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Applying Agenda-Setting Theory to Consumer Products: Oregon Wine

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Applying Agenda-Setting Theory to Consumer Products: Oregon Wine

Lisa Weidman, Primary Investigator

Katie Paysinger, Collaborator

Presented to the 2010 Summer Collaborative Research Seminar

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Orientation

- Discipline/field: mass communications
- Focus: public relations
- Subject of this study: *public relations pertaining to wine, specifically wines made in Oregon.*
- How effective are Oregon wineries in communicating the distinctive attributes of their wines to the public via the mass media?

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Purpose of the research

- To "build theory"
- To advance the use of mass-communication theory in public relations practice
- To assess the effectiveness of Oregon winery communications
- Objectives of the study:
  - To "build theory"
  - To advance the use of mass-communication theory in public relations practice
  - To assess the effectiveness of Oregon winery communications

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Description of the study

Two-step flow of information:

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Description of the study

- The study has three components:
  - Analyze materials sent to the media by wineries.
  - Analyze articles written about Oregon wines.
  - Survey wine drinkers around the country to see what they know about Oregon wines.

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Theory being tested

- **Agenda setting**: a media-effects theory that says the mass media set the public agenda of topics to think about and discuss.
- **First-level agenda setting**: the media influence our perception of which topics or issues are most important.
- **Second-level agenda setting**: the media influence our perception of which *attributes* of those topics or issues are most important.

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Methodology

- Two methods were used:
  - Content analysis: the systematic study of documents, such as…
    - Newspaper articles, diaries, ads, TV shows, press releases, etc.
  - Survey: asking many people to report what they think, feel or know

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Methodology

- Content analysis of winery literature:
  - Solicit materials from Oregon wineries.
  - Develop coding system (instructions and form).
  - Establish "intercoder reliability."
  - Identify attributes of Oregon wines, wineries, grapes and vines discussed in the literature.
  - Tally the attributes.

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Methodology

- Content analysis of media content:
  - Collect articles from *Wine Spectator, Wine Enthusiast* and five newspapers.
    - *The New York Times, The Washington Post, The St. Petersburg Times, The Chicago Tribune*, and *The Los Angeles Times*
  - Establish "intercoder reliability."
  - Identify attributes of Oregon wines, wineries, grapes and vines discussed in the articles.
  - Tally the attributes.

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Preliminary Findings

- Winery literature:
  - We solicited press materials from 12 wineries, received them from 10.
  - We analyzed 138 brochures, fact sheets, tasting notes, etc.
  - We identified 2,655 attributes.
  - Of these, the most common were "rich," "complex," "ripeness (of the fruit)" and "acidity."

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Findings: Winery literature

Attribute	No. of appearances
Rich	82
Complex	71
Ripeness	57
Acidity	54
Elegant	43
Balance	41
Cherry Aroma	35
Structure	28
Sustainable	28
Spice Flavor	27
Long Finish	26
Quality	26
Intense	25

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Preliminary Findings

- Articles that mention Oregon wine:
  - We analyzed 285 articles in total:
    - 21 articles from the five newspapers
    - 21 feature articles from the two magazines
    - 241 brief reviews from the two magazines
  - We identified 2,624 attributes.
  - Of these, the most common were "light," "acidity," "pear flavor" and "lingering flavor."

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Findings: Media content

Attribute	No. of appearances
Light	78
Acidity	44
Pear flavor	41
Lingering flavor	37
Raspberry flavor	35
Spice flavor	28
Earthy	26
Cherry flavor	24
Elegant	24
Bright	20
Delicate frame	20
Plum flavor	19
Tangy	19

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Media attributes

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Next steps

- Run statistical tests to compare results of the two content analyses.
- Conduct the survey of consumers.
- Compare consumer knowledge with attributes in winery literature and wine articles to see if there is any correlation.

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