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Use storytelling as a communication technique to improve customer engagement towards a brand: proposing a brand story for Poliziano winery (Montepulciano, Tuscany)

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October, 2021

Department of Marketing, Strategy and Operations

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Acknowledgments

This paper is the result of a very, very long and difficult journey that lasted almost a year from the end of 2020 to more than halfway through 2021. A year in which everything happened, and which certainly did not help to facilitate the drafting of this thesis. A long year, yes, but all in all a satisfying one, because it has taught me not to give up even in difficult moments (and there have been many), but rather to exploit them (also thanks to some small help) as gentle nudges to go ahead and finish what I had to finish. This is how I came to conclude this work, which also marks the (temporary?) end of my studies and my official entry into the world of work.

Getting here has been anything but easy, with a global pandemic still going on which prohibits travelling, contact with other people, any chance of making new acquaintances and thus broadening one's horizons, then with a lack of motivation on my part for a number of reasons and finally with a desire to immediately finish everything in order to devote myself to finding my own way forward. However, today, I made it. I have finished writing this thesis and I am ready to conclude this chapter of my life.

It is therefore time to thank all the people and things that have been there over these two, almost three, years.

First of all, I would like to thank myself because without me I would never have made it, but after all I know that very well.

I would logically like to thank my parents, who, although they have often encouraged me in making wrong choices, have nevertheless given me their support and believed in me, assisted me financially and morally, and always enriched me with advice and ideas that were never trivial and that were thought up especially for me. I therefore thank my mum and dad. I would also like to thank my brother, who, as always, is my verifier par excellence, the objective and, if necessary, strict one, but who, as chance would have it, I always end up asking because I trust his judgement blindly.

Of course, I thank all the friends who were there (the order below is random and not based on importance). I would therefore like to thank my friends from Chianciano, the oldest (in all senses) but most constantly present. I thank my friends in Lisbon, who made me live the year and a half and my first pandemic in the most incredible, insane, vivid and unforgettable way I could ever imagine. I thank my friends in Brussels, who made me live my first second wave of a global pandemic in total peace and let me know what the concept of friendship means, even when apparently you have nothing to share, but in the end, you find yourself equal and unique at the same time. I would like to thank the little new friends I have

Abstract

The aim of this study was to discover the potentialities that storytelling as a communication technique could have in the relationship that a customer has with the brand, and thus the involvement of the consumer with this brand. It was decided to collaborate with the Poliziano winery located in Montepulciano, Italy, as the author noted an absence of studies correlating the use of storytelling to a winery. More specifically, an attempt was made to investigate the implementation of this tool in its online format, as this channel is now also strongly consolidated in the wine sector.

To achieve this goal, the author interviewed some of the winery's managers in order to obtain more information and knowledge about the winery and its market. In addition, the author carried out further research with the aim of measuring the use of storytelling in the main online platforms of 6 wineries in Italy.

The analysis of the results allowed the author to design a brand story that could represent the company, its mission, and its values, and thanks to the research carried out on the wine market in the world and in Italy, it was possible to provide suggestions and indications for a possible implementation of this story in the company's digital communication strategy.

This thesis therefore proposes itself as a bridge between storytelling and the online communication of wineries and opens the discussion towards the possibility of implementing this technique also in other types of companies producing products similar to wine and not only.

JEL Classification System:

M31 – Marketing

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Resumo

O objetivo deste estudo era descobrir as potencialidades que o *storytelling* (enquanto técnica de comunicação) poderia ter na relação que um cliente tem com uma marca e, portanto, o envolvimento do consumidor com esta marca. Neste caso, foi decidido colaborar com a adega Poliziano situada em Montepulciano, Itália, uma vez que o autor identificou a inexistência de estudos que relacionassem o uso de storytelling com adegas vinícolas. Mais especificamente, foi feita uma tentativa de investigar a implementação deste instrumento no seu formato online, uma vez que este canal está agora também fortemente consolidado no sector do vinho.

Para atingir este objetivo, o autor entrevistou alguns dos gestores da adega, a fim de obter mais informações e conhecimentos sobre a adega e o seu mercado. Além disso, o autor realizou mais pesquisas com o objetivo de aferir o uso do *storytelling* nas principais plataformas online de 6 adegas em Itália.

A análise dos resultados permitiu ao autor conceber uma *brand story* que pudesse representar a empresa, a sua missão e os seus valores, e graças à pesquisa realizada no mercado vinícola do mundo e da Itália, foi possível fornecer sugestões e indicações para uma possível implementação desta história na estratégia de comunicação digital da empresa.

Esta tese propõe-se assim como uma ponte entre o *storytelling* e a comunicação online das adegas e abre a discussão para a possibilidade de implementar esta técnica também noutros tipos de empresas produtoras de produtos similares ao vinho e não só.

Index

1   Introduction

1.1   Background

The unbreakable bond that connects wine and stories is something that has been studied and used in different contexts for hundreds of years. Everyone that works in the wine sector tells stories. Sometimes there are stories told to the others in order to nudge them towards a purchase, sometimes they're told to lure someone to your winery, other times there are stories we tell us to convince ourselves that the very wine we tasted a little while ago is worth buying. It is important to notice that not only we tell stories about the wine, but also the wine itself tells stories to us. Stories about traditions, about family, about heritage, or again stories about failure or about success.

The purpose of this work starts from the feeling that nowadays, what wine companies are doing to communicate with their customers is not enough. Or better, not different enough. How many times, scrolling over the websites of different wineries we had the impression that they always tell the same story, may this be about their origins, how they developed over time and what they are today, how they produce a fine quality wine made only by following the traditions, or again how they want to provide only the best for their customers? This perception made me think about what wineries should do to better promote themselves and most importantly, differentiate themselves from the competition. In a market where most of the players sell the same product in thousands of different ways, where the brand plays a crucial role in the customer decision-making process (Lockshin & Albisu, 2006) and where past experiences, knowledge and beliefs are central aspects in the consumer's mind, suddenly rose the urge of making the extra mile and seek new ways of communicating and stand out from the mass.

The wine market is also changing a lot, and with it, consumer habits, which tend to be crucial when considering rethinking or implementing a new communication strategy. Moreover, the target of this market is no longer Baby Boomers, but has gradually shifted to younger consumer, generally Millennials, who typically drink less wine, but spend higher prices and focus on value and brand reputation when buying a bottle (Woldarsky, 2019). The question is then, in such a context, how can a wine company diversify itself, better communicate with this new customer and make it more loyal towards the brand?

Here is where the connection between storytelling and wine comes back again. According to Frost, Frost, Strickland, & Smith Maguire (2020), telling brand stories is the best way to form loyalty, because it evokes emotions in the consumer's mind and permits a more

straightforward and effective way of communicating brand values. In fact, consumers tend to use specific products mainly because they reflect their identity or desired identity and furthermore, they consume certain products, for example wine, to perceive belongingness and show a status symbol (Woldarsky, 2019).

Lastly, in this section it is relevant to mention the importance of the various social media as the most suitable platforms for the application of storytelling as a communication tool. The wine industry is one of the most positively impacted by the technological changes of the 21st century and the coming of the social media era (Antonio, Basiricò, & Seccia, 2019). Since consumers started to spend a considerable amount of time on these platforms, companies decided to exploit this new trend to study consumer behavior and thus attract new customers, engage with them through online content and build new solid relationships (Antonio et al., 2019). The same authors conclude by saying that wine companies use social media more like a hub where their community can gather and share experiences and information. In this way, the company can be more aware of the consumer's opinion on the company itself and its wines.

1.2   Research question & objective

Every thesis should start with the definition of a research topic, which is then better expressed by a research question and clear objectives. These necessarily have to be clear and stated since the beginning of the research, because the aim is to answer this question with the information gathered over time (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

The research question elaborated to conduct this study and fulfill its purpose is:

- *How can the Poliziano winery create more customer engagement through brand storytelling?*

Saunders et al. (2016), underline the importance of having a more general research question that serves as a base for the definition of a research objective, which in turn would be clearer and more specific. Consequently, a research objective has been defined with the aim of facilitating an easier and more comprehensive understanding of this thesis and its purpose. This objective is:

- *To determine the capacity that storytelling as a communication technique has to increase customers' engagement towards the brand of Poliziano winery.*

1.3 Content

The paper presented here is divided into main chapters, which in turn are divided into sub-chapters. Each chapter and sub-chapter are designed to deal with specific and different topics. Starting with a brief introduction to the subject of the thesis and the presentation of the research question and the objective of the study, the focus is then switched to one of the most substantial parts of this paper, the literature review. In this macro-section, there are basically four topics that are dealt with. The first and most important concept introduced is that of storytelling, firstly defined and then further explained, going into details about its dimensions and characteristics. The following three other concepts are all linked to storytelling and the idea of brand communication in general. Content marketing, brand experience and customer engagement are presented, each time providing definitions and main characteristics. Subsequently, a paragraph is dedicated to the methodology of data collection and analysis, with particular focus on the method and purpose of research. At this point, the result of the analysis carried out is presented through two macro sections, the first more focused on the analysis of the macroenvironment and the second on the microenvironment. The main core of the research will be in the section dedicated to defining the strategy, where the story and its implementation suggestions for the company will be exposed. Finally, limitations and conclusion will end the thesis.

2   Literature review

2.1   Storytelling

Our everyday life is constantly characterized by stories. We tell, hear, and create stories all the time every day, and are indeed stories that permit us to live in modern society. Even money and religion, for example, are nothing but stories that the human being has been telling himself and believed in it for decades simply to better bond and cooperate effectively (Harari, 2014). Telling stories is an extremely powerful method to create meaning to our lives, to understand the world and the role that we and the others play in it, as well as dealing with daily challenges and in general better communicate in today's society (Fog, Budtz, Munch, & Blanchette, 2010).

Widely analysed and investigated during the years, the concept of storytelling has been put in words by different authors, for example, Mossberg & Johansen (2006) as cited in Mei, Hågensen, & Kristiansen (2020) claims that storytelling appeals to humans' demand for a meaning in life as stories engage emotions, stimulate fantasies and thoughts. Gabriel (2000), as cited in Mei et al. (2020), described the purpose of storytelling, which is not only to convey facts and information, but to enrich, enhance and infuse facts with meanings to create a story around a concept, or again Sole & Wilson, (1999) who see storytelling more as a knowledge sharing tool, where a communication process is put in place and in which people share information and experiences through stories.

During the last two decades, storytelling also became an important and recognized branding and management tool, and marketers from all over the world have discovered its broad applicability when communicating with the customers and exploited it to create stronger bonds between the consumer and the brand itself (Du Plessis, 2015). Talking about the marketing context, Woodide (2010) described storytelling as the process of generating and sharing stories or narratives about an organization, brand, or product, with the intention of forming implied and explicit memories and emotions in the minds of the consumer. The use of stories in the business and management area has more than one application and it can address different types of users, from the customer to the employees to different stakeholders (Znanewitz & Gilch, 2016).

When a company decides to use storytelling as a communication tool, it basically wants to transmit its core values and characteristics through a story (Wolstenholme, 2008, as cited in Znanewitz & Gilch, 2016). Storytelling is what enhances the traits and meanings of a brand and brand values, so it can maintain the image that the brand would like to portray to the final user (Simmons, 2006). Today's powerful brands are founded around clear beliefs and

emotional relations with customers; this is where storytelling is used to embed brand values into stories, build emotional links with consumers, and establish consistent brand images (Fog et al., 2010). This becomes especially true when we're talking about companies and brands who provide services because they work with the purpose of creating unique experiences for the customer (Padgett & Allen, 1997). Zlateva (2020) confirms that strong brand stories aren't focused exclusively on products or services. The consumer must feel part of the story and its creation, and on the other hand, the company should understand who the customer is and what he/she wants.

The secret of narrative as very powerful tool origins by its tendency to refer directly to the audience's emotions and this abstract value can lead to the creation and the maintenance of a positive relationship between the brand and the consumer, which in turn might increase latter's willingness to purchase and advocacy of the brand (Du Plessis, 2015). Stories can also build concrete images in which the consumer can see himself or herself and so, better empathize with the organization (Canziani, Welsh, Dana, & Ramadani, 2020).

Now that a broad definition of storytelling has been given, it becomes crucial to make this concept clearer and understand which are the characteristics and the dimensions of this notion, to then comprehend its further utility in the organizational context. The question now is how to create good stories. A story is often linked to fairy tales and narratives tradition (Twitchell, 2004) and it generally answers the questions such as who, what, why, where, when, how, and with the help of what (Shankar, Elliott, & Goulding, 2001).

Fog et al. (2010) investigated this topic and delineated four core elements that constitute the basis of storytelling intended with a fairy-tale model and used as a branding tool.

The first element is the Message because what companies do when they adopt storytelling is to communicate their own message in a positive way by selecting the right words and symbols. The message is the central theme of the story, and it should be direct and authentic. In the case of multiple messages, they should be prioritized differently depending on the importance you want to give to each one of them (Fog et al., 2010).

The second component is the Conflict because there is no story without a conflict, or at least, not an interesting one. The conflict in a story is something that disrupts the initial harmony to which the human is generally used to and seeks. This unpleasant situation pushes the protagonist to act and re-establish peace and a state of order. However, it is relevant to avoid conflicts that are too hard to be solved, otherwise the story might get confusing and miss a proper ending. A balanced chaos-order situation can generate interesting and appealing stories (Fog et al., 2010).

The third core component of a good fairy-tale model-based story is the Characters. Different characters with specifically designed roles are very needed for a story because the reader/listener must identify and sympathize with them, so the story can better address his or her emotions. Fog et al. (2010) define 5 main roles in a narrative (although not all of them have to be present in a story): the *hero,* who normally starts his journey to accomplish a goal, usually with the help of a *supporter*; the *adversary* (sometimes a villain) who creates the conflict and uses his resources to impede the hero to achieve the goal; the character who intervenes and fights with the hero also to restore peace is the *benefactor*; finally there is the *beneficiary*, who receives the benefit of the restored harmony.

The fourth and last element of stories is the Plot. Once your story has all the previously mentioned elements, what you miss is something that brings them together, which is the plot (Fog et al., 2010). The flow of the events normally follows a chronological sequence and it is necessary to keep the consumer's attention all along with the narration (Stern, 1994). The commonly accepted structure of a story entails three main parts: the beginning, the middle, and the end (Fog et al., 2010).

Every story has an origin, and especially at the corporate level, despite it might not seems likable, there are numerous sources or characters that can voluntarily or involuntary participate in the creation process of a narrative. Stories can come from employees, who are the direct embodiment of a company's values. Every worker of a firm can have an interesting story to tell, from the operational employee to the top-level manager, even the CEO (Fog et al., 2010). It is not a case, in fact, that also the CEO is a great character for a brand story. The importance of this figure is given mainly by its symbolic significance and by its actions and words, who are taken as an example by the employees, who usually see the CEO as a leader. Stories about the CEO exist intrinsically in every company since the beginning of it and sometimes even before. Although the truthfulness, falsity, positivity, or negativity of this story might have a certain degree of relevance, the symbolic importance to the employee would be unaltered. In fact, that is usually from employees where you can get your stories about the CEO because it's them who spend most of the time with this figure (Fog et al., 2010).

Another important antecedent of a brand story is the story of the founder(s). Even though many of those stories are generally similar, reflecting the archetype of the young student who starts from the bottom and is very willing to become a successful entrepreneur by building his/her career through successes and failures, some of these stories are so emotional and well connected with the brand values that its usage would be more likely converted in a triumph.

Those stories usually address the founder's passion for his/her job and determination to achieve his/her dreams, and moreover, they give the roots to permits a more profound feeling of identification in the story's audience (Fog et al., 2010).

Customers' experiences with your brand are another remarkable source to build engaging stories, especially because they have a unique and unbeatable added value that can't be reproduced by your products or services' stories. This kind of stories shows how your company "changed" the customer's life and are undoubtedly more effective because when a customer tells a story of how you, with your brand and your product, made a difference for that customer, then this story will be much more credible and sincere than the one you could elaborate directly by you as a brand (Fog et al., 2010).

Talking about the importance of direct involvement of the customers, it is now crucial to explain this new trend, making clearer the reasons why it exists. The developments made by technology and the new digital possibilities born from these changes have led to an unexpected increase in the attention that companies must have on the opinions that consumers share online. Today, in fact, online communities give a lot of weight to the opinions and advice of other users, sometimes considering them even more valid and reliable than the suggestions provided by the companies themselves (Fog et al., 2010). Companies now have to shift from telling stories to listen to stories, and more precisely customers' stories. Brands should look for those stories that are shared online (but not only) and collect the most relevant and intriguing ones. By doing so, they are involving the customer to actively contribute to strengthening up their brand image through storytelling, making him/her a co-creator with the brand itself (Fog et al., 2010).

As previously mentioned, the dimensions of storytelling are multiple, and its implementation and outcomes can address both internal and external users and factors. In this thesis, the focus will be mainly posed on the external perspective of storytelling, but it is important also to mention the internal viewpoint to give a broader understanding of this concept and acknowledge the reader of the numerous potentialities of this modality of communicating. When talking about internal storytelling, we are referring to the exploitation of stories and anecdotes that the human capital of a company holds. Being the employees so closely connected to the company makes them the first and the best storytellers that an organization can have, especially in the service businesses, where the employees are in intimate contact with the customer (Fog et al., 2010).

On the other hand, externally directed storytelling can be strictly associated with branding and it becomes essential when branding a product or a service (Lund, Cohen, & Scarles,

2018). Giving a story to your product or service not only makes it more unique and rich in terms of experiential benefits, but it can also add more quality and emotional value that allows the product or service to differentiate itself better when compared to the ones provided by the competitors (Martinus & Chaniago, 2017). Lund et al. (2018) claim that when a brand is able to tell a story so well built and well connected with the brand core values, then the customer is driven to portray this brand through the story told, consequently changing his brand perception and intention to purchase. Fog et al. (2010) define the story that best represents the brand as the *core story*, claiming that this story "expresses the fundamental theme, or the central nervous system that ties all the company's brand communication together" (p. 48-49).

Before giving some conclusions about the positive and negative aspects of storytelling, it is important to analyze whether the story has to be true or fiction in order to efficiently succeed. Fog et al. (2010) argue that there is no real answer for that question, but instead put the focus on the importance of the story's main message to be easily understandable and accessible for the audience and furthermore capable of transmitting brand values that are quickly recognizable by the customer. However, even though Holt (2002) put the emphasis on the importance of the story as being perceived authentic by the customer, in order not to mistake it for manipulative marketing, Fog et al. (2010) affirm that the authenticity of a story doesn't affect the efficacy of it because the audience is generally aware regarding the fictional nature of the narrative.

Storytelling as a communication tool for branding has numerous advantages that apply to different areas of influence. Woodside, Sood, & Miller (2008), for example, believe that storytelling is a great source of vicarious participation by the consumer, who then feels more engaged with the brand. The authors also insist on the fact that storytelling helps to create strong and long-lasting customer-brand relationships. Erkas & Baron (2007) draw attention to the importance of stories as instruments to communicate brand values in a sincere and captivating way, thanks to the narration's capacity to generate emotions in the consumer's mind and convey complex messages in a simpler way. According to Serrat (2008), storytelling has three main advantages: first, it helps to express emotional aspects and true content, which allows the circulation of typically unspoken knowledge; second, it enhances the potential for meaningful knowledge sharing; third, by putting facts in a more narrative framework, a learning process takes place and this increases the chance of knowledge being passed from people to people.

