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EMARKETING FOR WINE TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify the main features in Wine Tourism operators' websites and to present a suggestion on how these operators could maximize the Internet tool. Ultimately, this research intends to assess the use of eMarketing for Wine Tourism. The sampled websites belong to six important wine producers in Portugal. Through the content analysis of the websites, we sought to determine the popularity and visibility of these, as well as their performance in categories such as Basic Information, Visual Information, Societal Information, Virtual Information, Trustworthy Information, Website Navigation, Customer Relations and Sales. Also, an email was sent by a Mystery Customer, similar to the widely used technique in Retail, in order to assess the quality of service for online customer, namely time and quality of reply. The results show that companies have not yet realized the full potential of eMarketing. Some suggestions are presented to maximize that tool in order to gain a competitive advantage.

KEYWORDS

eMarketing; Wine Tourism; Portugal.

ECONLIT KEYS

M30; L830.

1. INTRODUCTION

The wine sector is one of the key sectors in the Portuguese agriculture. Facing intense national and international competition, the Wine Tourism is a form of valuation of wine associating it to a series of personal experiences. eMarketing, through website or email, can support this relationship with a number of advantages in terms of additional information, promptness in information processing, and cost. In this research we will study the companies which are a reference to the wine industry, namely, Bacalhôa, Aliança, José Maria da Fonseca, Messias, Aveleda, and Esporão (Group of seven – G7) by using the content analysis of their websites and by contacting them through email. The paper is organized into eight parts. A characterization of Tourism and of the wine sector will be made. We will also address the concept of Wine Tourism. eMarketing and the use of Internet tool in Wine Tourism will be considered as well. Our Methodology and the Results of Analysis to Websites and Emails will also be presented.

2. THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

The Tourism industry is one of the most important industries in the world and it is also a major job-creating sector. Despite being a sector that traditionally, in times of crisis, shows a loss of revenue, it continues to have a major impact on countries' trade balances. In 2008, in the 27 members of the EU, the Tourism sector (accommodation and catering services) reported revenue of 194,100 million Euros and it employed 9.6 million people, many of them in part-time jobs (Eurostat Unit G2, 2011). In Portugal, the added value of tourism reached 5,373 million Euros in 2008 and it generated 440,000 jobs in that year (Contas Satélites do Turismo, 2010). These figures reflect the labour-intensive factor in the industry, making the human factor vital for the sector. However, despite the economic crisis of recent years, the data about Portuguese tourism revenues has been positive. According to data presented in Parliament in March this year (Patrão, 2011), Portugal has increased, from 2009 to 2010, the number of guests (more than 650,000 guests) and overnight

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stays (more than one million overnight stays) and revenues (more than 700 million in revenues).

The two main industries in Tourism are accommodation and travel (Kotler *et al.,* 2006), travel, the first of which is highly dependent on the second (the standard package of travel agencies includes travel and accommodation). Due to the complexity of this industry and its interdependence, Marketing and its professionals must understand the big picture and know to respond to changing consumer needs through creative strategies. Within this framework, the Internet has played an important role. In Portugal, in 2008, on the supply side, 88% of the accommodation establishments accept orders over the Internet, and on the demand side, according to data about the Information Society in Portugal, in 2010, 41% of the Internet users booked accommodation and travel on-line (UMIC, 2011). The evidence suggests that the Internet is on its way to become one of the major distribution channels in this sector.

The great advantage of the Internet is its functioning 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with worldwide coverage and the ability to broadcast pictures (and videos) in colour. It is recognized that the images of the destinations are a critical factor in the tourist decision to visit a region (Gartner and Hunt, 1987). Distinctive and appealing images tend to not only provide a competitive advantage in the process of influencing the choice of destination, but can also lead to an increased visitation for such tourism areas (Gartner and Shen, 1992; Reich, 1999). Photos and videos are the elements that make tangible the Tourism-related services. Therefore, the ability of providing this tangibility on a permanent basis has contributed to the growing importance of Internet as a distribution channel in Tourism. The relatively low costs involved may primarily benefit the smaller operators.

