

Establishing a Brand: How to Create a Household Name for a Wine Brand through Social Media
and Image

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Abstract

This paper was conducted as a Senior Project for the Journalism Department at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, California during a 10 week quarter. This paper explores the topic of wine branding through social media and image. The research for this paper consisted of interviews with three experts that are currently working in the wine industry as well as a literature review of several articles and books that support the topic. The questions that arose about wine branding, brand recognition, social media, wine label and image during the literature review were then asked to the three experts: Stacie Jacob, Kim Murphy-Rodrigues and Lauren Phelps. With the input from the three wine industry experts and the research conducted by the various studies in the literature review, the critical questions were answered.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1.....	1
Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Background of the Problem.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	2
Setting for the Study.....	2
Research Questions	3
Definition of Terms.....	3
Organization of Study.....	4
Chapter 2.....	5
Literature Review	5
Creating an Image in the Wine Industry.....	5
Why Brand is Essential to the Wine Industry.....	6
Good Practices of Social Media.....	7
Successful Wineries on Social Media.....	8
Why Social Media is Necessary in the Wine Industry.....	9
Wineries Who Utilize Social Media Well.....	11
A Successful Brand in the Wine Industry.....	12
Why a Distinct Image is Important in the Wine Industry.....	13
Chapter 3.....	15

Methodology.....	15
Data Sources.....	15
Participants.....	15
Interview Design.....	15
Data Collection.....	17
Data Presentation.....	17
Delimitations	17
Limitations.....	18
Chapter 4.....	19
Data Analysis.....	19
Description of Participating Experts in Related Fields	19
San Luis Obispo County Wine and Tourism Marketing.....	19
Social Media for Wineries.....	20
Marketing Coordinator for a Winery.....	20
Wine Branding Questionnaire	29
Wine Brand Establishment Through Social Media and Image Research Questions.....	28
Wine Branding Through Social Media and Image Data.....	31
Chapter 5.....	45
Discussion and Recommendations.....	45
Summary.....	45
Discussion.....	47

Recommendations for Practice.....	58
Keep consistency with postings, voice and image.....	58
Tell the brand’s story in an appealing way.....	59
Keep audience in mind when creating posts.....	60
Engage with your audience.....	61
Study Conclusion.....	61
References.....	63
Appendix A.....	68
Interview Transcripts: Kim Murphy-Rodrigues.....	68
Appendix B.....	74
Interview Transcripts: Stacie Jacob.....	74
Appendix C.....	82
Interview Transcripts: Lauren Phelps.....	82

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. <i>Creating an image</i>	33
Table 2. <i>Branding a wine label for increased visibility</i>	34
Table 3. <i>Non-commerical winemakers impacted due to label recognition</i>	35
Table 4. <i>How to have an equal playing field among small and large winemakers</i>	36
Table 5. <i>What is the difference between brand identity and regional identity</i>	37
Table 6. <i>Is there a way to have differentiation between wine brands?</i>	38
Table 7. <i>Social media practices</i>	39
Table 8. <i>Purchasing decisions</i>	40
Table 9. <i>Good practice of large production winery</i>	41
Table 10. <i>How to create unique wine label usage</i>	42
Table 11. <i>Convey a message via social media</i>	42
Table 12. <i>Successful social media</i>	43
Table 13. <i>Small production winery</i>	44

Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

This study focuses on various aspects of how to establish a brand for a wine label and how current strategies in marketing, public relations, and wine industry contribute to their brand and name recognition. Recently, the wine industry is growing rapidly with “revenue growth in the range of 3.5 percent each year,” and “ wine volumes have averaged 3.5 percent growth annually” (Kaskie, 2012). With so much competition in the wine industry, establishing a winery’s brand recognition to consumers has become dire. Establishing a brand for an individual winery can be difficult with so much competition, so wineries have to create a presence with where consumers are: the internet and in public. Social media has a huge part in driving “consumer’s purchasing decisions” (Newstex Trade & Industry Blogs, 2016) and it is key for a winery to establish a household name. An good brand image in the wine industry leads to “consumers develop strong feelings of love for the wine” (Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012).

Background of the Problem

E-commerce via the internet for Small Farming Enterprises has become more important in order to “be more competitive” (Begalli, Codurri & Gaeta, 2009). However even with this information, “there is a lag, with the wine industry in adopting Web Marketing 2.0, although this gap is narrowing and varies across countries (Begalli, Bouquet, Szolnoki & Thach, 2009). In order to be more competitive, wineries should utilize “the new marketing possibilities of the web regard: product information; corporate image growth; and interactivity with consumers” (Begalli,

Codurri & Gaeta, 2009). Since Small Farming Enterprises and wineries are slower to adopt new media, it leads to the wine industry facing challenges when compared to other industries.

Purpose of the Study

Social media is becoming so essential to a brand that without it, a brand will not gain the following that is necessary to have a strong image or brand recognition. Without a strong image that is a result of social media, a winery can kiss their adventure to a household name good-bye. By investigating the current practices of social media with household name wine labels, it will help determine how social media is leading consumers to buying practices, brand recognition, brand recommendation and image success. Also, by studying the current social media use of successful wineries it will determine how social media can assist wineries and establish a common household name with their winery and consumers.

Setting for the Study

This study will be done as part of the data collection for a Senior Project at California Polytechnic State University located in San Luis Obispo, California. Interviews will be conducted with three experts in the Paso Robles wine industry. One of the experts will be an expert on Paso Robles wineries, one will be someone who executes and creates social media postings for a winery and the last person will be the marketing director of a winery that is a “household name.” The experts will each be asked the same set of questions and probes. The questionnaire is specifically designed to answer the research questions and fill the gaps in

previous literature on the topic of establishing a household name for a winery through social media and image.

Research Questions

The study used following research questions that were designed to answer fundamental gaps in the existing literature on the topic of how to establish a household name for a wine label through social media and image. Each question was created after investigating the existing information on the topic in order to acquire additional pertinent and necessary data from professionals in the fields of marketing, public relations, and wine for the study.

1. How does a winery create an image?
2. What is essential to a winery's brand?
3. What is considered good practices of social media?
4. What do successful wineries do on their social media?
5. What social media is necessary for wineries?
6. What are some benchmarks for wineries that use social media?
7. What determines a wineries brand as "successful"?
8. Why is a distinct image important for a winery?

Definition of Terms

Brand: The embodiment of what the organization stands for (Fazekas, 2003).

Image: Consumer's perception of a bounded wine area. The elements are 'glued together' by inter-related winescape elements and/or the people and natural and physical attractions within the

wine area (Bruwer & Johnson, 2010). Image is also the emotional and psychological meanings of the brand's attributes. (Corbu, 2009)

Brand recognition: “Extent to which a consumer can correctly identify a particular product or service just by viewing the product or service's logo, tag line, packaging or advertising campaign” (Rouse, 2013).

Social media: Media is medium that communicates an establishment's message to the desired audience; while being social means that an interaction has happened. Social media is a new form of interaction that is taking the world by storm, that allows brands to communicate through a two-way interaction via the internet with their consumers (Nations, 2016).

Consumer: “One that utilizes economic goods” (Merriam-Webster, 2015).

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 included the background of the problem, purpose of the study, and a definition of terms. Chapter 2 will identify the trends in the wine industry regarding social media and image management with comparisons to successful household name wineries by reviewing the current literature on the topic. Chapter 3 will present the methodology of the study. In Chapter 4, the findings will be presented and organized based on the original research questions. The data will then be analyzed compared to the current literature on the topic. Lastly, Chapter 5 will include a summary of the study and recommendations for marketing and public relations professionals in the wine industry to develop and manage a household name in the wine industry.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The review of literature focuses on the existing literature on branding in the wine industry including various trends, methods for assessment, and theoretical frameworks regarding brand development through social media utilization and image management.

Creating an Image in the Wine Industry

The wine business is an industry that is growing at 3.5 percent each year (Kaskie, 2012). In fact, the “wine industry and market have been changing at a pace that has left many wine firms disillusioned and unable to adapt to a constantly modified environment” (Vrontis, Thrassou & Rossi, 2011). A huge concern is in a fast-paced and quickly growing industry— how does a wine label make themselves stand out? By creating an image for the wine label, it can help the business succeed in an environment with so many competitors. To do so, the winery has to learn and understand the “consumers’ purchases and consumption behaviors in order to formulate superior wine marketing strategies and build strong brands” (Bianchi, Drennan & Proud, 2014). An image is a consistent portrayal of the brand to consumers that is created through a multitude of factors. To clarify the term “image,” is a held perception by consumers about a “bounded wine area space...the elements are ‘glued together’ by inter-related winescape elements and/or the people and natural and physical attractions within it” (Bruwer & Johnson, 2010). Furthermore, a brand image also includes an implicit meaning made up of “emotional and psychological meanings of brand attributes and other associations” (Corbu, 2009). An image helps the wine brand stand out; and to stand out, the brand has to stick to the image.

A strong image helps a brand stand out in the competition but also builds strong consumer satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction is extremely important because consumer who favor a label with “good brand image are more likely to develop strong feelings of love for the wine” (Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012). Promoting the brand’s image enough to create the consumer love for the brand is “a good predictor of recommendation and loyalty in the wine sector” (Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012).

A wine brand should have an image associated with their brand to be one of success, prominence and originality— to do so, a label must satisfy their audience, the consumer.

Why Brand is Essential to the Wine Industry

To create a brand is more than just the image that is associated with the wine label. While an image is how you want to be viewed by consumers, a brand is the “set of associations held by consumers” (Marsden, 2002). A brand is essential to the wine industry because labels who have a strong image, respectively have a strong brand. For example, take Justin Winery located on California’s Central Coast— the winery portrays an image of elegance and high-quality due to their award-winning wine, because of this image their brand is associated with five-star restaurants and cellars across the country. To consumers, Justin Winery is seen as having a distinct, prestigious brand than competitors, which helps the consumer remember the label. Brands are “bundles of meaning which become shorthand in our mind for a series of other things” (Fazekas, 2003).

A wine brand wants to be remembered by the consumer. And through image and brand, this is possible. Since “brand is the embodiment of what the organization stands for” (Fazekas,

2003), the brand should focus on the relationship between a brand and a consumer. A successful relationship is created through brand satisfaction and brand loyalty— which only comes after the consumer feels that value, trust and loyalty have been established (He, Li & Harris, 2012).

Value, trust and loyalty can be established after a consumer feels they are a part of something larger. A huge part of what makes a wine brand unique is the label's story, tradition and consumer's experience with the label. A consumer creates a relationship, consciously and subconsciously, and it is determined by the “product itself, the shopping experience, the service experience, and their consumption experience” that creates a significant consumer-brand relationship (Sinha & Thompson, 2008).

Brand recognition will happen after the brand is established through brand satisfaction and brand loyalty. Brand recognition is extremely important because as stated before, the wine industry is rapidly growing and it is necessary for wine labels to stand out among the competition. Brand “recognition is a strong determinant of choice” of a consumer choosing the desired wine label over the competition.

Good Practices of Social Media

In today's society, everyone, every company and everything has some form of social media. To help explain social media, it's easier to think of it in two separate parts (Nations, 2016). Media is medium that communicates an establishment's message to the desired audience; while being social means that an interaction has happened. Social media is a new form of interaction that is taking the world by storm, that allows brands to communicate through a two-way interaction via the internet with their consumers. There is so many opportunities to interact

with consumers, brands often have more than one social media account for different applications. Whether it be through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat or Periscope— every day there are billions of social media interactions happening between a brand and their consumers.

Social media interactions with the consumers should be done so in a way that engages the audience but also drives the goal of the brand recognition, loyalty and satisfaction. With the shift of former marketing strategies to the current era, the marketing communications' target area has evolved from the “consumer’s environment to the consumer’s mind; from the external to the internal; from the tangible to the intangible” (Vrontis, Thrassou & Rossi, 2011). The wine brand should be perceived to consumers as a friend on social media, someone the consumer can actively engage with and have a connection through. A wine brand should be perceived by the consumer as a caring, interactive and engaging brand. By managing the perception the consumer has of the brand through social media, it can help drive the brand. A primary marketing communication process is “perception management and branding is a ‘primary vehicle’” (Vrontis, Thrassou & Rossi, 2011).

Successful Wineries on Social Media

Across the world there are countless wineries who are seen as “successful,” but in California there are three large-production wineries that have strong branding and social media presence: Gallo Family Vineyards, Robert-Mondavi and Kendall Jackson.

The above three all have Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts and all of the accounts are certified by the social media company except for Robert-Mondavi’s Instagram.

Also, Gallo Family Vineyards does not have a YouTube account when the other two brands do have an active YouTube account.

Wineries have access to social media analytics through a website called VinTank.com that is a resource for wine brands to view data regarding social media presence. With large-production wineries such as Kendall Jackson, having the resources and personnel dedicated to the digital presence, it is easier to monitor the engagement rates, maintain their brand and communicate the brand's message. "If they see someone in Nashville, Tennessee or Andover, Massachusetts talking about they had a great bottle of Kendall Jackson whenever the night before or they're going to have this for a tailgate, they respond and they actually will click on there and acknowledge that. There's been a lot of stories where people will use social media monitoring platforms to monitor more sales" (Murphy-Rodrigues, 2016).

Why Social Media is Necessary in the Wine Industry

Social media is a necessity in the wine industry to help promote the wine label. The internet is this huge monster that can either help or hinder a brand with the push of a button. The internet provides the opportunity for "e-business a superset of e-commerce and e-commerce, a superset of internet commerce" (Turban et al. 2000 and Beynon-Davies et al. 2002). Social media is a form of interaction that helps promote the label's internet business through e-business and e-commerce. Since social media is actively communicating with the consumer the "interactivity and development of these relationships is one of the most critical factors of internet marketing to gain competitive advantage for small and medium enterprises" (Sparks and Thomas, 2001). The internet offers a "competitive advantage for wine labels through access to

the international market, entrance into new markets, business efficiency and lower costs in the exchange of information.” (Kleindl, 2000) Of course having “accessible access to different markets without the use of a middleman” is another strength that the internet provides. (Benjamin & Wigand, 1995).

