EXTENDED ABSTRACT

WEB PAGES AS A MARKETING TOOL: CONTENT ANALYSIS RELATED TO ARAGONESE WINERIES

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The winery sector faces a highly competitive environment, in both domestic and international markets. The structure of this sector, with a predominance of small and medium wineries, makes it necessary to develop strategies in the online environment that allow taking advantage of the business opportunities offered by this medium. The Internet has changed the way in which transactions are conducted by offering different types of information and increasing the utility and efficiency of distribution systems (Kim, Kim & Han, 2007). The major growth in use of the Internet and e-commerce has led to the development of different models that allow for a better understanding of businesses within this new context (Davidson, 2002; Goodman, 2003; Rao, Metts, & Mora, 2003; Sellitto & McKenzie, 2005; Zhu, Basil, & Gordon, 2009). The Internet has thus become a vital technology for developing businesses, given that it provides a powerful set of tools that can be employed to improve many of the activities that are carried out, such as product distribution and communication, interaction with suppliers, and after-sales service for customers (Campubrí & Galí, 2015; Turban et al., 2002). Consequently, the Internet provides companies with the opportunity to improve both their efficiency and their productivity, thereby improving profits (Alonso et al., 2013).

Within this context, web pages are becoming well-established as one of the essential tools that allow wineries to reach their business objectives. Just like any other business, a winery's web page must be oriented towards achieving certain marketing objectives, which include providing information about the product, providing a secure channel for e-commerce, establishing and maintaining relations with customers, and attracting visitors to the winery (Ferreira & Ferreira, 2013).

In most sectors, including the wine sector, the Internet constitutes an important sales channel, as well as a source of information about products. Small and medium wineries tend to have major difficulty finding distributors who can provide them with an adequate point of sale for their wines so that they can compete in different markets (Ferreira & Ferreira, 2013). Therefore, wineries must, among other objectives, use the Internet as a marketing tool that allows them to overcome the limitations of existing distribution

channels and thereby expand their direct and retail sales. This means that wineries must allocate the necessary time and resources to managing sales orders, answering customer questions, and keeping their web pages updated, including the prices, availability, and descriptions of their products.

Moreover, a web page can also fulfil the objective of performing an educational task if it is designed as a source of information that nurtures relationships with customers (Ferreira & Ferreira, 2013). Consumers prefer web pages that provide them with effective tools for obtaining information and improving their knowledge about existing products (Simeon & Sayeed, 2011). By including educational characteristics in a web page, interest in the wine product can be increased, thereby leading to greater loyalty towards a winery and its products (Beverland et al., 1998). This interest in and involvement with the wine product constitutes one of the main predictors of not only sales but also the probability of carrying out activities related to wines and wineries (Marzo-Navarro & Pedraja-Iglesias, 2012). Therefore, educating the customer through information provided on a web page has the potential to retain and expand the existing customer base (Hall, 1996).

In conjunction with the aforementioned, relationships with customers can also be improved through a web page by allowing customers to interact with both the winery and other customers. Through these interactions, wineries can manage not only their brand image but also other intangible aspects of their business. Thus, wineries that adequately manage their online relationships with customers can improve their market shares by retaining and increasing customers (Hall & Winchester, 2000; O'Neill, Palmer & Charters, 2002).

Even though web pages may be designed to be able to reach these objectives, there are few that succeed in earning an adequate return (Ness, 2006). A web page could be the first (and often only) contact that potential customers might have with a winery. These consumers have high expectations about the quality of web pages (Velikova, Wilcox & Dodd, 2011), and yet many winery web pages are merely simple electronic brochures and are not dynamic and efficient marketing tools (Ferreira & Ferreira, 2013).

The use of a web page basically pursues two organizational objectives: transactional and informational (Bruwer & Wood, 2005). Therefore their design and content must be in line with these objectives. However, an intermediate type of web page is also possible, called interactive. And while it does not allow direct online purchasing, it does provide tools that not only allow companies to interrelate with customers, it also allows customers to interrelate with each other (Guräu & Dusquenois, 2011; Sellito & Martin, 2003). These categories of web pages correspond to three specific orientations of online marketing:

Information orientation: the web page is used to provide information about the winery, the wine, the location of the company, and the distribution channels.

- *Interactive communication approach*: the web page maintains the function of providing information about the winery, products, location, and distribution, but it also offers tools for interactive communication, thereby allowing customers to initiate direct dialogue with the winery and/or with other customers.
- *Transactional Orientation:* these web pages are more complex in terms of functionality. The transactional orientation not only includes the preceding (information

and communication orientations), it also provides facilities for purchasing and paying for products online.

