

WFA Wine Industry Tourism Toolkit

Developing Your Database

Most cellar doors collect the names and addresses of at least some of their customers. Sometimes this is by asking visitors to fill in details in the visitors' book and indicating if they'd like to be on the mailing list; for others it's a concerted effort to collect qualified names by way of a dedicated form that asks for more information than just contact details.

For effective database marketing, you need to know more about your customers than just their names and where they live. You need to build up a profile of their purchasing habits and preferences so that you can tailor offers to suit their needs. With simple computer programs, utilising mail merge facilities and the use of email as a method for marketing, it's just as easy to segment your database and send targeted information as it is to mass mail to your entire database. And the returns are likely to be a lot greater too. Traditional mass mail response rates can be as low as 1% and in a world where everyone wants to feel special, these types of mailings do nothing to garner loyalty, and cost you plenty to mail in the first place.

Let's say you want to shift the current vintage red to make way for the new vintage. Firstly you need to know who on your mailing list drinks red, and who likes this particular style. Chances are you've got some stock from a previous vintage as well, or other reds that can partner well with the one you want to move. So why not put together a vertical pack or a varietal pack, with an additional offer on the soon-to-be-released vintage as well? Depending on how well you know your customers, you could follow up the mailing with a telephone campaign to remind them of the offer, reiterate its expiry date and alert them to the value of the new release- because you don't want them to miss out on this great opportunity. Done well, this kind of campaign can be extremely effective and give you the opportunity to learn even more about your customers.

Harvesting Names

The cellar door is your main source of collecting names for your database, but there are many others as well. It is generally accepted that the closer to home you collect the name, the more likely they will become a purchaser. Consider the following opportunities to collect names and addresses and make sure you have your system in place to canvass, capture and then respond to the information.

- Cellar Door
- Local Events and Festivals, Conferences, Exhibitions, Seminars
- Trade Shows
- Consumer Shows
- Competitions (but be sure they are not just joining for the chance to win)
- Wine Tastings
- Response Coupons (Advertisements, Brochures, Articles ,Reviews)
- Referrals
- Business and Personal Networks
- Local Businesses (Accommodation Providers, Tour Operators, Restaurants, etc.)

Sample Data Collection Form

Capturing information consistently and accurately is a key requirement for building your database. Your data form can vary depending on how much information you want. Don't be afraid to offer an incentive for people to fill in the form, such as an opportunity to win a dozen wines, drawn monthly. It really is a cheap way to build your database.

Title	Include Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr, Other
First Name	Avoid the use of the term "Christian" name in deference to people of religious persuasion
Last Name	Put this after the first name - you'd be surprised how many forms ask for the surname first - keep it simple
Postal Address	Some people have post boxes. Include box number/street, state. Post Code
Delivery Address	Quite often this is different. Include room for Business Name, Street, State, Post Code
Special Instructions	Important for the courier company. Clear instructions such as "Leave at back if no-one home" or "Deliver between 10am-4pm"
Telephone	Ask for home, work mobile and preferred name for contact
Email	Ask for home and work and preferred option
Birthday	As opposed to birth date. Just ask for day and month. It gives you another opportunity to connect with the customer
Wine Styles	This is important to tailoring your offers. Segment according to your range (red, white, fortified, sparkling, etc.) Further segment into varieties for red and white to gain a more complete picture
Wine Program	Detail the options available. You may offer an Automatic delivery Service in different price points, a monthly or quarterly newsletter, emails, alerts, etc. Ask customers to tick a range of options applicable
Other Services	A tick box section including any other areas that offer the opportunity to communicate, such as advance notice on events, restaurant offers, in-store tastings in customers state, new releases, museum wines, magnums, etc.
Satisfaction	You can also use the form to ask how the customer rated their experience with you and offer a couple of lines to make a comment or recognise the efforts of a staff member

Many visitors sign up as couples, so consider making a provision on your form for joint applications.

Database Management & CRM Systems

Establishing a database is not a set and forget exercise. It requires dedicated resources in the form of staff and systems to implement your Direct Marketing activities and develop your customer relationships. You can do this entirely in-house or enlist the help of external agencies.

Develop a Customer Relationship Plan

Like any other aspect from your business you need a plan to manage your database and establish your communication with your customers.

- Create a calendar of communications
- Newsletters
- Email
- Alerts
- Telephone Calls
- Events
- Wine Releases
- Offers
- Personal Letters
- Develop a realistic budget based on the frequency and volume of your communications
- You can't manage what you don't measure, so build in methods to measure the effectiveness of your communications and offers
- Segment your database regularly so that you know who to target for different offers. You can use the A, B, C approach (A= Advocates, your best customers; B= Becoming your best customers; C= could be developed in time). For targeted offers of specific styles or ranges you'll need to know about the purchasing history of your customers and be able to extract that information
- Develop a plan to contact B and C customers for feedback and look for opportunities to encourage purchases
- Design the elements of your communication mix to ensure consistency and relevance
- Implement a follow up strategy to capitalise on each communication. Telephone calls to selected customers can yield additional sales because you're able to pinpoint exactly what they need
- Make sure each communication includes a 'Call to Action" within a designated time frame
- Confirm delivery of all orders - it gives you an additional opportunity to make contact with the customer and seek feedback
- Include a plan to contact customers who don't respond to target offers
- Regularly purge your database of customers who have moved or died