3. THE ELECTRONIC MARKETING

Electronic Marketing (or eMarketing) allows to know each customer on an individual level and to develop offerings for specific needs, thus enabling organizations to gain competitive advantages, in particular, large multinational chains (e.g. a special request from a customer in Lisbon Ritz remains in the database of the

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hotel chain, therefore, that customer can see his special request met whenever he stays at the Ritz, whatever country he is in).

EMarketing comprises three basic principles (Kotler *et al.*, 2006):

1. *Build and manage a database of customers*– a database which is rich in information so that it allows a more efficient targeting;

2. *Define the type of online presence* – an organization can develop an online presence in various ways, using the Internet for a simple search, for providing information, for starting discussions on forums, for providing training, for selling and buying, for making auctions or exchanges, among others. The organization's website must be appealing, relevant and up-to-date to attract repeat visits. Given that location is a major factor in Tourism, the website should contain a map and the directions on how to get there; it can also provide information about products and services and make recommendations, bookings, among other features, depending on the purpose of the organization;

3. *Be accessible and respond quickly to customers* – the customers have high expectations about how quickly they want to receive the answers to their questions or complaints to the organizations. Many features can be performed automatically (such as confirming room and flight availability or booking). But when the answer can not be provided automatically, a way must be provided so that the customer can interact with the organization (for example, a phone number). It is important to remember that you should communicate with the customer by the method of his choice. Often, the method preferred by the customer may not be the electronic one.

For many organizations, the first step in eMarketing is building a site on the Web. Websites vary greatly in purpose and content. The most basic type is a corporate website. Such websites are not designed to sell the organization's products and services, but rather to provide information to customers and also to complement the sales channels. Other organizations create a Marketing website. The purpose of these websites is to involve the customer in an interaction that approximates to the purchase, that is, such website serves as a true channel of distribution.

4. PORTUGAL AND WORLDWIDE WINE INDUSTRY

According to the data from the U.S. Wine Institute, the largest wine producers in 2009 were France, Italy, Spain, the USA and Argentina, representing 64.04% of all wine produced worldwide. Portugal was the tenth largest producer, accounting for 2.24% of total wine produced. In relation to consumption by volume, in the top 5 are Germany and China, joining the first three France, USA and Italy. Portugal ranks as the 12th largest consumer of wine by volume, and the 5th largest consumer of wine per capita in the world. In terms of vineyard areas, the first place goes to Spain, then France, Italy, China and Turkey. Portugal comes in ninth place.

Vineyard and wine are both a cultural and a economic heritage to Portugal as well as for most Mediterranean countries, being one of the fundamental traits of our cultural identity as a people and as a nation. History of the vineyard and wine dates back to the foundation of Portugal and to the role of the Religious Orders who settled in the territory, having been instrumental in the expansion of our wine and culinary culture and the development of various wine regions. In general, diversity is often considered the key feature of Portuguese wine. Diversity is mainly due to three factors: climate, soils and grape varieties.

The wine sector in Portugal accounted for 2.1% of GDP in the period 2006 to 2009 Wine production in Portugal is also an important component of the agricultural industry and it represented, in 2007, approximately 13% of the value generated, and its weight has increased since 1980 (INE, 2011). Portugal also is an wine exporter and it has reached, in the first quarter of 2011, 132.14 million Euros in exports and shipments. Angola remains in a prominent position as a leading destination for Portuguese wines with a weight of 27.4% in volume and 16.7% in value. The countries with most developments are China, Spain and also Brazil, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe and Japan. Portugal mainly imports wine from Spain, Italy, France and Germany (IVV, 2011).

According to data from the National Institute of Statistics (2011), for the production of the main permanent crops, vine is the second largest in absolute terms, with an area of 177,800 hectares which is approximately 26% of the total area planted.