In terms of disadvantages, Sole & Wilson (1999) point out three main issues related to this topic. The seductiveness occurs when the story is deeply alluring to the customer who in

turn loses the focus and skip the evaluation part. The subjectiveness of a story is the second main problem, because being a story told by a narrator, he or she will always put his or her point of view in the narration, which might eventually influence the audience's final perception of it. The fact that stories are told by a single person might also lead to a lack of different interpretations. Finally, some stories can be too static, especially when they are transposed from an oral to a written form or told by a different storyteller. Moreover, the impact of the story really depends on the way the story is delivered. Shankar et al. (2001) highlighted the importance of remembering that the same story usually doesn't work in another context or setting, due to cultural differences.

When talking about abstract concepts such as storytelling applied to something more concrete such as brand management and content marketing, it is very important to determine what are the methods and ways to measure the success or failure of an eventual implementation of this medium as a communication tool, so as to be able to determine the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the use of such a tool. In the case of digitally adopted storytelling on a given brand's website or social pages, the ways to measure the results of this adoption are mainly related to the interactions that users have with this content. Kang, Hong, & Hubbard (2020) confirm the importance already mentioned above of arousing emotions in the consumer through stories told, as the latter is more likely to share that content if moved by emotions. Sharing content, also promoted by the brand itself, has the enormous advantage of widening the audience of that content and consequently of making that content perceived as more credible by other users who find it shared by friends and relatives. Often companies encourage consumers to share stories, videos or reviews of their experience with the brand or a brand's products or services, making the tie between the two parts even stronger and more meaningful (Kemp, Porter, Anaza, & Min, 2021). Referring to customer engagement, a topic that is going to be illustrated further on, the best way to measure the effectiveness of storytelling is to collect data on the number of new followers, likes, shares and publications in addition to normal interactions such as comments and private messages, and then analyze this data to understand the performance of the communication strategy adopted (Kemp et al., 2021). Richard & Guppy (2014) confirm that the number of likes, comments and shares of a Facebook post can influence people when they are planning to make a purchase. Also very important are the reviews that consumers post online (TripAdvisor, Google) and which often receive high consideration from other users during the decision-making process.

In the context of defining the concept of storytelling, it should be mentioned that the word "storytelling", is used throughout this thesis instead of "corporate storytelling" because "storytelling" is more commonly used when referring to the concept.

2.2 Express brand stories through content marketing

As per Kotler & Armstrong (2014), today's marketing can't be limited to developing great products, calculating the right price, or making those products accessible to selected clients; modern organizations should likewise speak with current and possible clients and exploit every communication tool available to make this happen. In a world where everything and everyone is connected, and the consumers are constantly bombarded with different forms of advertising, finding the right way to get in contact with your targets becomes a crucial step that every company has to take in order to build and maintain a durable relationship with those (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014). Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan (2016) also put the emphasis on the fact that this relationship became harder to form because the customer is looking always more for opinions about customer experience from friends and family instead of directly trusting the brand and its advertisement. When developing a communication strategy, it is important for a brand to use all the available channels (advertising, pr, promotions and sales) and make sure that the same brand story is being spread unchanged and consistently among all these different channels (Znanewitz & Gilch, 2016). A relatively new concept that matches adequately with this communication modality is content marketing.

Wang, Malthouse, Calder, & Uzunoglu (2019) gave a definition of content marketing, intended as the creation, conveyance, and sharing of significant and up-to-date content that is convincing to consumers and draws in them at the proper touchpoint in their purchasing decision process. Another definition is given by Baltes (2015), who claims that content marking is making or curating of non-product related content - be it didactic, entertaining, or informative - and distributing it in order to make it stand out enough to be noticed by the customer and pull them to get to know more about you, your company, your brand, and your products.

According to Pulizzi (2012), content marketing is made by the brand itself, it can address both customers and employees, and it can be shared through corporate magazines, videos, blog posts, websites, social media, newsletters, or even podcasts. In a different article, the same author highlights the advantages of content marketing, saying that a good use of this tool enables companies to set up solid brand awareness and brand credibility with the customer, who continually remains in contact with the brand (Wall & Spinuzzi 2018).

Ideating content for free, just for the sake of influencing consumer behaviour, avoids the pressure of making a purchase felt by the consumer (Zlateva, 2020). Content should be engaging, explicit and tailor-made for a specific target audience so they can best absorb it and be entertained by it, generating customer engagement (Zlateva, 2020).

Now, where does storytelling fits into content marketing? Wall & Spinuzzi (2018) see content marketing as "storytelling for sales", made in different ways and with the aim of creating additional value recognizable by the customer. Murthy (2011) affirms that content marketing serves for the company to engage with the consumer and intrigue him/her with interesting stories. Moreover, the content ought to be made considering a brand story, which could be about, for example, the brand's set of values, experiences, culture, mission, motivation, objectives, or targets, including why its products and services are unique (Du Plessis, 2015). The objective of those stories is not to sell, but to bring interest in the consumer, who would search for information about the brand, might buy and eventually become a loyal customer (Du Plessis, 2015). Pulizzi (2012) highlights the strength of storytelling intended as content marketing over classical advertisement, saying that the former can create an incredible value through useful, immediate, and relevant for the customer content, while the latter is broader in its application and less emotion-arousing. In fact, this value, especially when linked to a product or a service rather than the brand itself, can increase even more if the consumer is able to relate it with the personalized information given by the company (Gilliam, Flaherty, & Rayburn, 2014). As previously said, consumer's emotions generated by a narration of stories are the crucial factor when analysing the outcomes of a good communication strategy that implements storytelling. In this sense, two factors are fundamental for content marketing in terms of stories to be successful: to transmit a positive message and to incite emotions (Kee & Yazdanifard, 2015).

A good storytelling content strategy can't be effective if not accurately implemented. Lazauskas & Snow (2018) defined a model with three main steps: create, connect, and optimize. First of all, you have to build your story. The creation process has already been discussed before, but it is important to talk about the relevance of choosing your audience and defining objectives. Lazauskas & Snow (2018) continue by saying that the main objectives are branding, meaning that you are going to investigate the consumer's opinion about your brand, and conversation, that aims to the analysis of the actions taken (or not taken) by the customers in relation to the company and the company's products. They also put the emphasis on the fact that each story has to be adapted to the relationship status that you're holding with your customer. To make it clearer, if you are addressing new potential consumers, you would

focus on your values, to see if they match with the consumer's values. On the other hand, if your customer is already aware of you and your brand, then you can pull the attention to the relationship that your company has with the customer himself or its employees. Finally, you should optimize your story, for example by examining its outcomes on customer's behaviour or engagement and discover successes and failures to then improve the former or solve the latter (Lazauskas & Snow, 2018).

2.3 Brand experience

Brand experience is a concept that has been discussed over time since the beginning of the '80s when Holbrook & Hirschman (1982) made acquainted the idea of brand experience in marketing literature. Later in years, Gentile, Spiller, & Noci (2007), gave a comprehensive definition of the term, saying: " [brand experience is] the customer experience that originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organization, which provoke a reaction. This experience is strictly personal and implies the customer's involvement at different levels (rational, emotional, sensorial, physical and spiritual)" (p.397).

This phenomenon can take place in different ways, for example indirectly, when the consumer is being put in contact with any form of marketing communication by the company, or directly, for instance when purchasing or consuming a product or a service (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009). The importance of investigating this topic is not only relatable to the possibility of measuring consumer's perception of the experience but rather to the chance of analysing the impact of brand-related experiences on customer's brand association and hence consider potential influences on various notions such as loyalty to the brand, preference towards the brand, brand credibility and overall customer's satisfaction (Brakus et al., 2009). Some authors put the emphasis on the tendency of the customer to prefer a brand due to its supplemental experiential value and benefits, giving also the conclusion that brand experience might positively influence the rising of consumer-based brand equity (Hultén, 2011; Hellmann, 2007; Ekström & Brembeck, 2005).

As mentioned earlier, experiencing a brand is a process that implies different components and dimensions, which arise thanks to brand-related stimuli such as colours, shapes, design, slogans, brand characters (Brakus et al., 2009). Brakus et al. (2009) indicate five main dimensions of brand experience: sensory, which encompasses the body senses such as vision, touch, smell and taste; affective, which relate to emotions and customer's feelings when referring to the brand; behavioural, that indicates the actions taken by the customer who is

enjoying the experience; the cognitive dimension refers to the customer's ability to think creatively and see things by different perspectives when interacting with the brand; social, instead, is the dimension that brings the experience to a more social and collective sphere, involving groups of people instead of individuals.

Brakus et al. (2009) also demonstrate that brand experience takes place in three different situations. The first concern product experience, more specifically when the customer interacts with the product (searching for it or evaluate it). This interaction can be both direct when it involves the physical sense of touch, or indirect through virtual communication or advertising. The second situation involves shopping and service experience and more in detail when a potential buyer relates with a brand's physical store, its salespeople, and related features. This category also concerns services, and, in this case, all the service-based operations are included. Consumption experience, the third aspect, happens when the customer consumes and uses the product or enjoys the service. This category is multidimensional and incorporates hedonistic elements, for instance, feelings, amusement, or fantasies.

When a customer positively experiences a brand, emotions arise and he/she starts to feel more connected with the brand and a new relationship between the two parties emerges (Cleff, Walter, & Xie, 2018; Bairrada, Coelho, & Coelho, 2018). This emotional click is only possible if a consumer perceives a mental attachment with the brand (Albert & Merunka, 2013). Moreover, Schmitt (2009) thinks that what really counts for the customer is the capacity of that brand to provide him with fascinating experiences through its products or services.

One last clarification has to be made when talking about this concept. In fact, brand experience shifts in strength and power with some brands being more capable, serious, or intense than others. Furthermore, brand experience changes in valence, where positive and negative experiences can occur depending on the brand. Additionally, some brand experiences are brief, more intense and at times unplanned; others are more intentional and durable. The latter is the perfect ingredient for building customer satisfaction and loyalty because good experiences remain in people's memory for longer periods (Brakus et al., 2009).

2.4 Customer Engagement

Over the last few years, customer engagement became a concept in which many researchers have conducted studies, and, more importantly, it became a big concern for companies, who started to explore it and invest resources in it. It is not a case if today's big brands, especially

in the service industry, are prioritizing customer engagement as one of the most important communicational aspects because engaged customers not only helps in building a strong and positive brand reputation, but it can also lead to an increase in customer's loyalty and satisfaction (Verhoef, Reinartz, & Krafft, 2010). Even if the benefits for companies that focus on customer engagement are visible (Zlateva, 2020), also in terms of profit (Van Doorn et al., 2010), there is still a lack of research on how some brand characteristics or strategies (e.g. storytelling) can have a clear impact on consumer engagement (Maslowska, Malthouse, & Collinger, 2015).

Although the definitions of this concept might differ, some are going to be presented in order to give a wider overview of the topic. Kumar et al. (2010), for example, explain customer engagement as a customer-based measurement, where an active interaction between one or multiple consumers and a brand generates a positive consumer attitude. Other authors that gave an explanation of this notion are Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić, & Ilić (2011), who define customer engagement as a motivational context-dependent state that involves a subject, the customer, and an object, usually the brand, or the company, a service or even an advertisement and has either a positive or negative valence. Consumer engagement has also been described as a driver of customer loyalty, obtained by the development of a stronger and more durable bond between brand and customer, which can last for long periods, eventually creating revenue, competitive advantage and profitability for the company (Brodie et al., 2011; Bowden, 2009; van Doorn et al., 2010).

Talking about the dimensions of this notion, Brodie et al. (2011) and Hollebeek (2011) developed the assumption that customer engagement is characterized by three main dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. Hollebeek (2011) also specifies that customer engagement is the state of mind held by the customer while interacting with an engagement object and implies different levels of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural mind activity. On the other hand, Brodie et al. (2011) indicate that customer engagement is rather a unidimensional concept and it focuses on one aspect at a time, may this be emotional, cognitive or behavioural.

To fully comprehend this concept, especially when referring to brands and branding, it is now necessary to determine which are the antecedents of customer engagement. Van Doorn et al. (2010) identified three main kinds of drivers that affect or lead to customer engagement: customer-based, firm-based, and context-based. The following paragraph will go into details only for the customer-based antecedent of customer engagement as the firm-based mostly focuses on the intrinsic features and elements of the company or brand and the context-based

refs largely to the political, legal, economic, and environmental factors that influence the brand in that specific context. When referring to customer-based drivers, we considered some attitudinal antecedents that come directly from the customer's characteristics and which affect customer engagement. Van Doorn et al. (2010), among the main ones, mention trust, customer satisfaction, customer commitment, emotional brand attachment, and customer involvement.

Since the concept of *brand experience* has also been discussed in this thesis, it is important to make a distinction between the two terms so as to avoid confusion. Some authors established the main differences, with Brakus et al. (2009) highlighting the non-motivational aspect of brand experience, while Brodie et al. (2011) and Bowden (2009) pointed out the motivational feature itself as belonging to customer engagement, describing that the consumer actively looks for a form of interaction when engaging with a brand, a product or a service.

Unfortunately, there is a lack of research that directly links storytelling with consumer engagement, even though the consequences of usage of the former as a branding tool, already discussed above, identify a potential positive outcome in the latter (Woodside et al., 2008).

3   Methodology

3.1   Research Method

When conducting research, there are 3 main methods that can be adopted: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. The quantitative approach mainly concerns measurements expressed in numbers, percentages, probabilities, and values. This implies certain pre-specification, meaning that the researcher has to know exactly what to do and collect all necessary data before analysing it (Robson & McCartan, 2016). In contrast, qualitative research is not based on numbers, at least not for the most part, and usually includes information collected from individuals or groups of individuals and used to describe, analyse, interpret, and understand a certain phenomenon. This method is used for this research. This approach is preferred when it is necessary to investigate the reasons for a certain human behaviour, decision, or action in a specific context (Horrocks, King, & Brooks, 2019). In this type of approach, moreover, the researcher conceives the design of the research and can change or modify it according to the evolution and progression of the research itself, so data collection and data analysis are often interconnected (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This method usually entails open-ended questions, which allow participants to express their opinions and reflections openly (Creswell, 2003). Finally, just to mention it, the mixed method involves the use of both approaches. The qualitative approach was therefore chosen because of the very nature of this research, which will focus more on the knowledge and experience of individuals rather than on data and numbers.

3.2   Research Purpose

When it comes to the purpose of the research, usually one of these three approaches is adopted: Descriptive, Explanatory or Exploratory (Robson & McCartan, 2016). The descriptive approach usually prepares for research questions that begin with or include "what", "when", "where" and "how". On the other hand, the explanatory approach usually involves answering the question "why" (Saunders et al., 2016). For this study, the exploratory approach was chosen because the objective is to understand a problem by investigating through questions and obtaining useful information and insight into the subject from these questions. Usually, research questions that favour this approach start with "how" or "what"(Saunders et al., 2016). In this case, the problem was to understand to what extent storytelling is a suitable marketing tool to enable Poliziano winery to create or improve customer engagement. In addition, an important aspect of the exploratory approach is that it allows flexibility and adaptability even during the course of the work according to the data

obtained from the interviews, when, for example, new and interesting insights may come up and consequently improve the research (Collis & Hussey, 2021).

3.3   Methods of data collection

The main methods used in this research to collect primary data were face-to-face interviews and a brief benchmark of the use of storytelling on the digital platforms of six Italian wineries, competitors of Poliziano. One of the advantages of using interviews as a data collection tool is flexibility. The researcher can come up with new ideas, interpret responses and feelings of the interviewees, as well as facial expressions, posture, and voice intonation. These are the main reasons for choosing interviews. However, it is true that interviews are time-consuming and can be subject to bias on the part of both the interviewer and the interviewee (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

Basically, there are 3 types of interviews depending on the result the researcher wants to achieve: fully structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Fully structured interviews have very precise questions with mainly closed answers and are used when the researcher wants to obtain very precise and more schematic information. Semi-structured interviews, on the other hand, include more general questions, perhaps containing key themes and terms, and require a more open-ended response, which may or may not be subject to the interviewee's intentions to make it more detailed. Unstructured interviews do not have pre-determined questions but usually only follow the theme and subject matter that the interviewer is researching and looking for data on (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

For this project it was decided to adopt the second solution, meaning semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. Normally they are composed of predetermined questions, but the interviewer has the possibility to change the order, alternate them, change the words, and provide additional explanations when needed. This allows easy adaptability of the interview to the situation or needs of the interviewees, whether or not they are willing to answer in detail. Furthermore, it is possible, during the course of the interview, to ask new questions or change the topic according to the answers, without necessarily following the established order of the questions.

The second method of data collection for this study was the benchmarking of the use of storytelling on the websites and social media pages of six Italian wineries. Since storytelling is a purely qualitative concept, criteria were chosen to evaluate this characteristic in order to facilitate subsequent comparison and to better establish which companies are leaders in this respect and which still need to grow. Benchmarking digital platforms also serves mainly to

understand the competitive advantages of the company concerned as well as to show methods to improve the efficiency of these digital platforms.

Initially it was also decided by the author to use a survey to be presented to Poliziano's customers, so as to also get the consumer's perspective and thus understand the consumer's desires and preferences when dealing with a wine brand and the stories related to it. Due to complications initially linked to a semi-lockdown in the country, and later due to internal company choices, the questionnaire was finally delivered in paper format to customers taking part in the visits and/or tastings. Unfortunately, the number of responses obtained after a time window of about two months was still too small to constitute a sample representing Poliziano's consumers, so it was decided by the author to abandon the idea of a questionnaire. The few answers obtained, however, were of great help to the researcher in understanding fundamental aspects of how a customer perceives the brand and everything related to it, and it was above all the stories given by the respondents to the questionnaire that provided the inspiration for the story devised for this report.

A table with the summary of the methods of data collection adopted can be found in the annex A.

3.3.1 Interviews

The semi-structured interviews were carried out with three different figures from the Poliziano farm. Despite the difficult period, it was possible to carry them out face-to-face, in a large and bright hall provided by the winery. The interviewees were the present owner and son of the founder of Poliziano, the son of the actual owner, current sales manager for the Asian and US markets as well as digital marketing manager, and finally the hospitality manager, who mainly manages all customer reception as well as winery visits and tastings.

In order to allow the interviews to be reviewed and analysed in the future, it was decided to record them previous authorization from the interviewees. Recording the interviews is a great way to make the whole process more effective, although it may give the interviewee a sense of insecurity and make him/her feel uncomfortable. The audio recording was subsequently transposed into written form by the researcher in order to facilitate its analysis and make it faster.

The three interviews were of different lengths, with the first interview with the owner's son lasting 46 minutes, the next with the hospitality manager 52 minutes and the last with the owner 30 minutes. Initially, the interviewees were informed about the aims of the study and the interviews themselves, as well as giving some general information on the subject, such as

the concept of storytelling and its application as a marketing tool for customer communication. Subsequently, the questions were first of a more concrete and factual nature, investigating the role and responsibilities that each interviewee has within the company. Then, other questions were asked, mainly to the owner, more related to abstract concepts. Finally, all three interviewees were asked to tell a short story or anecdote related to their work at Poliziano.

