

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PRACTICES AMONG TENNESSEE WINERIES: RESULTS OF A 2025 SURVEY

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Photo Caption: Spout Springs Estates Winery in Blaine, TN. Photo credit: K.L. DeLong

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*DISCLAIMER: The findings and views expressed in this study are those of the authors and may
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Executive Summary

In 2024, the Tennessee (TN) wine industry was estimated to have a direct economic impact of \$610 million on the TN economy (Hughes, Rihn and DeLong, 2025). From 2019 to 2024, the wine industry grew substantially in terms of the number of covered establishments (53 percent increase), employment (24 percent increase), and nominal wages (72 percent increase) (Hughes, Rihn and DeLong, 2025). According to TN Wines (2026), there are an estimated 79 wineries in the state. Wineries are located across a mixture of rural, suburban, metropolitan, and tourist areas throughout West, Middle and East TN.

TN's tourism industry has grown by 40 percent since 2018 and experienced \$32.5 billion in direct visitor spending in 2025 (TN Department of Tourist Development, 2026). Since tourism is a prominent industry in the state, wineries can benefit from this if they are able to effectively market their wines and wineries to tourists (and in-state customers). Given that social media marketing is an increasingly popular way to advertise, the purpose of this report is to evaluate how wineries in TN currently utilize, and plan to utilize in the future, social media marketing.

In 2025, we conducted a survey in which 21 wineries in the state participated (~27 percent of the state's wineries) to examine their current social media marketing trends, future use of social media marketing and their challenges with using social media. Questions were asked regarding which social media platforms wineries currently utilize, posting frequency, social media goals, their perceived impact of social media marketing and the type of content they post. Future usage of social media and challenges related to using social media as a marketing tool were elicited.

The survey also examined the characteristics of the wineries surveyed, such as winery location and year established. Information on the characteristics of the customers they served was collected, including number of customers, customer state residency (in-state versus out-of-state), and their annual sales. This report presents the aggregated results for all the survey questions completed by the 21 wineries. Below we provide a summary of 12 key insights that emerged from the survey.

12 Key Insights:

1. TN wineries use a variety of online channels to increase their customer base, including their **own websites**, **social media platforms**, **state-specific channels** (e.g., TN Wines website), **Google Search** and **wine trails**. Wine trails provide an opportunity to drive traffic to wineries and establish destination tourism.
2. **Eighty-five percent of wineries agreed or strongly agreed that social media marketing is vital to the success** of their businesses, and **52 percent of wineries plan to expand their use of social media** over the next three years. Only 10 percent of wineries agreed that there are better ways to market their establishment than social media.
3. **Social media is primarily used by TN wineries to attract more visitors**, increase customer awareness, promote events and tastings and improve customer engagement and wine sales.
4. **Facebook** and **Instagram** are the main social media platforms used by the TN wine industry. These two platforms have the highest number of followers, indicating wineries interested in using social media platforms would likely benefit from customers seeking information in these channels.

5. Facebook and Instagram **posting frequency is typically a few times per week**, with content primarily being **image- and video-driven**.
6. **Product promotions and events** are the social media content shared by at least **81 percent** of the wineries.
7. The **cost, labor and time** dedicated to social media marketing vary widely depending on business goals and market characteristics. Wineries need to carefully consider the overall goal of using the platform (e.g., brand awareness, increase visitors, wine sales), the resources required and whether the two are aligned when deciding the best way to use their social media presence.
8. A majority of wineries (62 percent) use **paid social media advertisements**, led by **Facebook ads** (100 percent of wineries) and **Google ads** (62 percent of wineries).
9. Only **52 percent** of wineries have an employee designated as the **social media manager**.
10. **Customer engagement (comments, shares)** is a key *performance indicator* of social media platforms. Secondary metrics include sales, number of followers/likes and website traffic.
11. **User-generated content** (reviews, testimonials) is often highlighted on TN winery social media sites to promote authenticity and customer engagement.
12. The main barriers to using or expanding their social media presence include lack of time, content creation or budget constraints. **Training opportunities (online or in-person) could reduce the barriers to using social media and improve social media outcomes.**

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 2024, the Tennessee (TN) wine industry had a direct economic impact of \$610 million on the TN economy (Hughes, Rihn and DeLong, 2025). From 2019 to 2024, the number of covered wine establishments grew from 43 to 66, an increase of 53 percent.¹ During this period, the number of covered employees in the wine industry increased by 24 percent, from 527 to 653. Covered nominal wages and salaries also grew from \$12.7 million to \$21.8 million (a 72 percent increase). According to TN Wines (2026), there are an estimated 79 wineries in the state that are located across West, Middle, and East TN and are in a mixture of rural, metropolitan, suburban, and tourist areas.²

The TN tourism industry has also been experiencing growth. Since 2018, the tourism industry has increased by 40 percent, with direct visitor spending reaching \$32.5 billion in 2025 (TN Department of Tourist Development, 2026). TN welcomed 150 million visitors in 2025 (TN Department of Tourist Development, 2026). According to Wine Travel Guides (2026), 25 percent of global winery revenue originates from tourism. The increase in tourism in TN is likely beneficial to the state's wine industry.

To attract customers to TN wineries and wine, social media marketing is a growing avenue for advertising. Szolnoki et al. (2018) surveyed 374 U.S. wineries and found that 87 percent used social media to communicate information about their wine businesses and 98 percent of them use Facebook. On a scale from 1=not important at all to 6=very important, on average, they found that U.S. wineries considered social

¹“Covered” means those who report their employees formally for insurance purposes and are included in data collected by the government.

² There is a difference between the “covered” number of wineries and the wineries reported by TN Wines (2026) since it is possible not all wineries report employees for insurance purposes and, thus, they are not counted in the U.S. Department of Labor data used by the Hughes, Rihn and DeLong (2025) study.

media to be somewhat important (a mean 3.8 rating on a 6-point scale). The goal of this survey is to determine how TN wineries utilize social media marketing to communicate about their wines and wineries, how TN wineries plan to use social media in the future and challenges they encounter in using social media.