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As a result of the vitality of the wine sector, the combining of the vineyard and wine with other activities also increased, namely, in the Tourism sector. That is why Wine Tourism has become a very popular activity in Portugal. In a study presented by Portugal Tourism Office in 2007 (Plano Estratégico Nacional do Turismo), the category Food and wine (although the term Wine is not used, its association with the Wine product is inevitable) was presented as one of ten strategic products for the development of tourism in Portugal. The European market for Food and Wine hit in 2004, 600,000 trips/year and is expected to reach 1.2 million trips/year, by 2015, which is an increase of 7% each year. The typical Gastronomy and Wine consumer is French (16%), Dutch (15%) and English (11%) and spends between 150 and 450 Euros per day, and this amount tends to be higher for learning trips because thematic activities, e.g. courses and workshops are included (Turismo de Portugal, 2007). Portugal may also have a potential market for Wine Tourism, especially, in the markets where its wine is exported as well as in the markets where tourists come from. In the first case, potential wine tourists can come from Angola, France and the United Kingdom, the three main destinations of exports (in value) of Portuguese wines. In the second case, besides the United Kingdom, Spain and Germany (IVV, 2011) may also be potential targets for promotion of Portuguese Wine Tourism.

4.1) *WINE TOURISM*

Several authors, economic agents and responsible bodies tried to come up with a definition and conceptualization of Wine Tourism, resulting in different approaches. When viewed from the perspective of Marketing, emphasis is placed primarily on the experiences of visitors. Hall and Macionis (1998) defined Wine Tourism as "... visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which grape wine regions are the main motivating factor for visitors." This is the most cited definition in scientific articles on Wine Tourism. However, Getz (2000) points out that there are three perspectives to be considered on the issue: the perspective of wine producers, tourist agencies and consumers. Wine Tourism can thus be seen as a consumer behaviour, a strategy by which tourism destinations develop and promote an image associated with wine and a marketing opportunity for wine producers to educate and to sell their products directly to consumers. Other authors, namely O'Neill and

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Charters (2000), Macionis and Cambourne (1998) also adopt a tripartite view of Wine Tourism referring to the vineyard/winery, the product wine and the visitor as the three fundamental elements that form the Wine Tourism mix. These and other views on Wine Tourism contain several common features: the importance of the experience for the consumer, the supply and demand for wine, the educational component, the relationship with food, the inclusion of Wine Tourism in the image of a tourist destination and an opportunity to Marketing.

On the supply side, Wine Tourism in Portugal is organized and structured primarily around wine routes. A wine route is a tourism product that consists of a marked and advertised trail organized as a network that includes wineries and facilities open to the public, by which the agriculture territories and their productions can be known and marketed as a tourism attraction (Simões, 2008). According to Hall et al. (2000) the concept of a demarcated geographical area is a key feature in the wine route because it defines for members an identity that proclaims unique attributes for their wines and cultural heritage. Such characteristics are the platform for a regional brand that can be associated both to tourism and to wine industry.

It is practically unanimous that a successful development of Wine Tourism depends on a holistic approach, meaning that several aspects must be taken into account and various stakeholders should be regarded and involved in planning, implementing and promoting Wine Tourism. The concept of wine route embodies this holistic approach.

"Interest in studying Wine Tourism is well expressed in various publications in different countries. Examples of studies in different countries are: Australia (Macionis, 1997, Dowling and Carlsen, 1999), Canada (Hackett, 1998; Telfer, 2001; Williams and Kelly, 2001; Williams and Dossa, 2003; Hashimoto and Telfer, 2003), Chile (Sharples, 2002), France (Thevenin, 1996; Frochot, 2000), Hungary (Szivas, 1999), Italy (Pavan, 1994), New Zealand (Beverland, 1998; Johnson, 1998; Mitchell and Hall, 2003) , Spain (Gilbert, 1992), South Africa (Preston-Whyte, 2000; Bruwer, 2003; Demhardt, 2003), United States of America (Dodd, 1995; Peters, 1997; Skinner, 2000) and Portugal (Costa, 1999 ; Costa and Dolgner, 2003; Correia, 2005; Guedes, 2006)" (Costa; Kastenholz, 2009, p.1494). One can see that most scientific literature on the subject of Wine Tourism comes from the so-called New World countries. In

1998, the first conference on Wine Tourism was held in Australia, having this country developed a national strategy for Wine Tourism.