Interviews will sometimes be quoted or referred to within the text if necessary. The complete transcript of the interviews can be found in the annex B.

4   Information presentation and analysis – Studied data

4.1   External analysis

Today, Italy is one of the main players in the wine sector at a global level. Every year it competes with France for the first place in terms of world production (47,5 hectolitres in 2019[1]), it is the fourth largest country in the world regarding surface area under vines (708.000 hectares in 2019[2]), preceded by France, Spain, and China, and it fights with Spain in terms of volume for world exports, while concerning value it is second only to France. In the matter of consumption, although this has decreased over the years, Italy still ranks third (22,6 hectolitres in 2019[3]), surpassed only by France and the US. On a global scale, Italy accounts for approximately 23% of the world wine trade, translated into approximately 6.4 billion euros and preceded only by France with 10 billion. With regards to volume, Italy and Spain both account for 21%, and together with France's 14%, they constitute more than 50% of the entire world production.

To end with numbers, it is fundamental to give the dimension of this market and its impact on the Italian economy. According to 2020 data collected by ISMEA (Institute of services for the agricultural food market), but referring to the pre-COVID period, the wine industry in Italy has been producing a total turnover of 13 billion euros per year for some years now. The sector comprises approximately 310 thousand wine enterprises of which 46 thousand are wine producers. This is a very distinctive feature of the Italian production chain when compared to the producing countries of the new world (e.g., Australia, Chile, etc.) as the largest companies (with a capacity of more than 10,000 hectolitres) produce about 80% of Italian wines. In fact, only 215 among cooperatives, large industrial operators, and centuries-old wineries, account for 78% of Italian wine turnover. The rest of the companies are medium-small, most of the times family-run businesses[4]. All these numbers help to understand the importance of this sector for the Italian economy and demonstrate its great growth over the years. In fact, in 2019, the Italian wine exports grew by 3.4% from the previous year, recording around 6.43 billion euros in value. Among the main markets we find the United States holding the first place, followed by Germany, for some years a solid buyer and lover of Italian wines, and then the United Kingdom, which has seen a slight decline due to Brexit. Eastern markets are growing strongly too, especially China (+5%), Japan (+13%)

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[1]https://www.oiv.int/public/medias/7303/it-nota-di-congiuntura-del-settore-vitivinicolo-mondiale-nel.pdf
[2]https://www.oiv.int/public/medias/7303/it-nota-di-congiuntura-del-settore-vitivinicolo-mondiale-nel.pdf
[Retrieved on th 3 April 2021]
[3]https://www.oiv.int/public/medias/7303/it-nota-di-congiuntura-del-settore-vitivinicolo-mondiale-nel.pdf
[4] file:///C:/Users/95lin/Downloads/Scheda_Vino_giugno_2020.pdf [Retrieved on the 6th of April 2021]

and Russia (+20%)[5]. In Italy, the wine sector is one of the few that has felt little or nothing of the economic crisis of the last decade, trying above all to compensate for a lack in the domestic market with excellent performances in global markets.

This, however, is the pre-covid situation, and while it is important to give an idea of the industry before the pandemic, it is even more important to consider the impact that this had on the wine business in Italy. According to ISTAT (National Institute of Statistics), the value of Italian wine exports in 2020 fell by 2.2% compared to 2019, invoicing €6.29 billion, but with an increase of 0.8% compared to 2018[6]. Although 2020 was a catastrophic year for most markets, the wine industry managed to hold on and continue to produce and trade on the strength of the fact that the lockdown period did not severely affect agricultural work, as this is mainly carried out outdoor, where it was easier to implement the physical distancing measures between staff members. There were in fact excellent results in production, which fell by only 1% compared to the previous year. The sector managed to better cope with the crisis also thanks to the increase in online commerce and therefore the diversification of markets and sales channels by many Italian wineries, the wine trade did not stop even during the long periods when the HoReCa sector (Hotellerie-Restaurant-Café) had to come to a standstill due to anti-contamination measures imposed by national governments.

4.1.1 PESTEL Analysis
A PESTEL analysis is a framework used to evaluate the macro-environmental factors that have an impact on an industry's performance.

4.1.1.1 Political factors
Politically speaking, Italy presents itself as a stable democracy in which corruption levels, although higher than in other European countries, remain on the threshold of normality. Being part of the European Union, the state enjoys all the benefits of the communion, including the absence of customs duties imposed on the trade of goods and the presence of free trade among the member countries of the union. However, some foreign events have or may have an impact on the wine industry in Italy. First of all, Brexit, which took place at the end of 2020, and has thus led to a potential risk of introducing duties in the future (although still a low risk), but a more real emergence of technical and legal barriers between the UK and the

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[5] http://www.inumeridelvino.it/2020/03/esportazioni-di-vino-italiano-aggiornamento-2019.html [Retrieved on the 6th of April 2021]
[6]https://www.federvini.it/studi-e-ricerche-cat/3094-qualivita,-vino-export-a-6,29-miliardi-2,2-nell-anno-del-covid [Retrieved on the 6th of April 2021]

countries of the European community, as well as possible administrative delays have given the temporary (for the moment) lack of common systems that facilitate logistical processes. Finally, it is foreseeable that there will be an increase in competition with non-European countries as how they trade with the UK will become the same as for EU member states. Another possible risk comes from the number one importer of Italian wines, the United States. In fact, the country imposed in 2019 tariffs on goods imported from the EU for $7.5 billion. At the moment, Italy is not yet on the blacklist of countries subject to duties, but nothing rules out its addition in the future. However, neither the countries affected by the tariffs nor Italy have recorded increases in exports to the US market following the introduction of the duties[7].

4.1.1.2 Economic factors

In economic terms, the contribution of the wine industry to the Italian economy has already been outlined. It is currently in a crisis situation due to the consequences of the pandemic, with a contracted GDP in 2020, which, however, according to initial calculations, is expected to rise by 3,4% in 2021 and 3,5% in 2022.[8] Taxation on wine in Italy is 22% and there is no excise duty. As Italy is a country heavily reliant on tourism for economic growth, a strong emphasis has been placed on wine tourism in recent years, which is slowly becoming bigger in terms of numbers and values. Of key importance, however, is the new European Community Agricultural Policy (CAP), conceived and initiated in 1962, and renewed for 2023 following a postponement due to a pandemic. This policy commits 368.6 billion in capital to two pillars. The CAP is structured around nine key objectives, including ensuring a fair income for farmers and farm workers, increasing competitiveness, as well as protecting the environment and climate change, maintaining biodiversity, and growing and developing rural areas[9]. The impacts on the wine sector will be manifold as the policy promises to provide resources and money to wine growers to enable them to restructure and convert vineyards, as well as subsidies to develop more organic and environmentally sustainable agriculture.

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[7]https://winenews.it/it/il-vino-italiano-ancora-una-volta-salvo-dai-dazi-usa-la-decisione-del-governo-di-trump_423167/ [Retrieved on the 7th of April 2021]

[8]https://www.ansa.it/europa/notizie/rubriche/altrenews/2021/02/11/previsioni-economiche-inverno-2021_403aa243-5dbd-4c7a-bc85-4bf779d090f6.html [Retrieved on the 7th of April 2021]

[9]https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/foodfarmingfisheries/by_country/documents/analytical_factsheet_it.pdf [Retrieved on the 8th of April 2021]

4.1.1.3 Social factors

It is possible to say that the quantity and patterns of wine consumption in the world have slowly changed over the years. While in the past wine was mainly drunk in company and during dinners and family gatherings, today consumption has become increasingly hedonistic-related, and more linked to particular events or specific situations. The type of consumer has also changed, moving from the older generations, usually dominated by baby boomers (1946 – 1964) or generation X (1965 – 1980), to the increasingly burgeoning Millennials (1981 – 1995). While the formers tended to consume wine in a more traditional way, with a few exceptions of some wine lovers, the latter group tends to prefer smaller quantities and seek multi-sensory experiences, often linked to food pairings or connection with the territory, which manifest an exaltation of their social status and well-being. It is precisely for this reason that the purchasing habits of millennials have seen an increase in interest from marketers and researchers, both in terms of purchasing power and the ability to set trends. This type of consumer is generally tech savvy, with low brand loyalty, looking for value, innovative design, and sustainable and health-related products. As mentioned above, wine tourism is also of fundamental importance, having this business grown strongly in recent years and having been confirmed as one of the strongest trends in the post-pandemic period.

4.1.1.4 Technological factors

In the field of technology, it can easily be confirmed that the Italian wine industry is second to none. In fact, many advances have been made in the search for innovative technologies to control all winemaking processes. From the control of temperature and fermentation to the introduction of instruments for checking the grapes during harvest, to the introduction of night-time harvesting, which saves time and improves results thanks to machinery that facilitates processing during the night, when the grapes have lower temperatures and are therefore easier to control. In addition to this, since 1963 Italy has hosted the SIMEI, the international exhibition of machinery for enology and bottling, every year in Milan. This event not only brings huge profits to the wine industry and wine tourism in the country, but also demonstrates the country's importance in the production of machinery for grape processing, bottling, and labelling. In fact, 70% of the wine-making technology in wineries around the world is labelled *made in Italy*[10]. However, if on one hand we see this great and unstoppable technological development, on the other hand we can see general backwardness

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[10] https://www.gamberorosso.it/notizie/notizie-vino/tecnologia-e-vino-tutte-le-tendenze-dal-simei/ [Retrieved on the 8th of April 2021]

of the wineries themselves, especially the medium-small ones. The funds that these wineries reserve for research and development are always very limited and they often end up keeping old and obsolete equipment because the investment to renew it would be too great. Also, from the IT point of view, there is general underdevelopment on the part of many Italian producers. Many wineries attest to an inadequate commercial structure, as well as to poor communication and promotion of their wine. Finally, most of them concentrate their resources in a single distribution channel or often do not diversify the markets they trade-in.

4.1.1.5 Environmental factors

Sustainable development is becoming an increasingly important issue over the years and is has been clearly reflected in every sector. In addition, the numerous cases of greenwashing have generated a further need for authenticity and fairness on the part of consumers, who seek to place their trust in companies and who demand concrete evidence and results of sustainability from them. In Italy, a law has just been proposed to the parliament with the aim to create a system for certifying the sustainability of the Italian wine production chain. Another topic of growing importance in the global wine industry concerns the organic transition of many producers. It is in fact ascertained how much the end consumer is gradually re-evaluating organic wines and often prefers one produced according to these criteria rather than one produced normally. 38% of Italian wine consumers consider organic as the next winning trend. In terms of production, around 12% of the land occupied by organic vineyards stretches across Italy, concentrated mainly in Tuscany, Apulia, and Sicily[11]. Among the most important issues on which the sustainable development and ecological transformation of the wine industry in Italy focuses are the replacement or reduction of the use of chemicals or pesticides, better water, geological and biodiversity management, as well as the control and maintenance of carbon dioxide emissions and energy. Finally, the creation of more sustainable packaging, where boxes and labels are produced from recycled materials, remains a central topic too.

4.1.1.6 Legal factors

From a legal point of view, the Italian wine industry has a strong rigidity of laws and regulations. The most important legal reference point is law n° 164 of 10/02/1992 called "Nuova disciplina delle denominazioni di origine". In 2009, this law was reformed with the "Nuovo OCM del vino" and thus the establishment of DOP (Denominazione origine protetta)

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[11] https://www.enoitalia.it/vino-biologico/ [Retrieved on the 8th of April 2021]

and IGP (Indicazione geografica protetta) designations. The new decree has improved protection for the consumer and the product as well as simplified the bureaucratic apparatus. There will therefore be two designations, with the DOP bringing together the DOC (Denominazione origine controllata) and DOCG (Denominazione origine controllata e garantita) and the IGP replacing the older IGT (Indicazione geografica tipica). A national committee for DOP and IGP wines has been set up to protect and promote wines with this designation. The indications on labels are also revised, including the obligation to highlight certain information such as the name of the product with the expression DOP, DOC, DOCG or IGP, the alcohol content, the origin and provenance, allergens, the lot number, the bottler company, and the quantity of product[12].

4.1.2 Market and competitive analysis

The competitive scenario in which Poliziano operates is very complex. In an area where more than 280 producers coexist and compete, among which new and more innovative ones emerge every year, differentiating oneself from the others has become a crucial point for most wineries and the race to diversification is now a common denominator of wine production in the Montepulciano area. However, for this study the analysis of the external market and therefore the examination of the main agents competing in this market was not done among the wineries of Montepulciano itself but rather on the main red wines (DOCG and DOC) of Tuscany. This is mainly for two reasons, the first and most important one is because among the main competitors of Poliziano there are all small wineries, which do not share sensitive data about production and turnover and of which it is practically impossible to find information on the internet. Poliziano too has decided not to provide the researcher with data on their financial situation and in general on the purely economic aspects of their management. The second reason why it was decided to compare the main Tuscan DOC and DOCG wines is because the export of Tuscan wines represents more than 50% of the whole production and, generally speaking, foreign consumers, in particular those who do not know much about wine, tend to prefer a distinction of wines by name rather than by winery, therefore ending up not choosing between two bottles of Nobile from two different wineries in Montepulciano, but rather between a bottle of Nobile di Montepulciano and a bottle of Brunello di Montalcino, two very different wines.

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[12]http://www.vinoinrete.it/sommelier/sommelier%20-1-%20legislazione.htm [Retrieved on the 8th of April 2021]

The DOCG of Nobile di Montepulciano, established in 1980, currently boasts an annual production of about 6.5 million bottles. The annual turnover from wine production alone is approximately 65 million euros. As far as sales are concerned, 80% are export sales and 20% are domestic sales. The main foreign markets for Nobile di Montepulciano include Germany, which has dominated the top spot for many years now and accounted for around 43% of Nobile's total exports in 2020. Next are the United States, with around 22%, followed by Switzerland (14.5%), Asia, non-EU countries and Canada (all three at 7%). On a domestic level, instead, Nobile's main buyers come from Tuscany itself, which boasts almost 50% of the total, followed by the rest of the country which is divided into North, Central (excluding Tuscany) and South and the Islands, all with about 15% of total sales. In terms of supply, the Montepulciano area offers 3 main wines, all linked to the territory. Obviously, there are many others, but only wines representative of the area and produced using local grapes will be included; the same parameter will be applied to the other territories analysed. The product for the basic range is the DOC Rosso di Montepulciano, which has an average price of around 8-9€ per bottle and is mainly preferred by young consumers, who are not wine experts and may order it in restaurants as an accompaniment to a meal. The DOCG Nobile di Montepulciano, together with the Nobile Riserva, are instead the flagship wines of the town. The former is in the medium-low price range, with an average bottle price of €19.45 (based on Nobile from 8 different wineries in the 2017 vintage), while the latter is already in the medium-high range with an average price of €25 (with some exceptions due to particular mono-cru wines such as Poliziano's Le Caggiole, which costs around €85). Vino Nobile and Nobile Riserva, on the other hand, are products aimed at a slightly more wine-educated public, which is willing to spend more and often buys in larger quantities, as Vino Nobile is excellent for ageing.

One of the biggest competitors of Montepulciano wine is undoubtedly Montalcino wine. Together with Chianti Classico, it has for years been considered the king of Tuscan wines, but since the last twenty years of the 20th century Brunello has grown enormously in terms of production, sales and even price. Having become a DOCG in 1980, this wine is now known throughout the world, thanks in part to a careful marketing and sponsorship strategy promoted by the consortium of Brunello di Montalcino wine over the years. The annual production of Brunello is around 9 million bottles (2019 figure), and the turnover has been calculated to be around 180 million euros. As for the Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, Brunello is exported all over the world and the percentage of production that is destined for foreign countries is around 70%. The first foreign market for Brunello is undoubtedly the United States, where the percentage of exports reaches 30%, followed by the European Union with about 20% (mainly

Nordic countries such as Germany, Switzerland and the UK), Asia with 15% (mainly China, Japan, Hong Kong) and Canada with about 10%. As for the different options that the Montalcino area offers, there is the DOC Rosso di Montalcino, which, likely to the DOC Rosso di Montepulciano, is produced to be a basic wine, not suitable for ageing and with a relatively low average price, but higher than its Montepulciano's namesake (around 13-18 euros). In contrast, Brunello di Montalcino is in a very high, premium range, with an average price of around €75 (based on Brunellos from 8 different wineries vintage 2016). The Riserva version of Brunello, aged 6 years instead of 5, reaches even higher price ranges, but since it is a very occasional product, highly dependent on the type of vintage and the reaction of each vineyard to that vintage (so each winery decides each year whether to produce it or not), it is more difficult to establish an average price. In general, Brunello di Montalcino is a very elaborate wine and definitely suited to ageing.

The other giant of Tuscan wines is Chianti Classico. Distinguished from normal Chianti by a decree in 1932, this wine has a history of almost a hundred years that accompanies it to the present day. The production area covers about 72,000 hectares and is exclusively confined to just eight municipalities between Siena and Florence. With an impressive annual production of 37 million bottles (2020 figure), Chianti Classico as a DOCG has a turnover of around 400 million euros per year. The main markets for this wine, which exports 78% of total bottles, include the United States with 34%, followed by an excellent domestic market at 22%, Canada and the UK both at 10% and Germany at 6%. The offer proposed by this area includes mainly 3 wines. The Chianti Classico vintage, with 1 year of ageing and an average price of €19 (based on Chianti Classico from 9 different wineries vintage 2017) is the lower-middle range product among the 3, but it is undoubtedly the best known and most purchased, especially among the younger generations and the less wine-savvy. Higher quality than the Chianti Classico vintage is the Chianti Classico Riserva, which instead requires an ageing of at least 2 years (of which 3 months in the bottle) and its production is subject to technical and organoleptic parameters to be respected. At an even higher level is Chianti Classico Selezione, which requires ageing of at least 3 years, technical and sensory parameters to be respected and the obligation on the part of the wineries to harvest grapes grown only by themselves and in a single vineyard. All these restrictions mean that even for these wines there is no annual production but rather that this depends very much on the weather conditions and the capacity of each individual winery to produce it or not. For this very reason it is difficult to establish an average price for these two labels.

The scenario of the main Tuscan red wines is completed with two other big names such as Bolgheri DOC and Morelino di Scansano DOCG. The first is undoubtedly a wine known throughout the world, especially for its high cost and its particular history. In fact, it was born around the 1950s when in the Bolgheri and Castagneto Carducci areas (in upper Tuscany, near the coast) vines typical of the Bordeaux area such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc were planted, thanks to the similarity of the two territories and climates (the Italian and the French one). Bolgheri became a DOC in 1994, and today 70% of its wine is exported to the main importers of Italian wine in the world, such as the United States, Canada, Germany and, in recent years, parts of Asia. In terms of production, about 6.5 million bottles were registered in 2020. Because of the use of more international vines, Bolgheri wine is certainly a wine with a less Tuscan style and therefore more suited to different types of palate, thus demonstrating a break with the tradition of Sangiovese and therefore a more sought-after appeal to certain types of consumers who may be looking for more innovative products. The panorama of Bolgheri wines is rather articulated, but essentially it is possible to divide the types into Bolgheri DOC, Rosso Superiore DOC, Sassicaia DOC, Vermentino, Bianco and Rosato. The last three will not be included in this analysis as they are white or rosé wines and therefore not direct competitors of Vino Nobile. Bolgheri DOC requires a minimum of one year of ageing, thus becoming the basic product in the catalogue, whose average price varies between 18€ and 25€. Rosso Superiore DOC, on the other hand, is the top wine of the denomination and reaches average prices of around 110-120€. The spearhead of the whole offer is instead the Sassicaia wine, which is unique in its kind as it is the only DOC in Italy to be produced only by one winery, San Guido, and its prices vary greatly depending on the vintage but normally have a basic cost of €250.00.

