



WINE LEVERAGE

DTC? OF COURSE YOU WANT IT!

Everyone in the wine business appears to have grasped the importance of direct to consumer sales. I believe most wineries would agree that DTC sales should be 20% to 30% or more of total sales.

ARE YOU REALLY READY?

While it is relatively easy to agree on the goal, most wineries do not really understand how to get there. Most wineries do not spend enough time at the starting point for any DTC business---that would be the tasting room, staff selection, training, motivation and the visitor interaction/experience. Most wineries feel they provide the "best tasting room experience and best tasting wines" but the reality is that most winery visitor center experiences are more similar than dissimilar or meaningfully distinctive.

Obviously one should have a website that is differentiating, compelling and easily shopped. That's not something everyone executes as well as they could either.

We assume you have a club. You take good care of club members with tantalizing offers and events, right?

THAT MAILING LIST

Finally, we assume you have a mailing list or database of customers and that you send out intriguing emails. Email, at best, will result in a 1% to 3% success rate. Most wineries do not know how to differentiate and qualify customers. We estimate that most wineries only maintain a relationship with 2% to 5% who sign up for their club (also, factor in a 30% to 50% attrition rate in the first year). Note: that means more than 90% of the customers who have elected to visit your winery simply disappear. What a terrible waste, right?

Most wineries do not put enough effort into database quality and maintenance. There are often no visit/start dates, lack of purchase and contact history, variations in the way data is entered and in general faulty information, which, in addition, is not timely. Winery employees change, so the way data is entered is different, and employees' judgment about customers and how they're segmented is different. If a customer is on the mailing list but is not a club member, how should they be regarded? They're not the same. Are all people in your club the same?

Someone came to your winery and had a fabulous time. How do you keep that experience fresh? How do you stay in touch and maintain a 'profitable' relationship?

THE SOUND OF YOUR VOICE

One aspect of DTC marketing that is often neglected is a periodic telephone call to all those on one's club and mailing lists. This approach can generate sales rates of 25% to 50% of those called. While the objective is sales, if done properly, this outreach also raises brand awareness and adds to brand imagery. A healthy---and very desirable---byproduct of a telephone sales campaign is a cleaned-up and annotated list. Invariably a telephone campaign will also solve other problems and issues, giving the customer a way to update their credit card or email or address or even something serendipitous---Your Aunt's 50th anniversary gift! Mark and Marie are getting married! John is graduating from college! Louise just published her first book and on it goes. How handy it is that their favorite winery is on the phone able to facilitate a fabulous wine gift.

JUST A TASTE

This is a quick overview of how Wine Leverage is ready to help wineries maximize their customer base. Contact John Martini to find out more: jgmartini@wineleverage.com, 707/260-0750, www.wineleverage.com.