2. WINERY SURVEY

A survey of TN wineries was conducted between February and May 2025. Email addresses of licensed TN wineries were obtained from the TN Farm Wine Growers Association. Additionally, the TN Farm Wine Growers Association emailed the survey to their members, and the survey was also advertised by fliers at the Pick TN Products Conference in February 2025.

The recruitment information stated the purpose of the survey, and the information recorded was assured to be confidential. The survey was administered through the Qualtrics platform and was accessed either by scanning the QR code on fliers at the Pick TN Products Conference or through emailed survey links. The survey received University of TN, Knoxville Institutional Review Board approval (IRB #24-08085-XP).

Before its full dissemination, the survey was pilot tested with a smaller group of winery operators. To participate, the respondents were required to be at least 18 years of age and they had to be an owner, general manager or marketing manager of the winery. The survey took around 15 minutes to complete.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WINERIES SURVEYED

Twenty-one wineries completed the survey out of the 79 wineries in the state, for a response rate of 27 percent. Those who completed the survey were all primary decision makers for the winery. Respondents were, on average, 54 years of age and half were male. With regard to education, of those who completed the survey, 23 percent had less than a bachelor's degree, 33 percent had a bachelor's degree and 44 percent had a graduate or professional degree.

3.1 Location, Employees, and Years Operating

The location of the wineries that responded to the survey is provided in Figure 1. Six responding wineries were in Sevier County, followed by two in Washington County, and one each in Blount, Campbell, Chester, Madison, Maury, Monroe, Obion, Shelby, Weakley, Williamson and Putnam counties. Across the surveyed wineries, the average winery had 10 full-time employees and 12 part-time employees. However, those results are skewed by a few large wineries in the sample. Thus, when evaluated at the median, the typical winery had three full-time employees and four part-time employees.



Figure 1. Location of Wineries That Responded to a 2025 Social Media Survey.

Number of Observations=19.

Of the wineries that completed the survey, 62 percent are in self-described rural areas, and half are in self-described tourist areas (Figure 2). About 19 percent of the wineries are located outside of a city and 14 percent are in city centers. Four of the 12 rural wineries reported they were in a tourist area. Thus, a third of the wineries located in rural areas were also in tourist areas, which is likely to contribute to their business operations.

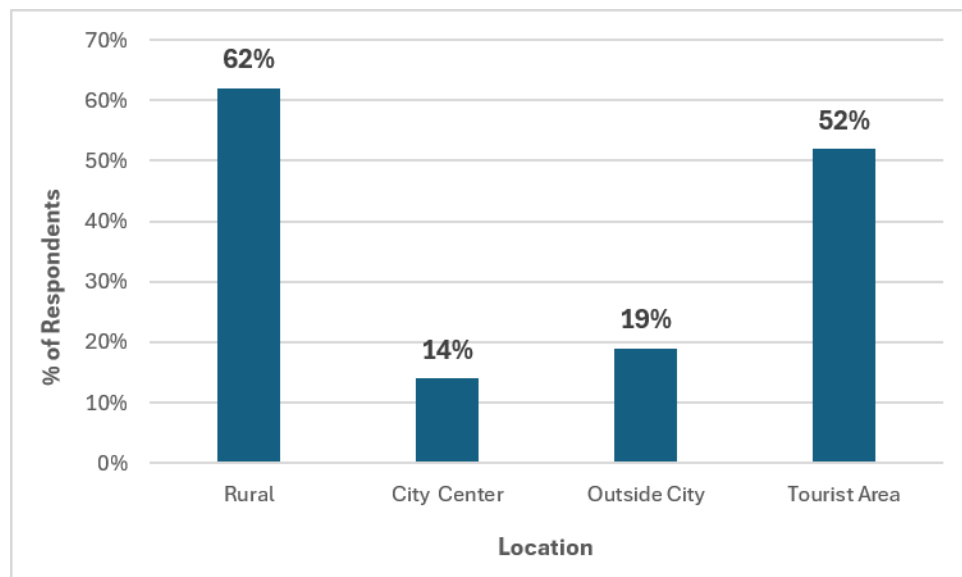


Figure 2. Winery Location. Survey Question: How would you describe the location of your winery? (Select all that apply): Rural, city center, outside of a city, in a tourist destination area. Number of Observations=21.

A majority (85 percent) of the wineries that responded to the survey were established in the past 20 years (Figure 3). Fifty-two percent were established in the last 10 years, and 33 percent were established within the last 11-20 years. About 5 percent were established in the last 21-30 years and 10 percent were established in the previous 31 years and over. The oldest winery in TN that participated in the survey was established in 1991.

