REPUTATION OF OREGON WINE

BACKGROUND

- Reputation: aggregate assessment of overall appeal of a company, industry, region, or country
- Reputation of wine/wine regions impacts wine purchase decisions and regional economies, but there is a lack of research on regional reputation related to Oregon wine
- Study objectives
  - Assess regional reputation associated with Oregon wine
  - Increase understanding of factors associated with the purchase of Oregon wine
- Research partners: Oregon Wine Board, Willamette Valley Wineries Association, Linfield College

INTERVIEW PHASE

- Purpose: Learn about the reputation of the Oregon wine industry from the perspective of Oregon wine professionals (winery founders, owners, managers, winemakers)
  - Use data from the interviews to construct consumer and trade surveys
- Nineteen interviews with representative mix of winery founders, owners, managers, and winemakers from all Oregon AVAs
  - Summer and fall of 2012
- Results: key factors of Oregon’s regional reputation as perceived by industry insiders:
  - Hand crafted/artisan wines
  - Organic or sustainably made wines
  - Small family farms
  - Community/collaboration
  - Stewardship of the land

SURVEY PHASE

- Consumer survey investigated importance of the key factors identified in the interviews
  - Also asked about familiarity with Oregon varieties, perceptions of California wine, and questions about demographics and buying behavior
  - Parallel trade survey examined perceptions of trade professionals
    - Distributors, retailers, restaurateurs, restaurant managers, and sommeliers

Consumer Results

- Quality, taste, price, pairing, previous experience with a wine, and familiarity with wine region and label were important factors in wine purchase decisions
  - “What are the first two or three words that come to mind when you hear the words ‘Oregon Wine?’” 56%: “Pinot noir”
  - Willing to spend more than usual for a bottle of Oregon wine based on region and AVA/sub-AVA

Trade Results

- All five key factors of Oregon regional reputation endorsed highly as associated with Oregon wine, especially in comparison to California wine
  - Important to clients: quality, taste, price, pairing, and previous experience with a wine
    - “What are the first two or three words that come to mind when you hear the words ‘Oregon Wine’?” 55%: “Pinot noir”
  - Affirmed importance of region and AVA/sub-AVA in selling/placing wine with clients
  - Oregon/California: same as consumer perceptions with three additions:
    - “High quality wines”, “food + wine connection” for Oregon
    - “Travel destination for wine tourism” for California

CONCLUSION

- Regional reputation is important for consumers and trade professionals who already have some familiarity with Oregon wine
- Five key factors of Oregon’s regional reputation identified by industry insiders were confirmed as important to consumers and trade professionals
- These factors also serve as points of distinctiveness from California wines/wineries
- Quality, taste, and price; familiarity with wine, label, and region; and multiple points of exposure to Oregon wine are important factors in Oregon wine purchases