4.1.1) INTERNET AND WINE TOURISM

A key element in the Wine Tourism experience is the visitor's first contact usually by a visit to the winery/cellar (O'Neill et al., 2002). Websites and email can offer other doors for this first contact. Tourists look for information so they can choose among different travelling options and, as noted earlier, the Internet is an excellent platform for providing information. As special-interest tourists, the winery visitors are more likely to use the Internet to gather travel information (such maps, activities, attractions and facilities) making the website an ideal venue for the information search (Yuan et al., 2004).

Comparing tourists who do not seek information online with those seeking information on the websites of destinations, it was found that the latter visit the destination much more often and plan more future visits than those who do not seek (Siu-Ian and Morrison, 2003).

One can also establish a positive relation between the information satisfaction and customers' behavioural intention (Jeong et al., 2003). Thus, providing online information is shown as important for those involved in Wine Tourism, particularly as learning is a recurrent theme for serious wine tourists (Ravenscroft and Westering, 2001). Therefore, websites offer an additional tool for tourists interested in the search for knowledge and an opportunity for agents to position their brand and to promote their sales.

The Internet has also became an important sales tool for wineries throughout the world and an increasing number of wineries have developed websites that allow customers to order wines directly through a cybershop. Wineries, particularly small-scale companies, can use the sales options available on their websites to overcome limitations on distribution channels and to expand sales (Yuan et al., 2004).

5. METHODOLOGY

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What are the features used in Wine Tourism websites? How can agents for Wine Tourism maximize the internet tool? These are some of the questions that this research will try to answer.

Our methodology is the content analysis for the websites belonging to six Portuguese wine producers that make up the G7 project: Esporão, Messias, Aliança, Bacalhôa, José Maria da Fonseca and Aveleda. Despite the exit of Sogrape and a greater concentration due to the acquisition of Caves Aliança by the same shareholder of Bacalhôa, the G7 group continues to be an example of synergy strategies in the sector of wine particularly in terms of international promotion. The group includes some of the largest companies in the wine sector at national level, which are often considered as a reference, just as Sogrape, of what is best done at national level. We can highlight, in particular, factors such as quality, market leadership, innovation, brand equity, number of years in the market, wine tourism and the amount of resources available. Altogether, seven wine regions are represented: Douro, Green Wine ("Vinho Verde"), Bairrada, Dão, Lisboa, Alentejo and Setúbal Peninsula.

The research will primarily study the websites' popularity and their features. It will also be carried out an analysis using the email criteria. In order to assess the websites' popularity, Google and Alexa tools will be used for measuring the popularity and visibility of websites in Google Rank (ranges from 0 to 10 and the higher the ranking, the greater the website's visibility), in Alexa Traffic Rank (ranges from 1 for websites as Yahoo.com to millions for rarely visited websites) and links to websites that help to increase traffic. Studies have shown that these tools provide reliable and valid measures (Garofalakis et al., 2002; Palmer, 2002). Google search engine in particular is perceived to be the most important tool in information searching (Law et al., 2009).

In relation to the website's features, we will use the features brought by Murphy et al. (2005) which were based on literature review, discussions with Wine Tourism operators and preliminary investigations, but adapting some features to the Portuguese reality. The categories found by those researchers and also used in this investigation were: Basic Information, Visual Information, Societal Information, Virtual Information, Trustworthy Information, Website Navigation, Customer Relations and Sales. In wineries website evaluation research by Yuan et al. (2004) the features

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used to evaluate the wineries websites were very similar to the one's used by Murphy's research team.