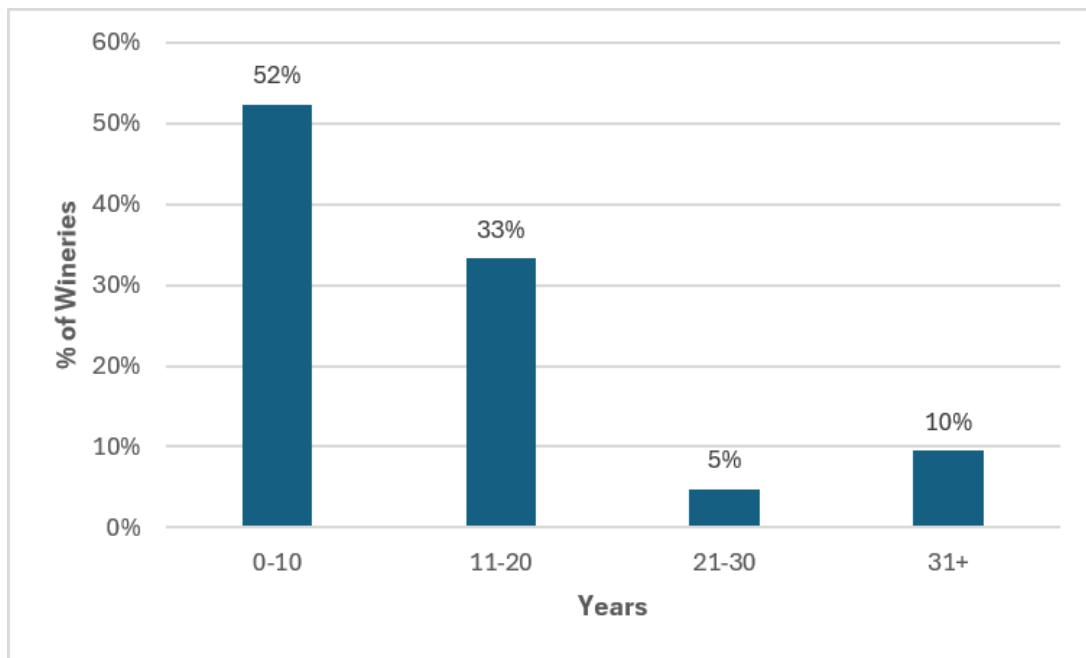


Figure 3. Winery Years Established. Survey Question: What year was your winery established? Number of Observations=21.

3.2 Winery Customer Characteristics

In 2024, 71 percent of the surveyed wineries had 100,000 customers or less (Figure 4).

There were no wineries with more than a million customers a year. On average, the wineries had 138,495 customers in a year. When reporting the median number of customers of wineries in the sample (to account for the data being skewed by a few large wineries), the amount was 10,000.

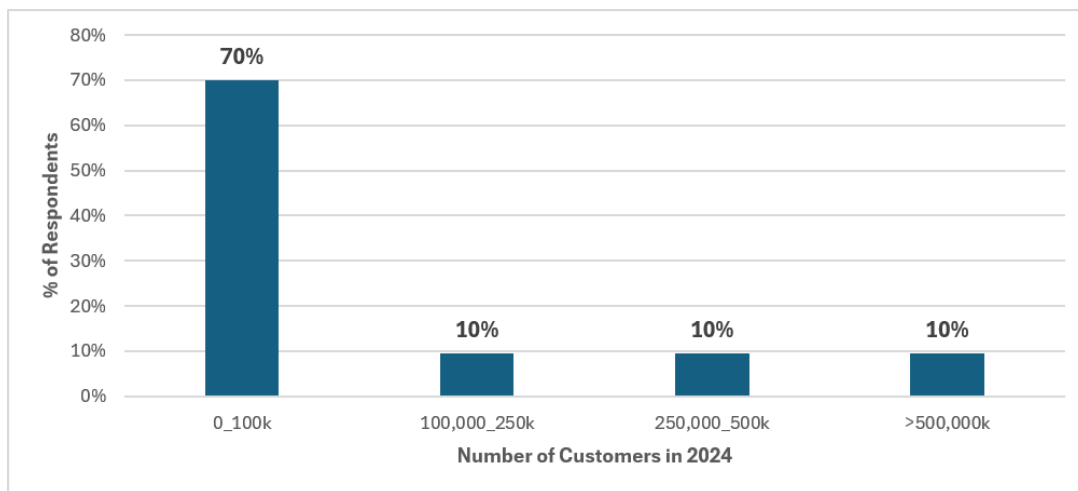


Figure 4. Winery Customers in 2024. Survey Question: Approximately how many customers did you have in 2024? Number of Observations=21.

On average, only a slight majority of customers who visited TN wineries in our sample are from the state (53 percent) (Figure 5). About 7 percent are from Ohio, 5 percent are from North Carolina, 5 percent are from Alabama, 5 percent are from Georgia, 6 percent are from Kentucky, 6 percent are from Florida, and 13 percent are from states not listed (other than OH, NC, AL, GA, KY, FL). Only one winery reported that 100 percent of its customers were from TN. Only 32 percent of our sample stated that over 80 percent of their customers originated from in-state. Meanwhile, 32 percent of our sample stated that over 65 percent of their customers originated from out-of-state. One winery reported that 48 percent of its customers were from Ohio. Hughes Rihn and DeLong (2025), in their survey of 25 TN wineries, found that out-of-state visitors represented 57 percent of the total visitors to TN wineries and out-of-state visitors accounted for 55 percent of spending at wineries. Thus, it is very clear that out-of-state customers, and likely tourists, play a very large role in the success of TN wineries.

