

## How to Grow Your Wine Club Part 1

### How to Ask People to Join Your Club

Question: Should you ask anyone that buys your wine sign up for your wine club?

Answer: No!

There is a vast difference between a lead, anyone who buys your wine, and a qualified lead, as someone who meets your wine club requirements (i.e. price points, wine consumption amount etc.). Your job is to identify which consumer leads are qualified and turn them into club members.

### Qualified Leads

A 'Qualified Lead' is a sales term you've probably heard over and over; let's actually take a look at what makes a lead qualified for your wine club and where to find them. You need to first start with a few questions about the makeup of your wine club:

1. How much does your wine club cost?
2. How many bottles do you send out each shipment?
3. What features besides wine are included in membership?
4. What wines are you shipping (reds, whites, etc)?

From those questions you'll be able to quickly establish a few guidelines that you should keep in mind as you are seeking out potential wine club members. Next you should consider the target market that your winery is going after (i.e. demographic, geographic, psychographic and behavioral characteristic information) and use that to benefit your wine club's marketing efforts. You should start to have an idea about what potential members look like.

It's time to find your qualified leads and convert them to members. There are several places where you should be promoting your wine club; I've split them into two categories, direct and indirect.

### Direct

The direct category encompasses promoting your wine club during all face-to-face interaction. It's common for wineries to have a sign up right in the tasting room but you should also promote it at your winery's special events, off-site tastings, wine festivals, marketing events and industry only events (even people within the wine industry such as distributors and reps will join wine clubs to gain access to limited wines and be included in member-only events).

Make it easy for your consumers to sign up! Also make sure that your staff doesn't come off as pushy sales people. Two great ways to have a sign up is a kiosk or a paper form to fill out.

A kiosk, in my opinion, is the better of the two options because you let the consumers do the work. The initial cost of the computer is greater than having paper forms, however, depending on the size and amount of members signing up a kiosk could save money in the long run. It lowers administration costs because no one manually enters the consumer information. A good wine club software platform should already have a kiosk mode.

The other option is to have a simple form your tasters fill out during or after their tasting or other events. They fill out their information on the form and the winery would go through them and enter the new wine club members into the system. This option would save the cost of the computer but requires more time from your staff.

Another benefit for the kiosk option is that the consumer enters their credit card information at the same time they sign up for a membership, one quick process. If you go for the paper option, you'll either have to process their card through as a purchase (or keep on file if you charge at the time of the shipments) or get them to enter their information at home online, not as quick and easy.

Whichever option works best for your winery make sure that your staff is trained to assist the sign up process and promote it! It's one thing if they have information about your club and it's another if they are passionate about it and believe that it benefits the qualified consumer.

#### Indirect

There are a few options for indirect ways to sign up consumers to your wine club. The main types are online, direct mail and the telephone. The telephone can be used as a great tool to contact your consumers and still capture the personal touch they felt when they visited your tasting room. It's a good way to show them that you care and that their business really means something to you and your winery. Direct mail is also a great marketing tool to use to encourage your consumer to become members. In the next email we'll go deeper into the information you should use to identify the key consumers, which would be suited for direct mail or the telephone.

Having an online wine club sign up online is an absolute must! It allows for your consumers to sign up whenever they feel like it from the comfort of their home with no sales pressure from the staff. They shouldn't feel pressured if you're promoting your club right, but sadly too many wineries are pushing their wine clubs so much that it turns people away and ruins their experience. An online sign up will also allow your raving fans from out of town, province or country to buy your wine without having to search extensively for it.

Don't put your wine club sign up on your home page! Just because there are more hits on that page doesn't mean they are quality hits. You should place your wine club sign up form on a clearly labeled section of your website. Have a page for the wine club explaining its details. You should notice the quality of hits will be greatly increased and you can measure your results with web analytics. The beauty of the online sign up is that it's effortless on your end. There are no administration costs to enter data (their information should be seamlessly entered into your database) and it didn't use your tasting room staff's time.

### Numbers to Monitor

Here are some numbers that you need to be monitoring for your wine club.

- \* Attrition Rate – The number of members active at the beginning of the month who are still active at the end of the month, expressed as a percent. (Calculated monthly)

- \* Conversion Rate – Sign Ups vs. Visitors. (I would recommend slitting it into two categories (a) Sign Ups vs. Tasting Room Traffic and (b) Web Sign Ups vs. Unique Visitors)

- \* Batch Failure Rate – The number of Successful Orders vs. Active Members