The internet provides three levels of consumer impact: informational, transactional and relational (Ditto & Pille, 1998). With these three levels of impact, the internet is in fact an efficient medium of communication. Taking into account these three levels of impact that are necessary for internet presence, social media can utilize the levels in the wine brands’s social media presence. Wine brands’s social media accounts who target these three level of impact can create an inclusive experience for the consumer. A wine brands’s social media account that provides the consumer with an informational approach can help strengthen the label’s story and help educate the consumer about the brand. Social media already provides the transactional level that is necessary for consumer impact because it is a “mechanism that provides two-way communications with the consumer” (Ditto & Pille, 1998). A relational level of impact through social media is something that is easily accessible but usually executed in a poor fashion. A relational level of impact with consumers is one that an “organization offers meaningful, interactive services that create a relationship with the consumer” (Ditto & Pille, 1998). Way too often organizations forget to engage and interact with their consumers and spend the account’s focus on an informational approach or promotional. A successful social media account for a company does not forget that the consumer’s experience is important in order to build the brand. A meaningful experience for the consumer through the wine label’s social media accounts are the biggest priority in the quest for building a desired brand to be associated with a wine label.

Wineries Who Utilize Social Media Well

Strategy can not be determined as a singular universal, one-way, how-to, step-by-step guide. A social media strategy can only be determined after evaluating the brand's internet presence, current social media efforts and goals.

Wineries who are considered to have good social media are those wineries who accomplish strong brand visibility in an overall strategy. Reiterating that fact that brand visibility is extremely important in determining the success of a brand. Since the wine industry is so large, it is difficult to determine what an overall determination of what specific wineries who use social media well. But in a study of Italian wineries, it was found that most wineries who choose to use social media will utilize Facebook most often followed by YouTube sporadically and Flickr for photos (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014).

These Italian wineries were compared on their social media presence through brand visibility, word-of-mouth and free media presence based on their HowSocialable score (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014). HowSociable is a website that determines a brand's visibility through social media and then decides a score based on its magnitude. HowSocialable is convenient in determining wine brands who use social media well because the brands can help establish what the wine brand is doing correctly for their brand through internet presence and social media efforts.

The study found that wineries who were creative in their use of "communication, style and technology" received a higher brand visible score. Also the wine labels who actively engaged their customers were more competitive (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014). To

manage social media, the “value of social media as a brand management tool is increasing” (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014).

Good practices of social media are also found to focus on a few specific social media platforms and execute that presence well by “ensuring presence is meaningful and linked to its consumers’ engagement behavior” (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014). Also, there is no “perfect strategy.” (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014). A good strategy is one that provides a consistent bond between “corporate vision and the chosen digital marketing strategy” (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014). Next, a good practice of social media is language style. All too often, brands use a formal tone on their social media platforms and as a result it “creates a feeling of detachment among consumers and prevents the establishment of long-term relationships with stakeholders” (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014). By “personifying” their social media platforms, it helps build “consumer trust based on transparency in the office environment” (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014) which can be supported through the interactive and engaging nature of social media. Finally, a good social media presence is determined on the brand’s overall marketing strategy. An effective social media account “integrates appropriate web marketing actions and tactics” (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014).

A Successful Brand in the Wine Industry

One single wine label comes to mind when thinking of a “successful brand,” Gallo Family Vineyards.

Previously, E. & J. Gallo had multiple product lines that were considered “cheap”. The brand’s different labels consisted of screw-top and wine jugs “such as Gallo Hearty Burgundy and Carlo Rossi, and its skid-row wine, Thunderbird” (Stavro, 1999). But as time passed on, the brand had to stay competitive among other wine labels and decided to create a wine that was more upscale. Now the company has condensed the products it into one single, umbrella brand known as Gallo Family Vineyards (Stavro, 1999). During a study of 10,000 international wine and spirits brands conducted by Intangible Business they measured the brands based on four hard-measures and four soft-measures. The “hard measures were: share of market, projected growth based on trends, price positioning, and distribution. Soft measures were based on the opinions of the research panel: brand awareness, relevancy, heritage, and brand perception” (Jenkins, 2006). The brand offers “a range of products at attractive prices,” which helps the winery be accessible and relevant for all audiences (Jenkins, 2006).

The brand is also considered successful because of the large production quantity and huge sales the label brings. In 1998, “Gallo did \$1.3 billion in sales with net income of \$65 million pulling a 5% profit margin” (Stavro, 1999).

Why a Distinct Image is Important in the Wine Industry

A distinctive image is extremely important in the wine industry because it is how the brand is viewed by the consumer. Take Gallo Family Vineyards, the brand used to have a large product line that was seen as “cheap.” When the winery was compared with other large name labels that were on the same shelves in the store, such as Kendall-Jackson and Robert Mondavi, Gallo Family Vineyards realized they needed to stay up with the competition to stay alive. Since

Kendall-Jackson and Robert Mondavi produced higher-end varietals instead of the wine jugs Gallo was actually making, the company decided to change their image and create upscale, premium wine labels that could compete with the competition.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter presents the methods used to collect data for the study including the data sources, collection and presentation of the data, and delimitations.

Data Sources

For this study, three experts will be interviewed; one will be a marketing expert in San Luis Obispo County, one will be a professional who manages social media accounts for a winery, and the last will be a marketing coordinator for a Paso Robles winery who is considered a “household name.”

Participants

Stacie Jacob, current Solterra Stragies Founder and Chief Strategist for Solterra Strategies, a wine, food and tourism marketing agency in Paso Robles. Kim Murphy-Rodrigues, National Sales and Business Manager for Kita Wines, Rhone Ranger committee member, and former marketing director of several Central Coast wineries. Lauren Phelps, Marketing Coordinator of Tablas Creek Winery in Paso Robles.

Interview Design

The following questions and probes were asked each of the experts and served as data sources for the study:

1. In term of established wineries, those who are producing wine for sale that are not established wineries—how do they create an image?

2. How would you, as an expert in your field, describe branding a wine label as a way to increase public visibility? Please give an example of when the creation of a brand led to increased visibility
3. How are non-commercial winemakers impacted in terms of label recognition?
4. How does a small and large winemaker play on an equal playing field in order for brand?
 - a. When was a time you saw this happen?
5. What is the difference between a brand's identity and regional identity?
6. In means of social media and image, is there a way to differentiate a brand from another?
 - a. What is a successful wine label to you?
7. What are good practices of social media?
 - a. What are bad practices?
 - b. Is this different for wineries when compared to other brands?
 - c. What are some wineries who use social media well?
8. What drives consumers to making purchasing decisions?
 - a. How do you purchase wine?
9. What are big name wineries doing on social media that is considered "good"?
10. How can those involved in wine production (big or small) use labeling as a way to create something that is unique that consumers want to think about, that then we can use in the social media interface?
11. How do you convey a winery's message with social media to the desired public?
12. What are wineries doing right now that is successful on social media? Can you give me some examples of a recent social media campaign a winery has done?

13. How does a small guy have the chance?

a. How does the small guy establish the brand identity and connection to the consumer?
and use social media to do that?

Data Collection

The method of data collection for this study was three individual interviews with each expert. The interviews were conducted during March 2016 and lasted approximately 45 minutes each. During the interviews, experts were asked questions from a single questionnaire designed to provide answers to the original research questions while gaining insight into current branding through social media and image in the wine industry.

Data Presentation

The data collected during the each interview was documented through audio recordings using a digital voice recorder as well as written verbatim notes during and after the interviews to document any additional information that could potentially clarify the context of the responses. This method of data collection ensures that the data is presented in the most complete and objective way possible.

Delimitations

There are delimitations to this study based on the type of data collected and interview process. The three individuals were chosen because of the close proximity to San Luis Obispo and the current relationships with the interviewees and interviewer.

Limitations

One of the limitations to this study is that the interviews were conducted for a 10 week senior project class. Due to this, there was not an opportunity to spend more time to research and conduct the study than what the Cal Poly's 2016 Winter Quarter allowed.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

Chapter 4 will provide descriptions of the experts interviewed in the study and summarize the respondents' answers to the questionnaire. Since the data was collected through recorded interviews lasting approximately 30 minutes, it will be presented in the form of direct quotations or paraphrased responses. The answers will then be analyzed and compared to the original research questions and the existing literature on establishing a wine brand through social media and image as reviewed in Chapter 2.

Description of Participating Experts in Related Fields

San Luis Obispo County Wine and Tourism Marketing.

Stacie Jacob was the wine and tourism marketing expert for the study. Jacob is currently the founder and chief strategist of Solterra Strategies, a wine and tourism marketing firm located in Paso Robles with an emphasis on developing brand messaging. Jacob is an expert in wine marketing as she also began her career at a public relations firm before moving to Seattle, Washington to become the first-ever public relations director for the Washington Wine Commission. More recently, Jacob has made great strides in the local wine industry as having seven-year tenure as Executive Director of the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance and Chief Executive Officer of Visit San Luis Obispo County. She's received many accolades for her work including 2008 the San Luis Obispo Tribune Top 20 Under 40, 2011 SLO Wine Industry Person of the Year and 2013 Pacific Coast Business Times Top 40 under 40.

Social Media for Wineries.

The social media for wineries expert selected for the study was Kim Murphy-Rodrigues, current National Sales and Business Manager at Kita Wines. Murphy-Rodrigues has had several marketing director positions in the past 20 years throughout San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara County including positions at Robert Hall Winery, Conway Family Wines, SummerWood Winery & Inn and serving as a committee member and managing all social media and e-mail for the Paso Robles' branch of the Rhone Rangers.

Marketing Coordinator.

The marketing director for a household name winery is Lauren Phelps from Tablas Creek Winery. Phelps began her career in marketing as the Program Director and then Executive Director of the Paso Robles Boys & Girls Club where she was responsible for operations, fundraising, programs, administration tasks and marketing. She joined Tablas Creek in 2012 as Marketing Coordinator where she is able to use her skills in marketing to for the winery's dedication to quality, innovation and social and environmental responsibility.

Wine Branding Questionnaire

Each expert was asked to respond to the following questions and probes regarding brand establishment for a winery through social media and advertising:

1. In term of established wineries, those who are producing wine for sale that are not established wineries—how do they create an image?

Question #1 was asked to gain insight in ways professionals would create an image for a winery. The question was designed to clarify what an image means in regards to wineries to make the following questions more easily understood for both the experts and the reader.

- Kim Murphy-Rodrigues: “First look at what your mission statement is for your brand and determine what your goals are...focusing on what your tagline is” (Appendix A).
- Stacie Jacob: “Being very specific and having that distinct look and feel and understanding who your audience is and what is it that you want your brand to represent” (Appendix B).
- Lauren Phelps: “I think in terms of marketing it’s so important to have each individual brand do their own and have their own story and convey that story— for us it was educational... I think smaller labels have more flexibility wth that brand identity” (Appendix C).

2. How would you, as an expert in your field, describe branding a wine label as a way to increase public visibility? Please give an example of when the creation of a brand led to increased visibility.

Question #2 was asked to emphasize how to increase public visibility to to consumers.

The question was designed to gain insight on what each of the different experts believe to increase public visibility among the competition.

- Kim Murphy-Rodrigues: “Be consistent” (Appendix A).
- Stacie Jacob: “It goes back to the story” (Appendix B).

- Lauren Phelps: “Well it’s recognition. You want your consumer to recognize your brand based on either your logo or your label is just that, a visual representation of your brand” (Appendix C).

3. How are non-commercial winemakers impacted in terms of label recognition?

Question #3 was asked in order to determine how much label recognition matters to wineries, more specifically wineries who are not as well-known.

- Kim Murphy-Rodrigues: “...keeping that logo and the name out there so they can building on a following” (Appendix A)
- Stacie Jacob: “Critical to understanding and really dialing in who that customer is and making sure that that product and your marketing is meeting that particular customer” (Appendix B).
- Lauren Phelps: “...I think the opportunities are able to be a little edgier and be able to not feel like they need to please everyone and be able to please a specific demographic...The challenge for non-commercial is just less recognition” (Appendix C).

4. How does a small and large winemaker play on an equal playing field in order for brand? When was a time you saw this happen?

Question #4 was asked in curiosity if there has ever been an instance in which a small and large winery can be equal. Also this question was asked to determine what a small winery needs to do in order to compete with large wineries.

- Kim Murphy-Rodrigues: “..small and large wine producers alike that have the winemaker that is known for their craft and their speciality” (Appendix A).

- Stacie Jacob: "...if you can find that passion of your customer, and help create that be part of fulfilling that, you're going to have longevity in that customer experience" (Appendix B).
- Lauren Phelps: "...we're seeing a trend in the wine industry, and beer and distillery industry this kind of craft movement and moving to smaller production...it's interesting to see this broadening of the playing field for... less known winemakers who are making a path for themselves in this trend" (Appendix C).

5. What is the difference between a brand's identity and regional identity?

Question #5 was asked to gain insight of what these professionals consider that makes up both identities.

- Kim Murphy-Rodrigues: "A brand identity is something that is global..Regional is something that is more unique" (Appendix A).
- Stacie Jacob: "The two go hand in hand in my opinion. A brand typically chooses a region for a reason" (Appendix B).
- Lauren Phelps: "...we can't separate those two with our brand" (Appendix C).

6. In means of social media and image, is there a way to differentiate a brand from another? What is a successful wine label to you?

Question #6 was asked in order to determine what it takes to stand out among the competition. The ambiguous term "success" was used intentionally to gather particularly subjective responses of how one would assess brand achievement and what a successful wine brand is.

- Kim Murphy-Rodrigues: “Whether it be your social media voice, or it’s your branded materials, digital or print, you have to ensure that the consistency in your brand is there... [successful wine label has] recognition from not only critics and consumers but from your peers” (Appendix A).
- Stacie Jacob: “Obviously sales are very important...A successful wine label in my mind is one that is on vintage...it’s one that tells an awesome story, it’s one that has this idea that I’m exclusive and I want to be a part of it...And it’s one you can’t stop talking about” (Appendix B).
- Lauren Phelps: “Each brand excels in a different platform...Brands can convey their philosophy on social media and differentiate themselves really easily especially across the different platforms” (Appendix C).