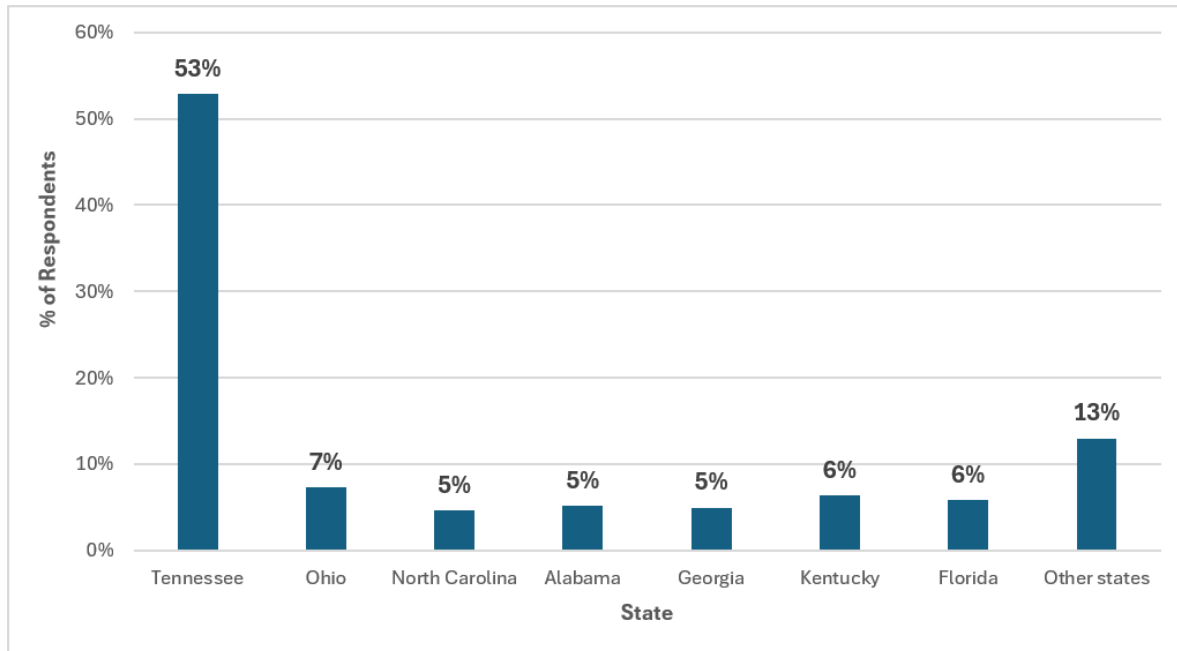


Figure 5. Percentage of Customers from the Following States. Survey Question: Approximately what percentage of your customers visited from the following states? TN, Ohio, North Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Florida, Other States. Number of Observations=19.

3.3 Winery Sales

All surveyed wineries have onsite wine sales (Figure 6), while a majority have both online sales (57 percent) and a wine club (52 percent). Thirty-eight percent participated in events and festivals. Twenty-four percent sell through local retailers and 19 percent sell through restaurants and bars. Only 10 percent sell through distributors. All wineries in our sample utilized wine tastings (Figure 7). Forty-eight percent of wineries utilized wine and food pairings, music/entertainment and private events to attract visitors. Forty-three percent hosted vineyard tours and 29 percent had seasonal festivals.

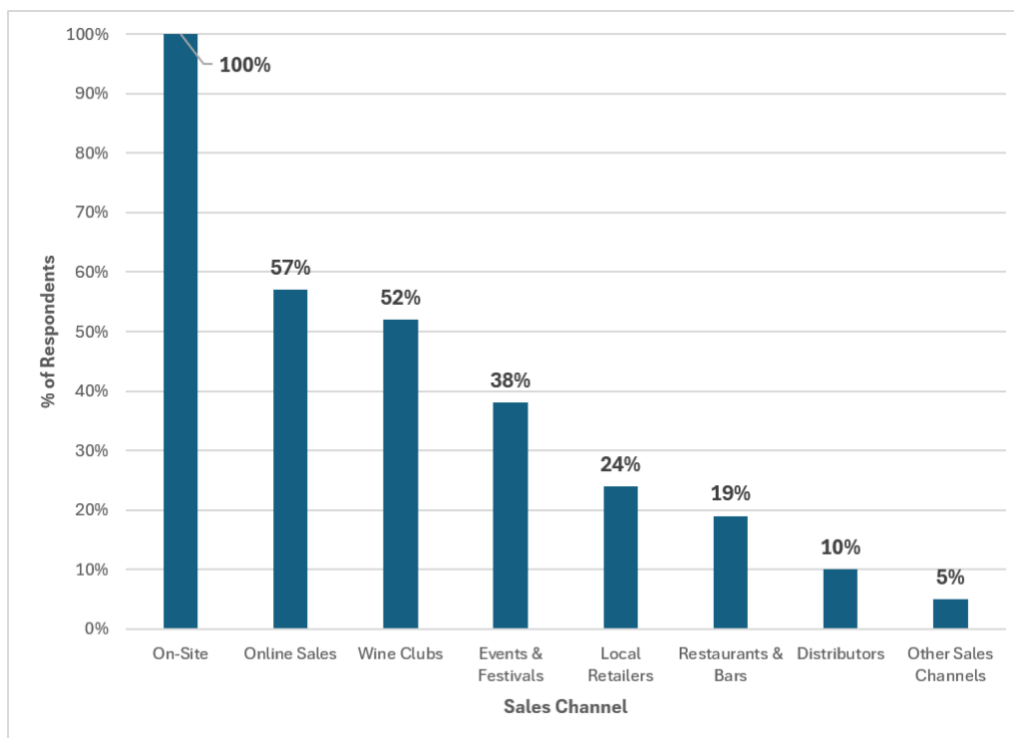


Figure 6. Sales Channels Used by TN Wineries. Survey Question: Through which channels do you primarily sell your wine? (Select all that apply): On-site at the winery, online sales/shipping, local retailers, regional or national distributors, restaurants and bars, wine clubs, events and festivals, and other sales channels. Number of Observations=21.