- And in addition to these three traditional orientations, authors such as Rao, Metts, & Mora (2003) and Zhu, Basil, & Gordon (2009) add a fourth to the process of e-commerce development by companies: *Company integration*, which seeks to integrate Customer Relationship Management, Value Chain Management, and Supply Chain Management. Consequently, an analysis of the content of winery web pages will clearly show the objectives that wineries pursue and, as a result, the online marketing orientation followed in their strategies.

Therefore, the main objective of this research focuses on evaluating the web pages that exist for wineries in one of the main quality-wine production areas of Spain: Aragón. In Aragón there are four officially recognized Designations of Origin: Cariñena Designation of Origin, Borja Designation of Origin, Calatayud Designation of Origin, and Somontano Designation of Origin. The existence of these four production areas clearly shows the region's business potential, in both domestic and international markets. Moreover, the geographic areas in which the Designations of Origin are located have a variety of different characteristics, both geographic and socio-economic, yet there is a predominance of small and medium wineries in each of these areas. Therefore, using the Internet through a tool such as a web page could allow them to access new business opportunities under better conditions. Within this context, the main objective of this work is to determine if existing wineries make use of the Internet and, more specifically, if they use web pages within their business strategy. And after determining the presence of web pages associated with wineries, this work secondly seeks to determine the level of development of those web pages. To do so, their content is analysed, thereby allowing us to identify the main objectives in relation to creating links with consumers. Thus, in order to analyse the orientation of winery web pages, their dimensions and the respective evaluation criteria are proposed, which are based on the scheme offered by Hasmin, Murphy, & Law (2007). The first dimension, '*Information and Processes*', basically includes both the information orientation and the transactional orientation. The '*Aggregate Value*' dimension includes information that allows detecting both the internal and external integration of a winery. The '*Relationships*' dimension brings together the elements corresponding to interactive communication, both winery-customer and customer-customer (Murphy, Ho, & Chan, 2005). The '*Confidence, Design, and Usability*' dimension is very closely related to the preceding dimension, given that it highlights the role of confidence in creating and building successful relationships with customers (Bauer, Grether, & Leach, 2002; Wang, Head, & Archer, 2000).

The results show a high rate of penetration by web pages, given that 71.71% of all the wineries have a functioning web page. However, the role of web pages within the marketing strategy could be improved, given that the majority of the analysed evaluation criteria could be improved. Thus, the most basic orientation, focused solely on providing information about a winery and its wines, is the most frequent, given that all the analysed web pages contain contact information. And it could be concluded that the web pages are being used more as an electronic brochure rather than as a dynamic and efficient marke-

ting tool. The web pages generally offer fairly complete information about their products, thereby allowing potential customers to obtain information about the characteristics of a wine prior to making a purchase. But it does not seem that wineries are making the most of all this information by using the web page as a sales channel. Less than half of the web pages offer the possibility of making purchases online. Moreover, there are few web pages that offer information about distributors of a winery's products. On the other hand, it can be observed how wineries consider it important to establish interactive relationships with customers through their web pages. Social networks are also highly present on winery web pages, especially Facebook and Twitter, although this element could also be improved. The existence of content that allows interactive communication provides wineries with the opportunity to detect the desires of the demand side and adjust the supply of their products.

After analysing the content, a cluster analysis was performed to determine the existence of differentiated groups of web pages according to their orientation, thereby determining their main business objective. The results show the existence of two types of web pages. The predominant group shows how the role played by web pages within the marketing strategy is not highly relevant, with this tool basically designed to merely provide information. The second group includes those web pages that are more evolved, with an orientation towards company integration, which clearly shows that more ambitious marketing objectives are established. These web pages present all the orientations detected in literature, although they continue to leave room for improvement.

Finally, it should be pointed out that web pages must be functional and easy to use, such that visiting a web page is a satisfactory experience. Even though there are several factors that should be improved, no major problems in the design and use of the analysed web pages were detected. It is important that a web page include the date when it was updated in order to transmit a sense of confidence, both for making a purchase and for obtaining information about activities related to wine tourism.

Therefore, it seems that the first steps towards online marketing have been taken, but major business opportunities are being missed. Future research should consequently investigate the returns that are derived from the presence of a web page as a tool within the marketing strategy. Thus, and for example, it would be important to analyse the elements that are stopping winery owners from promoting the online sales of their products, as well as analyse the development of business networks for developing wine tourism through internal or external integration.