7. What are good practices of social media? What are bad practices? Is this different for wineries when compared to other brands? What are some wineries who use social media well?

Question #7 was asked to provide insight on what the experts determine what the correct and incorrect practices of social media are in regards to the wine industry. An example was also asked for further research on what the experts consider to be specifically social media that was used well.

- Kim Murphy-Rodrigues: “[Good practice is] having a plan and being consistent again in making sure you upkeep your social media platform...[Bad practice is] if you’re not keeping up that” (Appendix A).

- Stacie Jacob: "...engage the audience, don't just sell to the audience... same basic principles of social media translate across the way." (Appendix B).
- Lauren Phelps: "Good practices are posting regularly, and interacting on a regular basis but not too much and understanding that balance...[Bad practices are] posting too much... Complaining" (Appendix C)

8. What drives consumers to making purchasing decisions? How do you purchase wine?

Question #8 was asked in order to determine what helps sell a wine brand. If a wine isn't selling then the brand will not be seen as successful.

- Kim Murphy-Rodrigues: "Emotional connections. There has to be an authentic message to your brand and a connection...[A] consistent, quality product that will inspire me to purchase it" (Appendix A).
- Stacie Jacob: "...at the end of the day I'll keep coming back to experiences" (Appendix B).
- Lauren Phelps: "Recommendations from their friends is the number one thing that drives sales and then second, is an educated shop owner, or sommelier or tasting room attendant" (Appendix C).

9. What are big name wineries doing on social media that is considered "good"?

Question #9 was asked for specific examples of wineries who are already known as a household name do on social media that the experts consider to be a good practice.

- Kim Murphy-Rodrigues: "Consistently engage their consumers on what their brand is. Educate them as well" (Appendix A).
- Stacie Jacob: "Edna Valley has done a lot of great social media" (Appendix B).

- Lauren Phelps: "... it's all relative to their follower size, at the end of the day it's all about engagement rate" (Appendix C).

10. How can those involved in wine production (big or small) use labeling as a way to create something that is unique that consumers want to think about, that then we can use in the social media interface?

Question #10 was asked so it can be determined what the physical label can do to stand out when next to other labels, and then how and if we can use that originality throughout the brand's social media presence.

- Kim Murphy-Rodrigues: "Don't get too creative in trying to have a unique name for your brand out there" (Appendix A).
- Stacie Jacob: "Label has to go back and be the trigger that makes you want to learn more about the story" (Appendix B).
- Lauren Phelps: "'Bottle shots are huge. People love bottle shots. Labeling is a part of that as brand recognition and story" (Appendix C).

11. How do you convey a winery's message with social media to the desired public?

Question #11 was designed in order to determine how to have a digital presence like social media help tell and sell the wine brand to the social media forum's audience.

- Kim Murphy-Rodrigues: "Making sure your branding is intact whether that be your pages on your social media" (Appendix A).
- Stacie Jacob: "...continuing to understand what your core message is and having a strategy of how you're going to do that" (Appendix B).

- Lauren Phelps: “Facebook you basically have to pay for it if you want to reach all your followers...” (Appendix C).

12. What are wineries doing right now that is successful on social media? Can you give me some examples of a recent social media campaign a winery has done?

Question #12 was designed so a wine brand’s social media presence can be deemed as successful or unsuccessful. If the wine brand’s social media presence isn’t successful, then what is a specific concrete example of what a good, well-known social media presence should be modeled after.

- Kim Murphy-Rodrigues: “Iron Horse and Kendall Jackson. They just have a lot of fun information as well as engaging content whether it be about their wines, vineyards, ideas for Super Bowl parties or hashtag Wine Wednesday, they just do a lot of consumer engagement that puts them ahead” (Appendix A).
- Stacie Jacob: “...successful is any time they’re creating engagement” (Appendix B).
- Lauren Phelps: “Just having engage-able content, interacting with customers, interacting with social media customers, being consistent...” (Appendix C).

13. How does a small guy have the chance? How does the small guy establish the brand identity and connection to the consumer and use social media to do that?

Question #13 was created in order to determine if it is even possible to create a household name for a small wine brand that is just starting how. Not only this, but how is it possible for new wineries create this identity and connection to the consumer through social media that so many well-known, household known wine brands already have established through years of marketing.

- Kim Murphy-Rodrigues: “Social media is an equal opportunity platform... you just have to have the right person there that is writing, compelling, engaging content on the brand and keeping the consistent message on what the branding is and consistency in regular posts” (Appendix A).
- Stacie Jacob: “Small wineries can be super, super successful. It’s finding that niche, what is it they’re going to do well, figuring out that audience” (Appendix B).
- Lauren Phelps: “Be out there, be consistent, slowly grow your followers. And then once you get recognition then it exponentially grows your customer base. But it’s just about don’t give up. It’s just not overnight” (Appendix C).

Wine Brand Establishment Through Social Media and Image Research Questions

For this project, the following six research questions were created for the study to determine what current practices and strategies are being used among marketing, public relations, and wine industry professionals and collect expert opinions on wine branding through social media and image.

Research question 1: In term of established wineries, those who are producing wine for sale that are not established wineries—how do they create an image?

- “The winery has to learn and understand the ‘consumers’ purchases and consumption behaviors in order to formulate superior wine marketing strategies and build strong brands” (Bianchi, Drennan & Proud, 2014).

Research question 2: How would you, as an expert in your field, describe branding a wine label as a way to increase public visibility? Please give an example of when the creation of a brand led to increased visibility.

- “Brand is the embodiment of what the organization stands for” (Fazekas, 2003).
- “Product itself, the shopping experience, the service experience, and their consumption experience” that creates a significant consumer-brand relationship (Sinha & Thompson, 2008).

Research question 3: How are non-commercial winemakers impacted in terms of label recognition?

- Consumer satisfaction is extremely important because consumer who favor a label with “good brand image are more likely to develop strong feelings of love for the wine” (Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012).

Research question 4: How does a small and large winemaker play on an equal playing field in order for brand? When was a time you saw this happen?

- Consumer satisfaction is extremely important because consumer who favor a label with “good brand image are more likely to develop strong feelings of love for the wine” (Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012).

Research question 5: What is the difference between a brand’s identity and regional identity?

- Brands are “bundles of meaning which become shorthand in our mind for a series of other things” (Fazekas, 2003).
- A brand is the “set of associations held by consumers” (Marsden, 2002).

Research question 6: In means of social media and image, is there a way to differentiate a brand from another? What is a successful wine label to you?

- An effective social media account “integrates appropriate web marketing actions and tactics” (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014).

Research question 7: What are good practices of social media? What are bad practices? Is this different for wineries when compared to other brands? What are some wineries who use social media well?

- Wineries who were creative in their use of “communication, style and technology” received a higher brand visible score (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014).
- Also the wine labels who actively engaged their customers were more competitive (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014).

Research question 8: What drives consumers to making purchasing decisions? How do you purchase wine?

- Brand offers “a range of products at attractive prices,” which helps the winery be accessible and relevant for all audiences. (Jenkins, 2006)

Research question 9: What are big name wineries doing on social media that is considered “good”?

- Provides a consistent bond between “corporate vision and the chosen digital marketing strategy” (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014).

Research question 10: How can those involved in wine production (big or small) use labeling as a way to create something that is unique that consumers want to think about, that then we can use in the social media interface?

- Since “brand is the embodiment of what the organization stands for” (Fazekas, 2003), the label should focus on the relationship between a brand and a consumer

Research question 11: How do you convey a winery’s message with social media to the desired public?

- Provides a consistent bond between “corporate vision and the chosen digital marketing strategy” (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014).

Research question 12: What are wineries doing right now that is successful on social media? Can you give me some examples of a recent social media campaign a winery has done?

- Provides a consistent bond between “corporate vision and the chosen digital marketing strategy” (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014).
- Discouraging a formal tone on their social media platforms and as a result it “creates a feeling of detachment among consumers and prevents the establishment of long-term relationships with stakeholders” (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014).

Research question 13: How does a small guy have the chance? How does the small guy establish the brand identity and connection to the consumer and use social media to do that?

- A relational level of impact with consumers is one that an “organization offers meaningful, interactive services that create a relationship with the consumer” (Ditto & Pille, 1998).

Wine Branding Through Social Media and Image Data

For this study, it was important to see what other experts said due to the relatively small amount of related information that currently exists on the topic of establishing a wine brand through social media and image. In order to acquire this data Stacie Jacob, a wine marketing expert, Kim Murphy-Rodrigues, a social media for wineries expert, and Lauren Phelps, the marketing coordinator for an established winery in Paso Robles, California were interviewed for the study. They were each asked identical questions specifically designed to answer the original research questions in an individual interview setting. The following tables present the respondents’ answers in the form of their individual perspectives on the original research questions.

Research question 1: In term of established wineries, those who are producing wine for sale that are not established wineries—how do they create an image?

This research question was studied in response to the current literature that exists on the topic of the creation of an image. Image is a held perception by consumers about a “bounded wine area space...the elements are ‘glued together’ by inter-related winescape elements and/or the people and natural and physical attractions within it” (Bruwer & Johnson, 2010). A substantial amount of research discusses image being of utmost important. In fact to create an image, the winery has to learn and understand the “consumers’ purchases and consumption behaviors in order to formulate superior wine marketing strategies and build strong brands” (Bianchi, Drennan & Proud, 2014). Further more, a brand image also includes an implicit meaning made up of “emotional and psychological meanings of brand attributes and other associations” (Corbu, 2009).

This question was studied in to gain insight in the way professionals would create an image for a wine brand. This question was asked to gain insight in ways professionals would create an image for a winery. The question was designed to clarify what an image means in regards to wineries to make the following questions more easily understood for both the experts and the reader.

Table 1 summarizes the answers to this question elicited quite different responses. Although all the responses recognize the importance of looking at the brand, Murphy-Rodrigues, Jacob and Phelps discussed different aspects of the brand that are critical in creating an image.

Table 1

Creating an image

Respondent	How to create an image
Kim Murphy-Rodrigues	Look at mission statement and brand goal
Stacie Jacob	Look at audience and desired brand representation
Lauren Phelps	Look at the brand's story

Research question 2: How would you, as an expert in your field, describe branding a wine label as a way to increase public visibility? Please give an example of when the creation of a brand led to increased visibility.

This research question was studied in response to the current literature that exists on the topic of branding a wine label in an effort to increase visibility to the public. The literature went in depth about the definition of branding and how important the creation of a brand is. Since “brand is the embodiment of what the organization stands for” (Fazekas, 2003), the increased visibility created by the “product itself, the shopping experience, the service experience, and their consumption experience” that creates a significant consumer-brand relationship (Sinha & Thompson, 2008) that is sought after for the establishment of wine brands.

This specific was asked to the experts in order to determine how to increase public visibility to consumers. The question was designed to gain insight on what each of the different experts believe to increase public visibility among the competition.

Table 2 shows the experts opinions on branding with a wine label. All three experts agree that a label is a huge part in branding for a wine brand and they focused on different aspects. However, even though they claimed different aspects of more importance, all of the responses touched on every other expert's opinion.

Table 2

Branding a wine label for increased visibility

Respondent	How to create a label for increased visibility	Example of a brand that had increased visibility
Kim Murphy-Rodrigues	Consistency in branded materials with font, color palette and logo	Wild Horse Winery
Stacie Jacob	Representing story on label	Wine clubs
Lauren Phelps	Recognition	Tablas Creek Winery

Research question 3: How are non-commercial winemakers impacted in terms of label recognition?

This research question was created after searching the literature for data on non-commercial winemakers, better known as artisan winemakers (people who make wine on a smaller production scale) being impacted when next to more well-known labels. The literature associated with this research question only described how dire it is for the brand to appeal to the customers via consumer satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction is important to a wine brand because the customer who favors a label with “good brand image are more likely to develop strong feelings of love for the wine” (Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012) if the brand has a good image when compared to other wine labels then the customer will opt for the non-commercial brand.

This question was asked was asked in order to determine how much label recognition matters to wineries, more specifically wineries who are not as well-known.

Table 3 shows the experts’ opinions in regards to this question. Jacob and Phelps agrees that it’s understanding the specific person that is buying your brand, while Murphy-Rodrigues reiterates that it’s the brand consistency that will lead to continued label recognition.

Table 3

Non-commercial winemakers impacted due to label recognition

Respondent	How to have label recognition
Kim Murphy-Rodrigues	Consistency in label with color palette, font and logo
Stacie Jacob	Understanding and targeting the brand's customer
Lauren Phelps	Understanding demographic

Research question 4: How does a small and large winemaker play on an equal playing field in order for brand? When was a time you saw this happen?

This research question was created to determine what needs to happen for a small wine brand on the way to establishing household name and brand through social media and image when compared to a larger wine brand, and if this is even possible. The literature found didn't blatantly describe this scenario in a how-to but went on to discuss the importance of consumer satisfaction. By having the satisfaction from the consumer's, they will favor a label with "good brand image are more likely to develop strong feelings of love for the wine" (Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012). From previous questions answered by the experts' opinions and literature, it is deducted that strong feelings such as love can help a small wine brand gain the necessary recognition in order to rise to the same playing field as a larger winemaker.

This question was asked to the three experts in curiosity if there has ever been an instance in which a small and large winery can be equal. Also this question was asked to determine what a small winery needs to do in order to compete with large wineries.

Table 4 shows the responses of the experts. Murphy-Rodrigues and Phelps both agree that small and large production wineries have an equal playing field because of the craft or artisan

quality that is appealing to customers. Jacob thinks the opposite, and advocates that to equal the playing field the brand needs to understand the customer.