Morellino di Scansano is probably the youngest red wine DOC in Tuscany, born only in 1978, becoming DOCG in 2007. Precisely for this reason, about 75% of the bottles produced are sold in Italy, while 25% of exports are divided among the main European countries, with little or almost no overseas distribution. In spite of this, as the production area is quite vast, the production capacity of Morellino is around 10 million bottles per year. There are basically two types of wine produced: Morellino, which has no minimum ageing period and has an average price of €16 (based on 10 Morellino from different wineries, vintage 2017), and Morellino Riserva, which requires two years of ageing, one of which must be in a wood barrel, and has an average price of around €22.

In general, the Tuscan red wine scenario is very competitive, with the two giants, Chianti Classico and Brunello di Montalcino, dominating unchallenged for years, but with smaller

DOCGs such as the Nobile, which over time have managed to build their own niche of loyal consumers and are slowly trying to expand distribution to other targets and in other areas thanks to innovation and the introduction of new products. Among these wines there is certainly a very decisive factor that conditions consumers towards one choice rather than another, namely the price. Although the basic wines all have more or less the same price range, when it comes to the most representative and therefore most sought-after labels, the costs begin to vary greatly, going from €25 for the Nobile to €75 for the Brunello, demonstrating that, although the product itself may have differences that are more difficult to perceive for a non-expert, what has made a big difference over time has been the marketing and communication strategy promoted by each consortium.

4.1.3 Consumers Behaviour

It is a fact that consumer tastes and behaviour change rapidly, but it is especially in this era, in which we are strongly conditioned every day by everything that surrounds us, that consumers find themselves making choices dictated more by social influences than by free will. Moreover, there is no doubt that the pandemic has also strongly conditioned consumers in adopting new attitudes and behaviours in the purchase and consumption of goods and services, as well as in making different choices given the new circumstances. The trends recorded in recent years demonstrate new consumer behaviour even with regard to wine, and in summary it is possible to establish crucial points to better describe the new consumer, or rather, the consumer-teller. This is in fact the term coined by a study conducted by the Area Studi Mediobanca in collaboration with SACE, an Italian joint-stock company, on the structural change of wine companies and wine consumption in the post-pandemic scenario. This new concept describes the consumer as a narrator of himself in his choices and symbology. He/she informs him/herself about what he/she is interested in, he/she follows and is conditioned by fashions, mixes styles and is stimulated by unions between different brands and tastes. He/she tends to structure and tell his/her identity and the stories he/she discovers over time. The consumer-teller looks for stories that are akin to his/her personality and modern tastes. As wine consumption has become more and more hedonistic over time, the modern drinker uses brands and wine products to enhance his or herself and to make the uniqueness and authenticity of the self-manifest to others.

In this respect, it is also important to stress that the consumer never remains alone, but rather joins communities that share the same passions and tastes. These communities or groups of individuals are united by frail but very intense bonds, which can be easily

abandoned but which create forms of cohesion between consumers who in turn exchange feelings, experiences, and emotions. Also, Francesco Carletti, the son of the winery owner, when asked to tell a story, put the emphasis on his first experience as an export manager in the United States, where he said he met many people in a few days and established a sincerely deep relationship and bond thanks to wine as a common denominator, although the duration of the meeting was only of a few hours.

According to the study, there are three main traits that unite the new wine consumer:

1. There is an ever-increasing quest for quality (but measured by individual economic capacity). On one hand, people are saving more because of the uncertain future, but on the other hand, people are looking for products of increasingly higher quality, in which case they are prepared to spend more. This trend is less evident among Baby Boomers but remains more pronounced, especially in Europe, among Millennials and Generation X, particularly among men and parents with children.

2. Strong tendency to place more value on local products and businesses. 7 out of 10 consumers in China, Brazil, USA, Canada, France and Italy show a strong preference to choose local products and to turn to local companies. Globally, the trend shows that 80% of people who buy quality products usually also buy local products. This trend is more prevalent among Baby Boomers and affluent families, with women slightly outnumbering men.

3. An increasing diffusion and consolidation of food delivery as a method of purchasing products. The sense of risk in going indoors has meant that many people prefer to order at home rather than have a meal in a restaurant.

Finally, it is important to emphasise that the relationship between brand and consumer has also changed greatly as a result of the pandemic. Omnichannel has become established as a fundamental element in the buying and selling process. For the consumer, there is no longer any distinction between real and virtual, and everything that was once done for real is now done virtually and vice versa (or at least in part). There is also an accentuation of the distinction between classes based on consumption choices, which often reflect the different aspirations that each social segment pursues. As mentioned earlier, technological progress and the fear of contagion in enclosed or crowded places have led to the emergence and growth of new forms of spending and consequently a greater focus by companies on providing increasingly personalised services. Finally, the focus on the challenge of sustainability and

climate change is also becoming increasingly relevant and has become a very important trend also at the digital level[13].

4.1.4 Digital Benchmark

To make this study even more complete and above all to understand how widespread the use of storytelling as a communication tool already is, it was decided to carry out a series of research studies to establish a benchmark on the use that some Italian wineries make of storytelling on their websites and social media pages. Six wineries were selected, and it was decided to choose three wineries located in Tuscany, the same region where Poliziano is situated and produces, and three wineries from other parts of Italy, in order to give a more complete picture of the situation, providing a more local focus and therefore including more "direct" competitors and a more general point of view by involving less direct competitors. The main purpose of benchmarking this aspect of communication is to understand the quantity and quality of storytelling in the online communication strategies of these wineries, so as to be able to make a comparison with Poliziano's communication strategy and, if necessary, make changes or improvements to it, based on the competitors.

As mentioned above, during the research on the benchmark in question, criteria were established by the researcher in order to facilitate the gathering of information, to make it faster and above all to make the subsequent analysis easier and more immediate. The six criteria selected are the following:

I. If storytelling as a communication tool is present, based on the definition given earlier in the literature review section;

II. What kind of story is adopted, i.e. whether it relates to the origins of the brand, the story of the founder, the story of an employee, the story of a customer or the story of a product/service of the brand;

III. Whether the story in question is short, long or in "chapters" or "episodes";

IV. Whether this story is shared only on one platform or also in the other channels;

V. The number of followers and posts on the Instagram page and the number of followers on the Facebook page of each winery (in this case, the data will refer to the date 3rd of May 2021);

VI. The level of interaction that followers have with the brand on social media, classified as low, moderate or high.

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[13] https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/2021-07/Vino%20e%20Spirits_Report%20Integrale.pdf [Retrieved on the 23rd of August 2021]

Check table 2 in the annex C for the complete analysis. From this analysis it was possible to determine that in general the larger and more famous wineries are more successful and overall, better at using storytelling as a communication tool. The main reasons for this are probably a higher economic capacity, an established reputation as well as previous skills and experience. It is also worth stating that some of these wineries make only minimal use of storytelling, which is probably due to the fact that they do not consider this tool sufficiently useful for their communication strategy.

4.2 Internal analysis – Poliziano winery

4.2.1 About the territory, the winery and its history

Montepulciano is a renowned medieval town, located in the southern part of Tuscany, a region in central Italy, known for its beautiful landscapes, enormous historical and cultural heritage, rich gastronomy, and centuries-old wine production. The incredible fertility of the soil and the perfect exposure of most of its vineyards have allowed an astonishing development of the wine sector in this area, which today is the main productive activity of the zone together with tourism; so great that it has guaranteed an annual growth of about 5% of the local economy until 2019[14].

There are three main wines produced in Montepulciano, and all three falls into the Italian denomination categories. In fact, production focuses on the DOC 'Rosso di Montepulciano', the DOCG 'Vino Nobile di Montepulciano' and the DOCG 'Vino Nobile Riserva'. The importance of the wine sector in the territory is demonstrated by the presence of 2000 hectares devoted to vineyards, about 15% of the total municipal area. Among these, the best known within the country and abroad is undoubtedly the "Vino Nobile di Montepulciano", which alone represents a business worth around 500 million euros, including assets, turnover, and production. Today, there are more than 250 vine-growers managing these lands and carrying on this ancient tradition, together with about 1000 permanent employees and seasonal employees, who normally help the wineries during the harvest period every year[15].

Finally, it is necessary to briefly introduce the origin of the company, in order to better understand its current structure and subsequently the implementation of the strategy underlying this paper. In order to do so, it is necessary to take a big step backwards, to the 15th century. Agnolo Ambrogini was born in Montepulciano in 1454. He was later called 'Il

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[14] https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/vino-nobile-montepulciano-business-500-milioni-ABihs9cB [Retrieved on the 23rd of April 2021]
[15] https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/vino-nobile-montepulciano-business-500-milioni-ABihs9cB [Retrieved on the 23rd of April 2021]

Poliziano' after the town's Latin name, *Mons Politianus*. A famous humanist, poet, and philologist of the Italian Renaissance, Poliziano moved to Florence as a young man and met Lorenzo the Magnificent, one of the most important members of the Medici family, who became the poet's protector, patron, and friend. In 1494 Poliziano died, and exactly 467 years later another Poliziano was born, this time by Dino Carletti, the founder of the historic winery that is the subject of this study [16].

As recounted by the current owner and son of the founder during the interview, Dino Careletti was born as a "poliziano" (as people born in Montepulciano are called) and gradually became passionate about literature and poetry, until he discovered and then became a great lover of the aforementioned poet Il Poliziano. This love of poetry, combined with a passion for wine and for his homeland, led Mr. Carletti to buy the first 22 hectares of land and found his own winery, calling it Poliziano to honour the humanist. In 1980, Federico Carletti, Dino's son, after graduating in agriculture, took over the management of the company, which had already made a name for itself on the local and national scene. Thanks to his enormous technical skills and undeniable astuteness in exploiting an excellent territory and excellent vineyards, Mr. Carletti revolutionized the production of Poliziano by working only with his own grapes and concentrating on combining modernity with respect for tradition and the environment. The love of wine and the wine industry has been passed down from Federico to Francesco, the son of the current owner, who is now working in the company as sales manager for the United States and Asia and who is currently continuing his studies so that he can one day inherit the company from its father and continue to grow it over time.

4.2.2 Structure of the organization

The Poliziano winery is a small to medium sized company located in Montepulciano, Tuscany. According to the latest organizational chart compiled in 2015, the company has 15 employees, including the owner, heads of department and section managers, plus other seasonal employees and cellar workers whose number greatly varies from year to year as it depends on the workload that arises from time to time. As already mentioned, the current owner is Mr. Carletti Federico, after which there is a quality and traceability manager, who is also in charge of personnel and supplier management, as well as being the oenologist and head of bottling; then there is a foreign salesman, an Italian salesman and his agents and collaborators; the sales department also includes an accounting and purchasing manager and

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[16] https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agnolo_Poliziano [Retrieved on the 23rd of April 2021]

an agronomy manager; the team is then completed by a reception manager and a cellar manager with his employees.

The company's legal headquarters and production site are located in Montepulciano Stazione, where the main building, which includes offices, tasting room, cellar and fermentation rooms, covers a total area of 8000 square meters (Annex D.1). Also in the same location is the tool shed which used to be the old cellar and production area and which now covers an area of 550sqm and is used as storage for tractors and agricultural equipment. The company also owns another small winery of 200sqm located in Magliano in Toscana and used mainly for processing grapes from that area. In fact, the vineyards are spread over several territories, including Montepulciano, Montefollonico, Magliano and Cortona, for a total of 155 hectares of vineyards, suitable for producing different types of grapes. Finally, the winery has a shop in the historic center of Montepulciano called "Le Stanze del Poliziano" (Annex D.2), as this is the former home of the poet. The shop is small (40sqm) but very new and with great attention to detail in the furnishing and is used as a sales point and tasting point for customers passing through the town.

4.2.3   Strategic and Operational management of the company

In this part we will focus more on the aspects strictly related to marketing, i.e. everything concerning the offer, sales, promotion, targets, etc. The aim of this part is in fact to understand how the Poliziano company operates in the market, what its strengths and weaknesses are, and thus provide a broader overview on which to then elaborate the final idea of storytelling as a communication tool.

During the interview with the current owner, Mr. Carletti, it was possible to ask about the company's general mission, values, and objectives. Poliziano, in fact, is committed to producing quality wines while maintaining total transparency and truthfulness towards the customer. Mr. Carletti also highlighted the fact that the company has always tried to remain authentic and true, obviously adapting to the market and changing tastes, but always maintaining its traditional approach as a family business producing typical wines. Since the beginning of the 2000s, the winery has also embarked on the road of hospitality, which now accounts for around 10% of its total annual turnover. Now one of the main objectives for the upcoming years is to develop this sector even further, investing in new ways of offering visits and tastings and an ever-improved direct interaction with the customer.

To complete the analysis of the company's strategic management, it is necessary to illustrate the main criteria used to segment the clientele, as well as to identify the most

dominant consumer targets and finally to present an appropriate positioning strategy. Among the main criteria used to segment customers into groups are demographic and geographical variables, and more specifically gender, age, income, nationality, education level and family size. Those serve as a basis to define the size of the area where the brand can have an impactful influence and are easier to analyse. Secondly, some behaviouristic variables are taken into consideration, for example, price sensitivity, buying habits or how satisfied are they from the purchase and consequently if they will advocate the brand.

Poliziano has over time reduced the number of its targets, trying to adapt it partly to the average tourist visiting Montepulciano and therefore the local wineries (mainly wine tourism) and partly to new types of wine consumers, such as the growing category of millennials. In fact, it is possible to identify two targets that are more defined and characterized than the others. The first one is a young target, aged between 25 and 35, mostly men, which is slowly developing a new interest in wine and especially in its social component. Consumers in this target group are mostly Italian or from north Europe, e.g. Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium or France. This target is also attracted above all by the innovativeness of the Poliziano winery, and therefore by its commitment of transforming its production into 100% biologic. The price sensitivity of this group of consumers is relatively high, since, although they are interested in more sophisticated bottles and products, they do not yet have the economic capacity of older targets and are potentially willing to spend less on wine, since it is a product that they consider to be hedonistic and therefore less connected to emotions and feelings.

The second target group comprises an older consumer segment, aged between 35 and 55, with a nice balance on gender, but mostly couple or families, who have a strong interest in wine, who are connoisseurs and who have over time experienced various wine-related experiences, abroad too. The United States, Germany and Switzerland are the main countries from which these consumers come. Price sensitivity is low for them, as they have higher economic capacities than the other group and above all are well disposed to spend more on wine, as it is an integral part of their daily lives, and for this reason they seek quality products, linked to the territory and representative of something unique, true and authentic. Poliziano's traditionality and truth are the strengths that attracts this type of customer, who, after an initial approach with the brand, tends to become a loyal customer and therefore a more regular consumer of their products.

Poliziano's positioning strategy is competition-based, so it focuses on defining how its offering differs from that of its competitors and how to create value in the market through its

products. Although, as mentioned earlier, the range of producers and wineries in Montepulciano is much wider than one might think, Poliziano undoubtedly has strengths and differences that make it stand out from the rest. The company's chosen way of delivering value is undoubtedly to focus on customers intimacy, i.e. to provide a complete, varied and different service than the competition, so as to attract the customer through uniqueness and not price. In fact, it was illustrated how what Poliziano offers is not just wine, but an entire experience linked to the winery, which begins with a tasting and ends with the wine club, encompassing in the middle a whole series of elements that over time bind the customer to the brand.

A table with the summary of the STP (Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning) strategy is presented on the Annex E.

4.2.4   Marketing Mix

Going into more detail, it is necessary to identify Poliziano's marketing mix, i.e. what kind of products are offered to the public, what kind of price is applied to these products, where these products are distributed and how, and finally how they are advertised and made known to consumers.

Poliziano has a wide range of products, in part quite similar to other wineries in the area, and in part differentiated thanks to the relocation of some of its vineyards to other parts of Tuscany. Obviously, the main element of Poliziano's wine offering is the Vino Nobile di Montepulciano red wine. Their selection includes Rosso di Montepulciano DOC (Annex D.3), the most basic of the estate's wines, produced since 1989 and composed of 80% Sangiovese (an indigenous variety) and 20% Merlot. Then there is the actual Vino Nobile di Montepulciano DOCG (Annex D.4), which together with Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Asinone DOCG (Annex D.5) make up the two medium-high end products on offer. The first boasts its first bottle in 1968 while the second in 1983 and the blends count 85% Sangiovese and 15% Merlot in the first and 100% Sangiovese in the second. The name Asinone comes from the vineyard area from which the grapes used exclusively for this wine are harvested, whose shape recalls the back of a donkey (asino in Italian). Another single-vineyard wine, the flagship product of Poliziano's offer, is Le Caggiole (Annex D.6). The result of research and dedication, Le Caggiole has been part of the winery's production as a premium wine since 2015 and is made from 100% Sangiovese. The second high-end product of the winery is the IGT le Stanze (Annex D.7), created in 1987 to honour "Le Stanze", the work of the Florentine poet and writer Poliziano. The composition of this wine is 90% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10%

Merlot. The range of products has been expanded at the beginning of the 2000's thanks also to the increase in the number of hectares of vineyards belonging to Poliziano. Following the purchase of land in the areas of Cortona, Scansano and Maremma, the wines In Violas (since 2004 with 100% Merlot), Lhosa Morellino di Scansano (since 1998 with 85% Sangiovese and 15% Ciliegiolo) and Mandrone di Lhosa (since 2001 with 85% Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% Petit Verdot) were born respectively. In terms of bottles, the offer concludes with 2 other wines. The first is the only white wine produced by the winery, the IGT Ambrae, made in the Montepulciano area since 1993 with 80% Chardonnay and 20% Sauvignon Blanc. The second is the well-known Vin Santo DOC (Annex D.8), a sweet raisin wine produced since 1995 and composed of 90-95% Malvasia grapes and the rest various blends. The company also produces extra virgin olive oil (Annex D.9), as the territory has a strong vocation for this product. Although limited to 2000 - 4000 bottles per year, the company has invested heavily in making the oil BIO as of 2016 and thus making this product a high-end item. However, Poliziano does not only offer wine but, like most wineries in the world, also offers its customers wine tours and tastings. The only package available is the Poliziano Experience, which includes a tour and tasting of about 1 hour and 30 minutes, in which a maximum of 12 people can participate, and a total of 5 wines are served.

Poliziano's pricing strategy for its products is very up-to-date and in line with the competition. The winery offers products for every type of consumer group, from basic to premium. With regard to basic products such as DOC Rosso di Montepulciano and DOCG Nobile di Montepulciano, Poliziano follows a pricing strategy based on market cost, thus setting the price according to the price of its main competitors. For other products such as Nobile "Le Caggiole" DOCG or the Nobile "Asinone" DOCG, the price is instead based on value, as the product can be considered similar to the regular Nobile di Montepulciano, but the grapes and the way this wine is made are of much higher quality than its namesake, so the price is increased and justified to the consumer by explaining this characteristic. Other bottles such as the IGT wine "Le Stanze" or the DOC Vin Santo also follow the same price philosophy since they have intrinsic characteristics and above all symbolic and experimental benefits that the other products lack. On the other hand, wines produced outside the Montepulciano area are re-proposed with the same pricing strategy as the basic products, and therefore based on the market price.