Basic and Visual Information includes the most basic information that serves as a framework for Wine Tourism websites, namely, the company's data, data about the products that are sold, and the images used to illustrate the company's activities which give the tangibility provided by the Internet. The Visual component can help to bridge the intangibility of Tourism.

Societal Information is about the concerns acknowledged by companies in relation to the community and the environment. Virtual Information is what the company does to take advantage of the Internet's multimedia characteristics by using videos and virtual tours. Trustworthy Information is about the confidence that websites visitors can have in the information made available, namely, in external links, in copyright and in the frequency at which the information is updated. Safety and privacy, or their absence, is often cited as a major concern for Internet users, so the more security and privacy a website provides to its visitors, the greater the likelihood of them repeating the visit, and even making transactions online.

In Website Navigation, we will assess the ease or difficulty in finding all the information described above since it is important not only the content of a website but also the ease with which you can search it. In Customer Relations, we will try to assess the level of websites' interactivity with visitors/customers. Just as the technique of Mystery Customer, widely used in Retail, we will use the email to contact the above referred producers in order to assess the quality of online customer service, particularly regarding time and quality of response.

We also intend to measure in which stage of development the companies' websites are, based on the notion that websites evolve over three stages (Doolin et al., 2002; Hanson, 2000). Websites evolve from Stage 1 (providing information) to Stage 2 (interactivity is added), and then to Stage 3 (personalisation is added). In their first stage, websites provide basic information such as company information, product variety and physical address. As the website evolves, interactive features are added, such as newsletter subscription or downloadable brochures. Finally, in Stage 3, personalisation features are added, such as online sales or bookings.

6. RESULTS

6.1) RESULTS FOR WEBSITES ANALYSIS

Popularity and Visibility of Websites

The analysis of the three metrics used shows that, regarding visibility in Google Rank, websites values range between 4 and 5, so there is no one standing out, having all an average visibility. With regard to popularity, in Alexa Traffic Rank metric, websites range from position 2,256,833 to position 12,328,191, with companies 2 and 3 a little below the others in terms of website visits. The number of links to the pages ranges from 36 to 141, standing out the website of company 1 with more links to its web page.

	1 Finagra	2 Messias	3 Caves Aliança	4 Bacalhôa	5 JM Fonseca	6 Aveleda
Popularity						
Google Rank	5/10	4/10	5/10	5/10	5/10	5/10
Alexa Traffic Rank	2 471 097	12 328 191	9 879 818	2 555 043	2 256 833	2 514 218
N.º of Links/Reputation	141	36	37	77	93	84
Basic Information						
Company	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wineries/Vineards	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Wines	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Other products	✓					✓
Restaurant	✓					
Tours	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Events			✓	✓	✓	
Contact Information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Legal Disclaimers	✓				✓	
Awards	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Visual Information						
Wines	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Labels				✓		
Facilities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Food	✓					
Location Map		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Societal Information						
Environmental Concerns	✓				✓	✓
Community	✓					
Virtual Information						
Document Downloads/Videos	✓	✓			✓	✓
Virtual Tour						✓
Trustworthy Information						
Domain (.com; .pt)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Privacy Policy	✓		✓	✓		
Copyright Updates		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Personal Profiles	✓		✓		✓	
Links to other websites			✓	✓	✓	✓
Website Navigation						
Search	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Site Map	✓		✓	✓		
Languages	2	2	2	2	2	3
FAQs						
Customer Relations						
News	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Forms (Tours, Complaints, Information requests,...)			✓	✓		✓
Brochures						
Newsletter			✓	✓		
Social Networks (Facebook, Twitter,...)	✓		✓		✓	
Wine Club						
Sales						
Online Orders						
Gift Vouchers						
Online Reservations						
Shops Locator						
Shopping Cart						

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Table 1: *Websites* Analysis
Source: Own elaboration

Basic Information

All websites have information about the company, their wines and contact information. Additional basic information is related to the vineyards and wineries, visits and awards given to wines. Depending on the size and type of company structure, websites also have information about restaurants, events organized/participated by the companies and other manufactured products. Interestingly, given that the main product is wine, that is, an alcoholic beverage, only two websites have disclaimers regarding the age of the page visitor and/or advice on drinking in moderation. Without trying to establish a cause-effect connection, it appears that the website having less basic information ranks the lowest in visibility and popularity.