Table 4

How to have an equal playing field among small and large winemakers

Respondent	Equal playing field?	How to equal the playing field	Example
Kim Murphy-Rodrigues	Yes	Both are playing on an equal field because they're both producing artisanal wines	Halter Ranch and Robert Hall Winery
Stacie Jacob	No	Understanding and targeting the brand's customer's passion points	J. Lohr and Cucola
Lauren Phelps	Yes	New trend of customers falling for craft drinks	Helcyon

Research question 5: What is the difference between a brand's identity and regional identity?

This question was created due to identity being a huge factor in determining the success of a brand. The literature did not provide a definition of either brand identity or regional identity but defined brand as “bundles of meaning which become shorthand in our mind for a series of other things” (Fazekas, 2003) and a “set of associations held by consumers” (Marsden, 2002).

The experts as asked to gain insight of what these professionals consider that makes up both identities that would combine in an effort to create a household name.

Table 5 shows the responses of this specific question. Jacob and Phelps agree that both brand identity and regional identity are related to each other and it isn't possible for one brand to succeed with out the benefit of both regional and brand identity. Murphy-Rodrigues believes that regional and brand identity are separate and a brand can play up either for success.

Table 5

What is the difference between brand identity and regional identity

Respondent	Brand identity	Regional identity
Kim Murphy-Rodrigues	Global	Unique that a small winery can target to desired audience
Stacie Jacob	Goes hand-in-hand with regional identity. A brand's location is chosen due to the brand's identity	Goes hand-in-hand with brand identity. A brand's location is chosen due to the brand's identity.
Lauren Phelps	Mutual with regional identity	Mutual with brand identity

Research question 6: In means of social media and image, is there a way to differentiate a brand from another? What is a successful wine label to you?

This question was created to determine how social media and image can lead to strong brand identification. Also with the example of a successful wine label, it would be easy to determine what is considered a wine label who has the knowledge and expertise of how to use their brand correctly in a competitive environment, such as the wine industry.

The experts were asked this question in order to determine what it takes to stand out among the competition. The ambiguous term "success" was used intentionally to gather particularly subjective responses of how one would assess brand achievement and what a successful wine brand is.

Table 6 shows the experts' responses which depicts that there definitely is possibility to have differentiation between wine brands through social media and image. However this depends on two things: consistency and conveying the brand's philosophy. Murphy-Rodrigues believes it's having consistency from year to year with the wine, while Jacob confirms that and having a consistent story. For Phelps, it's one of two things: having the brand's being associated with good quality or having an interesting, artistic label.

Table 6

Is there a way to have differentiation between wine brands?

Respondent	Possibility of differentiation?	Attributes of a successful wine label
Kim Murphy-Rodrigues	Yes	Consistency from vintage to vintage
Stacie Jacob	Yes	Consistency in telling the story and wine
Lauren Phelps	Yes	Brand recognition and interesting

Research question 7: What are good practices of social media? What are bad practices? Is this different for wineries when compared to other brands? What are some wineries who use social media well?

This question focuses on social media and how a winery can use social media to their advantage in order to establish a successful wine brand and become a household name. Social media is seen as very important for brands to establish themselves. The literature showed that wineries who were creative in their use of “communication, style and technology” received a higher brand visible score (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014) among their consumers. It was also found that the wine labels who actively engaged their customers were more

competitive (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014). A way to actively engage customers is through social media.

This was asked to provide insight on what the experts determine what the correct and incorrect practices of social media are in regards to the wine industry. An example was also asked for further research on what the experts consider to be specifically social media that was used well.

Table 7 below shows the experts advice regarding good and bad practices of social media. All three experts agreed having a plan, consistent posting, consistent voice and engaging with the audience is a good practice. While bad practices can range from inconsistency with posts and voice, complaining, selling to the audience. Phelps is the only expert who says that social media is different for wine brands due to regulations called “Tied House Laws.”

Table 7

Social media practices

Respondent	Good practices	Bad practices	Different for other enterprises?	Examples
Kim Murphy-Rodrigues	Having a plan and consistent voice	Inconsistency in message and voice	No	Kendall Jackson
Stacie Jacob	Engaging audience	Selling to audience	No	Halter Ranch and Jordan Winery
Lauren Phelps	Engaging the audience and posting regularly	Not posting regularly and complaining	Yes, due to Tied House Laws	Red Bull

Research question 8: What drives consumers to making purchasing decisions? How do you purchase wine?

This question is straightly focused on purchasing decisions because this is a key factor of establishing a brand. Purchasing decisions correlate to sales and if sales increase, that leads to a higher likelihood of the wine brand being established to more consumers. The literature focuses on the “range of products at attractive prices,” which helps the winery brand be accessible and relevant for all audiences (Jenkins, 2006).

The experts say the following in Table 8. All three experts say believe it’s a connection to the brand that decides purchasing decisions. Murphy-Rodrigues says it is an emotional connection while Jacob and Phelps say it’s recommendations from trusted individuals such as friends or a trusted sommelier.

Table 8

Purchasing decisions

Respondent	Purchasing decision factors	Personal buying habits
Kim Murphy-Rodrigues	Emotional connections	Varietal of wine or winery with connection
Stacie Jacob	Price, emotional connection, personal connection and word-of-mouth	Winery with connection
Lauren Phelps	Recommendations from friends	Recommendations from friends

Research question 9: What are big name wineries doing on social media that is considered “good”?

This research question was asked for specific examples of wineries who are already known as a household name do on social media that the experts consider to be a good practice. The literature states that consistent bond between “corporate vision and the chosen digital

marketing strategy” (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014) is a good practice that wine brands can utilize.

Experts state engaging customers is a good practice of a large production winery, as seen in Table 9.

Table 9

Good practice of large production winery

Respondent	Good practice
Kim Murphy-Rodrigues	Engaging customers
Stacie Jacob	Engaging customers
Lauren Phelps	Engaging customers

Research question 10: How can those involved in wine production (big or small) use labeling as a way to create something that is unique that consumers want to think about, that then we can use in the social media interface?

This question focuses on what the physical label can do to stand out when next to other labels, and then how and if we can use that originality throughout the brand’s social media presence. In order for a wine label to appeal to customers as something unique, that we can then take that unique quality and utilize in social media “brand is the embodiment of what the organization stands for” (Fazekas, 2003), the label should focus on the relationship between a brand and a consumer. The brand should specifically focus on the relationship between a brand and a consumer.

Table 10 shows the experts’ differing opinions on this topic. Murphy-Rodrigues believes simplicity in labeling and name will lead to great brand recognition, while Jacob reiterates the need to tell the brand’s story through labeling. Phelps goes a completely different route that is more into visually showing the social media audience through bottle shots.

Table 10

How to create unique wine label usage

Respondent	Good practice
Kim Murphy-Rodrigues	Simplicity
Stacie Jacob	Trigger the story
Lauren Phelps	Bottleshots

Research question 11: How do you convey a winery’s message with social media to the desired public?

This question was designed in order to determine how to have a digital presence like social media help tell and sell the wine brand to the social media forum’s audience. The literature states that a social forum must provide a consistent bond between “corporate vision and the chosen digital marketing strategy” (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014).

Table 11 shows the different responses from the three experts. Murphy-Rodrigues and Jacob both reiterated previous responses that sticking to the brand through message and consistency is excellent for the broad audience of the brand’s social media. While Phelps discussed paying for Facebook posts to target the audience.

Table 11

Convey a message via social media

Respondent	Practice
Kim Murphy-Rodrigues	Brand consistency
Stacie Jacob	Understanding brand’s core message
Lauren Phelps	Paying for posts on social media

Research question 12: What are wineries doing right now that is successful on social media? Can you give me some examples of a recent social media campaign a winery has done?

This question was designed so a wine brand’s social media presence can be deemed as successful or unsuccessful. If the wine brand’s social media presence isn’t successful, then what is a specific concrete example of what a good, well-known social media presence should be modeled after. The literature states that a good social media pages is one that provides a consistent bond between “corporate vision and the chosen digital marketing strategy” (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014). Not only this but also takes it a step further and discourages using a formal tone through the posts on their social media platforms. This then “creates a feeling of detachment among consumers and prevents the establishment of long-term relationships with stakeholders” (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014).

Table 12 shows the results after asking the experts. All three experts agreed that engagement with the audience is what makes a winery successful on social media. Engagement can be either creating content that allows the audience to respond, responding to questions or comments or having promotional opportunities as a post— anything that allows the audience to interact with the brand.

Table 12

Successful social media

Respondent	Successful practice	Example
Kim Murphy-Rodrigues	Engagement	Kendall Jackson and Iron Horse
Stacie Jacob	Engagement	Edna Valley Vineyards
Lauren Phelps	Engagement	Bonny Doon

Research question 13: How does a small guy have the chance? How does the small guy establish the brand identity and connection to the consumer and use social media to do that?

This question was created in order to determine if it is even possible to create a household name for a small wine brand that is in the beginning stages. Not only this, but how is it possible for new wineries create this ideal identity and connection to the consumer through social media that so many well-known, household known wine brands already have established through years of marketing. The literature study discusses a relational level of impact with consumers is one that an “organization offers meaningful, interactive services that create a relationship with the consumer” (Ditto & Pille, 1998). If a company is able to create meaningful relationships then it can strengthen the brand.

All three experts agreed that the smaller production winery can have a chance— but in three different ways. Murphy-Rodrigues and Phelps believes a strong social media presence is necessary, while Jacob agrees that social media is necessary but telling the story and utilizing a strong public relations and marketing team.

Table 13

Small production winery

Respondent	Small production have a chance?	How?
Kim Murphy-Rodrigues	Yes	Social media presence
Stacie Jacob	Yes	Tell the story
Lauren Phelps	Yes	Social media presence

Chapter 5

Discussion and Recommendations

Summary

This study was performed in response to recent boom with the wine industry, or the development and management of a wine brand through a variety of available mediums, such as social media and image. In the wine industry among such competition, it's dire to find the quality and aspects that lead a consumer to learn about the wine label in order for the label to become so established that it becomes a household name. With the majority of case studies involving the wine industry, it was essential to collect data from experts in the wine industry regarding their opinions on successful wine branding.

To find more information on current strategies being used by professionals in this field, the experts were interviewed based on a single questionnaire designed to answer the following research questions for the study:

1. In term of established wineries, those who are producing wine for sale that are not established wineries—how do they create an image?
2. How would you, as an expert in your field, describe branding a wine label as a way to increase public visibility? Please give an example of when the creation of a brand led to increased visibility
3. How are non-commercial winemakers impacted in terms of label recognition?
4. How does a small and large winemaker play on an equal playing field in order for brand?
 - a. When was a time you saw this happen?
5. What is the difference between a brand's identity and regional identity?

6. In means of social media and image, is there a way to differentiate a brand from another?
 - a. What is a successful wine label to you?
7. What are good practices of social media?
 - a. What are bad practices?
 - b. Is this different for wineries when compared to other brands?
 - c. What are some wineries who use social media well?
8. What drives consumers to making purchasing decisions?
 - a. How do you purchase wine?
9. What are big name wineries doing on social media that is considered “good”?
10. How can those involved in wine production (big or small) use labeling as a way to create something that is unique that consumers want to think about, that then we can use in the social media interface?
11. How do you convey a winery’s message with social media to the desired public?
12. What are wineries doing right now that is successful on social media? Can you give me some examples of a recent social media campaign a winery has done?
13. How does a small guy have the chance?
 - a. How does the small guy establish the brand identity and connection to the consumer? and use social media to do that?

Each research question was created in order to learn more about social media and image management and creativity in the wine industry for interviews with each respondent. The

questionnaire led to a variety of responses, sometimes conflicting and sometimes in agreement that were tied to the literature on wine branding through social media and image.

Discussion

By analyzing the data collected from Chapter 4, connections made between experts' responses provided during the interview process, and the existing literature found in Chapter 2, it is possible to make conclusions regarding the following original research questions.

Research question #1: In term of established wineries, those who are producing wine for sale that are not established wineries—how do they create an image?

All three experts began their responses by discussing the importance of learning the wine's brand. Through the tagline, message the brand wants to spread, the brand's audience, the story of the winery's creation and who the brand represents would be utilized in creating an image.

The literature defined the word image as a held perception by consumers about a “bounded wine area space...the elements are ‘glued together’ by inter-related winescape elements and/or the people and natural and physical attractions within it” (Bruwer & Johnson, 2010). In an area such as Paso Robles, where new wine brands are being introduced every day there is plenty of competition for wine brands who are just starting out to fly under the radar. Jacob recommends that since it is a crowded marketplace, being specific, having a distinct look and feel, and understanding who the brand's audience is will help the brand stand out. She suggests finding the meaning of the label will lead to emulate the look. “It's a lot of soul searching at the end of the day. So you have to get beneath the skin, if you will, so it's really

understanding why did you get into this business, what is your goal in terms of making that premium product and who is your audience, what's going to resonate with your audience.”

There were different opinions with the experts and literature about how to create an image, but all three experts and literature agree on one common fact: understanding the brand is necessary to create an image.

Research question #2: How would you, as an expert in your field, describe branding a wine label as a way to increase public visibility? Please give an example of when the creation of a brand led to increased visibility.

The three experts had different opinions on this topic of branding a wine to increase public visibility, although all three of the opinions play a part in each response. Murphy-Rodrigues discussed consistency being of utmost importance to increase presence, while Jacob suggested making the consumer feel they are buying into the brand when they purchase a bottle of wine. Phelps put those two differing opinions together and said that to increase presence you need to be consistent with your brand—the brand can't change. “However you want to do that needs to convey a story and how you're presenting yourself as a brand and being consistent with that is really important. It goes back to what is your identity and how is your brand, what story does your brand tell.”

The literature reiterated the three experts' opinions. Since “brand is the embodiment of what the organization stands for” (Fazekas, 2003), the increased visibility created by the “product itself, the shopping experience, the service experience, and their consumption experience” that creates a significant consumer-brand relationship (Sinha & Thompson, 2008) that is sought after for the establishment of wine brands.

Research question #3: How are non-commercial winemakers impacted in terms of label recognition?