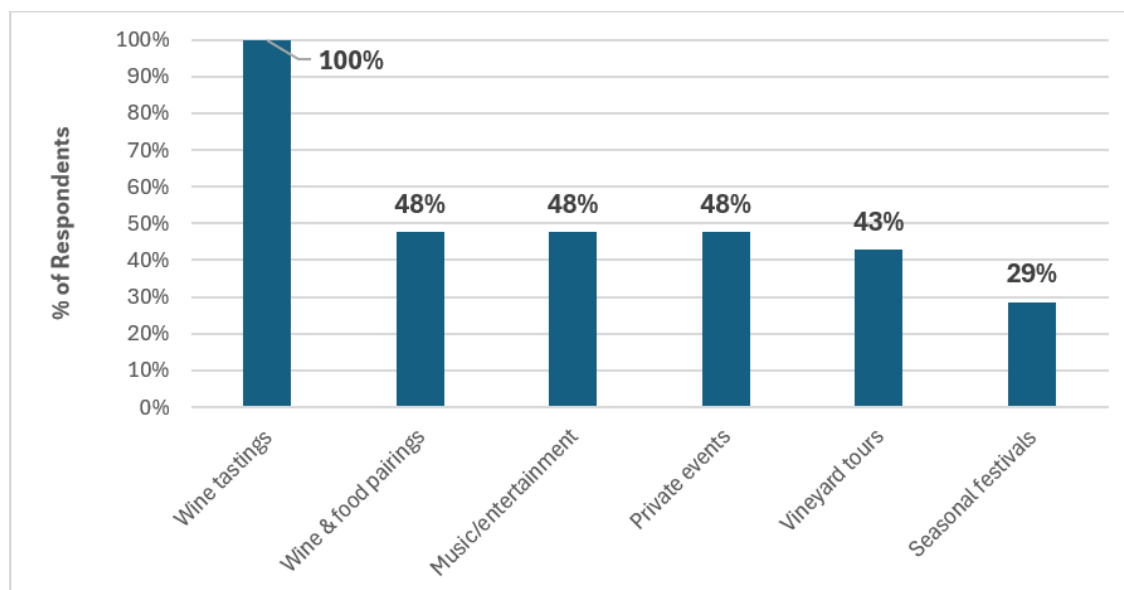


Figure 7. Promotions Used by Wineries to Attract Visitors. Survey Question: What events or promotions does your winery host to attract visitors (Select all that apply): Wine tastings, vineyard tours, wine & food pairings, music/entertainment, seasonal festivals, and private events (weddings, corporate, etc.). Number of Observations=21.

Figure 8 shows how easy or difficult the wineries considered aspects of shipping wine and/or managing a wine club. Of the 21 wineries who answered this question, 18 shipped wine (86 percent), 17 used online payments (81 percent), and 14 had a wine club (67 percent). Fifty-six percent of wineries who ship wine considered it somewhat difficult or very difficult. However, 53 percent of wineries considered online payments to be somewhat easy or easy. Forty-three percent of wineries considered wine club management to be somewhat difficult. Thus, shipping wine was considered rather difficult, while online payments were rather easy.

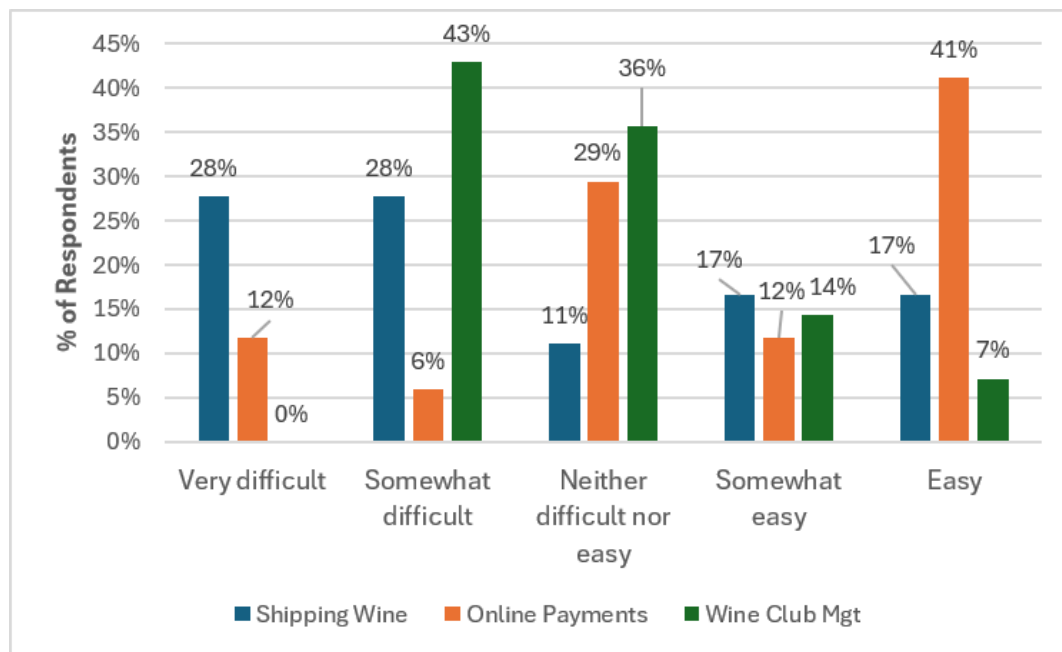


Figure 8. Difficulty of Managing Wine Clubs. Survey Question: Please answer how easy or difficult you consider the following?: Shipping wine, allowing online payments, managing a wine club. Number of observations for: shipping wine=18, online payments=17, wine club management=14.

Figure 9 shows the distribution of gross sales among surveyed TN wineries with a substantial variation in their responses. Twenty-nine percent of wineries are small and have sales of under \$100,000 per year. Fifty-three percent of wineries reported gross sales of less than \$500,000, which implies that most TN wineries are small-scale operations. Twenty-four percent of wineries had gross sales between \$500,000 and \$1 million, and 25 percent of wineries had gross sales greater than \$1 million.

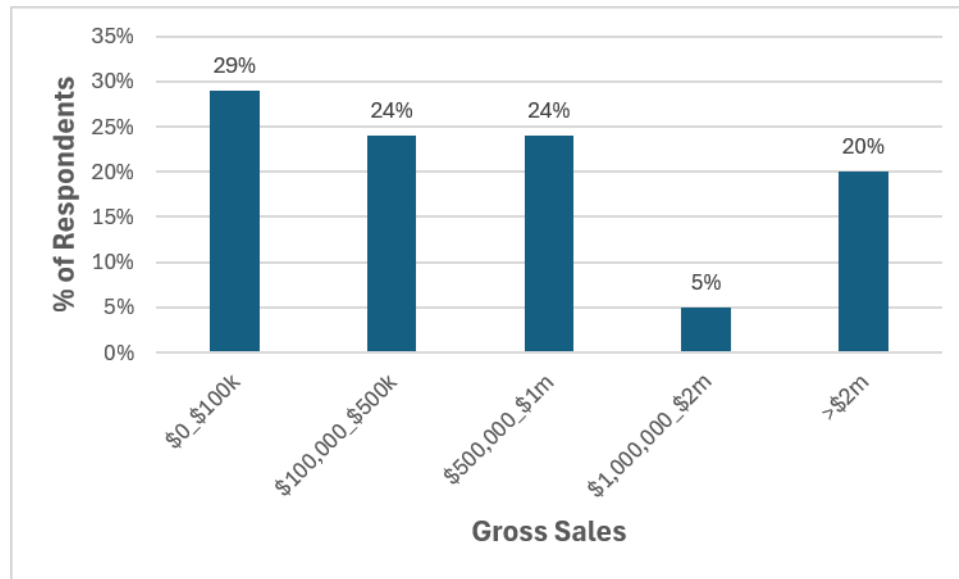


Figure 9. Gross Sales from TN Wineries. Survey Question: What were the gross sales (wine, other retail, services provided such as hosting events) by your winery in 2024? Number of Observations=21.