According to information provided by the company during the interviews, about 80% of the bottles produced are sold outside the company, through various distribution methods. As confirmed by Francesco Carletti, head of foreign trade and marketing manager, the HoReCa

channel contributes a huge part of Poliziano's wine sales. To reach restaurants and bars, the company relies on an Italian distribution company that promotes the wine nationwide. In the United States, the main importer of Poliziano wines, they rely on the Dalla Terra Winery Direct distributor, which works with numerous high-quality Italian wineries to distribute wine in America. For other foreign countries such as Germany, Canada and some countries in Asia, the winery cooperates with local monopolies, which, once the wine is imported, redistribute it to domestic agents. The remaining 20% of the bottles produced, on the other hand, are sold directly to direct customers, either at the winery or at the shop located in the historic center of Montepulciano. There are just as many visitors who, especially in the summer, take part in a wine-tasting session or simply come to the winery and buy wine to send or take home with them. The same thing happens with customers who buy from the shop in Montepulciano. It is important to emphasize that Poliziano's online sales are made through third-party sites or secondary channels, because as Francesco Carletti once again pointed out, at the current moment, opening an e-commerce solely dedicated to the winery's products would be counterproductive for them, first of all because of the high costs, and secondly because it would involve internal competition with the distributors with whom they already collaborate, thus creating potential tensions and an excessive fragmentation of sales channels.

Finally, the analysis shifts to the methods of promotion and publicity adopted by Poliziano over the years, illustrated by Federico and Francesco Carletti during the interviews. The owner in fact described Poliziano's promotional strategy as a very particular one because it was completely transformed at the beginning of the 2000s, in correspondence with the advent of the web as we understand it today. Before then, the company attracted new customers mainly through billboards, leafleting and above all by word of mouth. At the beginning of the 2000s, Mr Carletti decided to invest more in the hospitality sector and hired Fabio Bertocci, the current Hospitality Manager. Poliziano thus began a long ascent in this sector, which by 2020 will contribute around 10% of the company's total turnover. In 2015 they also decided to renovate the tasting room, which is now a place truly designed and planned to provide tastings and ad-hoc experiences for customers (Annex D.10). But if in the past customers came because they were passing by or because they were recommended by a friend, this is no longer the case, or at least not exclusively so. The word-of-mouth component still exists, but it is now the digital aspect that has been developing the most in recent years.

During the interview, Francesco talked about how he had taken over all the winery's social media when he first joined the company and tried to create a cutting-edge and engaging social communication strategy. Initially, it was just a matter of reposting other users' content

(user-generated content) and providing assistance via private message to anyone with questions or needs. This then evolved and recently they began to collaborate with Italian bloggers and influencers linked to the world of wine, with a following of at least 40-50 thousand followers (Annex D.11). These collaborations have given a big boost to the numbers and visibility of the company's social pages, generating new interest from consumers to learn more about the winery and its products. However, it was following the pandemic caused by Covid-19 that the company decided to become more involved on improving the website and social pages. Since January 2021, the company has been working with a local web page and content management company, which is following up on the Poliziano website and social media campaign. A CRM (Salesforce) was also implemented on the website in order to monitor and track users' interaction on the website. As a result of this, a newsletter was also set up, which Poliziano now uses to inform and launch promotions to its customers. The goal, according to Francesco, is in fact to use the main social networks (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter) as a showcase to attract customers with captivating images and videos, and then have them end up on the website, which is the real core of the company's digital promotion (Annex D.12). Today, the newsletter has become a key tool in the promotion strategy of the winery. The department dedicated to managing this tool has in fact created hierarchies and groups divided mainly according to the number and type of annual purchases that a customer makes and the customer's loyalty towards the brand (how many years they have been buying Poliziano products). This gave rise to 5 lists of consumers, sorted by: Asinone Wine Club (Annex D.13), considered the elite and made up of around 450 members, who buy and stock large quantities of bottles every year and have been loyal customers for years. These customers receive special treatment, are offered special vintages, unique experiences and the opportunity to stay at the "Villa Fornace" (Annex D.14), located in the Montepulciano countryside. Next is the Gold group, then Silver, Bronze and Ultra Basic. The idea is therefore to diversify the offer and promotions according to the target for which they are directed. Informative emails are sent to all lists, while promotional emails are diversified according to the recipient. The goal, according to Francesco Carletti, is to create a history of customer data that can be reused in the upcoming years to improve the type of offers designed for each target.

5 Implementation

5.1 Storytelling proposal

All that has been described and analysed so far is the context and framework on which this final section is based. In order to understand the suggestions given for implementation of the strategy, it was first necessary to introduce all the aspects and elements that characterise the wine sector in general, the wine market in Italy, the behaviour and habits of consumers and, obviously, the strategic and operational structure that actually constitutes the Poliziano company. It was at this point, however, that the idea was born and developed, making it possible to imagine a hypothetical implementation of storytelling within the winery's communication strategy. More specifically, in this case we are talking about an almost exclusively digital implementation, in the sense that the campaign is designed and produced to be spread and advertised on the online platforms where the company is present, and in particular on the website and main social media. The reason for choosing to design the strategy primarily for digital channels is easily explained. As mentioned earlier, since the beginning of 2021 the winery has decided to invest heavily in its social media and online presence in general, with the help of third-party companies. This is because, in uncertain times such as the one we are experiencing at the moment, the digital component is increasingly becoming a focal point for most companies operating in the wine sector, as the way in which customers come into contact with a brand is most often online. In addition, given the growing number of young consumers (Millennials) that Poliziano has been acquiring over the years, it was thought that digital storytelling was the best way to attract more users from this target group and consequently make them more involved with the brand. It is also important to emphasise that the strategy is designed to follow the mission, vision and values pursued by the winery (mentioned above), as storytelling is also more effective when designed and adapted according to the company's basic principles.

After the gathered information it's possible to propose a story for Poliziano, in order to be used as a trigger for customer engagement and thus enhance brand image and the relationship that this has with its consumer. The idea for this story essentially stems from the researcher's reflection on the fact that the brand, although it used the name of the poet Poliziano, did not properly exploit the importance that this humanist has and has had in the Italian Renaissance literary scene. Being Poliziano a historical figure of some importance, it was considered interesting to think of exploiting more the concept of the winery being named after the poet himself, and thus to find a common thread between wine and literature through the city that is the birthplace of both the poet and the winery. The storytelling adopted for this tale will

therefore focus on the foundation of the company and so of the brand, with another particular focus on the figure of the founding family, the Carletti family, and thus the relationship between father and son within the context of the birth of the Poliziano winery. The name of this story is 'Un uomo e Poliziano' (A Man & Poliziano). It is a story made up of episodes, as these are perfectly suited to the modes of communication present in social media, as each episode could be told through a post (whether on Instagram, Facebook or even the website) and in general the episodic format manages to engage the user in a greater way, thanks to the extension of the story time and therefore through the creation of hype and expectations in the consumer.

The basic plot is to tell the story of how the Poliziano company was born thanks to the founder's love for the poet and his city, which he passed on to his son through stories made of memories, fantasies and dreams. At this point the complete story will be introduced, and then broken down and analysed to understand episode by episode and its practical online implementation.

"Once upon a time, there was a Man. A Man who wanted, or rather felt the need, to tell his story. He did not know exactly how and whom to tell it, for there was always the risk that it could be misperceived or directed to the wrong listener…or simply to an uninterested one.

However, the Man wanted to tell it anyways: he was aware of the true power of this story, its potential to leave a mark and, above all, to honour his origins. The Man grew very affectionate to the place he was raised in, and he believed he could share some of its greatness and culture with the world, through this very story.

And so, the Man begun, with little nostalgia, to speak to his son of the anecdotes who took place in Montepulciano and that led to the discovery of a poet that shared with him this town, but in different times. The poet's name was Agnolo Ambrogini, known to many as Poliziano, and he happened to be one of the most important humanists and man of culture of the Italian Renaissance. He knew the poet by name, but didn't know much more about this figure, as the Man was a surveyor, guiding constructions around the country, and not a poet himself. Nonetheless, when he was not busy with work, he used to spend his time between literature and wine; that's how he eventually discovered that he shared not only his hometown, but also these two passions with Poliziano. The Man liked to share these literary discoveries with his son, for sure an interested and eager listener, with whom he knew his stories were never wasted: he told him how, during Poliziano's days, their town was called in Latin *Mons Politianus*, and that was the reason the poet had earned that nickname, given to

him by his colleagues and the Medici's court. The Man also told his son about Poliziano's stay in Florence, after the death of his father, where he began his university studies and where he stared interacting with the Medici's court.

At that point the Man, wanting to learn more about the flourishing literary environment of the Medici's court, came across "Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne", written by Lorenzo the Magnificent. He was pleasantly surprised by the role of the wine in the poem. After more research, he learned how the wine was perceived as a vehicle for a more peaceful and serene life, how intertwined it was with the concept of good life and *carpe diem*. He also learned that the court preferred to spend the summers in countryside, and more specifically in Montepulciano, as it was fresher if compared to the suffocating heat of the city and with its vineyards it offered many occasions for feasts and banquets to accompany the wine tasting (the very Poliziano and Sandro Botticelli, a famous painter from the Renaissance scene, loved to spend their afternoons together with a good glass of wine at hand).

Without even realising it, the wine slowly started to become a more and more integrated aspect into the Man's life. He begun to see wine as more as a simple beverage to enjoy with a couple of friends, and to grow a sincere interest in it and in its cultural implications. It was then in 1961 that the Man purchased his first 22 hectares of vineyards and embarked on his adventure into the world of wine, moved by the tales of Renaissance poets and a passionate vision of his homeland, the romantic scenery of their stories.

Wine, literature and tradition begun to meld, and what were once hobbies were now transforming into a real project, a new mean for telling the story of his territory. With the Man's genuine passion for his project, the winery soon became one of the most famous in Montepulciano, and Poliziano's wine one of the most appreciated by visitors and locals alike.

The Man continued cultivating his interest for Poliziano's work, which led him to "Le Stanze per la Giostra" (The Rooms for the Joust), written in 1484 to celebrate the victory of Giuliano De' Medici, Lorenzo's brother, in a horse tournament. This poem in particular was highly innovative, as it was able to mix the style of the most important Italian Renaissance poets such as Dante, Petrarca and Boccaccio, while dealing with simple themes such as love intrigues, nature and mythology, and the Man was so impressed that he decided to dedicate a special wine to it. Unfortunately, despite all his best efforts, either because of a lack of knowledge or resources, the Man never achieved the desired result and decided to shelve the project. This small but significant failure, together with a gradual expansion of the wine market in Montepulciano and consequently an increase in competition, forced the Man to

invest less and less time and money in the winery, depressed by his inability to remain unique among so many others like him.

This is where the Man's story ends, or to better speak, his direct role in it does. But there is still an important part to share, not necessarily told by him.

It was, in fact, in 1980, exactly 19 years after the company was founded, that the son, inspired by his father's stories, decided to concretise his dreams and aspirations, and thus find a common thread between wine and the poem. In 1987, through relentless and meticulous research and experimentation, the son was able to achieve what his father had always wanted: that year, the wine "Le Stanze" was introduced, dedicated to the Man, the poem, and its poet. "Le Stanze" wine happened to be the first Supertuscan (a name used by American journalists to define the most prestigious Tuscan IGTs) produced in Montepulciano, showing an amazing ability to experiment and innovate just as the poet. This connection that the poem and the wine shared, through the great originality of both, contributed to strengthen the love for the poetry, the winemaking, and their amazing territory.

And if it is true that wine is a constant discovery, so the discovery of Poliziano was for the father and son. One day, by chance or by fate, the son read Poliziano's Rime, one of the poet's minor works, but rich in interesting ideas and refined poems. One hundred small poems made up of stornelli, ballads and songs of very simple nature, based on playful and frivolous themes, often referred to courtly love and characterised by a popular but not trivial style. There was one rhyme in particular that really resonated with the son, since he found in those words, probably intended for a woman, an interesting correlation with wine, as a drink that gives pleasure and that is good for the soul:

> *Se tu sapessi quanto è gran dolcezza*
> *un suo fedele amante contentare,*
> *gustare e modi suoi, la gentilezza,*
> *udirlo dolcemente sospirare,*
> *tu porresti da canto ogni durezza,*
> *e diresti: "Una volta i' vo' provare".*
> *Quando una volta l'avessi provato,*
> *tu ti dorresti aver tanto indugiato.*[17]

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[17] http://www.letteraturaitaliana.net/pdf/Volume_3/t64.pdf [Retrieved on the 14th of September 2021]

Now, for someone who does not know Italian and especially the vernacular language of the late 1400s, it will be rather difficult to understand this verse (a free translation from the author can be found if the Annex F), but it's important to highlight how the son found these words to be an exact reflection of Montepulciano's wine, that once you try it, you regret not having tried it before. That's how the son, who was so fascinated by this rhyme, decided that tell this new ending to his father's story was the best way to pay homage to his father, the poet and Montepulciano with the precise intention of passing on this passion and interest to the many visitors to the region, inviting them in turn to collect stories about the wine, the winery and the territory, so that the circle would never close, and authenticity and tradition would never be forgotten.

So, we have come to the happy ending with this second story, which is not so much a tale as a whole as much as an invitation to live these stories and tell them to posterity, perhaps in front of a bottle of Poliziano's wine, or reading one of his poems."

5.2   Insights and recommendation for an implementation

The idea of this storytelling stems from the fact that a story, even if it is well told, must leave its mark, or at least prompts consumers to tell this story or their personal story, their approach to wine, their experience with the brand and the events linked to a bottle, for example. The story also serves as an attractor for new customers who want to find out more about the wine and the brand and find this story an interesting way to learn about the values of the winery itself. The story could also act as an allurement for consumers who are already affiliated with the winery, giving them a new interest in discovering and investigating even more deeply the origins behind each label and each bottle, and then extending this discovery into other fields, as in this case for example, in literature.

At this point it is important to clearly define the methods, timing and consequences of a possible implementation of this story within the communication strategy adopted by the Poliziano winery. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the idea is to divide the story into "chapters" or "episodes" and publish them over a defined period of time on the winery's main social and online channels. The episodes will be divided as follows: an introductory one, which contains the initial part of the story where the context, the characters and the plot are introduced. This will serve to create hype in the reader/user and entice them to continue following the story and possibly to follow the winery's pages if they are not already doing so. The second episode will instead have as its main part the "encounter" and "discovery" of the poet Poliziano and 15th century Medici literature by the Man, together with the birth and the

decline of the Poliziano winery, so as to make the poet more familiar to the reader and arouse curiosity in discovering something new as well as inserting the antagonist or the moment of difficulty into the story. The third episode will tell the story of the birth of the winery and the wine "Le Stanze", thus creating a more real connection with what the Poliziano winery is today and encouraging the reader to want to know more about the wine and try it. The last chapter is dedicated to the collection "Rime" and is therefore a gentle nudge to live the Poliziano experience and not regret not having tried it before. This episode aims to actively call the consumer to visit or return to Poliziano's, so that they can learn more about the story and at the same time collect and experience stories to tell in turn.

The strategy was designed to be presented on the company's Instagram and Facebook pages and on the official website of the winery. As mentioned above, however, this idea of implementation does not prohibit the story from being told verbally. In fact, it is possible that during the wine tasting, the story is told to the visitors following the episodic scheme, i.e. giving the introduction at the beginning of the tasting, and then continuing with the part of the story dedicated to the different wines while they are being served to the customer. Therefore, telling not only how a particular wine is produced and from which grapes it is made, but also embellishing the story with the particular anecdote from which the idea of the bottle originally came. The same thing, albeit adapted to the situation, can be done at an event if the conditions permit it.

The main advantages of this strategy are manifold and concern various areas, from economic to practical. There is no doubt that the use of such a story on digital channels has practically no monetary cost, as the social channel accounts are completely free. The only possible cost that can arise would be if the company decided to use professional photos taken by a photographer dedicated to the project (which they are already doing) and therefore the latter's salary would have to be calculated. However, if they ever decide not to hire a photographer, this may not drastically compromise the quality of the content, as even photos taken amateurishly and with everyday devices such as a mobile phone could potentially produce a more than acceptable result, and in any case in line with most of the standards present on social networks today. In terms of time, a strategy of this kind can certainly take some time to be devised, refined and planned. The basic idea might be present, but it could certainly be improved and expanded by the winery itself as a more experienced connoisseur of the winery's history and above all of the tastes and attitudes of its customers, both offline and online. A greater number of years of experience in contact with the customer would in

fact allow the story to be modified and improved to make it more consistent with the tastes of the brand's loyal customers or in general with the typical consumer of Montepulciano wine.

Another suggestion, which is of high importance, is to establish what the objective of this strategy is, in more concrete terms. It may help here to use the SMART model to make these objective easier to manage and more quantifiable in terms of data. The S stands for "specific" and requires that the objective is well defined and focused, so that it is easier to determine the amount of resources needed to achieve it and therefore make it easier to pursue it. The M stands for 'measurable' and indicates the fact that a concrete result needs to be established, also in terms of numbers, so it is easier to understand when this has been achieved or the level of progression for completion. The A stands for 'achievable', because if this goal is not actually achievable then it is right to revise it, as there is a risk that over time the right motivation to achieve it will be lost. The R stands for "relevant" because each objective is only relevant if its completion actually counts for the company and if its achievement brings tangible improvements. Finally, the T stands for "time-based" and simply indicates the fact that a specific time period must be established within which one wishes to achieve that goal.

In the case of this strategy, the goal can be for example to "Increase the conversion rate of the website and thus the newsletter subscribers by at least 50% in a 6-month time window". In this case, the target is specific as it indicates the exact percentage of customers the company wants to have subscribed to the newsletter. The target is also measurable because the target is set at 50%, and therefore calculable in the course of the work. The target is undoubtedly achievable because the time window is large enough and the current newsletter subscribers are not very many, so an increase of at least half of the current subscribers is undoubtedly achievable. The relevance of this objective derives from the fact that the company is increasingly focusing on its online channels and on the newsletter as a means of communicating information and promotions, as well as a useful tool for creating a database on which to work in the future. Finally, the objective is time-based as it is likely to be achieved within 6 months from the previously established implementation date.

Since consumer engagement is one of the main objectives of storytelling, it is appropriate to consider the customer participation as an integral and potentially very beneficial element of the results of the implementation of this tool. In fact, it is fair to think that a very direct involvement of the customer can enrich and improve the story, since as mentioned earlier, even the personal experience of the consumer himself constitute a story in itself and often provides a different and ideally more objective point of view. The company can so invite the customer to add details to the story, to enrich it through illustrations, drawings, or other

poems by the poet Poliziano. Such an interaction with the customer could go into a variety of other fields and forms, such as through the inclusion of photos or video footages that tell of more direct and widely varying experiences. In this way, there is no doubt that the outcome would be more than positive in terms of how connected and engaged the customer feels with the brand, leading to an unequivocal win-win situation.