The experts had different opinions on how small-production, craft, artisan winemakers can make an impact in regards to label recognition. Murphy-Rodrigues suggested focusing on the brand and keeping consistent to the brand through labeling and the winemaking style. Jacob suggested focusing on the audience of the brand for label recognition. Phelps summarized both Jacob's and Murphy-Rodrigues' suggestions by explaining the opportunities and challenges associated with label recognition for smaller production facilities. "Again I think the opportunities are able to be a little edgier and be able to not feel like they need to please everyone and be able to please a specific demographic, say the millennials. So you can have more of a graphic image as your label...so if you wanted a global or national recognition you would need to have it be more appealing and again consistent..." Phelps did acknowledge that the unknown quality and less recognition associated with small-production wine brands could appeal to a specific demographic, but it would have to depend on the specific demographic the brand is catering to.

The literature didn't discuss label recognition as much as it emphasized consumer satisfaction being important for a brand. Consumer satisfaction is important to a wine brand because the customer who favors a label with "good brand image are more likely to develop strong feelings of love for the wine" (Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012) if the brand has a good image when compared to other wine labels then the customer will opt for the non-commercial brand.

Research question #4: How does a small and large winemaker play on an equal playing field in order for brand? When was a time you saw this happen?

All three experts have completely different responses for this research question. Murphy-Rodrigues discussed how the winemaker of both a small-production and large-production winery would still have the dedication to the craft as the other, so in the end the only difference it would just be the number of cases being produced “I think that there’s small and large wine producers alike that have the winemaker that is known for their craft and their speciality. Whether that be in blended wines, for a hundred thousand case production winery or for an artisan craftsman..they can have the same quality that their known for as well as have the unique of their craftsmanship.”

Jacob brought up the limited staffing that would be with a smaller production brand. With a small winery that is starting out, the winery doesn’t have a sales team. To equal the playing field the brand would have to focus on the audience’s “passion points” to succeed in brand recognition.

Phelps discussed the moving trend of the craft movement gaining recognition and how the smaller-production brands do just as well as the large-production brands because of the appealing nature of the small, craft, artisan production.

The literature found didn’t blatantly describe this scenario in a how-to format but discussed the importance of consumer satisfaction. By having the satisfaction from the consumer’s, they will favor a label with “good brand image are more likely to develop strong feelings of love for the wine” (Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012).

Research question #5: What is the difference between a brand’s identity and regional identity?

Two of the experts had a similar response when the other had an opposite response. Jacob and Phelps agreed that a brand's identity and regional identity go hand-in-hand and are definitely associated with the other. Jacob brought up the image of a melting pot when discussing identity. "A brand typically chooses a region for a reason...the two go hand in hand because you make wine from a sense of place. Wine's about place. Wine should taste different from Paso Robles than it does from Edna Valley and than it does from Napa Valley. And so I think that identity of the region is critical and if the two are working hand in hand, the region is identifying itself...but I think those two kinda go hand in hand, and it's kind of this melting pot where everybody kind of comes together and formulates what that regional and cultural identity really is." Rodrigues brought up the point that identity is also key in the recognition in each different area. For Rodrigues, a brand's identity can be known worldwide as one brand, but in a specific region then the identity can change.

This question was asked in order to gain a clear understanding of identity since the literature did not provide a definition of either brand identity or regional identity but defined brand as "bundles of meaning which become shorthand in our mind for a series of other things" (Fazekas, 2003) and a "set of associations held by consumers" (Marsden, 2002).

This question shows the ambiguity associated with the concept of where an identity can be represented. Since brand identity and regional identity can mean such different things, it shows that the whole concept of identity is infinite and a brand can, and will, be recognized in different forms from person to person.

Research question #6: In means of social media and image, is there a way to differentiate a brand from another? What is a successful wine label to you?

All three experts agreed that it is possible to differentiate a brand from another with social media and image. With social media, it's easy to create a brand and establish that to your audience. Murphy-Rodrigues had the example of using social media to promote events in different ways to differentiate themselves from other wine brands. "There's some wineries that known for being more serious wine brands, and so therefore they might be focused more on an educational aspect in their social media that is as far as what they're communicating and painting out there. Versus a brand that is more light hearted and they would be doing more of their fun topics. Instead of a wine and food pairing it'd be pizza night with whatever wine."

The literature agreed with what the experts said and stated that an effective social media account "integrates appropriate web marketing actions and tactics" (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014).

Reiterating what the experts say, social media definitely helps a brand differentiate itself from another.

Research question #7: What are good practices of social media? What are bad practices? Is this different for wineries when compared to other brands? What are some wineries who use social media well?

Since social media is so expansive, it's necessary to establish what practices of social media are necessary. All three experts agree that good practices are posting daily, engaging with the audience through posts and comments, updating audience through pictures, and replying to questions. They also agreed that bad practices would be not posting often, not being consistent in voice and becoming too focused on selling the product through social media. However with the selling of alcoholic products, Phelps brought Tied House Laws and the regulations that imposes

on social media posts for wineries. But even with the Tied House Laws, Jacob states that at the end of the day, the goal is still the same. “Of course, wineries, breweries and distilleries are alcoholic products so here’s certain rules essentially but I think at the end of the day social media is about engagement and about people who are interested in that particular topic.”

The literature found a study that stated that wineries who were creative in their use of “communication, style and technology” received a higher brand visible score (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014). The same study also found that the wine labels who actively engaged their customers were more competitive (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014).

For wine brands to become recognized on the way to becoming a household name in the evolving and competitive wine industry, the brands need to stay active on social media and stay true to the original brand goal, message, voice and image. The audience of the social media should feel as if they are a part of the brand and see daily images of the winery, wine, vineyard and tasting room. By showing the audience a daily presence through engaging content, and not just trying to sell a product helps the brand stand out.

Research question #8: What drives consumers to making purchasing decisions? How do you purchase wine?

All three experts agree that it is the consumers’ experience with the brand that will lead to purchase, brand recognition and brand loyalty. Phelps discusses the number one reason why customers purchase wine is because of recommendations from a trusted source. “That’s where social media is so important, it really comes down to what your friends and family recommends. We want our customers to be ambassadors of our brand, and that’s the goal at the end of the day.”

The literature states that price is what determines consumer's purchasing decisions. According to a study it was found that brands that offers "a range of products at attractive prices," can help a winery be accessible and relevant for all audiences. (Jenkins, 2006)

Overall, it is an experience that will determine whether or not a consumer will buy into the brand. But even with an experience, correct pricing and recommendations from trusted sources will help guide the consumer into becoming a brand ambassador.

Research question #9: What are big name wineries doing on social media that is considered "good"?

The three experts agreed that engagement with consumers through social media is good. Engagement with consumers through social media means replying to comments and questions, but also creating posts that could lead to further engagement with the audience should be kept in mind. Murphy-Rodrigues suggest that wine brands post food pairings as an engagement opportunity. "I think the ones that are doing it good are engaging their consumers whether it be through lifestyle presentations like the food and wine concept or artisan cheese and wine pairings, BBQ ideas etc..as well as other ideas where they can consistently engage their consumers on what their brand is. Educate them as well."

The literature recommends that the brand's whose social media that provides a consistent bond between "corporate vision and the chosen digital marketing strategy" (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014).

Keeping consistency with the brand is definitely one way to maintain brand recognition which would lead to becoming a household name, but engagement is the number one way to utilize social media. Without engagement the consumer will not keep returning to the social

media page, and eventually the brand because the consumer will not feel as if they are a part of the brand.

Research question #10: How can those involved in wine production (big or small) use labeling as a way to create something that is unique that consumers want to think about, that then we can use in the social media interface?

The experts had differing opinions on how to use labeling through social media. Jacob discussed using the label as another medium to translate the brand's story, and then using that same story through the social media forum. Murphy-Rodrigues suggested QR codes on the wine's labels as a medium to lead consumers to the brand's social media. Phelps replied that actual photos of the wine bottles or labels on the social media page for the consumer.

The literature went back to discuss branding. Branding is essential to the consumer's relationship to the brand, and since "brand is the embodiment of what the organization stands for" (Fazekas, 2003), the label should focus on that relationship.

Social media has no limits in regards to posts so any wine brand can use that to their advantage through labeling.

Research question #11: How do you convey a winery's message with social media to the desired public?

Jacob, Phelps and Murphy-Rodrigues all had different responses for this research question. Murphy-Rodrigues discussed being consistent in the winery's message, brand, and voice through social media. "If your brand is very sophisticated then you want to be consistent in what your brand message and image is and what you're putting out there on all the platforms. And obviously, be aware of what your audience is. A Facebook user might be a little bit different

than a Twitter user is, so just have those voices.” On the topic of Facebook, Phelps brought up the advertising opportunities that arise when creating content. In order for the brand’s audience to see a post, the brand has to pay the social media platform to distribute the post to the audience’s newsfeed. Jacob acknowledge this marketing scheme Facebook has implemented but focused on how it is actually a brand’s website will be the driving factor in establishing a brand. “We try to be pretty thoughtful because we also know that social media can be one of the key drivers that can bring people to your website. If you bring them to your website, they start to spend more time, they’re engaging with the brand and maybe they’ll choose to buy wine, maybe they’ll choose to book a tour— that’s the platform in which they can take action towards the brand experience.”

The literature states that a social forum must provide a consistent bond between “corporate vision and the chosen digital marketing strategy” (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014).

Taking all of the experts responses and the literature review it becomes clear that social media has an infinite amount of possibilities of conveying a brand’s message. Either that be consistency between the marketing strategy, paying for posts, driving social media traffic to the website or keeping a consistent message and image through social media to consumers— the possibilities are endless.

Research question #12: What are wineries doing right now that is successful on social media? Can you give me some examples of a recent social media campaign a winery has done?

All three experts agree that engaging content is the biggest factor for success on social media. Engaging content will drive consumers to the brand's social media. Jacob brought up the example of Halter Ranch Vineyard's Facebook page posting pictures of the actual block of grapes the 2015 Rose came from. "That's much more interesting and now I'm really engaging with you and it's beyond than just a beverage for me. I've become an ambassador of your brand as a result. It's trying to figure out what all those layers are beyond just the wine itself."

The literature states that a good social media pages is one that provides a consistent bond between "corporate vision and the chosen digital marketing strategy" (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014). Not only this but also takes it a step further and discourages using a formal tone through the posts on their social media platforms. This then "creates a feeling of detachment among consumers and prevents the establishment of long-term relationships with stakeholders" (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014).

Wineries should use social media as an opportunity to create engaging content for the consumers, who in turn become brand ambassadors for the winery. Engaging content ranges from fun posts, links to interesting articles, behind-the-scene photos— anything that leads the consumer to feel as if they are a part of the brand. In doing so, refraining from an overly formal tone will help. Formal tones only create an insincere and fake persona of the brand.

Research question #13: How does a small guy have the chance? How does the small guy establish the brand identity and connection to the consumer? And use social media to do that?

Two of the experts, Jacob and Phelps, agreed in that it is difficult for the small guy to have a chance. Jacob said "They have to work really hard at it because they're the same guy who

I like to call the janitor, chief bottle-washer, winemaker and marketer too so they sort of wear all these hats in their own business but they have to continue to get out there to tell their story.”

Murphy-Rodrigues brought up the fact that being consistent is a way to stand out with consumers.

The literature study discusses a relational level of impact with consumers is one that an “organization offers meaningful, interactive services that create a relationship with the consumer” (Ditto & Pille, 1998). If a company is able to create meaningful relationships then it can strengthen the brand.

Strengthening a brand is absolutely essential for a winery or wine brand that is just starting out. But being able to stay persistent, consistent and engaging the consumer to the wine brand will be the ending factor in determining success.

Recommendations for Practice

After completion of the study, data has been collected and analyzed on the topic of establishing a brand in the wine industry through social media and image. Given the information, it is important to highlight the most important takeaways for future marketing, public relations, and wine industry professionals. Some recommendations for establishing a household name for a wine brand include consistency in social media presence through postings and voice, telling the brand’s story, catering to the audience and engaging with audience.

Keep consistency with postings, voice and image.

Keeping consistent to the brand should be replicated over all social media platforms. Whether that be with postings or voice, the brand’s social media should be the same and keep to

the same essential message and brand that led the consumer to the brand in the first place. The consistency should even translate from digital to physical materials. Murphy-Rodrigues recommends for increased brand visibility that brand consistency is necessary. “Be consistent. That’s important, make sure that you have a logo that can be easily identified and be consistent in using that logo, the fonts, and color palette, and everything consistently throughout your marketing materials.”

With brand being associated “bundles of meaning which become shorthand in our mind for a series of other things” (Fazekas, 2003) and a “set of associations held by consumers” (Marsden, 2002), there is a need for consistency. With the consistency then it will help consumers to remember the brand.

Tell the brand’s story in an appealing way.

Every wine brand started because someone had a desire to create something new— so tell that. Tell the love story of the winemaker’s craft, remind the audience of when they fell in love with the first brand’s vintage, tell the brand’s story in a way through social media and image that will lead the consumer to remember why they became a brand ambassador.

To find this story, Jacob recommends remembering why the brand began. “It’s a lot of soul searching at the end of the day. So you have to get beneath the skin, if you will, so it’s really understanding why did you get into this business, what is your goal in terms of making that premium product and who is your audience, what’s going to resonate with your audience. I really think understanding your audience is a key part of when you are establishing your brand.”

It's absolutely dire for a brand to stand out among the other brands, especially in an industry that is rapidly evolving. Jacob confirms this. "Well it's a very crowded marketplace out there so being very specific and having that distinct look and feel and understanding who your audience is and what is it that you want your brand to represent. I'm a big believer in that it's more than just the name and more than just what the look is, but what is the meaning behind the label. So you have to create a look and feel that help emulates what you're trying to sell."

Keep audience in mind when creating posts.

