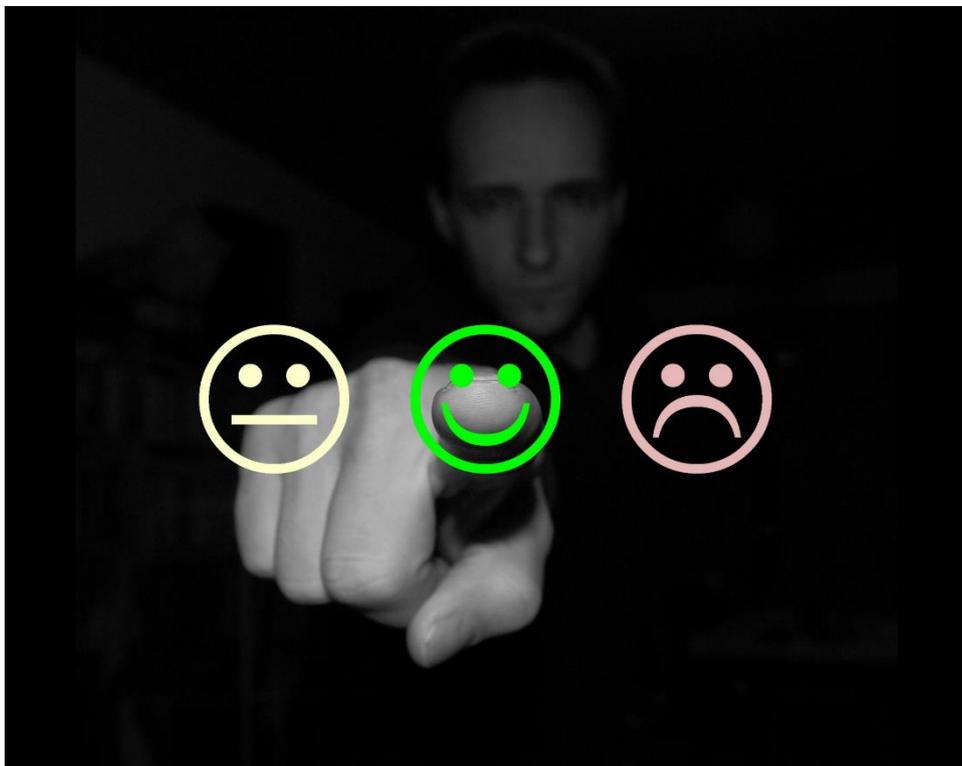




CONSUMER RESEARCH WITH IMPACT

WINE CONSUMERS - PART 3



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In this blog post (the third in the Wine Consumer Series brought to you by Sauvignon blanc SA), **guidelines for consumer research with impact** will be provided. Considering the pearls and pitfalls of consumer research, this article will help guide wine producers in their decision to undertake consumer research. Some Sauvignon blanc consumer research gaps are also identified.

WHEN TO CONSIDER CONSUMER RESEARCH?

Consumer research is used to support strategic wine decisions. Some more specific examples of when consumer research should be considered are listed below.

- **Prior to making strategic product or brand decisions** which can range from a concept idea to a new wine label design. This approach will **help understand consumer perception and likability** of the product or concept **before investing** in costly new product development on a commercial scale.
- To **gain insight on consumers' perception of your brand** within a category and against major competitors. This approach could, for example, help to **evaluate whether current marketing efforts are effective and aligned with core values** while providing insight on brand equity status (perceived “stance” in the market).
- To **improve product performance/sales/online wine shopping experience**. Consumer research will help to identify underperforming attributes that are important to the target market.
- To **understand target market segment(s)** and position different wines appropriate for specific target markets.

TRANSLATING CONSUMER INSIGHTS INTO ACTION

Often, **small and medium-sized wineries don't have the luxury of in-house consumer insight support** and need to rely on consultant market research companies. Making use of external consultants can become problematic, specifically when translating the consumer insights into action. **Some practical guidelines are provided to ensure that research results have impact:**

1. Make sure the assigned **market researcher is also a product or category specialist** that can work with your team to assist with the integration of research results into strategy.

2. Ideally, **the researcher should also have a bigger picture. He/she needs to understand the business objectives, target market needs and expectations, trends as well as hidden variables.** The consumer research findings should, therefore, not be used in isolation to drive wine strategy decision-making.
3. Collaboration, **mutual trust and knowledge** transfer between all parties are key.
4. Always **ask for a presentation on the results**, allowing time for a Q&A session to clarify research results.

VALUE FOR MONEY RESULTS

Consumer research is particularly valuable but can be taxing on wine producers' resources. Below are some **guidelines to make sure you get value for money results**, including responsibilities of the wine producers/business teams during the research process.

Wine producers/business teams need to:

- **Be clear on what they would like to have addressed and what the main problem(s) are.** Without a proper understanding of what the real issue is, research findings can be unsatisfying and costly to all role-players.
- Make sure the market researcher does a **needs analysis, formulate a proposal and methodology with objectives, clearly stipulating the specific questions** that will be answered by the consumer research.
- Ask for **previous examples and beware of a "one approach fits all"** which might only provide generic results.
- **Approve all major steps of the research process prior to data collection;** once the data has been collected, the process cannot be reversed.
- **Be part of the research process**, e.g. give input in the design and testing of surveys.
- Ask whether the **consumers participating in the research "fits" the profile of the intended target market(s).**

SAUVIGNON BLANC CONSUMER RESEARCH GAPS

It is important to **retain and grow Sauvignon blanc market share**, especially as younger consumers appear to have different wine purchasing patterns. Building on the Sauvignon blanc consumer insights provided in the **first two blogs of this series**, some of the **research gaps/questions** below might be worthwhile to investigate.

- Younger generations' **liking** of Sauvignon blanc
- Younger generations' Sauvignon blanc **purchase barriers**
- Younger generations' **perception of unwooded and wooded** Sauvignon blanc
- Younger generations' **perceived value** of Sauvignon blanc (price perception)
- What is the **best way to promote** Sauvignon blanc to younger generations?
- Consumers' **motives for purchasing** Sauvignon blanc – a geographical segmentation (e.g. Western Cape vs Gauteng)
- Consumers' **perception of lower alcohol** Sauvignon blanc wines
- Consumers' **willingness to pay** a premium for lower alcohol Sauvignon blanc wines

CONCLUSION

Consumer research is valuable when making strategic product decisions and can save wine producers money in the long-term. **The guidelines given above will help the producer to successfully approach consumer research to ensure research results have optimal impact.**

In the next blog post of this Wine Consumer series, the success of New Zealand agricultural products, including Sauvignon blanc, will be unpacked from a consumer perspective.

REFERENCES

Consumer Solutions. 2020. "A guide to consumer research for small and medium businesses". Jun, 10. Available: <https://www.consumersolutions.co.za/post/a-guide-to-consumer-research-for-small-and-medium-businesses>.