The last point to illustrate for the potential implementation of this strategy is the importance of measuring the results obtained, evaluating them and if possible, seeking feedback from customers. A strategy remains ineffective if it is not possible to see how successful or unsuccessful it has been. In this case, thanks to the CRM adopted by Poliziano, it will be possible to really assess how well the strategy has met the objectives set beforehand. This implies not only that the strategy can be changed and improved even during its course, but above all that at the end of it, it is changed and improved according to the results obtained, so as not to make mistakes in the future if it has failed, or to maintain or improve specific aspects if these have been appreciated by consumers. At the end of the campaign, it will also be necessary to understand how successful the implementation has been for the company, i.e. whether its adoption has led to the desired results or whether something was missing. Finally, it is always important to use loyal customers to investigate the effectiveness of the strategy for themselves, because there is no better way to understand how fruitful something is than through the opinion of those directly involved.

6 Limitations

The author of this study would like to acknowledge some restrictions and limitations encountered in conducting the research. This was carried out in an academic environment, where a limited time frame of about 6 months was present. This time period certainly had an effect on the researcher's decision to select certain research methods over others, where one of the weaknesses of the study included the length and depth of the interviews conducted. A different approach could have been adopted to collect a larger and more precise amount of primary data, whereby the researcher could have interviewed experts in the field to gain a deeper and more detailed knowledge and understanding of the field of study.

It is also important to note that the data was collected during a semi-lockdown period in Italy, which initially did not allow for easy access to the required information and extended research time due to travel restrictions and rules of distancing among people. This limitation in travel and contact initially prevented a survey from being proposed directly to the company's customers as the company was effectively closed to the public. Therefore, the modalities shifted to digital by exploiting the newsletter, which then were abandoned due to internal company reasons. The questionnaire was then resubmitted in paper format, but the time available for obtaining responses had meanwhile shrunk to such an extent that it was no longer sufficient to collect a significant number of responses, thus leading to the questionnaire's non-use as a method of collecting primary data. This led to the lack of the client's point of view on the topic being researched.

Moreover, in this research just one interpretation of stories and storytelling have been included, but it is fundamental to point out that there are still many more to take into consideration, and so other aspects of this concept might have been unmentioned in this paper. Another limitation is related to the fact that storytelling could be equally applicable to all types of products and price ranges, so comparative studies should be conducted on stories related to various goods and services in order to give a deeper understanding of the topic. One might also ask if some products are particularly well suited for storytelling.

Finally, the author had a lack of experience in writing a research paper including limited knowledge of the field and in the process of writing a thesis, which could be seen as a limitation. However, this has led the author to develop academic skills and knowledge both in the areas of storytelling and branding, but also in the setting of a thesis.

7   Conclusion

The aim of this study was to gain a better understanding of storytelling and to explore how storytelling can be used as a marketing technique to enhance the brand experience and thus customer engagement with that brand, in this case the Poliziano winery brand.

First of all, it is important to mention the contribution, albeit small, that this paper makes to the academic and research community on this topic. The study, although limited in terms of pages and limited to one specific company, adds more knowledge and notions to other studies already present in this field and gives more credibility to the topic in question. This research was also carried out with the aim of disseminating more insights and information on storytelling as a communication technique, in this case related to the wine sector. This research could be a starting point from where extend the studies on the possible implementations of this technique, such as for example creating a structure for brand stories, maybe a model or a pattern that other companies/brands could follow and adapt to their specifics and unique characteristics.

However, this study was created to provide the company with a proposal and an idea for their communication strategy in digital channels. It is therefore the Poliziano winery that is the real recipient of this study, which first and foremost decided to believe in this research and provide the necessary data to make it as most comprehensive as possible. The implementation described in the dedicated section of this thesis is therefore a starting point for the winery itself to adopt storytelling as a marketing technique and in turn develop its own ad hoc strategy for their structure and organisation.

Poliziano's history is undoubtedly unique, and the foundation of the winery is linked to events and personalities that are difficult to connect with producers of other wines or in other territories. However, the concept behind this thesis, namely that of using storytelling as a communication tool to increase and improve consumer engagement with a brand, could very well be applied to other wineries and in other contexts. The contribution that this work can make is to be an example or a guideline for those in the wine industry who want to improve their relationship with their customers through greater involvement due to the telling of stories. In this specific case it was decided to put the emphasis on the story of the foundation and founder of the company, but nothing impedes to explore many other and perhaps unusual starting points from which build and then convey the story. For example, a story could steam from anecdotes connected with a place, a building, a particular hill, or a name, a legend, an oral tale that has been passed over for years. Potentially, every aspect that makes a brand different could be used as the base for building a brand story.

The contribution of this thesis does not stop with wine and wine cellars, but can well be extended to other products, such as olive oil, beer, spirits and even cheese and dairy products. As already mentioned at the beginning of this paper, people tell hundreds of stories every day, and at the same time we are all potential receivers and listeners of these stories, be it the story of a vineyard or the story of a particular hop. Where there is a story to be told, however embellished, there is surely a person ready to listen.

Finally, during the course of this project the researcher undoubtedly gained new insights and further improved those already acquired during his years of study. Firstly, the concept of storytelling, content marketing, brand experience and customer engagement were explored, previously almost unknown to the researcher, and now fully understood along with their characteristics and facets. It was also understood how storytelling it can be used as a marketing tool in a brand communication strategy and thanks to the numerous examples analysed during the writing of this research it was possible to determine which factors to consider and not to consider when using such a technique. It is important to specify how much the study also contributed to the expansion of the researcher's knowledge of the wine sector and the wine market worldwide and in Italy. The researcher thus concludes the study enriched with new knowledge and greater skills in various areas, as well as greater confidence in analysing and interpreting data and in writing a dissertation.

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9   Annexes

Annex A – Table 1. Summary of methods of data collection adopted

Method	To whom	How	Goals
Interviews	Federico Carletti, owner of the company	Oral; Face-to-face inside the winery's tasting room; lasting 30 minutes; recorded	Understand the Vision, Mission and Values of the company. Collect insights regarding the foundation of the company and some intriguing anecdotes and stories connected to it.
	Francesco Carletti, Marketing Manager and US & Far East export Manager	Oral; Face-to-face inside the winery's tasting room; lasting 46 minutes; recorded	Have a deeper understanding of the structure of the company, its dimension, and its marketing mix, with a particular focus on the digital communication strategy carried on by the company. Moreover, collect come interesting stories related to the winery.
	Fabio Bertocci, Hospitality Manager	Oral; Face-to-face inside the winery's tasting room; lasting 52 minutes; recorded	Getting to know more about everything that concerns the hospitality and the direct contact with the customer. Comprehend what type of customer the winery has, what is the offer in terms of products, services, and experiences, as well as understand the offline communication strategy.
Benchmark	6 Italian wineries located across the country. Two out of six re direct competitors of Poliziano, the others are big and well-established wineries in the wine market of the country.	Analysing the digital platforms of the wineries, such as the official website, Instagram and Facebook page and perceive if the storytelling technique is adopted and if yes, how. 6 criteria were chosen in order to facilitate the analysis.	Create a benchmark of the usage in online platforms of storytelling as communication technique. Investigate what are the method used to implement this technique and eventually obtain inspiration or ideas from other wineries, more expert in exploiting this tool.

The transcript of the interviews is presented here in its whole and it was decided to keep it in Italian by author's option, as a translation would have had been too much time consuming and unnecessary after all. Only the questions present a translation in English, in order to permit to understand what the job of the interviewer was and how he structured the interviews.

Annex B.1

1st Interviewee - Francesco Carletti, *Marketing and US & Far east export Manager*

Interviewer: Quale è il tuo ruolo nell'azienda?

(What's your role inside the company?)

Interviewee: Formalmente sono l'export manager per tutto quello che è fuori dall'Europa. Avendo studiato all'espero parlo abbastanza bene inglese. Focus principale sono gli Stati Uniti essendo il cliente più grosso fuori dall'UE. Poi vabbè c'è il Canada ma ogni stato ha i suoi regolamenti differenti e lavori principalmente con il monopolio. Poi tutto il discorso Est dalla Russia fino alla Nuova Zelanda. Cina, Giappone, Taiwan, Corea. Io non sono una persona social e non capisco i sistemi di comunicazione di questo tipo. Quando sono entrato ho preso in mano i social. Sono uno strumento gratuito, ma mi rendevo conto che quando facevi un post avevi un impatto non al 100% efficace e solo sulla platea che ti segue. Ho cercato quindi di concentrarmi sulle altre persone (user-generated content). Ho iniziato a seguire gli #poliziano, re post sulle storie e assistenza tramite messaggio. Per esempio "come è quel vino?" Nel corso del tempo ho notato che più persone richiedevano il vino per fare dei post loro specifici. Quindi ho collaborato con altri blogger e da quando è arrivato il covid questa cosa si è accentuata e stiamo ricevendo un elevato numero di richieste. Persone che tu contattano su Instagram e ti chiedono il prodotto. Principalmente italiani. Per gli esteri ci sono molti costi di esportazioni e difficilmente dai vini di alta fascia a persone che non sai nemmeno se poi c'è un ritorno. Ci sono magari alcuni che sai che fanno questo mestiere per il vino e fanno questa cosa di contorno. Se la fanno con persistenza, con 40/50 mila followers. Il migliore è PeppeTronio a cui avevamo dato vini costosi e lui ha fatto dei post sui nostri vini. Dalla pandemia adesso ci stiamo occupando molto del sito, che è molto grafico e un po' di contorno. Noi partiamo dal lavoro per strada, ristorante per ristorante, agente per

agente e sostanzialmente passa parola. Il mezzo di comunicazione è sempre stato la brochure, il sito è una brochure digitale con scritte e foto ma ora recentemente, assieme a Mattia.

Interviewer: quanti siete in questo settore?

(How many employees operate in this section?)

Interviewee: Qui in ufficio siamo 6. Due in amministrazione e 3 per vendita. 1 per Italia, 1 per Europa e 1 extra Europa. Italia ed extra Europa gestiscono la comunicazione. Abbiamo inserito un pop-up nel sito per lasciare i tuoi dati ed essere iscritto alla newsletter. Abbiamo poi fatto delle promozioni che non avevamo mai fatto prima, tramite la newsletter. Per problemi burocratici non possiamo fare un e-commerce. Poi in Italia siamo rappresentati da diversi agenti e questo creerebbe conflitti d'interesse. L'80% dei nostri clienti vende online+ristoranti. Alla fine, diventi un competitor dei tuoi clienti. La promozione è diretta. Fabio ha legato con molte persone negli anni, un tempo queste persone gli scrivevano delle e-mail e con il tempo si è ufficiosamente istituito un wine club e negli ultimi 3-4 anni abbiamo iniziato a inviare e-mail a loro. Con il covid la cosa è diventata ufficiale, abbiamo recuperato tutte le e-mail, chiesto per l'utilizzo dei dati ecce cc. Sito, Instagram, Facebook, Newsletter. Aumentare traffico sul sito e sui social per impostare nuove strategie.

Interviewer: Adesso come li utilizzate i social? Posto e piano piano aspetto di diventare più grande oppure avete già un'idea di crescita e una strategia.

(How do you use the social media now? Do you just post and wait until you grow, or do you already have a strategy and an idea of growth?)

Interviewee: sei arrivato in un momento buono da questo punto di vista perché abbiamo assunto una azienda che ci segue nel sito web. Tobo Group di Siena e loro gestiscono inizialmente il sito e adesso ci stanno dicendo per il canale social bisogna necessariamente avere una impostazione fotogenica di un certo livello quindi eventualmente fare una collaborazione stabile con un fotografo per mantenere lo stesso stile e da quello un po' scopiazzando crei una struttura comunicativa di un certo tipo. Alois Lageder, Antinori, Frescobaldi sono 3 canali social di alto livello e con tanto seguito con comunicazioni digitali molto interessanti. In più loro dicono che per accrescere traffico è fare sponsorizzazioni mirate persistenti e costanti su cui noi

stiamo ragionando. Abbiamo iniziato a lavorare con loro da Gennaio 2021 e abbiamo fatto sponsorizzazioni in queste ultime 3 settimane. Gestiscono tutto loro. Con il Covid si vede che è esploso il social. Noi puntiamo tanto sul sito e il suo traffico. La società dice che puoi usare social e newsletter ma il pilastro crescita di un sito web sono i contenuti che crei, blog, news continue, coinvolgere attraverso tanti contenuti che poi entreranno nei motori di ricerca. I primi che entrano devono ritornare per poi riportare gente.

Interviewer: tra tutte le piattaforme online, il sito è quello su cui puntate di più e quella che rende di più?

(Among all the online platforms, the website is the one where you invest more and thus that yield the most?)

Interviewee: Su Instagram abbiamo 3100 followers, Facebook 2000, sul sito 7000-10000 utenti all'anno. Abbiamo messo adesso un CMR nuovo che è salesforce che permette di tracciare quando un utente interagisce nel sito. La newsletter è stata fatta con salesforce e si è sviluppata in questi mesi. Sul sito il 60% è ricerca organica, il 30% di riferimento e meno del 3% dal social e tutti i clienti che hanno acquistato in azienda ci hanno visitato sui social. Il social è solo una vetrina come un cartellone pubblicitario. Avere una pagina con tanti follower e il verificato è un investimento per far capire che ci sei. È la prima esca, la seconda esca è un sito performante. Le ricerche su Google sono più efficaci. Il social ti permette di vedere la vita comune dell'azienda ed è una cosa divertente mentre il sito può rendere veramente. In azienda qualcuno preferisce dire che i social sono quelli che ti portano sul sito, altri dicono che hanno più impatto sul consumatore. Se tu hai un sito performante lo vedi nei social ma non viceversa. Io sono convinto che il sito abbia più potenziale e quindi e-commerce, newsletter e wine club.

Interviewer: il wine club da quando lo avete istituito?

(When did you constitute the Wine club?)

Interviewee: ufficiosamente un wine club più strutturato dall'anno scorso. Newsletter, tu entri nel sito, lasci dati e ci abiliti a farti promozioni commerciali e informative. Con il sessantesimo vorremmo fare una bella strategia. L'Asinone wine club fa parte di 450 amici che vengono tutti gli anni, acquistano tante bottiglie e le stockano. Nel corso del

tempo ogni anno facevamo promozione tramite una mail. Cosa di iper-nicchia. Con il CRM abbiamo creato più liste: Wine club, Oro, Argento, Bronzo e ultra-base. Con comunicazioni informative includiamo tutti, comunicazioni mirate le facciamo in base al target. Con il 2020 la cosa è diventata ufficiale e cerchiamo di targettizzare, creare uno storico in modo da migliorare le promozioni.

Interviewer: per gli eventi fate sponsorizzazioni social prima dell'evento?

(Concerning the events, do you promote your participation on your social media in advance?)

Interviewee: la vendita diretta avveniva direttamente qui. Questo settore qui, seppur valete di una percentuale enorme ha sempre lavorato e quindi non abbiamo mai avuto bisogno di farlo crescere. Mai avuti problemi di turismo quindi mai avuta la necessità di stimolare nuovi consumatori finali attraverso il digitale. Il nostro core business è al 90% dei ristoratori. Non hai necessità di informare i clienti perché già sanno. Non ci siamo mai preoccupati dei privati. In toscana c'è una competizione enorme, e non solo, anche in Italia e in tutta Europa. È un mercato così frammentato e allo stesso tempo di nicchia e commerciale, che entrare nella testa di un cliente è difficile durante una degustazione con 250 persone. Ciò che è sempre stato importante è la struttura di vendita: distributori, importatori, agenti, ecc. Il nostro attuale importatore è Dalla Terra Winery Direct. Il prodotto grosso modo è rimasto lo stesso e il consumatore finale non percepisce la differenza. La cosa importante è la sensazione, l'emozione che susciti vendendo il vino. Ciò che è importante è la relazione che costituisci sopra al vino e se trovi il distributore bravo fa tutto lui. Fino al 2020 dovevi avere un rapporto diretto solo con giornalisti e distributori, con il digitale riesci ad andare oltre questo. Mutare le strategie senza scontrarsi con i distributori.

Interviewer: volevo chiederti se hai una storia o un evento da raccontare. Una cosa che ti è rimasta così memorabile

(I would like to ask you if you have a story or an event to tell me. Something that has been somehow memborable)

Interviewee: La cosa che più mi ricordo è quando iniziai a lavorare a 14-15 anni con Fabio bertocci nella sala degustazioni sopra. Da non degustator e non bevitore io parlavo del vino. Dal secondo mese ero io che versavo il vino e finalizzavo la vendita.

Pax di 60 anni che bevono vino da quando sono nati, sentire un sedicenne parlare del vino ti fa capire che è la persona che vende che da impulso all'emozione oltre al vino. Nel 2019 andai in Danimarca, dopo aver fatto un giro con Margherita, che è la responsabile Europa, feci una degustazione con un nostro cliente, degustatore, parte della squadra nazionale Danimarca degustazione alla cieca. Quest'uomo ci fece una degustazione alla cieca, Sassicaia 2003, Pingus 2006 e Cerretalto 2003 e questo qui azzeccò il Pingus per via del vitigno e del suo aspetto chimico particolare che gli fa fare una schiuma quando lo versi. Una cosa che ti dà la sensazione di che lavoro fai quando giri in America. Cambi costantemente, conosci persone che in quelle due ore con cui stai ti raccontano più cose possibili e a volte c'è anche chi ti riscrive un anno e mezzo dopo. Creare una relazione in tempo breve. Sembra che è in quelle dure ore iniziali che giudichi e capisci se vorrai avere rapporti anche in futuro.

Annex B.2
2nd Interviewee - Fabio Bertocci, *Hospitality manager*

Interviewer: Quale è il tuo ruolo nell'azienda?
(What is your role inside the company?)
Interviewee: Hospitality Manager. Mi occupo di tutta l'accoglienza aziendale, la prima persona che il cliente incontra quando viene in azienda sono io. E faccio da tramite per smistare il cliente che ho di fronte in base a chi ha bisogno. Per esempio, a Mattia per l'Italia, Margherita per l'Europa, Francesco per l'extra Ue o la famiglia per i potenziali buoni clienti. Capire chi hai sottomano e capire cosa vuole quel determinato cliente. È tutto fatto a pelle, devi capire subito di cosa vuole parlare il cliente e arrivare piano piano al vino. Creare subito un legame andando in contro al cliente e cercare di mediare. Capire quello che vuole il cliente e chi è che decide tra i clienti che hai davanti.

Interviewer: Sei da solo in questo?
(Do you have any collaborator?)
Interviewee: Non sono da solo. Siamo partiti con margherita che ora è la nostra export manager, viene assunta nel 2004 per iniziare a intraprendere questo percorso di ospitalità, perché il Dott. Carletti vede un boom di turismo, soprattutto europeo e

americano, e quindi ha bisogno di accogliere la gente in azienda, non per vendere ma per avere una persona che fa conoscere il mio prodotto e che quando il cliente esca sia soddisfatto e quando ritorna a casa e trova l'etichetta Poliziano se la ricorda e la compra. Ruotare il vino e farlo conoscere, presentare il vino ad amici e parenti e sviluppare un passaparola. Visti i primi sviluppi, nel 2008 cercavano un'altra persona da affiancare a margherita. Io ero proprietario di un bar del posto e poi accetto. Inizio con lavorare all'interno di questa struttura e ad oggi su prenotazione abbiamo circa 15.000 presenze all'anno. Al 90% c'è la prenotazione. Non ci interessa fare la massa, ci interessa ospitare a dare una buona accoglienza. Se apri a tutti rischi di rovinare il tuo prodotto, devi coccolare la gente. Tutto su prenotazione. Ad oggi, questo settore di ospitalità porta a coprire quasi il 10% del fatturato aziendale.