The brand's audience maintain the brand's existence. Therefore it's absolutely essential to keep the audience in mind when creating content for social media. Phelps referenced a recent example Tablas Creek did to show their social media audience how they value their engagement. "Something we just did recently and we're waiting to see if it was a good idea or not but it seems like it is, we analyzed our followers and the people who engage with our brand and we recognized them and I wrote them a handwritten letter thanking them for their likes and comments and shares and explained why they're important to us and gave them a gift certificate. It was a way to appreciate them because they're ambassadors to our brand and they're like 15 key people who always like, share, comment and we wouldn't be where we are without them. Recognizing them and interacting with them because they have chosen to not only follow what we're doing but also interact with what we're doing so we want to make sure we're interacting with them and appreciating them and bringing them into our story digitally as well."

The audience, consumers and customers are what keeps a brand afloat and alive in an industry that is growing exponentially.

Engage with your audience.

A brand's social media is a brand ambassador. It's important to engage with every audience member through content, comments and messages so the consumer feels recognized and as a part of the brand. Studies discourages using a formal tone through the posts on their social media platforms. This then "creates a feeling of detachment among consumers and prevents the establishment of long-term relationships with stakeholders" (Capitello, Agnoli, Begalli & Codurri, 2014). Phelps goes as far to talk about visual content can even engage the audience without saying much of a word. "I think any concept that's engage-able I think people like to be either in the vineyard or with the wine so images of the vineyard or of the wine seem to be the most influential. It brings them in, and they're going on social media for a break so they're going from their desk job to their vineyard or imagining a glass of wine in front of them. That's what we found to be the most engaging."

Study conclusion

In conclusion, given the general findings of the study, there should be qualitative and quantitative research done regularly on the topic of social media and image for wine brands. With social media evolving every day and an industry that is quickly on the rise, it's necessary that more data, statistics and research be conducted in order to follow up. Routine data collection and interview should be conducted based on the independent fast-paced trends of the different subjects area. Overall, the study presented the collective opinions of three experts of related positions in the wine industry fields and a review of literature on the topic. However, the

interviews were conducted by one individual with a small sample, in an up and coming wine industry. Therefore, the study and overall recommendations for creation and management of wine brands through social media and image cannot be applied to all wine brands. This study does however serve as an educational tool for professionals in the wine industry who are interested in creating a new wine brand. In fact, this study can be applied to any professional who is starting out a new brand in an industry that is rapidly evolving, such as breweries or distilleries.

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Appendix A

Interview Transcripts: Kim Murphy-Rodrigues

The following interview was conducted to get expert opinions from a sales perspective based on a questionnaire about establishing a wine brand.

Interviewer: Megan Rodrigues

Respondent: National Sales & Business Manager at Kita Wines
(Kim Murphy-Rodrigues)

Date of Interview: 2/29/2016

Interview Transcription:

Megan Rodrigues: “In term of established wineries, those who are producing wine for sale that are not established wineries—how do they create an image?”

Kim Murphy-Rodrigues: “I think that you need to first look at what your mission statement is for your brand and determine what your goals are, you know if you’re a large winery, if you’re wanting more of the direct to consumer base or if you’re a smaller winery as well looking to the direct to consumer base or to grow your wholesale imprint with more sales, but focusing on what your tagline is. For example, Robert Hall Winery, ‘The Essence of Paso Robles’ was our tagline so we used that in everything we possibly could for marketing collateral to convey the image and branding of the winery.”

MR: “How would you, as an expert in your field, describe branding a wine label as a way to increase public visibility?”

KMR: “Be consistent. That’s important, make sure that you have a logo that can be easily identified and be consistent in using that logo, the fonts, and color palette, and everything consistently throughout your marketing materials.”

MR: “Do you have an example of when the creation of a brand led to increased visibility?”

KMR: “An example of that would be Wild Horse when Ken Volk, the owner and founder of Wild Horse created Wild Horse, he was known for producing esoteric, heirloom varietals of wine that could vary anywhere from 12 to 30 wines that were poured daily in the tasting room. The Wild Horse name became synonymous not only with the horse logo but with knowing that the expectation, the quality and uniqueness of the wines that he was producing well shows the consistency of his Four Horsemen, which was his core wines he produced.”

MR: “In terms of label recognition, how are non-commercial winemakers impacted?”

KMR: “For a start-up winery that is just starting up in terms of getting their name recognized, they do have to again be consistent in their branding and try to, you know while they’re being creative in their winemaking style and what their wine label is going to look like, just be conscious again of keeping that logo and the name out there so they can building on a following. It does certainly helps them to be part of a garagiste . Some of the smaller producer organizations that can help brand them. The garagiste is known for being for producers that are less than 200 cases; so they have the festivals in California and it helps to kind of get their name out there, as well as the family winemakers.”

MR: “How does a small and large winemaker play on an equal playing field in order for brand?”

KMR: “I think that there’s small and large wine producers alike that have the winemaker that is known for their craft and their speciality. Whether that be in blended wines, for a hundred thousand case production winery or for an artisan craftsman who’s doing a very small production of maybe less than a thousand cases, they can have the same quality that their known for as well as have the unique of their craftsmanship. And you see that a lot with wines whether it be a propriety blend or like a rose that someone is known specifically, Halter Ranch is a good representation of someone who’s really made a name for themselves doing rose. What Kevin is doing versus what Don Brady is doing, and I think as winemakers they both appreciate what each other are doing. They’re both larger producers and then there’s also some very artisanal producers that are doing the same thing.”

MR: “What is the difference between a brand’s identity and regional identity?”

KMR: “A brand identity is something that is global. So a brand’s identity, if it’s a Robert Hall known as a Robert Hall whether it’s here or if it’s in Beijing, it’s something that the Robert Hall wine would be known for their Cabernet or whatever. Regional is something that is more unique for maybe a smaller production wine that a winery can do. Such as the Kita Taia White Rhone Blend, it might be more recognized specifically in a certain area like Southern California or Santa Barbara County when compared to other areas, it isn’t as well-known.”

MR: “In means of social media and image, is there a way to differentiate a brand from another?”

KMR: “Absolutely. I think that again whether it be your social media voice, or it’s your branded materials, digital or print, you have to ensure that the consistency in your brand is there. But certainly you can put your voice and your signature on that. There’s some wineries that known for being more serious wine brands, and so therefore they might be focused more on an educational aspect in their social media that is as far as what they’re communicating and painting out there. Versus a brand that is more light hearted and they would be doing more of their fun topics. Instead of a wine and food pairing it’d be pizza night with whatever wine. There’s just a different voice they can lend to differentiate themselves from each other.”

MR: “What is a successful wine label to you?”

KMR: “I think one that has consistency in its quality from vintage to vintage, as well as able to have your recognition from not only critics and consumers but from your peers.”

MR: “What are good practices of social media?”

KMR: “Having a plan. A campaign calendar is always good to be doing and planning ahead. It’s easy enough to do every Tuesday we’re doing food pairings with our wine and then every Wednesday it’s Wine Wednesday, we’re going to focus more and tell the history of this wine. Just having a plan and being consistent again in making sure you upkeep your social media platform. There’s nothing worse whether it’s a website or social media, if you go to it and you see the last post was 2013 and it’s 2016, it’s not very current information which makes you wonder how current the wines are.

MR: “Would you say that is considered a bad practice?”

KMR: “Yeah absolutely. I think that if you’re not keeping up that, and sometimes representing yourself as a brand and making sure whoever is doing your social media, if it’s one person or a department that it’s a consistent voice that is representing the brand. If there’s three different people posting that they’re still using the brand message that you want to communicate to the public, it’s not varied to the person’s personal style interfering with the brand style that you’re trying to communicate.”

MR: “Is this different for wineries when compared to other brands such as breweries, small boutiques...?”

KMR: “No, I think it’s pretty consistent globally for a brand. You definitely want to have that consistent message. Another bad practice is using too many hashtags. I think that after awhile you see someone who is using 12 hashtags in a post it’s a little redundant after awhile.”

MR: “What are some wineries who use social media well?”

KMR: “VinTank.com is a really great resource for looking at that. Some of the wineries who are doing social media well, Kendall Jackson actually has an entire department, of course with them being such a global brand they have a team that is basically doing their social media and the first thing they do each morning is go onto VinTank, which is a social media monitoring platform and they check to see where they’re voice is being heard, who’s talking about them out there and then better yet, they respond. So if they see someone in Nashville, Tennessee or Andover, Massachusetts talking about they had a great bottle of Kendall Jackson whenever the night before or they’re going to have this for a tailgate, they respond and they actually will click on there and acknowledge that. There’s been a lot of stories where people will use social media monitoring platforms to monitor more sales. If they see people are tailgating and enjoying it they’ll go onto the San Francisco Giants page and they’ll actually interact and engage with consumers on their platforms so they can recognize they’re out and enjoying their wine. Locally,

Daou does a good job in being really out there with their's. Halter Ranch is doing a good job as far as making sure they always have fresh messaging out there to the public."

MR: "What drives consumers to making purchasing decisions?"

KMR: "Emotional connections. There has to be an authentic message to your brand and a connection. I think that most people who pick up a bottle of wine they've done that because either they tasted it or they've seen it, there's some sort of emotional connection to them. We're finding that more and more wineries aren't just doing content management but they're actually trying to have an authentic story that they're telling the consumers to help them have that emotional connection."

MR: "How do you purchase wine?"

KMR: "Generally there's certain wines that I have a preference for like the Rhone varietals so I look at that and if it's someone who I'm familiar with whether it be an obscure small producer that I know that does really well with their Rhone wines or if it's someone who is more commercially successful but again, has a consistent, quality product that will inspire me to purchase it.

MR: "What are big name wineries doing on social media that is considered 'good'?"

KMR: "I think using their platforms not only to market their wines because it's really hard to get the ROI on what your social media is prompting a wine sale, but I think the ones that are doing it good are engaging their consumers whether it be through lifestyle presentations like the food and wine concept or artisan cheese and wine pairings, bbq ideas etc..as well as other ideas where they can consistently engage their consumers on what their brand is. Educate them as well."

MR: "How can those involved in wine production (big or small) use labeling as a way to create something that is unique that consumers want to think about, that then we can use in the social media interface?"

KMR: "The QR codes were really popular five to six years ago, I don't know that those are still as big as they used to be. But I think just making sure that the labels have your URL on them and have a presence on social media is something that you definitely need to do. Don't get too creative in trying to have a unique name for your brand out there. If you're XYZ Winery just try to keep it simple so that it's easy to find."

MR: "How do you convey a winery's message with social media to the desired public?"

KMR: "Again, just making sure your branding is intact whether that be your pages on your social media, just in what you're uploading to Instagram or Twitter. I think that a lot of wineries are finding that Pinterest is a great forum now, but if your brand is very sophisticated then you

want to be consistent in what your brand message and image is and what you're putting out there on all the platforms. And obviously, be aware of what your audience is. A Facebook user might be a little bit different than a Twitter user is, so just have those voices."

MR: "What would be the difference between the two?"

KMR: "Facebook is finding more and more that it's becoming an older population that is looking at Facebook versus say, six years ago you wouldn't of found many 60 year olds on Facebook. More and more you're finding that Aunt Sally or Grandma Sue they're on Facebook because a lot of them use it to look at pictures of their families, and they get inspired from recipes from the Today show— so they're finding that more and more. Versus Instagram is a younger demographic, it's more spontaneous as far as people who are communicating via the photographs that cause a quick reaction to."

MR: "So target your message to the public that is using the social media forum?"

KMR: "Exactly. And then there's Twitter and I could probably bet that there's very few people over the age of 60 that are on Twitter."

MR: "What are wineries doing right now that is successful on social media?"

KMR: "Some wineries that are doing a really good job with engaging content for the consumer audience are Iron Horse and Kendall Jackson. They just have a lot of fun information as well as engaging content whether it be about their wines, vineyards, ideas for Super Bowl parties or hashtag Wine Wednesday, they just do a lot of consumer engagement that puts them ahead. Locally here on the Central Coast, Tablas Creek is doing a great job as far as education out in the vineyard with their sustainable farming as well as education on all of their wines that they produce, talking about the whole process from vine to bottle. Halter Ranch does a great job with their current information and again it really works well with engaging content for the consumers on what's going on at their facility. Dressaro down in Santa Barbara county does a great job as far as education— it's a little more wordy. I like the other ones that keep it short, brief, direct content that really engages the consumer without them having to read an essay."

MR: "So how many lines or sentences for a post?"

KMR: "I think no more than probably 3 sentences. Dressaro has a lot of information and instead of giving a URL link to an article or to his blog, he tends to want to post everything on his actual social media post. So most people tend to scan it and move on."

MR: "How does a small guy have the chance?"

KMR: "I think that social media is an equal opportunity platform. Most of it is free to do, you just have to have the right person there that is writing, compelling, engaging content on the brand

and keeping the consistent message on what the branding is and consistency in regular posts, either once a week or once a month or once a day, just make sure that it's consistent. You don't want to post something and then six months later you finally post something else."

MR: "How do you determine how often to post?"

KMR: "You need to look at your audience. If you're just starting out and you're trying to build a demographic of consumer interest then you might need to do some Facebook ads or something to draw in more audience. Use the social media icon in your printed publications so that people know if they're reading Wine Country This Month and they see your Facebook logo at the end of your article they know that you have a Facebook page and it prompts people to go to that page, like and follow you.

MR: "How does the small guy establish the brand identity and connection to the consumer? And use social media to do that?"

KMR: "Paying attention to social media platform. If you're posting on Facebook about a new release and someone asks you 'Where can I find this in Palm Springs?', then you need to respond. That's where the small guy has an opportunity to get a direct connection to the consumer by something as simple as responding. That can be as easy as responding 'Ask your local Whole Foods,' or 'We can ship directly to you and save you a trip to the store!' There's a way to take it to the next step by simple engagement."

MR: "Essentially using customer service and beyond?"

KMR: "Absolutely."

Appendix B

Interview Transcripts: Stacie Jacob

The following interview was conducted to get expert opinions from a marketing and public relations perspective based on a questionnaire about establishing a wine brand.

Interviewer: Megan Rodrigues

Respondent: Founder and Chief Strategist of Solterra Strategies
(Stacie Jacob)

Date of Interview: 3/02/2016

Interview Transcription:

Megan Rodrigues: “In term of established wineries, those who are producing wine for sale that are not established wineries—how do they create an image?”

