Building Brands through Digital Marketing and Social Media in the Italian Wine Sector

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Today the Internet is the main source of communication, information, services and entertainment worldwide. As a consequence the web marketing activities are spreading increasingly among businesses that offer products and services to the end consumer.

The environment in which businesses compete is characterized by the quick transition to a new interaction with customers based on the use of social networks, blogs, vlogs, podcasts and virtual communities.

The appearance of the Web 2.0 has major implications for many industries, especially those, like the wine sector, offering products that present high level of credence and for which the information research is part of the consumption experience.

The aim of the study is to explore the best practices adopted by wineries in cultivating relationships with the customers through digital marketing and social media.

A qualitative survey will be developed to evaluate from the winery point of view the linkages between the brands image and the social media marketing plans implemented. Case studies will be analysed in order to provide an overview of the most significant experiences in the main Italian wine areas. Particular attention will be paid to the strategic web positioning adopted and the way that wineries interact with customers.

The expected results of this research are: i) to highlight the effective and potential impacts of digital marketing and social media in the brand-customer relationships; ii) to define a framework for the evaluation of best practices in cultivating relationships and loyalty with wine customers; iii) to identify best practices in the Italian wine sector.

The study will contribute to a better understanding of how to manage social media relationships in order to reach higher levels of brand equity for the winery. Managerial implications will concern the delivery of an evaluation framework.

Keywords: Wine brand, digital marketing, social media, case study, Italy