Visual Information

In this category the provided information is fairly homogeneous. It should be stressed that the website 1 does not provide a location map, despite the importance of location in the Tourism sector. Nevertheless, it is one of the websites with the most visibility and popularity. Website 4 has the greatest variety of visual information and it is known that it belongs to the same business group as the company for website 3.

Societal Information

In this category, companies still show little involvement in social responsibility in their daily operations, or there is not much information about it. Only website 1 includes detailed information about the company's activities regarding the community and the environment. Websites 5 and 6 just refer to the environmental concerns of their companies.

Virtual Information

Regarding information showing Stage 2 in the website development, that is, interactivity, we observe that not all have yet evolved to this Stage. Website 6 has the highest level of interactivity, making it possible to download brochures, watch videos or conduct a virtual tour. Website 5 includes in its menu a virtual tour, but it is just a promotional video. According to these criteria, websites 3 and 4 have no interactivity with the web page visitor.

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Trustworthy Information

All websites have had their domains registered as .pt or .com, but besides this, trustworthy information proves not to be a concern for all companies surveyed. Just a few include the Privacy Policy and Copyright, and none displays the date of last update to the website. Most companies show links to other websites. Nevertheless, just some of them have personal profiles, adding a personal touch to the website as well as giving greater confidence to the user.

Website Navigation

All websites are available in more than one language, which may indicate a concern for foreign markets. None includes the topic of frequently asked questions (FAQ), but most allow searching the website and seeing the sitemap.

Customer Relations

All websites offer news, not only about the company but also about the products, and especially the prizes that have won. The presence on social networks is not strong yet: only three companies are in Facebook social network and there are only two on Twitter. No website refers to wine clubs and none displayed brochures. Few provide newsletters or forms.

Sales

Stage 3 of website development is not present in any of the websites surveyed, which indicates that they have not yet entered the last stage of evolution.

6.2) *RESULTS FOR EMAIL ANALYSIS*

On a Friday afternoon, an email was sent to the above mentioned six companies, requesting information about the possibility of organizing a visit to the facilities as well as having a meal with wine and accommodation. This way we tried to evaluate the use of email as a business communication and sales tool. According to several authors (Ober, 2001; Zemke & Connellan, 2001) an email must meet a set of principles: Promptness, Politeness, Personalisation, Professionalism, Promotional and Technical.

	1	3	4	5	6
Prompt					
Working days to reply	1 day	1 day	1 day	0 days	1 day
Hours and minuts to reply	19h55m	21h26m	16h17m	17h25m	16h39
Polite					
Open with "Dear/Dearest"	✓			✓	
Thanked recipient for their interest	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Used "pleased"					
Closed with "Best regards"	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Personal					
Greeted recipient by name	✓				
Closed with sender's name	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Included sender's title	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Professional					
Answered the question	✓			✓	✓
Used proper language	✓	✓		✓	
Promotional					
Winery name	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winery website address	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winery physical address	✓	✓	✓		✓
Phone and fax numbers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Slogan and other promotional messages	✓	✓			✓
Branded email address	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Technical					
Use plain text email					
Included attachment	✓			✓	✓
Total email size	5.456 Kb	38 Kb	34 Kb	2 Mb	286 Kb
Total attachement size	5.395 Kb			791 Kb	122 Kb
Disclaimer				✓	✓

Table 2: *E-mails* Analysis
Source: Own elaboration

Concerning Promptness, one of six companies did not respond at all. All other replied promptly within one business day, a result that is within the recommended 24 hours in order to meet the expectations of a rapid treatment (Murphy & Tan, 2003;

Zemke & Connellan, 2001). However, one of them replied twice to the same request, in different days and by different people, which indicates that there is no proper treatment of emails. With regard to Politeness, only two in five companies began with a formal treatment of "Dear/Sir". All thanked the interest shown in the request, but none used the recommended term "please". Instead, they all ended well the email with "Yours sincerely".