Stacie Jacob: “Well it’s a very crowded marketplace out there so being very specific and having that distinct look and feel and understanding who your audience is and what is it that you want your brand to represent. I’m a big believer in that it’s more than just the name and more than just what the look is, but what is the meaning behind the label. So you have to create a look and feel that help emulates what you’re trying to sell.”

MR: “How do you find that?”

SJ: “It’s a lot of soul searching at the end of the day. So you have to get beneath the skin, if you will, so it’s really understanding why did you get into this business, what is your goal in terms of making that premium product and who is your audience, what’s going to resonate with your audience. I really think understanding your audience is a key part of when you are establishing your brand.”

MR: “How would you, as an expert in your field, describe branding a wine label as a way to increase public visibility?”

SJ: “For me, it goes back to the story. A wine label needs to evoke the interest in wanting to learn more. There’s lots and lots of wine labels out there; there’s critters on labels, there’s flashy colors on labels, there’s very old-world style labels—but for me if you’re trying to create, it’s understanding your audience and what’s the story that’s going to resonate so you can connect those dots. What’s going to jump that particular bottle off the shelf and want you to know more about it. Because once you choose that bottle, you like that wine, you start to become invested and then you want to find out— let me follow them on social media, let’s learn more about their website, let me go visit them and start to make that investment— and that’s the critical component of wine marketing is creating that ambassador component, so that your customer is more than just buying a bottle, they’re starting to buy a piece in the brand.”

MR: “Please give an example of when the creation of a brand led to increased visibility.”

SJ: “So, I think for me, I’m going to parallel this into wine clubs a little bit— the wine club is an important component for many, many brands when it comes to emulating that brand experience. There’s lots of great wine out on the shelf, there’s lots of beautiful labels out there, to me it’s getting beyond that. It’s either that fantastic experience that a sommelier provided you in a restaurant, or maybe it was one of your first wine experiences where we all kind of remember that first wine experience essentially, so it’s how do you continue making memories out of those experiences. In wine we’re very lucky because wine is like this cool, sexy product that actually says on the label where it comes from— so it kind of becomes an ambassador for a region. So if you fall in love with, let’s say, Adelaida, you might find that the Adelaida area in Paso Robles is something very interesting to you essentially. So to go back to answering your question, the creation of a wine brand led to visibility—creating a wine brand and creating that kind of club aspect creates an exclusivity and in that club if you have exclusive benefits that’s going to create that kind of awareness overall for the brand.”

MR: “How are non-commercial winemakers impacted in terms of label recognition?”

SJ: “When you say non-commercial are you talking about the small, craft artisan producers...?”

MR: “Yes exactly.”

SJ: “So this is ultimately important when it comes to the handcrafted, smaller producers— their label and that brand experience is critical to their success. Because they don’t have sales teams out there, they don’t have all the bells and whistles that go with kind of the commercial brands that are there, and even the story is important on the commercial side too don’t get me wrong but I think this is really, really critical to understanding and really dialing in who that customer is and making sure that that product and your marketing is meeting that particular customer.”

MR: “How does a small and large winemaker play on an equal playing field in order for brand?”

SJ: “It’s really hard. It’s really hard! I mean let’s just take in Paso Robles’ terms, you know, J. Lohr versus Cucola Winery— two very, very different. Cucola being a small, about five thousand case brand that’s out in the Adelaida district, J. Lohr being a million plus cases. J. Lohr has sales people all across the nation, they can get the attention of a distributor, Cucola has a very hard time getting the attention of a distributor as part of the three tier system. So Cucola’s marketing has to be very, very different than J. Lohr. J. Lohr has to plan on more of a macro level and Cucola needs to figure out what is their niche in that audience piece. So in terms of how do they play on and create an equal playing field— there’s not an equal playing field. The only equal playing field is, is creating that experience and what’s going to evoke that emotion. So I always say you gotta find the passion points of your customer. And if you can find that passion of your customer, and help create that be part of fulfilling that, you’re going to have longevity in that customer experience.”

MR: “What is the difference between a brand’s identity and regional identity?”

SJ: “So I think these two go hand in hand in my opinion. A brand typically chooses a region for a reason. You know either you grew up in Paso Robles, maybe your family was a longterm farmer and decided to start planting grapes and then you created a brand, maybe you came here and experienced what an awesome community this is and you said I want to be part of that, maybe you had another career and then you moved here— to me, the two go hand in hand because you make wine from a sense of place. Wine’s about place. Wine should taste different from Paso Robles than it does from Edna Valley and than it does from Napa Valley. And so I think that identity of the region is critical and if the two are working hand in hand, the region is identifying itself so Paso we kinda like to be known as the casual, laid-back, very accessible kind of wine country. I think most brands here want to emulate that kind of accessibility. We don’t have reservations that you have to make months and months in advance to be able to get into wineries — that doesn’t happen here. That doesn’t happen in other areas essentially, but I think those two kinda go hand in hand, and it’s kind of this melting pot where everybody kind of comes together and formulates what that regional and cultural identity really is.”

MR: “In means of social media and image, is there a way to differentiate a brand from another?”

SJ: “Absolutely! I think social media, when done really well, is strategically thought out I think it helps emulate what your brand image is and gives people an insight to your culture. The followers of a social media particular brand can be more about the day-to-day— what’s happening in the day-to-day, I can’t be there everyday but I want to know what’s going on in the vineyard today, I want to know what’s happening in the tasting room, what wine is being released, what are the employees doing today— I think being able to kind of unpeeling the layers of the onion and getting to the core because I want to know more. And your social media followers, they’re pretty dedicated, especially those that are engaging with you in that conversation.”

MR: “What is a successful wine label to you?”

SJ: “Wow that’s a pretty loaded question. I think a successful wine label...obviously sales are very important you have to have customers that are going to buy your wine—that’s what I think one of the biggest challenge. So many wine makers are passionate about making wine but then they realize ‘Oh, I have to sell this stuff,’ it doesn’t just sell itself, so I think that that is a critical piece into it. A successful wine label in my mind is one that is on vintage, so they don’t just have laid back vintages, it’s one that tells an awesome story, it’s one that has this idea that I’m exclusive and I want to be a part of it, it kinda draws you in as a customer. And it’s one you can’t stop talking about.”

MR: “What are good practices of social media?”

SJ: “So I think social media really needs to be looked at as a way to engage the audience, don’t just sell to the audience. So it needs to have two-way communication. So you want to try to evoke a conversation with your followers. You don’t want to push out information, you want to engage that dialogue.”

MR: “And bad practices I’m assuming are...?”

SJ: “To me, it’s too salesy. You know, let’s be honest we all see how Facebook has changed and it’s much more advertising driven and it’s much more one-way communication— I want the two-way communication going on.”

MR: “Is this different for wineries when compared to other brands, such as boutiques, breweries, big-time corporations?”

SJ: “I don’t think so. I think there’s those same basic principles of social media translate across the way. Of course, wineries, breweries and distilleries are alcoholic products so here’s certain rules essentially but I think at the end of the day social media is about engagement and about people who are interested in that particular topic.”

MR: “What are some wineries who use social media well?”

SJ: “I would say Jordan Winery does a really great job with social media. We do Halter Ranch, they do a great job of social media. So we’re pretty excited about what they’re doing—“

MR: “I work in their tasting room!”

SJ: “Oh do you? So you’ve seen that beautiful, new tasting room— so I think they’ve done a great job. Who else is doing a good job on social media? Oh, you know Alta Colina does a great job! Maggie Tillman who does their social media, she has a creative way and her followers love it. They’re getting ready to launch, we work with them, they’re getting ready to launch a website and I said you should create a video of the tutorial of the new website and take people through it on social media. And she’s like, ‘Yeah I’m going to do that but I’m going to have the dog lead the video.’ It’s a small boutique brand but I think that’s a great example when you talk about small versus large— they do some things really, really well. She’s quirky! But it’s a fun quirky, so she takes their brand that could be seen as very, very serious but she creates a kind of fun, approachable piece to it. Because their wine not inexpensive and it’s very serious wine, don’t get me wrong, but she has a lot of fun with it too.

MR: “What drives consumers to making purchasing decisions?”

SJ: “Well I think it’s lots of things. I think price drives consumers to making decisions, I think experiences can drive consumers to purchasing decisions, word of mouth— but I think at the end of the day I’ll keep coming back to experiences. I can remember when someone recommends a

great bottle of wine to me, or my friends drinking it, I think that kind of moment is critical. So how can we drive that. I think that's what's so powerful about social media is how we drive more and more of that word of mouth that's happening.

MR: "How do you purchase wine?"

SJ: "I personally purchase wine at wineries. I'm fortunate to live in wine country, I'm fortunate to have lots of clients in the wine industry so that's typically how I purchase. However I'll be the first to admit when I go into a city and I geek out over a wine shop and I'll walk out with a couple of bottles because it's exciting, it's a passion of course.

MR: "What are big name wineries doing on social media that is considered 'good'?"

SJ: "I think Edna Valley has done a lot of great social media especially around the holidays. It has more of a polished, so you don't get that genuine flavor if you will, but it's really solid."

MR: "And are they still engaging their customers when they're acting polished?"

SJ: "I feel like they were."

MR: "How can those involved in wine production (big or small) use labeling as a way to create something that is unique that consumers want to think about, that then we can use in the social media interface?"

SJ: "When you say labeling can you explain what you mean by that? Talking about the wine label or more of the marketing pitch?"

MR: "More the wine label."

SJ: "I think your label has to go back and be the trigger that makes you want to learn more about the story. And so, I'll give a quick example. We've been working with Adelaida Cellars, who has just, I don't know if you're familiar with their brand but they typically have faces on their brand and we've just switched it out to where the brand took a more very old-world feel and very classic approach but on it now is a visual of what you seen when you're on their hilltop. So it brought the estate property into the label essentially.

MR: "How do you convey a winery's message with social media to the desired public?"

SJ: "I think it's continuing to understand what your core message is and having a strategy of how you're going to do that."

MR: "How do you determine their message?"

SJ: “So I think it’s understanding what the brand’s about. So are we about, the experience in the tasting room, are we about— well let’s take Halter Ranch for example, Halter you got great quality of wine, you got the experience up at the tasting room, you’ve got the tour program as part of that experience, eventually you’ll have picnics again as you know, — there’s all those piece that go in so how do you understand who are we, and how do we segment that out knowing that social media is about this quick engagement component.

So one of the things that we’re always a fan of so there’s seven days of the week, let’s pick a theme for each day as part of a greater message we want to communicate for the month. So we were just talking about the month of March, the month of March we’re discussing should be and will be about the faces of Halter Ranch like who’s actually working at Halter Ranch on a regular basis, and we talk about that if Friday is Fan Friday then what’s the engagement that a customer can tell about an experience they had with one of guests of the winery. So we have like a foodie day, we have a day where we’re talking about the vineyard so we take the seven days of the week and we just think of it as a grid. Here’s our theme for the month, here’s what we want to talk about so let’s look at all seven days and pick a general theme each of those days and then communicate it about us. And by doing that, we can actually understand the analytics and what we’re getting from the engagement side of things. We don’t want to take away the genuine of the here now, but we also want to put thought into it and, for example Jen just posted a tour for four up at the new winery— so just like a small contest or the opportunity for someone to win something, boom, you just see the engagement go up. Because everybody still wants a free lunch. Right? It’s just part of the experience.

We try to be pretty thoughtful because we also know that social media can be one of the key drivers that can bring people to your website. If you bring them to your website, they start to spend more time, they’re engaging with the brand and maybe they’ll choose to buy wine, maybe they’ll choose to book a tour— that’s the platform in which they can take action towards the brand experience.”

MR: “So you suggest that drive people from the social media to the website?”

SJ: “I believe that digital, because there’s so many components, I look at digital marketing as the website is the middle there’s all these things that are feeding into it. So not everything of social media has to drive to the website but that’s the ultimate goal so if you can study your website analytics and see where your traffic is coming from you’ll get a better understanding of where your marketing dollars and where those voices are being heard and how people are finding you essentially. But I’m a big fan of understanding the thinking of the website as kind of the ultimate goal and all these chatterboxes that are going on around it are feeding into that essentially. Because otherwise at the end of the day social media is just become singular social media and it should all be a network of all these things and all these tools kind of working together. So your social media, your public relations, all your different marketing tools should ultimately feed into one common hub. Because the website is where I’m going to learn where the hours are, which will evoke potentially me coming to the tasting room, it will give me the opportunity to book a

tour, it's going to tell me more about the wine, I can join the wine club and granted we don't have a lot of the selling wine online is not something we typically see a lot of however, if I come to the tasting room and I got really excited about it and I don't live here where I can just run out and buy some wine and I really can't find the Halter Ranch Grenache Blanc that I really want I can always go to the website and buy it. So that's why the website and having that to me is an important component of ultimate engagement.

MR: "What are wineries doing right now that is successful on social media? Can you give me some examples of a recent social media campaign a winery has done?"

SJ: "I think what wineries are doing that's successful is any time they're creating engagement, I also think that when they are again going beyond the wine label and it's important to say 'hey our new rose is out', but if then I can say this is the block of where the rose comes from, or here's the mustard growing in the vineyard, you know give me those beautiful, pretty pictures that we are so blessed to see here all the time— but feed that to me. That's much more interesting and now I'm really engaging with you and it's beyond than just a beverage for me. I've become an ambassador of your brand as a result. It's trying to figure out what all those layers are beyond just the wine itself. So examples of recent social media campaigns, I'm going to point to Halter Ranch again, we just took over their social media starting in January and we've seen the analytics skyrocket compared to what it had been. But part of that is because we have a plan right now, we have a theme that we're working off of every month and every day, and working those two things together. Again, it's not like we don't want the organic 'we got this news' kinda thing but it's not that every day. And as a result we're starting to see those numbers change.

MR: "How does a small guy have the chance?"