This section provided an overview of the characteristics of the wineries in our sample. The sample included a wide variety of wineries spanning across West, Middle and East TN and representing small, medium and large wineries that serve both in-state and out-of-state customers. Therefore, our surveyed sample of wineries is well representative of TN wineries. The next sections provide information on how these wineries utilize social media marketing, how they plan to use it in the future and challenges they find with utilizing social media.

4. MARKETING METHODS USED BY WINERIES

4.1 Advertising Platforms: Social Media, Wine Trails, and Websites

Wineries use a wide variety of platforms to advertise their products, promotions and events (Figure 10). All but one winery surveyed have their own website (95 percent), and all have a Facebook page (100 percent). Instagram was also used by 81 percent of wineries. TikTok was reported to be used by 19 percent of wineries, and none used X. Our results are similar to Szolnoki et al. (2018) results that found 87 percent of surveyed wineries in the U.S. used social media to communicate information about their wine business and of those that used social media, 98 percent used Facebook.

We also asked whether wineries used artificial intelligence (AI) to write ads or employed a social media influencer in their advertising. We found that only 10 percent of surveyed wineries utilized a social media influencer and 19 percent used AI to write ads.

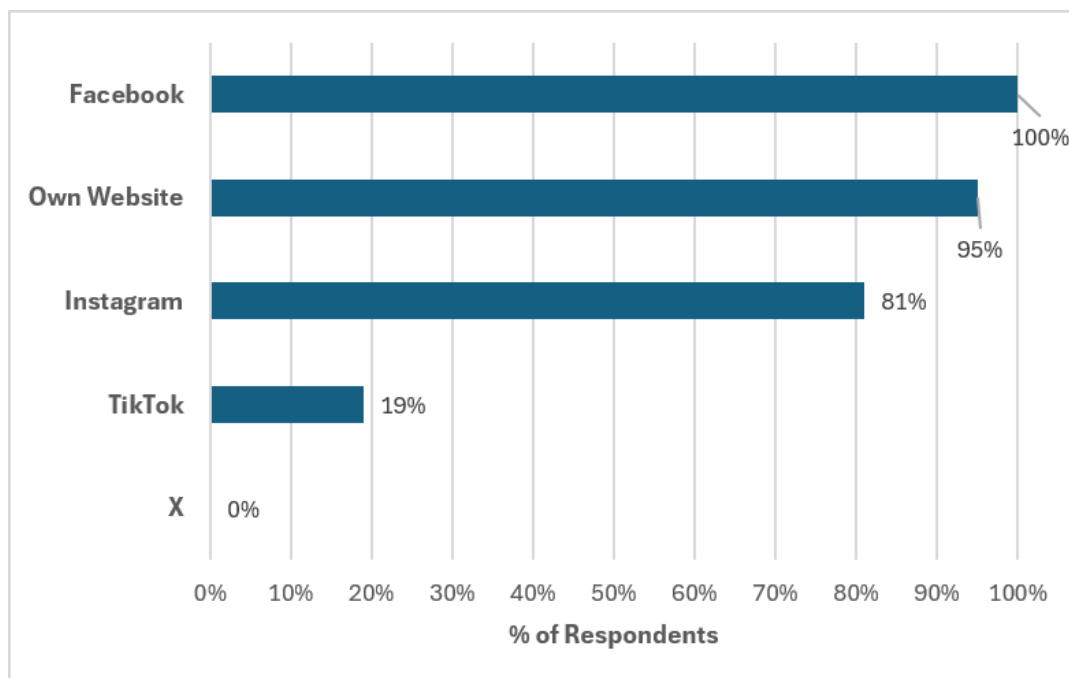


Figure 10. Internet Advertising by TN Wineries. Survey Question: How do you advertise your wines and/or winery? (Select all that apply): Own Website, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and X. Number of Observations=21.

Traditional tourism-related channels are also widely used for advertising by the surveyed wineries, such as the TN Wines website (71 percent), the TN Department of Tourist Development website (67 percent), and the TN Wine Trail website (67 percent) (Figure 11). Other wine trail websites (38 percent) and the Beverage Testing Institute (33 percent) were also utilized. Wineries were also asked if they utilize a wine trail social media page, in addition to their establishment's social media page, for product promotion. Of the 21 responding wineries, 48 percent did, while 52 percent did not.

A study conducted by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (2020) found that the government investing in wine trails through grants helped to drive traffic to winery websites and social media pages. These findings may suggest that expanding wine trail marketing efforts may increase the visibility of TN wineries and lead to more consumer engagement.

