



## **QUALITATIVE MEDIA RELATIONS CASE STUDIES**

### **From PR to ROI**

**Winery Case 1** – 3,000-case production. PR/Media Relations Services

#### **Client Condition**

The property, on the western slopes of an underappreciated region, had been growing grapes by a family for others for 30 years; while in the last 10 the vineyard has been farmed biodynamically. The owners began producing wines over the same period.

#### **The Challenge**

To tell the story of the farmer/winemaker/owner and his singularly focused farming practices in such a way as to go beyond the usual “passion” of his organic philosophy. Further, it was crucial to promote the AVA, not unlike how Calistoga and Lodi are trying to elevate their regions.

#### **Tactical Strategy**

We positioned the owner/farmer’s agricultural viewpoint as being “beyond biodynamism” -- because biodynamic farming is an often written-about and sometimes suspicious story – as being “practical”, “because his daughters live on the vineyard”, and “not wedded to the sun, moon, and stars”. As for the AVA, we had the owner aligned with one of the more renowned winemakers in the area and went beyond wine and focused on collateral attractions in the region as “You’ll be missing the boat if you miss ...”

## **The Upshot**

The winery's inn, which is on a hilltop overlooking the vineyards, is now constantly filled, the wines and how they are made, are garnering stories, mentions, and higher scores. The vintner, to whom we've attached to the project, is also getting more traffic to his tasting room, which is in the heart of the town in the center of the AVA.

## **Client Testimony**

“Carl has provided us with an invaluable service in many respects. First, he has the public relations savvy to provide direction on how to approach these wine writers. Second, provide guidance on how to craft and package the message. Third, know who to contact in a given market and for what purpose. Fourth, he has an excellent communications team to coordinate everything with respect to a given writer. Fifth, handle all the coordination for interviews, tastings, etc. that we could not have done on our own. Sixth, he is a great Tweeter! Carl was instrumental in helping us be bigger than we really are in any given market with long lasting impressions in those markets. We are still seeing results long after the initial contacts.”

**Winery Case 2** – Family owned; 2,200-case production. PR/Media Communications

## **Client Condition**

The winery had come into existence only in the last five years, and commercial wines have been produced for even less. The owners had absolutely no experience with promoting their 200-acre site or their wines. In fact, their tasting room hadn't even been opened and was in the throes of final construction.

## **The Challenge**

First the owners needed to be coached as to the possibilities of putting a PR campaign in place. Then their newly released wines had to be vetted for their efficacy. And the vineyards needed to be explored and understood. All with the idea of building a *true* and *singular* story.

## **Tactical Strategy**

The campaign was built upon the vineyard, the wines, and the winemaker/owner. That might sound like a no-brainer, but upon investigation, we discovered an abandoned quarry on the property – underneath the vineyard – that showed for all to see, the sub-strata of the various soil types; a most rare view. The wines were underpriced for the quality; and they displayed bona fide terroir. The winemaker turned out to be a geek – in the best sense of that word – schooled in chemistry and soil analysis skill-sets. (A further challenge was to get him to not be *too* technical.)

## **The Upshot**

In addition to opening the tasting room and putting a marketing plan in place concurrently with our PR stratagem, we focused on the various market trips undertaken by the couple/owners. We secured several meetings with media members in those markets. The story of the vineyard and its vantage-point quarry, proved to be irresistible to the media. The wines were indeed singled out for their terroir-centricity. Oh, and as for the winemaker: He could easily tone down his techie-talk; and did so in an informative, charming manner.

## **Client Testimony**

**He says**, “Carl has opened doors for us that would have taken years on our own. He has a solid network and work hard for their clients’ success. We are very happy with the results and appreciate how responsive he is with our account. The channels of communication and regular feedback are great.”

**She says**, “Working with Carl is the Perfect Storm. When a great product with passionate producers meets talented, tenacious and knowledgeable PR reps, the sky’s the limit. We are very pleased with the tangible results this dynamic duo has brought to the table.”

**Winery Case 3** – 20,000-case production. PR/Media Relations Services

## **Client Condition**

Early on the morning of Aug. 24, 2014, an earthquake magnitude 6.1 hit Napa Valley and specifically, less than a half-mile from our client’s winery/cellar/tasting room. Upon telephone communication with the winemaker/GM, who was at the winery shortly thereafter, it was determined that the winery had lost about 30 barrels of wine, representing about 12% of the client’s 2013 barrel inventory.

## **The Challenge**

The task was handle the dissemination of how the earthquake affected the client, but to do so in a sensitive manner because the client wasn’t the only winery to be impacted; or what the affect was on people as well. The idea admittedly, was to tell the winery’s story as it pertained to the event.

## **Tactical Strategy**

After ascertaining enough preliminary information as to how the quake affected the winery and its inventory, at around 8:30 a.m. on the morning of the quake, we began sending information of what we had learned about the client’s damage, and we did that via Twitter. For the next hour we tweeted info and messaged all the media contacts we had. Within minutes, some of those members began responding whether by direct message, universal message, or by retweeting our

tweets. Over the course of the day, we sent out tweets whenever we received updated information from the winery.

It's interesting to note: If this event had occurred several years ago, a press release might have been the first line of communication.

### **The Upshot**

By the end of the day – and throughout the next 10 days – more than 1,800 people had seen our tweets and retweets, including about two dozen media members, who either posted their own tweets about our clients' happenstance, visited the winery to interview members of the staff, and posted or had published stories about the quake in general, and more specifically, about our clients' plight in particular. Among those media who engaged with our client were the *San Francisco Chronicle* (on three occasions), the *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Reuters*, *Bloomberg News*, *ABC7-San Francisco*, *NPR*; within three of sending the first tweet, *The Weather Channel* arrived to film a three-minute segment – exclusively on our client. Save for several other wineries, some of whom suffered heavier losses, one might have drawn the conclusion that it was our client who was the only one affected by the earthquake.

### **Client Testimony**

I have worked with a number of PR firms. They all come with a caveat about the ramp up time and how not to expect too much right off and that they first have to redo all of our material; blame the client. Carl just started working fresh with what we had and within days had begun to introduce us to the world of wine bloggers, columnists and talk show hosts that I didn't even know existed which then led to more main stream exposure. The difference is that the "press" knows that Carl isn't going to waste their time, so they always take the call. Also the timeliness is crucial. Good publicists can sense breaking opportunities and take the initiative to inform their "press" first.

They help us see ourselves and our public relations in a holistic context rather than a series of events and facts strung together and help us create a unified fully integrated program which continues to enrich the relationships they make on our behalf with those who care about wine. The opportunities to give away free wine are legion in the wine business; Carl has the experience and perspective to help us navigate this ocean of solicitations to optimize rather than maximize our exposure. With them I feel more like a partner than a client.