Interviewer: Ad oggi a fare le degustazioni e accoglienza siete?

(At the present moment, who's in charge of the hospitality and wine tasting?)

Interviewee: qui tutti facciamo accoglienza, io sono il responsabile. Se si parla di turismo ci sono io e poi 'è Loredana, collaboratrice stagionale. A volte siamo in 3 perché la mole di lavoro è enorme. Se ho bisogno di coprire determinati settori sale chi di competenza, a volte francesco, a volte margherita, a volte mattia, a volte il dott. Carletti. Tutti sanno fare tutto, ci diamo tutti una mano. Degustazioni con me. Casomai indirizzo se ci sono casi particolari.

Interviewer: volevo chiederti se, per le degustazioni e le visite, avete una pre-organizzazione?

(I would like to ask you if there is a pre-organization of the wine tour and tasting)

Interviewee: Ci siamo imposti una visita la mattina e una il pomeriggio. Non facciamo visite private. Massimo 12 persone, durano circa 1 ora e 30. Spiegazione dal vigneto alla cantina e quello che abbiamo spiegato durante il percorso se lo ritrovano in degustazione. Quello spiegato fuori se lo ritrovano nel bicchiere anche per capire meglio. Massimo 12 pax perché non vogliamo la massa e anche se il tour viene fatto in modo collettivo, alla fine chi prenota ha il tavolo riservato. Spesso la gente viene perché vuole degustare tranquillo. Siamo una azienda dove viene anche il professionista, perché è interessato al vino a e non vuole essere messo accanto a persone che vengono per caso o svago. La degustazione cerchiamo di farla sempre in

forma privata. Abbiamo anche grandi gruppi a volte, con distributori, importatori, che siamo costretti a mettere tutti insieme. Mandare via il cliente con un buon ricordo di te. Noi facciamo un tipo di degustazione presentando l'azienda a 360 gradi e facendo assaggiare 5 vini, DOC, DOCG e IGT. Non facciamo visite particolari perché facciamo una cosa, fatta bene. La nostra ospitalità prevede un tour di 40-45 minuti seguita da una degustazione dei nostri vini base e vini di qualità. C'era in programma di fare tour privati ed esclusivi, con una persona e una sala dedicata solo esclusivamente a loro e vini che di solito non apri mai. Ci siamo fermati con il covid. Sala rinnovata nel 2015 con un grande investimento che ha migliorato l'estetica ma anche la funzionalità con temperatura controllata per dare il miglior benvenuto.

Interviewer: La tua narrativa durante la degustazione è standardizzata o tendi a mutarla in base alle persone?

*(**Does your narrative during the wine tasting follow is somehow standardized or do you tend to modify it according to the customer?**)*

Interviewee: le cose sono quelle, ma il fatto di personalizzarsi la storia è sempre quella. A volte a qualcuno lo dici a qualcuno no. In base al target cambio. Magari la storia la racconto ma evito il particolare. Con gli americani racconto la storia, la mia storia, la storia dell'azienda e la storia della famiglia. Loro sono affascinati dalla famiglia. La cosa che c'è una famiglia dietro per l'americano è una cosa wow. L'americano se ne frega degli aspetti tecnici, ma a loro interessa la storia. L'europeo invece no, preferisce i dati tecnici. L'europeo per dire, quando viene qui e si trovava una collega americana che ha lavorato con me 8 anni, che gli racconta la storia, non ci crede. Ci sono approcci molto molto differenti e in base a americani o europei cerco di differenziare mattina e pomeriggio. Alla fine, quando finiscono il tour vogliono stare insieme. Tutti legano molto perché sei stato bravo te, non perché si stavano simpatici loro. Hai cercato di coinvolgerli in modo tale che poi la degustazione la vogliono fare insieme.

Interviewer: Volevo chiedere se avete un metodo per capire l'efficacia della degustazione, magari in base al vino venduto dopo la degustazione o se i clienti lasciano i contatti o se sono fatte un po' così.

(I would like to ask you if you have a method to understand the efficacy of a wine tasting, maybe based on the quantity of wine sold afterwards or if the customers leave their contacts, or if they are done just for the sake of it?)

Interviewee: abbiamo un libro dove il cliente può lasciare la sua dedica sulla Poliziano Experience e poi gli chiediamo se può lasciare un contatto e-mail per ricever newsletter in modo annuale. Non sei troppo invasivo nei confronti del cliente e decide lui se ricevere notizie da noi o no. Un 40% di persone a degustazione lascia i contatti. Il cliente particolare, se non vuole lasciare il contatto ma ci tengo a inserirlo magari lo aggiungo nel wine club gratuitamente, così prendo il contatto e gli offro i vantaggi del club. Trovare un modo per conquistarlo senza forzare. Stavamo pensando di aggiungere un corner con un tablet dove scattare foto che poi registrandosi gli vanno nei profili social per taggare il posto, l'esperienza, ecc. Funziona tutto con il passaparola.

Interviewer: Come funziona il wine club?

(How does the Wine club work?)

Interviewee: Abbiamo iniziato questo wine club con Jennifer nel 2014 solo a invito. Ancora ad oggi questo club prevede scontistiche su determinati prodotti, o determinati prodotti disponibili solo per loro, determinate annate, promozioni, ospitare in azienda a titolo gratuito a loro e la famiglia. Acquistare vini in anteprima. Ora abbiamo 450 membri e poi abbiamo selezionato i clienti in vari scaglioni. Ci siamo divisi in queste fasce e già da quest'anno mandiamo determinate offerte in base al target. In base a quello che ti ordinano li dividi in varie fasce. L'Asinone wine club lo gestiamo più in presenza. Principalmente americani o europei.

Interviewe: ti occupi anche degli eventi? Anche lì avete una preparazione dietro o andate più a sentimento?

(Do you also take care of the events in which the company take part? If yes, is there a preparation beforehead or do you go "by heart"?)

Interviewee: capisci subito anche lì chi hai davanti. Capisci quello che è interessato dalla presentazione. Il Vinitaly è diventato più esclusivo a gente di settore, ormai è solo un 10-15% che ti fa perdere tempo.

Interviewer: Anche negli eventi avete modo di misurare l'efficacia di una partecipazione ad un evento?

(Also, for the events, do you have a metric to calculate the efficacy of the participation to that specific event?)

Interviewee: Per alcuni eventi funziona, e prendi circa il 50% dei contatti. Magari gente che ordina o che riordina o che viene in azienda.

Annex B.3

3rd Interviewee - Dott. Federico Carletti, *Owner*

Interviewer: quale è il suo ruolo nell'azienda?

(What is your role inside the company?)

Interviewee: figlio di quello che l'ha fondata, attuale titolare, laureato in agraria e ho competenze tecniche sia nell'agricoltura sia nell'enologia.

Interviewer: Mi racconta brevemente come è iniziata la sua storia?

(Could you please briefly tell me how your story begun?)

Interviewee: Storia semplice, mi sono laureato in agraria, poi mio padre aveva questa azienda piccola, non era del mestiere e mi ah richiamato nell'azienda. Io dal 1980 mi interesso dell'azienda a tempo pieno. La situazione era completamente diversa da ora si faceva vino in damigiane però poi piano piano mi sono reso conto del potenziale di vendere vino in bottiglia, sono andato all'estero a vendere il vino, ho creato il logo e l'etichetta. Il nome l'aveva scelto mio padre.

Interviewer: lo sa perché suo padre gli ha dato questo nome?

(Do you know why your father gave the company this name?)

Interviewee: mio padre era appassionato di letteratura, e ha lavorato con un geometra per tutta Italia, e questa cosa di essere poliziano, questa storia con il poeta gli piaceva e gli ha dato questo nome all'azienda. Nel 1980 ho creato il marchio e ho incominciato a vendere il vino all'estero. È stato un momento molto favorevole, tutto andava bene, prezzo, qualità, abbiamo iniziato a vendere nel nord Europa, nord America e piano piano in Italia. Era l'azienda agricola con la cantina di là e qui tutta una situazione del centro trattori. A un certo punto, inizio anni 85-86 sono iniziati ad arrivare clienti tedeschi, non avevamo spazi per accogliere ma loro compravano vino e iniziavano a

fare passaparola. A fine anni 80 abbiamo messo a posto tutta la parte di sopra creando uffici e piccola sala degustazione, che ancora era a metà adibita per gli operai. A fine anni 90 è aumentata molto l'attenzione sul vino della toscana da parte del nord Europa e allora abbiamo deciso di spostare il centro aziendale da un'altra parte, a metà anni 90, in un casolare vicino all'azienda. Dopodiché nel 2003 abbiamo creato sala degustazioni e barriccaia e l'ospitalità è diventato un asset principale dell'azienda. Dal 2000 al 2020 escluso abbiamo avuto una crescita consistente tutti gli anni, fino a oggi che è il 10% del fatturato. Gli stranieri venivano quasi sempre tra mezzogiorno e mezzo alle 2 e mezzo e allora ho assunto Fabio. Aumento di fatturato enorme, eravamo sempre pieni da mezzogiorno fino alle 3. Poi abbiamo cominciato a raccontarla questa cosa, poi abbiamo fatto un negozio a Montepulciano molto bello, che non deve vendere il vino ma piuttosto raccontare la storia, un punto di attrazione per convincere la gente a venire in azienda. Ora abbiamo una villa dove ospitiamo i clienti più importanti. Abbiamo completato l'offerta che non è più un'offerta di vino, ma abbiamo creato una esperienza per coinvolgere privati e fare quello che voi chiamate fidelizzazione del cliente. I nobili tedeschi andavano in borgogna, compravano cartoni di vino Château pinco pallo e bevevano solo quello, oggi purtroppo non c'è più fidelizzazione. Creare curiosità nelle persone. Un gruppo di 400 clienti privati fedeli lo abbiamo, ma non di più. Abbiamo contatto con agriturismi, con chi trasporta clienti.

Interviewer: Secondo lei cosa rende Poliziano differente rispetto agli altri?

(In your opinion, what makes Poliziano different from the other?)

Interviewee: Noi siamo vecchi, c'è tradizione, storicità e poi c'è anche una guida nel vino, Non facciamo lo stessi vino di 40 anni fa. Poliziano è una azienda vera, abbiamo fatto un nostro percorso che è vero. I nostri vini non sono quelli di 40 anni fa perché il mercato cambia e ti condiziona, quindi tu vai dietro al mercato, ma i nostri cambiamenti sono stati piccoli, sempre guidati con saggezza, senza fare inversioni a U. Dal 95 siamo tornati verso la tradizione. Siamo molto più tipici, tradizionali. La clientela ci riconosce la verità.

Interviewer: quindi più che il prodotto in sé per sé, è il concetto che c'è dietro, la struttura e l'azienda?

(So rather than the product per se, what matters is the concept behind it? The structure and the company itself?)

Interviewee: Si, sai c'è stato negli ultimi anni gli opinion leader erano molto importanti e noi abbiamo un'ottima reputazione. Gli esperti ci riconoscono di essere veri. L'esperto capisce il percorso e scrive bene di noi, anche i critici. C'è tutto un bacino di clientela che si informa dagli opinion leader. Poi ora i social ci stanno aiutando, stiamo cercando di avvicinare i clienti. Qualità e verità. E poi c'è la denominazione, i contenitori generali. Lo storytelling deve essere vero, tipico, eticamente corretto. Ora sono in transizione biologica, vero biologico. Abbiamo fatto uno studio biologico, collegamento fra geologia, pedologa, qualità del vino e suoi caratteri organolettici. Qui c'è una vera connessione.

Interviewer: Come è inserita la famiglia Carletti nell'azienda?

(How does the Carletti family is involved inside the company?)

Interviewee: Io e francesco e forse mia figlia in futuro. Mio padre mi ha ceduto le sue quote nel 1983. Ora francesco è dipendente poi diventerà socio.

Interviewer: Una storia da raccontare?

(Do you have a story to tell me?)

Interviewee: tre cose belle. 1983 in Italia scoppia il metanolo, lo scandalo del metanolo, perché veniva venduto del vino adulterato con del metanolo e poliziano ha raddoppiato il fatturato, racconti la verità, qualità. Poi nel 1988 scandalo del dietilenglicole, aggiunto nell'antifermentativo proibito, che veniva aggiunto al vino per non farlo rifermentare, e Poliziano ha raddoppiato il fatturato. Scandalo dell'antigelo.

Annex C – Benchmark analysis' result

Table 2. - Benchmark of the 6 selected wineries (Own elaboration form the author)

Avignonesi and Boscarelli were selected from the three Tuscan wineries, both producers of Vino Nobile di Montepulciano and therefore direct competitors of Poliziano. These wineries operate in the same market as the winery chosen for this study and have approximately the same size and production capacity. The third winery from Tuscany is the Frescobaldi winery, in this case we are already talking about a very large company, a well-established producer in his region and throughout the country. Finally, as far as the other three wineries of the study are concerned, again it was preferred to select very large wineries, with very high production volumes. These include Antinori, which actually started out as a winery with a typical Tuscan production but is now one of the largest producers in Italy, with estates all over the country and even owners of a winery in North America (Napa Valley, California) and one in South America (Chile). The second winery is Alois Lageder, producers mainly of sparkling wine located in Trentino Alto Adige, a region in the north of Italy on the border with Austria. The last winery is Ca' del Bosco, which concentrates its production area in the Franciacorta region of Lombardy. The reason why these types of wineries were selected is because they carry out

a careful, constant, and studied communication strategy in all digital platforms, be it the website or the Instagram or Facebook page. By selecting this type of brand, it was decided to show which is the benchmark and consequently one of the highest levels of storytelling and online content management by a winery in Italy.

Annex C.1 - Avignonesi winery

Winery located in Montepulciano and producers of Vino Nobile. Speaking of the website, it was not possible to confirm with absolute certainty the presence of storytelling, as there are a few paragraphs on the origins of the company and the biography of the owner and some employees, however these do not follow the "canons" of storytelling, as there is no underlying plot to tie the elements together. The website is full of images and informative videos, but none of these use the characteristics of narrative to tell something, and instead provide data and information in a rather bland way. Also, on the social pages the storytelling element is mostly absent. Regarding the second criterion, this could not be met due to the absence of storytelling. The same applies to the third and fourth criteria. The number of followers on the Instagram page is 8.496 the number of posts is 1.435 and the number of followers on the Facebook page is 7.834. These numbers, when compared to other wineries in the area, show excellent results and a general good success of the two main social channels. Nevertheless, a large margin for growth is to be taken into account. As regards the last criterion, the winery attests to a moderate level of interaction with users, thanks to the constant publication of various and interesting posts, sometimes interspersed with contests, videos for special events or anniversaries and giveaways.

Annex C.2 - Boscarelli winery

Farm located in Montepulciano, also producers of Vino Nobile. Here the elements for a story are vaguely present, especially if the background of the current owner is taken into account. There is an element of conflict, characters and a final message. However, here too there is a lack of an underlying plot to tie it together. The other sections of the website present more explanatory and informative paragraphs about the company and its belongings. Criteria two, three and four are not met as there is no storytelling as such. The number of followers of the Instagram page is 1.113 with 57 posts, while the followers on Facebook are 3.005. These numbers are significantly lower than those of the previous winery, demonstrating how little attention is paid to the winery's social channels. On Instagram there are frequent publications,

but they are limited to simple reposts of other users' photos, making the sixth criterion low, with almost no interaction.

Annex C.3 - Frescobaldi winery

The Frescobaldi company is considered to be one of the largest and most important wineries in Tuscany. On the winery's website, which is well-maintained and very visually appealing, there are various sections with storytelling elements. For example, the brand's mission and vision are made known, which often coincide with the message of a story. In the section on the origins of the company and the history of the Frescobaldi family, the paragraphs are full of information and historical notes but there is a complete lack of conflict, as well as a plot. There is an explanatory video of the main estate that could be exploited with more storytelling, but it lacks spoken commentary, making it more scenic rather than emotional. With regard to the second criterion, on the Instagram page the storytelling element becomes more present, especially in the video section. Here, in fact, the company has published numerous posts, each dedicated to an employee, illustrating his or her story within Frescobaldi and his or her role in the farm, highlighting the importance that each individual has within the company. In this case, it is therefore possible to say that there are various short stories, divided into "episodes" and basically telling the background of the various employees. On Instagram, the page has 43 thousand followers and 1.128 posts, while on Facebook there are 163,275 followers. In terms of level of interaction in the social pages, this is moderate, as comments on photos often receive a response and reposts of photos and stories are often made, enhancing the content created by users.

Annex C.4 - Antinori winery

The Antinori winery is undoubtedly a cornerstone of the Italian wine tradition and every year ranks among the 10 most productive and profitable wineries in the country. The company's website is of the highest standard, with great attention to detail and a wealth of information and curiosities. On the home page there is a rather interesting video, very well done, which shows the main estates of the brand and the founding family through beautiful images and catchy music. The video has a strong impact, but it lacks a narration or a narrator's voice, which could give the video a more narrative character rather than an exclusively visual one. The story setting is there but lacks an underlying plot to make the content as storytelling. However, the highlight of the site is the section on the history of the family and the company. Here the storytelling is present as the whole foundation of the winery and the vicissitudes of

the various Antinori generations from 1100 to the present day are recounted in full. In this section there are also historical notes, the changes that have occurred over time in the company and its products, and everything is contextualised in the historical period of reference. In the section on the estates there are also a few paragraphs with a more narrative approach, illustrating the history of the building and what it has become today. The same goes for the wine section, which is perhaps second only to the history section. Each wine has its own page, which in turn is subdivided into vintages, and each vintage offers all kinds of information, from climate, soil, grapes, vinification and some historical data. Among these sections, some have a more narrative approach than others, thus presenting a potential use of storytelling in this section as well. Finally, the most important wines also have a short descriptive video that further enriches the amount of information and especially the way it is conveyed, making this website a true museum of history and beauty. As for the second criterion, here the main stories told are those of the family and the founding of the winery. This story is very long and detailed and is told by breaking it down into different historical periods, with a focus on specific years in which noteworthy events took place, making the narrative setting in "chapters". The story is shared exclusively on the website. On Instagram, the Antinori winery has 433 posts, 88 thousand followers, while on Facebook these are 55 thousand. In terms of interaction with customers, this is moderate, since the photos published are all related to landscapes, important places (winery, vineyard, castle, etc.) and the descriptions are very limited, sometimes characterised only by the hashtag.