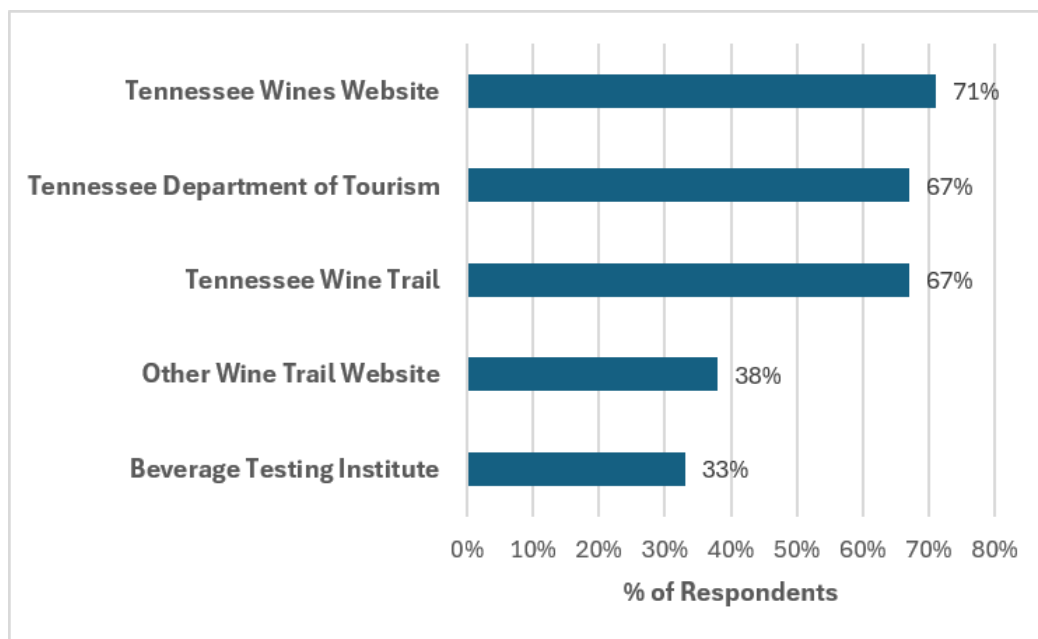


Figure 11. Tourism and Wine Specific Website Participation by TN Wineries. Survey Question: How do you advertise your wines and/or winery? (Select all that apply): TN Department of Tourist Development, TN Wines Website, TN Wine Trail, Beverage Testing Institute, and other wine trail websites. Number of Observations=21.

Two questions faced by wineries are which advertising channel or platform brings in the most customers and which one helps to provide the best connections with their customers. Our research indicates that Instagram, Facebook and wineries' own websites are what wineries rely on the most for social media marketing.³ Newer platforms, such as TikTok, have gained significant popularity for advertising and marketing, but the TN wine industry uses TikTok at a very low rate of only 19 percent. This result could mean that wineries prefer using more established platforms for advertising to create content, promote products and events, and engage customers. Thach, Lease, and Barton (2016) found that wineries using multiple social media platforms to market, rather than just a couple of platforms, reported a significant increase in wine sales.

The wineries reported the number of followers on their social media platforms (Figure 12). On average, most winery followers are on Facebook (9,476) and Instagram (6,999). We see a substantially lower average number of followers on TikTok (105) and X (316). The number of followers aligns with the internet advertising results (Figure 10) regarding use of social media platforms by TN wineries.

³ Some wineries also mentioned in written survey responses that they use YouTube. Unfortunately, our survey did not ask questions about YouTube.

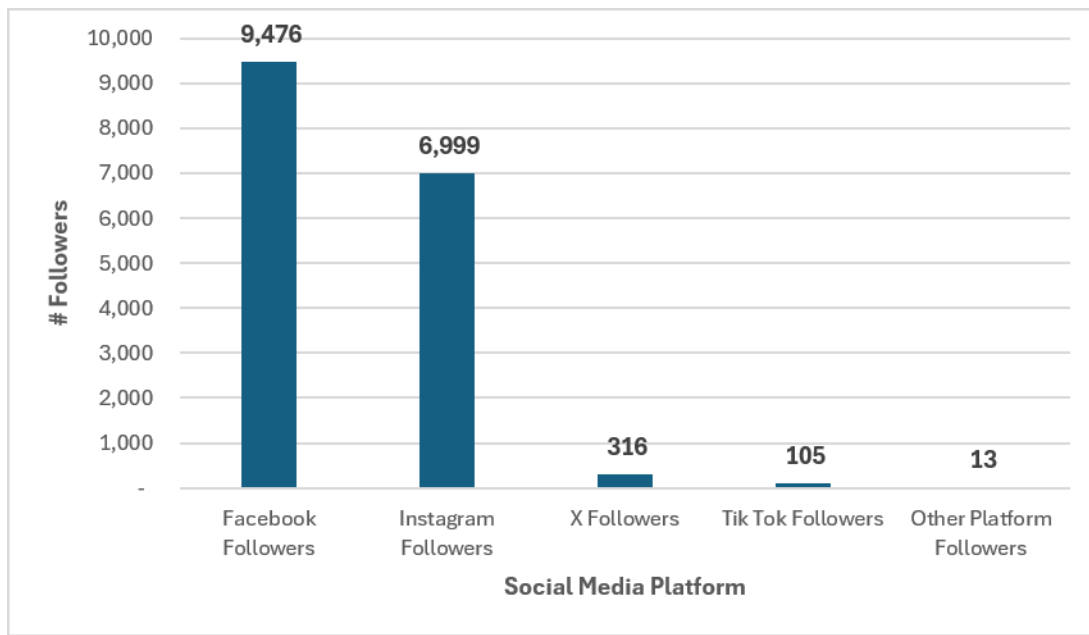


Figure 12. Social Media Platforms Used by TN Wineries. Approximately how many followers (or likes) do you have for the social media page devoted to your wines and/or winery establishment (insert "0" if you don't use the platform or leave blank)? Facebook Followers, Instagram Followers, TikTok Followers, X Followers, and Other Platform Followers. Number of Observations=20.

TN wineries frequently post on both Instagram and Facebook (Figure 13).

Nineteen percent post on Facebook daily and 52 percent post at least a few times a week. Instagram was similar with 24 percent posting daily and 47 percent posting at least a few times a week. The similarity in posting frequency on these two platforms reflects the synchronization between platforms and the importance of these platforms in wineries' marketing strategies. Regular postings from wineries help improve visibility to customers while promoting events, showcasing products, and engaging customers. A study conducted in Germany found that Facebook fans had higher rates of wine purchasing activity than non-Facebook fans, which suggests that Facebook may play a large role in customer engagement and loyalty within the wine industry (Szolnoki et al., 2014).