At a Personalisation level, only one replied using the customer's name. However, all replied mentioning their name and job title.

At a Professionalism level, only three answered to the questions asked and used the appropriate language. One even wrote a completely unformatted text. Good results were obtained at a Promotion level. All put their name, Internet address, telephone number, fax number and used a personalised email. However, one company failed to give its physical address and two did not put any slogan or promotional message, meaning that they did not properly use the email as a promotion tool.

At the Technical level, all emails used plain text and image, and in three cases, attachments were included. For users with lower speed connections to the Internet, emails with attachments over 5Mb may not meet customer expectations. Only two companies put their privacy policy, meaning that most companies do not use it yet as a way to pass confidence to the customer, as we have seen for the website.

7. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research focused on the six major Portuguese wine producers. In our opinion it's equally important to extend this methodology to other Wine Tourism agents like wine routes or smaller wineries. Following Yuan et al. (2004) research it would be useful to cross the results of the websites and email evaluation with the wineries strategy to understand the role that technology plays within these strategies. Also a demand side research would be useful to understand customers' perceptions and how a website image and usability affects their purchase intentions. A comparative study between Portuguese wineries and wineries from other countries should provide greater awareness and a deeper understanding of the use of eMarketing in Wine Tourism.

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8. CONCLUSION

The results in Table 1 support the fact that the companies websites are still in Stage 1 of evolution. They are very strong in the information component, are beginning to make some investment in interactivity, but still very weak in the personalisation component. A website should provide textual and graphical information to make it appealing to visitors, but also should invest in maintaining a relationship with the customer through a wine club, presence in social networks and ultimately online sales. A website should also reassure visitors by a Privacy Policy, links to websites or personal profiles of oenologists or people responsible in the companies who can help ensure that trust. By the analysis, we also concluded that more focus on societal information, virtual information, customer relations or sales component would help distinguish the company from the competition. These findings are in line with Yuan et al. (2004) research where the use of the web by the small wineries could be described as being at an early infancy stage, failing to capitalize upon the web's unique interactive capabilities.

In parallel, emails are an excellent tool for personalising messages. Given the websites' inability in personalising their message, therefore, it should be the email to do so in an attempt to create an individual marketing relationship with the customer. So we recommend the adoption of a more personalised treatment with the customer (for example including the customer name in the message) and apply Customer Relationship Management practices in order to create records and a history of interactions with the customers The right management of the database and the proper training of the companies employees will avoid duplication of contacts, as we have found. If Wine Tourism companies are unable to provide the download of online brochures, they should have different types of email attachments to respond appropriately to the needs of targeted customers (e.g. requests for accommodation, experiences around wine, matching regional cuisine with wine), in this way, the companies avoid using too generic or heavy attachments. It is also recommended to include a Privacy Policy in the email in a more obvious manner as a guarantee of trustworthiness in communication management. Similarly, it is important that emails are fully used as a tool for communication and promotion of Wine tourism projects,

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through slogans or promotional messages. It should be avoided to provide an email address as a means of contact, but when contacted they did not give any response.

Given that the wine tourist seeks knowledge, providing information online becomes very important and can make a difference at the time of the purchase decision. Considering that eMarketing is faster and cheaper than Traditional Marketing, it provides convenience for the consumer and it is a message with broad reach, which shows that eMarketing is an opportunity for Wine Tourism operators who could gain competitive advantages, by just taking simple measures as those illustrated in Tables 1 and 2.

Our work has some limitations. Due to our non-probabilistic sampling, it is not possible to infer the results to the universe, as our choice of sample was influenced by time constraints, as well as by the human and financial resources for conducting this experiment. However, we hope that our research will be a contribution to the research literature concerning Wine Tourism.

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