SJ: "Small wineries can be super, super successful. It's finding that niche, what is it they're going to do well, figuring out that audience, they have to make sure that marketing is definitely first and foremost but their marketing is going to be very different than the big boys marketing. Their marketing is going to be what I like to call, high-touch marketing. So it's finding who are those high network individuals that want access to wines of this caliber that maybe they can't get and almost create this exclusive feel that hat you can't get this unless you come to my club pickup party or unless you come to this special, private event— you see in the wine world it's all about scarcity and exclusivity. Especially with the small guys. There was a brand up in Washington that use to be open just one day a year and it's called Leonetti Cellars and it's still very much successful today. You had to be on the list to be invited to come pick up your wine for that one day a year. All the other hundred wineries all around Walla Walla used to call it Leonetti Weekend, it's now called Spring Release Weekend but Leonetti would be lined up with cars coming to pick up their wine club shipment because it was the one day out of the year that every one came to pick up their wine. And then it was I'm on the list to be on the list. So there ws the other list that you could get on. That scarcity and exclusivity was a tool that worked really, really well for them. So I think small wineries need to figure out what are those niche components taht are really going to resonate with their customer."

MR: “Did they do well then in sales?”

SJ: “Oh they did awesome in sales because their wine was like \$75.00 a bottle plus! And that was also allocation for restaurants, they were very strategic in giving certain allocation to restaurants because they wanted on-premise placement which we haven’t talked a lot about, but having on-premise placement I believe is another key driver in having direct-to-consumer sales. So the fact that Halter Ranch is in 15 states and they focus on getting wines by the glass is important in them increasing club members and helping bring people to the tasting room.”

MR: “How does the small guy establish the brand identity and connection to the consumer? And use social media to do that?”

SJ: “A lot of hard work. Sweat equity, to be honest with you. It’s about being out there and really being able to tell your story. And I will not underestimate the need for marketing and public relations and getting that story told out there. They have to work really hard at it because they’re the same guy who I like to call the janitor, chief bottle-washer, winemaker and marketer too so they sort of wear all these hats in their own business but they have to continue to get out there to tell their story.”

MR: “Anything else you’d like to say?”

SJ: “It’s a fun business and there’s no lack of hard work that goes into it making it happen.”

Appendix C

Interview Transcripts: Lauren Phelps

The following interview was conducted to get expert opinions from a marketing professional at a Central Coast household name winery.

Interviewer: Megan Rodrigues
Respondent: Marketing Coordinator at Tablas Creek Winery
(Lauren Phelps)
Date of Interview: 3/11/2016

Interview Transcription:

Megan Rodrigues: “In term of established wineries, those who are producing wine for sale that are not established wineries—how do they create an image?”

Lauren Phelps: “I think it depends on the story of that brand. For example, when we first started we created an individual identity by an educational piece. We were doing such a unique project in California, a lot of what we were doing was educating the public around what our Rhone varieties, why did we decide to bring all these clones in from France to California, why did we choose Paso Robles— which at that time wasn’t a very recognized wine community. We took on this educational role and we’ve just stuck with that as a big part of our marketing to help folks identify us and our brand. I think in terms of marketing it’s so important to have each individual brand do their own and have their own story and convey that story— for us it was educational. But I think for maybe smaller brands, it could be something a bit edgier. I’ve seen brands do it with wine labels or events. I think smaller labels have more flexibility wth that brand identity.”

MR: “How would you, as an expert in your field, describe branding a wine label as a way to increase public visibility? Please give an example of when the creation of a brand led to increased visibility.”

LP: “Well it’s recognition. You want your consumer to recognize your brand based on either your logo or your label is just that, a visual representation of your brand. So however you want to do that needs to convey a story and how you’re presenting yourself as a brand and being consistent with that is really important. It goes back to what is your identity and how is your brand, what story does your brand tell— and for us is more of a educational, quality piece so we want to convey that. So we use our colors are gold, and we have a classic look. When other brands can have an edgy, and different images that can appeal to a different demographic or whatever their individual audience is.”

MR: “How are non-commercial winemakers impacted in terms of label recognition?”

LP: “There’s opportunities and challenges. Again I think the opportunities are able to be a little edgier and be able to not feel like they need to please everyone and be able to please a specific demographic, say the millennials. So you can have more of a graphic image as your label. Which would appeal to a specific demographic and I think having that flexibility is really interesting for a noncommercial winery, so if you wanted a global or national recognition you would need to have it be more appealing and again consistent. So you couldn’t have maybe a different image for each type of wine you’re producing because you want to have that consistent brand recognition is more broad. I think there’s challenges and opportunities for both. The challenge for non-commercial is just less recognition. But on the other hand people are looking for new things too so it really just depends on what your demographic is and what you’re looking for.”

MR: “How does a small and large winemaker play on an equal playing field in order for brand?”

LP: “I think we’re seeing a trend in the wine industry, and beer and distillery industry this kind of craft movement and moving to smaller production, kind of a nuance product. Which isn’t as influential as kind of the more well-known brands that are consistently bought. But with millennial and this new trend is seeking out smaller labels with funkier things, like orange wine. So it’s interesting to see this broadening of the playing field for these smaller brands, less known winemakers who are making a path for themselves in this trend.”

MR: “When was a time you saw this happen?”

LP: “Helcyon is a wine brand that one of our winemakers have started and he’s doing a sparkling rose that was just in a big magazine! And it’s a super small brand. But he’s doing something really interesting, you know a sparkling rose with cab franc grapes from this area. And i think he was producing for only two years and he has a really cool label. They’re in major magazines right alongside major productions with massive recognition so it’s awesome to see this new trend growing.”

MR: “What is the difference between a brand’s identity and regional identity?”

LP: “My only experience has been with Tablas and those have grown together for Paso. When we started Paso wasn’t known as a winemaking region and destination. As the recognition for Paso has grown, the recognition for Tablas has grown. And we’ve been recognized as of a leader in helping the region grow as well. We’ve been really active in the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance and a lot of regional organizations because we recognize in order for Tablas Creek to have national recognition then the whole region is going to have to really grow. So even when we came, we imported all of our grape clones from our sister winery and sold them all over Paso and the U.S. The idea was ‘rising tides floats all boats’ and we wanted the whole region to grow in recognition with us. We were really tide to that, we can’t separate those two with our brand. As the quality is growing, recognition is growing and it’s helping everyone. It’s a mutual benefit.”

MR: “In means of social media and image, is there a way to differentiate a brand from another?”

LP: “Absolutely. And you have all the social media platforms so I think that’s really interesting. Each brand excels in a different platform. My example would be with Alta Colina and Maggie Tillman is like everything for that winery. She is so graphically gifted and she has such witty, funny ways of captioning her images— her Instagram is super fun to engage with. Where our brand is a little more serious, broad reaching and educational a lot of our posts are about the animals because we do biodynamic farming so we have images of animals, a lot of our captions are educational— we can’t do edgy, but we can be, but it’s not our brand so we have to be consistent with that. Brands can convey their philosophy on social media and differentiate themselves really easily especially across the different platforms.”

MR: “What is a successful wine label to you?”

LP: “I wonder if there’s aren’t two goals with a wine label. One is brand recognition and having it be very recognizable and being associated with something good, like quality. So being recognizable is really important and a growing trend is also being visually appealing and interesting, and I don’t know that you can do both of those things in one label. I think it’s kind of two paths. For us, it’s all about recognition and association with quality, but definitely there’s another path that can be successful as well.”

MR: “What are good practices of social media?”

LP: “Good practices are posting regularly, and interacting on a regular basis but not too much and understanding that balance. I’ve seen wine shops posting four to five times in a matter of hours and it’s just too much. There’s a balance of interaction and I think it’s really important to interact with your followers too. So something we just did recently and we’re waiting to see if it was a good idea or not but it seems like it is, we analyzed our followers and the people who engage with our brand and we recognized them and I wrote them a handwritten letter thanking them for their likes and comments and shares and explained why they’re important to us and gave them a gift certificate. It was a way to appreciate them because they’re ambassadors to our brand and they’re like 15 key people who always like, share, comment and we wouldn’t be where we are without them. Recognizing them and interacting with them because they have chosen to not only follow what we’re doing but also interact with what we’re doing so we want to make sure we’re interacting with them and appreciating them and bringing them into our story digitally as well.”

MR: “What are bad practices?”

LP: “Posting too much. Complaining. I think it’s kind of like social rules too, and social etiquette. I think maybe using people’s photos without giving them proper...without listing them and saying ‘we borrowed this picture from so and so’.”

MR: “Is this different for wineries when compared to other brands?”

LP: “There’s specific laws you can’t promote anyone who has a license, so like a wine bar, restaurant, anyone who carries a wine license you can’t promote them in any social media. You can’t say ‘this is a great place’ or even if we’re having a wine dinner there. We can say we’re having a wine dinner there but we can’t say ‘I love this restaurant,’ ‘so excited to be there’, but we can’t promote them at all. We can’t any type of currency. We can’t promote them at all, anyone who has a license. And a lot of those places don’t know that that’s the law. it’s totally archaic and it doesn’t fit with out modern times but it is the law. And it’s called Tied House Laws.”

MR: “But can the wine bars promote you?”

LP: “Yes. The whole reciprocity is a big part of social media, you always want to reciprocate with any type of appreciation or promotion but we can’t always. So that’s a part of the conversation with those places. A lot of wineries do it anyways, even though you’re not supposed to.”

MR: “What are some wineries who use social media well?”

LP: “There’s a lot. And it depends on the brand, everyone is so different but it’s fun to watch. Let’s see, I like what Ridge does. Bonny Doon is fun. Like I said Alta Colina is great on Instagram. That’s all I can think of off the top of my head. Do you just want wine brands?”

MR: “Yeah but unless you have another brand you think does it well?”

LP: “Yeah! Red Bull! I follow like big brands just to see what they’re doing, not like we can replicate it but it’s just good to keep an eye on it.”

MR: “What drives consumers to making purchasing decisions?”

LP: “So the number one thing in terms of buying wine, from research, is recommendations from their friends is the number one thing that drives sales and then second, is an educated shop owner, or sommelier or tasting room attendant. And that’s where social media is so important, it really comes down to what your friends and family recommends. We want our customers to be ambassadors of our brand, and that’s the goal at the end of the day.”

MR: “How do you purchase wine?”

LP: “I get to go to a lot of tasting events. So I have key people I follow and buy online with my discount. Actually I go to these tasting events with multiple people and it’s like ‘what brand do you like?’ because a lot of these people know wine better than I do so I can go and meet these people and it’s nice to go and have an interaction with the people who are producing it too. And then you just get hooked.”

MR: “What are big name wineries doing on social media that is considered ‘good’?”

LP: “I don’t follow them. I follow Justin, they’re pretty big locally. But the thing is when you look at the engagement rates, even though they’re getting like twice as many engagements, it’s all relative to their follower size, at the end of the day it’s all about engagement rate. Who’s engaging with their customers the best. I think it’s relative to their size. I think any concept that’s engage-able I think people like to be either in the vineyard or with the wine so images of the vineyard or of the wine seem to be the most influential. It brings them in, and they’re going on social media for a break so they’re going from their desk job to their vineyard or imagining a glass of wine in front of them. That’s what we found to be the most engaging.”

MR: “How can those involved in wine production (big or small) use labeling as a way to create something that is unique that consumers want to think about, that then we can use in the social media interface?”

LP: “Bottle shots are huge. People love bottle shots. Labeling is a part of that as brand recognition and story. There’s certain brands, like Justin’s Isosceles that’s super recognizable with quality. So when people see an Isosceles bottle, their likes quadruple and then again there’s some really funky cool labels with octopi that are fun to look at so there’s a place for that as well but then again they’re smaller brand.”

MR: “How do you convey a winery’s message with social media to the desired public?”

LP: “Facebook you basically have to pay for it if you want to reach all your followers, it’s not super expensive between twenty to sixty for a post. Any so we do that selectively for things we feel that are important enough, like to buy wine. So if we feel it’s going to be really compelling enough, that will get that end result then we’ll absolutely promote it. And I think Facebook is still the best driver for sales at this point. But all of this is virtually impossible to measure. You can measure growth, but conversion rates are a lot tricky. By the time someone buys the brand, they’ve already seen the label, they’ve had it in a restaurant, had a friend talk about it— by the time they join the club they’ve had five or six different touch points. Tracking that story is impossible.”

MR: “What are wineries doing right now that is successful on social media?”

LP: “Just having engage-able content, interacting with customers, interacting with social media customers, being consistent, you can’t just be on a platform once a month. You have to be on there daily.

MR: “Can you give me some examples of a recent social media campaign a winery has done?”

LP: “We didn’t even talk about e-mail marketing. E-mail marketing is huge too. There’s one that’s interesting, I don’t know if it’s good but it’s fascinating. Bonny Doon bought some land in Monterey but they crowdsourced to buy it. They sent out e-mails, and had a crowdfunding site. Randall Graham actually wrote a letter to the mailing list, and engaged on all the platforms, social, e-mail and mailing list and I think they bought it.”

MR: “How did they word it?”

LP: “It was some like weird — they’re interesting people. They’re nontraditional. They had it so it was this awesome opportunity, they’re going to have really obscure wines from it— it was something appealing that helped them buy it. It wasn’t like ‘we want land, help us buy it’ it was appealing. They told it in a way for people who were already interested in their brand to buy into it.

MR: “How does a small guy have the chance?”

LP: “It’s a growing opportunity now. I feel like the trend is really benefiting some of these craft winemakers and distilleries, and I think it’s great. People are finally adventuring out from cabernet, merlot and chardonnay, it’s great for everybody.

MR: “How does the small guy establish the brand identity and connection to the consumer? And use social media to do that?”

LP: “It’s a long road, and it’s just don’t give up. Be out there, be consistent, slowly grow your followers. And then once you get recognition then it exponentially grows your customer base. But it’s just about don’t give up. It’s just not overnight.”

MR: “Anything else to say?”

LP: “I think e-mail is actually the number one driver beyond social media and the easiest to track and easiest for data to watch. You can see everything everyone clicks on, it’s just really easier to track and it’s a powerful source.”