Annex C.5 - Alois Lageder winery

Alois Lageder is a renowned winery located in Trentino Alto Adige, a region in northern Italy. They produce mainly prosecco wine, so they are not direct competitors of Poliziano. The website of this winery is quite different from the others, as it makes stories its strong point. In most of the sections of the website, from the wine section to the biodynamic section to the family section, the paragraphs often tell stories, albeit small ones, about the origins of the vineyard and thus of the bottle in question. It is above all the section concerning the family history that is characterised by a strong storytelling component as there are characters, a plot and a conflict. The story of the founding of the winery and the path taken by the Alois Lageder family is told briefly and in a single text. Very interesting is the section dedicated to the partners of the winery, as their history, their origins and their role in the company are told, all in narrative form. On their Instagram profile, the family story is captured through Instagram Stories and is made much more engaging and dynamic. The company's Instagram

profile has 501 posts and 21.7 thousand followers. On Facebook there are 9345 followers. The posts on the Instagram page are all very engaging and you get the feeling that they are often telling something, even if it is in a simple way and in a few lines. The contents are numerous and varied, and many of them go beyond wine, but also deal with books, biodynamics and the environment, promotion of the area and so on. Interaction with the customer is very high thanks to the various types of content, and above all by looking at the comments on the posts you can see that when users ask questions, they always receive an answer from the winery itself.

Annex C.6 - Ca' del Bosco winery

Ca' del Bosco is also a winery in northern Italy, producers of prosecco. In the identity section of the company's website, is possible to find a few paragraphs with a strong narrative appeal, which tell a little about the vision and mission of the brand. There is a relative involvement of the customer through the narration of stories that excite and arouse curiosity. The other sections, although rich in data, remain more schematic and informative, leaving little room for storytelling. In general, the site appears somewhat poorer than those analysed previously and, above all, the use of storytelling as a communication tool is almost absent. Criteria two and three are therefore not met. The Instagram page has 1109 posts and 81.5 followers. The Facebook page has 72,814 followers. On Instagram, the company manages to have a well-maintained page with a careful and planned selection of photos and a certain variety of content between stories and videos. The captions of the photos are rather simple and do not tell stories. Customer interaction is low due to a lack of response to comments, few reposts and generally little content to engage the customer.

Annex C.7 – Poliziano winey

In order for the analysis to be complete and the benchmark more correctly established, it is essential to include the protagonist of this study, the Poliziano winery. In terms of storytelling, the winery has recently started to implement this technique in its online communication strategy. Although still in small doses, there is a clear change in the way content is chosen, especially on Instagram, and in general a shift towards captions with a more narrative and certainly more elaborate appearance. The posts on Instagram are in fact much more polished than those of a few months ago and have numerous elements that relate to brand storytelling technique. Even on the website, content often refers to this tool. With regard to the second criterion, the stories on Poliziano's digital channels are mainly related to

the story of the foundation of the company. This year, 2021, is the 60th anniversary of the winery's foundation, so the content from January up until now has often focused on this special event. At times, some products, especially the premium and most important ones, are also the subject of stories (especially on Instagram) and are therefore characterised by a description with a more narrative tone.

With regard to the third and fourth criteria, the stories told are often short and are shared homogeneously on all the social networks on which Poliziano has a page.

The Instagram page has 169 posts, with 3981 followers, while the Facebook page has 1490 followers. The Instagram page is very well maintained, constantly updated and rich in content. Interaction with the customer is moderate to high, especially since the type of content has been changed, improved and made more varied, thus allowing users to interact more with the brand and get closer to it. On Facebook, the company focuses mainly on reposts from the Instagram page.

From this analysis it was therefore possible to establish which companies in the world of wine in Italy adopt storytelling as a communication tool in their digital channels and which of these do so professionally and effectively. It was also possible to verify the extent to which a social page with captivating and well-researched content leads to significant results in terms of customer feedback and interaction, possibly translating into an improvement in the relationship the customer has with the winery in question. Among the selected wineries, Alois Lageder and Antinori are definitely the best in terms of both the quality of their content and their ability to convey a story. This has brought to light the fact that companies in Montepulciano make little use of the opportunities provided by digital technology, demonstrating a gap that needs to be filled. Poliziano, thanks to a newfound commitment and dedication, has recently changed its online communication strategy and started to adopt storytelling as a communication technique, significantly improving the winery's digital results. There is still a long way to go, but the first results are already evident, such as the increase in the number of followers on the company's Instagram page in a short time.

Annex D – Pictures of the company and its online presence

Annex D.1

Annex D.2

LE STANZE DEL POLIZIANO

Dentro le mura storiche della città di Montepulciano, chiamata anche Perla del 500 per le sue bellezze artistiche, in via del Poliziano, nell'edificio che fu un tempo casa dell'omonimo poeta potrete visitare la nuova lussuosa enoteca Le Stanze del Poliziano.

In un ambiente elegante ed accogliente avrete una vasta scelta dei nostri prodotti in diversi formati. Il preparato staff Poliziano sarà a vostra completa disposizione per fornirvi tutte le informazioni di cui avrete bisogno e rispondere ad ogni vostra curiosità.

polizianowinery
Montepulciano

1/2

Piace a 240 persone
polizianowinery Our wine shop located at via Poliziano 1 in the historic centre of the romantic Montepulciano.... altro
cwd_wein 👑👑👑👑👑😘
    polizianowinery @cwd_wein ❤️❤️🍷
23 luglio

polizianowinery
Montepulciano

2/2

Piace a 240 persone
polizianowinery Our wine shop located at via Poliziano 1 in the historic centre of the romantic Montepulciano.... altro
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    polizianowinery @cwd_wein ❤️❤️🍷
23 luglio

Annex D.3

ROSSO DI MONTEPULCIANO

Denominazione di Origine Controllata

Rosso di Montepulciano has been a D.O.C. since 1989 and can be produced by simply declassifying the grapes registered for Vino Nobile. At Poliziano, vice versa, a uncompromising choice was made: we selected the most suitable vineyards to obtain a young, fruity, and full-bodied wine.

WINE CARD

Classification:	Rosso di Montepulciano – DOC
First year of production:	1989
N. bottles produced on average:	around 250.000
Variety	80% Sangiovese – 20% Merlot
Vineyard area:	58 ha.
Altitude:	280-350 m.s.l.m.
Exposure:	Various
Type of soil	silty-clay in nature with a presence of stones
Plant density	5.000-6.000 plants per hectare
Harvest method:	manual with secondary selection by optical sorting
Vinification:	fermentation in truncated, conical stainless steel vats at controlled temperatures with pressing and pump over techniques for a duration of 10-12 days
Aging:	about 8 months; 20-40% of the product is aged in wood of varying size
Aging potential:	5-8 years

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Annex D.4

VINO NOBILE DI MONTEPULCIANO

DENOMINAZIONE DI ORIGINE CONTROLLATA E GARANTITA

To the Prugnolo Gentile grapes, which characterize the Montepulciano area, we dedicate the most attentive care because they express the full potential of a territory with a rich wine history. The result is our Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, structured, enduring, with intense aromas that faithfully represent its Tuscan origins and the ancient bond between land, man, and culture.

WINE CARD

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Classification:	Vino Nobile di Montepulciano – DOCG
Frist year of production	1968
N. bottles produced on average:	180.000 -250.000
Variety	85% Prugnolo Gentile – 15% Colorino, Canaiolo e Merlot
Vineyard area:	47 ha.
Altitude:	300-450 m.s.l.m.
Exposure:	Various
Type of soil:	silty-clay in nature with a medium presence of stones
Plant density	3.000 – 6.000 plants per hectare
Harvest method:	manual with a secondary selection by optical sorting
Vinification:	fermentation and maceration in truncated, conical stainless steel vats for a period of 15-20 days
Aging	about 14-16 months in wood barrels. Two thirds in barriques and tonneaux of French oak and a third in vats
Aging potential:	10 -15 anni

Annex D.5

"ASINONE"
VINO NOBILE DI
MONTEPULCIANO

Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita

After years of continual experimentation, we identified the best quality potential of our grapes in the "Asinone" vineyard. The Nobile "Asinone" represents the highest expression of our production and the most accomplished synthesis between tradition, territory, and enological innovation. Obtained from Sangiovese grapes, it expresses a recognizable style and a defined character, but also has wide-ranging appeal to international palates.

SCHEDA VINO

Classification:	Vino Nobile di Montepulciano – DOCG
First year of production:	1983 (born as reserve)
N. bottles produced on average:	about 25.000
Varieties:	Best vintages 100% Sangiovese. Other vintages include about 10% of Colorino and Canaiolo
Vineyard surface:	12 ha. (5.5 hectares planted in 1963, 5 hectares in the 1990s and 1.5 hectares in 2017)
Altitude:	350- 400 m.s.l.m.
Exposure:	South/South-West
Type of land:	silty-clay in nature with a presence of stones
Density of planting:	3,300 vines per hectare in the old part and 5,200 in the new
Harvest method:	manual in crates with a secondary selection also by hand
Vinification:	fermentation in stainless steel vats at a controlled temperature lasting 20-25 days.
Aging:	16-18 months in French oak tonneaux.
Aging potential:	over 20 years

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Annex D.6

"LE CAGGIOLE"

VINO NOBILE DI MONTEPULCIANO

Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita

Only tradition and knowledge can allow us to face the future: VINO NOBILE DI MONTEPULCIANO "LE CAGGIOLE" is reborn. An important work that led to the awareness of the very high quality yield of the "Le Caggiole" vineyard that, after being studied, cared for, and re-planted, has allowed the production of a great, elegant and refined Sangiovese.

WINE CARD

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Classification:	Vino Nobile di Montepulciano – DOCG
Frist production year:	2015 – (previous production start 1988)/em>
N. bottles produced on average:	around 6.500
Variety	100% Sangiovese
Vineyard area:	14 ha (only partly in production)
Altitude:	350 m.s.l.m.
Exposure:	East
Type of land:	tuffaceous rock of marine origin with a percentage of clay less than 15%
Plant density	5.000 plants per hectare
Harvest method:	manual in crates with a secondary selection also by hand
Vinification:	fermentation and maceration in truncated conical, stainless steel vats for a period of 18 to 22 days
Aging:	16-18 months in tonneaux of 500/600 liters of French oak
Aging potential:	over 20 years

Annex D.7

LE STANZE DEL POLIZIANO

INDICAZIONE GEOGRAFICA TIPICA

A great modern red, to which we gave the name Le Stanze, the title of an eminent work by the poet Angelo Ambrogini, nicknamed "Il Poliziano". Obtained from Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, Le Stanze is a classic "Bordeaux" blend, conceived in Tuscany which appeals also to international palates, emphasizing the value of the territory of Montepulciano and its potential in the production of great wines for aging.

WINE CARD

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PDF

Classification:	Toscana – IGT
Frist production yesr:	1987
N. bottles produced on average:	around 18.000
Varieties:	90% cabernet, remaining merlot
Vineyard area:	15 ha.
Altitude:	250-350 m.s.l.m.
Exposure:	Various
Type of soil:	silty-clay in nature with a slight presence of stones
Plant density:	5.000 plants per hectare
Harvest method:	manual in crates with a secondary manual selection in cantina
Vinification:	fermentation and maceration in conical stainless steel vats for a period
Aging:	16 months in new French oak barrels
Aging potential:	over 20 years

Annex D.8

VIN SANTO DI MONTEPULCIANO

DENOMINAZIONE DI ORIGINE CONTROLLATA

A wine traditionally offered by our families in Tuscany to welcome guests. Vin Santo di Montepulciano is dense and dark amber in color, opaque with golden hues. The bouquet is intense with hints of honey and vanilla, over a base of caramel. The taste is sweet, velvety, soft, and round, elegantly balanced thanks to a harmonious interplay of sugars, acidity and aromas: a meditation wine.

VIN SANTO CARD

Classification:	Vin Santo di Montepulciano – DOC
First year of production:	1995
Number of bottles produced on average:	2.000
Varieties:	Malvasia 90-95%, restante Grechetto.
Vineyard area:	selection from various vineyards
Altitude:	between 280 and 450 meters above sea level
Exposure:	Various
Type of soil:	silty-clay in nature with presence of stones
Harvest method:	manual
Vinification:	Pressing of the grapes takes place in January after they have dried on reed mats in an attic room for around 4 months.
Aging:	The must is then put in small wood barrels, called caratelli, where it stays for a minimum of 7 years aging, along with the yeast starter or "madre," a precious "ingredient" jealously protected by each winery.
Aging potential:	25 years

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Annex D.9

EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

Organic

Tuscan olive-growing, a part of the landscape, a high quality product that has undergone a resurgence and new cultivation giving rise to the "organic" extra virgin olive oil from Poliziano. A production of few but precious bottles.
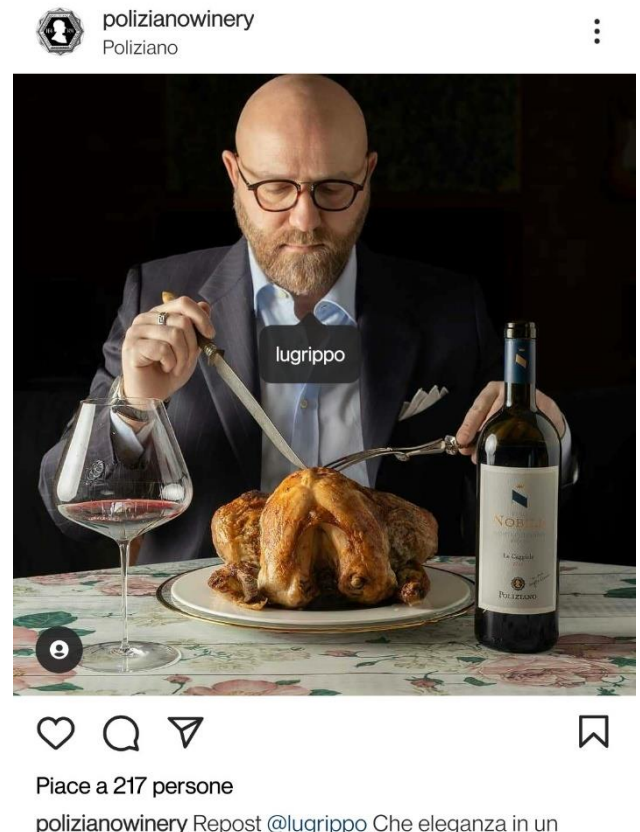
TECHNICAL CARD

Classification:	EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL – Organic
First year of production:	*From 2016 our Extra Virgin Olive Oil is certified Organic..*
N. bottles produced on average:	2.000- 4.000 bottles
Variety:	Leccino, moraiolo, frantoio.
Average age of plants:	over 30 years
Altitude:	*300-450 m.s.l.m.*
Type of soil:	silty-clay in nature with medium presence of stones
Harvest method:	manual
Processing	Hand-picked and crushed by the same evening at 26-27 ° C
Duration of the harvest:	The olives are all harvested within two weeks, the various olives coming from different orchards which are then blended after a careful tasting. The oil is then bottled after light filtration.
Characteristics:	Bright green color with yellow highlights, fruity aroma, and intense and full-bodied flavor, characterized by ample vegetal notes of artichoke and black pepper and a finish of almond and spices

DOWNLOAD PDF

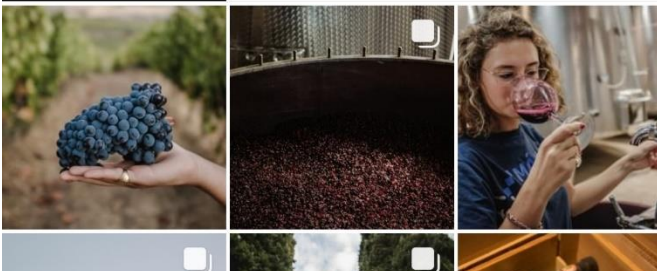**Annex D.10**

Annex D.11

polizianowinery
Poliziano

1/3

certa.hk

Piace a 143 persone
polizianowinery Repost @certa.hk

polizianowinery
Poliziano

lugrippo

Piace a 217 persone
polizianowinery Repost @lugrippo Che eleganza in un

Annex D.12

Poliziano
24 set 2021 · 🌐

Con il massimo piacere vi comunichiamo che il nostro Nobile Le Caggiole 2018 è stato premiato con il faccino DoctorWine. Anni di ricerca e sperimentazione hanno portato Poliziano alla massima espressione ed eleganza del nostro Prugnolo Gentile.

Il progetto aveva l'obiettivo di esaltare il Sangiove... Altro...

👍❤️ Francesca Raspanti e altri 178

👍 179   💬 1   ↗️ 13

📞 **Chiama ora**   💬

Poliziano
5 g · 🌐

Harvest 2021 has officially ended!

This was an important one for us here at Poliziano, as it will be the first one yielding 100% certified organic wines. We have been bio-oriented on our vineyards for more than 10 years now, that is, we have been choosing the most 'natural' methods possible, testing different tech... Altro...

👍❤️ Francesca Raspanti e altri 55

📞 **Chiama ora**   💬

Annex D.13

ASINONE WINE CLUB

On a sunny hill facing southwest, lie the 12 hectares of the Asinone vineyard, 7 of which are over fifty years old. The nickname "Asinone" derives from the characteristic shape of the vineyard which has the form of a donkey's back. The wine produced from its grapes, almost exclusively Sangiovese, has captivated such a large group of admirers, for its decisive and refined character, that in 2015 Poliziano created a wine club in its honor.

The members of the Asinone Wine Club enjoy exclusive products and services reserved just for them:

- Annual newsletter with the latest news for Poliziano and Asinone
- Tour and free tastings for members and their friends when their membership card is presented
- Participation in dedicated events
- Possibility to buy older vintages and library wines available only to members
- Booking of vintages "en primeur"
- Other special promotions

You can request to join the Asinone Wine Club at the winery. With a minimum purchase, membership will be immediately activated and you can experience the full Poliziano Experience.

For more information contact:

- Tel: +39 0578/738171
- Mail: info@carlettipoliziano.com

Annex D.14

polizianowinery
Montepulciano

Piace a 1.184 persone

polizianowinery Villa "La Fornace" immersed in the vineyards of Nobile is perfect for a signature Po... altro

monteroneart Outstanding place ❤️🎨

31 agosto

Annex E - Table 3. Summary of the STP strategy of the Poliziano winery

Segmentation	Geographic variables	Demographic variables	Behavioural variables
	• Country • Region	• Age • Gender • Income	• Price sensitivity • Buying habits • Satisfaction from purchase • Brand advocacy
Targeting	**Target 1**		**Target 2**
	• 25-35 years old • Mostly men • From Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France • Like brand innovativeness • Interested in brand's biologic transition • Prefer sophisticated bottles • High price sensitivity		• 35-55 years old • Balance in gender • Couples or families • Wine connoisseurs or passionate • From the Unites States, Germany, Switzerland • Seek high quality products • Prefer products related to the territory, tradition, and authenticity • More likely to become loyal customers • Low price sensitivity
Positioning	**Competition based**, the offering differs from the one of the competitions and the goal is to create value in the market		**Customer intimacy**, provide a range of services that are different from the competitors and attract customers through uniqueness, personalized experiences and not price.

Annex F – Author's free translation to English of one of Poliziano's Rime

If you only knew what great sweetness
Is to make its[18] lover happy,
To taste its manners, its kindness,
Hear it tenderly sighing,
You could set aside every toughness,
and you would say: "one day I'll try it".
Once you have tried it,
You would regret having this long time waited.

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[18] It was decided to use the neutral pronoun because the poet here is referring to an embodiment of love.