight on where this type of package would be successful. “We has all been to a ton of wineries, wine shows and exhibits, and the main selling point of wine packaging right now is a combination of innovation and serving multiple purposes. This package is unique because it does both” (Holt, 2014). They also believed that the bracelet is a real novelty because it provides a new method of marketing a brand. “The stuff that some of these wineries come up with to sell at their tasting room and wineries is both bizarre and sometimes really silly, but the crazy thing is, it works. People are willing to buy something really random as long as they think they are getting something that no one has or something that they can show off to their friends as being chic and funky” (Holt,
As long as the package has something to offer that is distinctive and exclusive, it will have a better chance of selling.

For the most part, the survey findings and the information gathered from the interviews with professionals in both the wine and packaging industry supported the introduction and promotion of this package and confirms that there is a place for this type of wine packaging in the marketplace. People are willing to spend a little more on a package that has a unique set of advantages that benefit their personal needs. This new style of packaging for more than one purpose allows wineries to be both sustainable and innovative in the way that they package their products. It also serves them well in the marketing side of promotion since it acts as an off-site promotional item once consumers display it inside their home.

Recommendations for Future Research

If future research is to be done on this subject, there are a few modifications to be made. The survey would need to have a more diverse population in the age category and also include more men. 160 people responded to the survey but out of those, over 80% were women (Figure 1.) and there was a skewed age group with the majority of respondents being in the 21-30 group (Figure 2). However, when comparing the answers from the younger group of respondents to the other, older groups, there was definitely a connection between the younger group and a strong interest in all aspects of the project. This is beneficial to know how to market this package when used in the marketplace, come up with a price point and also help to know where it should be sold.

The question about how much people would be willing to spend on the product with this added feature would also need to be reevaluated. Later research suggested that “asking a
customer to select one price from three available options for a new offering will normally result in the survey taker choosing the lowest price. A better survey methodology for dealing with pricing is called conjoint analysis, which takes the survey taker through a series of trade-off decisions where prices are tied to other elements of value, such as product features or quality levels. Only in context can customers make intelligent decisions about cost on a survey” (Healy, 2012). People often always say they would spend more on something in a survey but actually don’t when it comes to paying for it in real life.

Finally, it would have been beneficial to create a multi-sensory experiment where all participants of the survey could actually touch the product packaging, pick it up and get a better feel for it overall so they really understand how it works. Showing participants how the boxes interlocked and showing them how easy it is to assemble, would have given them a better grasp of the various functions of the package and would have allowed them to answer the questions more realistically and not just base their decisions off of pictures.

As far as the prototype goes, there are a few refinements to be made. The first is that the leather strap needs to be about 3-4 inches shorter than it is now. This would help with it display the wineries’ logos more vividly and also be a better fit for a bracelet. Melissa Pura, from Southern Wine and Spirits, suggested “to make the bracelets even more personal by adding quotes or significant events such as ‘Happy Birthday’ or ‘I love you’ would only add to the appeal of the package” (Pura, 2014). A question regarding what type of words or phrases consumers would like to have on the bracelet could be added to the survey to get a better understanding on what they want and what they are willing to spend extra money on.

After listening to the opinions of multiple wine drinkers who saw the package, adding the laser etching to the side of the boxes to add another element of advertisement for the wineries’
brand recognition would be a good idea. “We love the simplicity of the box, yet we want to make sure that if this package were to sell at various wineries, customers would remember that ours was one of them” (Holt, 2014). Even though some of the wineries’ logos would get covered up once it was turned into a wine rack, it still would serve a major advertising purpose before the bottle gets home and while it is being carried.

Finding out where this product would be sold to gain the most profit is another area to look further into. Trying it in different locations such as Bevmo, grocery stores and tasting rooms at wineries would be beneficial to knowing how to market this product. Price point would probably vary a little based on what winery it was being sold at and also what type of wood and stain was being used. The bracelet also adds a variable cost to the product. The simple box itself would cost around six dollars, but some companies may want to add more to it to make it even more unique. The best way to further research the success of this project would be to put it on the floor and see if it actually sold and also see how consumers reacted to it.
Appendix A.

Survey Questions for Consumers

1. What is your age?
   a. 21-30
   b. 31-40
   c. 41-50
   d. 51+

2. What is your gender?
   a. female
   b. male

3. How often do you give wine to people as a gift?
   a. all the time
   b. pretty often
   c. sometimes
   d. hardly never
   e. never ever

4. When buying wine for others or yourself, where do you make your purchases?
   a. grocery store
   b. wineries
   c. Bevmo
   d. a combination of the choices above
   e. I don’t buy wine
5. do you like to display the wine you purchase in your home?
   a. yes, I keep the bottles visible in my home
   b. no, I keep them where they cannot be seen
   c. I would like to display them, but don’t have a wine rack
   d. I don’t drink wine

6. if a wine package serves another purpose besides just carrying the wine, would you be willing
to spend more on it?
   a. yes
   b. no
   c. maybe

7. how much more would you be willing to spend?
   a. 1-3 dollars
   b. 5-10 dollars
   c. more than 10 dollars
   d. I would not spend more on it

8. does the package’s ability to also serve as a wine rack interest you?
   a. yes! I could definitely use that
   b. no, I don’t like wine racks
   c. no, I already have one
   d. maybe

9. would you like having a leather bracelet from different wineries you visited?
   a. yes
b. no

c. maybe

Images Used in Survey.

These images were shown to the participants while taking the survey.
Survey Result Charts

Figure 1.

What is your gender?
Answered: 100  Skipped: 0

Figure 2.

what is your age?
Answered: 99  Skipped: 1

Figure 3.

how often do you give wine to people as a gift?
Answered: 100  Skipped: 0
Figure 7. 

how much more would you be willing to spend?

Answered: 100  Skipped: 0

- 1-3 dollars
- 5-10 dollars
- more than 10 dollars
- I would not spend more...

Figure 8. 

does the package’s ability to also serve as a wine rack interest you?

Answered: 100  Skipped: 0

- Yes! I could definitely use...
- No, I don’t like wine racks
- No, I already have one
- Maybe

Figure 9. 

would you like having a leather bracelet from different wineries you visited?

Answered: 100  Skipped: 0

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
References


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