Social Media Marketing in Greek Winery: Evidence from Facebook - Abstract

Effrosyni Bitakou[1], Sotirios Karetsos[1], Constantina Costopoulou[1] and Maria Ntaliani[1]

[1] Agricultural University of Athens, Informatics Laboratory, Iera Odos 75, Athens, 11855, Greece

Summary

In the last decade, several social media platforms have emerged and gained instant popularity for personal use and business. Usually, these platforms are supported by well-known global ICT companies and their diffusion starts mainly from youths and gradually reaches even seniors. Also, social media have transformed businesses' dynamics, offering new opportunities for implementing effective marketing and gaining competitive advantage. In this context, businesses are working on their social media profiles as means to interact, keep in touch with and promote products / services to their customers. Therefore, social media marketing refers to the process that utilizes social media technologies and channels to create, communicate, and deliver marketing offerings that enhance the company stakeholders' value. Moreover, according to literature, social media promotional messages can be effective at influencing consumers' perceptions about product image and lead to consumption behaviors. Recently, the COVID-19 outbreak and the adopted measures for its limitation i.e., consecutive lockdowns, have severely affected various business sectors, including logistics, tourism, and food and beverage industry, and have boosted even more the use of social media, especially among businesses that were mostly impacted by those measures. For example, the shutting down of the food services has impacted several business sectors and wineries where among them. It has to be noted that the internet and social media provide important channels for wine promotion and sale. Moreover, wine may be considered a social product, as it is included in the top eight product categories involved in discussions over the internet. Wineries are increasingly adopting social media but at a slow pace, as most lack the knowledge to incorporate and exploit social media effectively in their marketing strategy. Therefore, the objective of this research is to study social media marketing in Greek winery during the COVID-19 outbreak. More specifically, it focuses on Facebook and tries to comparatively assess wineries' activities and impact through their Facebook profile, before and after the imposed lockdowns in Greece. According to recent statistics, with about 2.8 billion active users, Facebook is the most popular social network worldwide and also remains the most important and popular social media platform among marketers on the B2B and B2C spectrum. The study focused on 311 Greek wineries that evaluated using a social media analytics tool, namely, the Fanpage Karma. This tool helps in assessing key variables, such as the number of followers, posts, comments, likes, and dislikes, the average daily number of posts made, as well as identifying the most popular text, images, videos, and links. The Facebook activity of Greek wineries analyzed for four periods. Specifically, the first period regards pre-COVID-19, two periods regard lockdowns and the last period refers after the lockdowns (i.e., with reduced or no restrictions). The results of the study reveal that the majority of the wineries have not used Facebook. The comparison of the variable "posts per day" for the four aforementioned periods, showed no or very little differentiation. However, only a few wineries used Facebook for advertising purposes by increasing the number of posts during the COVID-19 outbreak. These results led to the conclusion that Greek wineries have not used Facebook for marketing purposes. It is recommended, that they should use more efficiently social media in order to take advantage of the positive influence they could have on their businesses.

Keywords

Social media marketing, Greek wineries, wine business, social media analytics tools, COVID