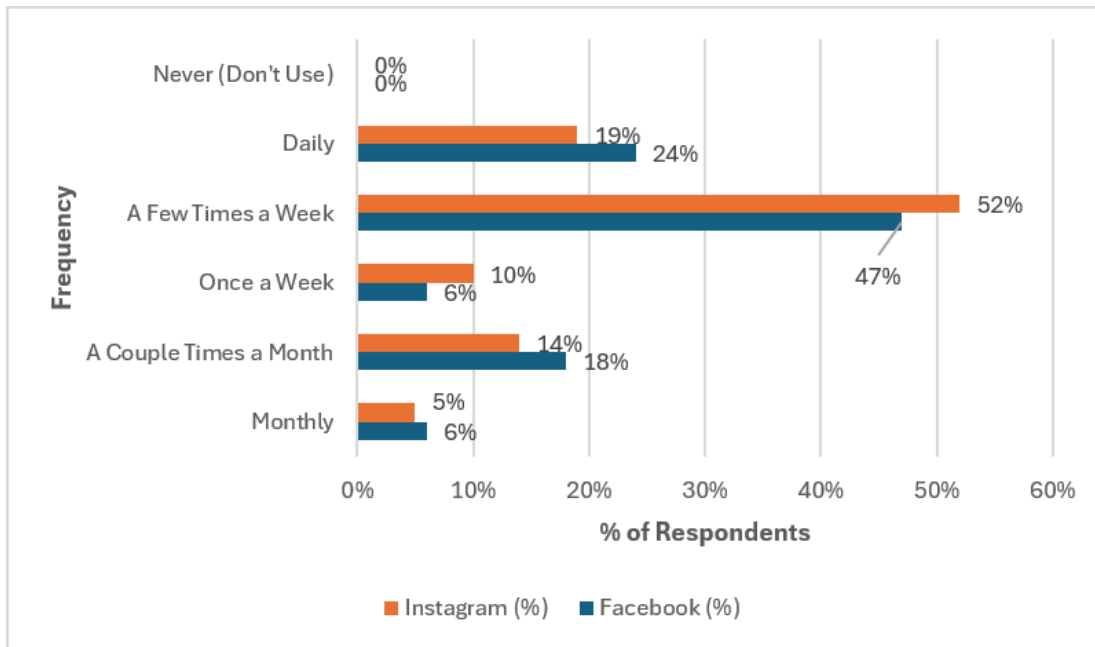


Figure 13. How Frequently TN Wineries Post on Social Media Platforms. Survey Question: How often do you post content to the following social media platforms to advertise your winery and/or wines (including events)? Instagram, Facebook. Number of Observations=21. Note: Much lower posting frequencies for TikTok and X are not provided; 100 percent of X posting frequencies were reported to be monthly, and 50% of TikTok posting frequencies were a few times a week, 25% were a couple times a month, and 25% were monthly.

Ninety-five percent of the wineries surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that a Google Search that points people to your devoted business webpage would attract people to purchase their wines and/or visit their winery (Figure 14). This result was followed by 90 percent of wineries agreeing or strongly agreeing that Facebook would attract people to their wineries, followed by being located on a wine trail (76 percent) and Instagram (67 percent).

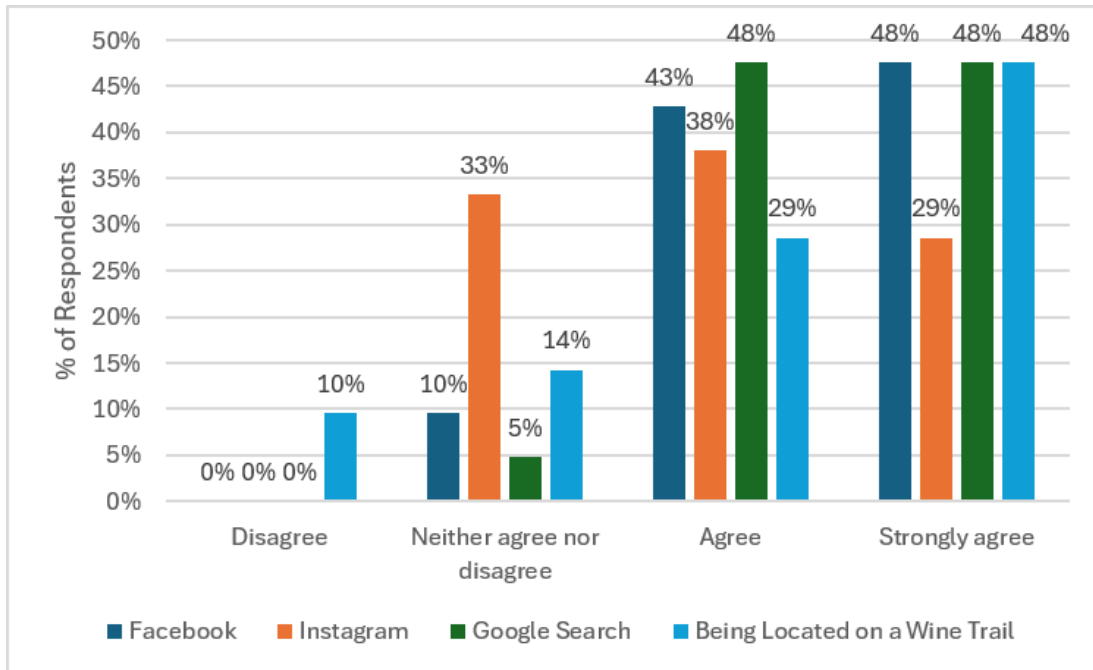


Figure 14. Platforms that Attract People to your Winery. Survey Question: How much do you agree or disagree that the following attract (or would attract if you don't use them) people to purchase your wines and/or visit your wineries? Note that no one selected "strongly disagree", so we omitted it from the graph. Number of Observations=21. Note: Much lower result values for X are not provided; only 5% of wineries agreed or strongly agreed that X would attract customers and 29% agreed or strongly agreed that TikTok would attract customers to their wines and/or wineries.

5. SOCIAL MEDIA GOALS, TARGET AUDIENCE, AND CONTENT

5.1 Social Media Goals

Wineries have several goals in mind when using social media (Figure 15). All respondents use social media to attract more visitors to their wineries. Seventy-six percent of the wineries use social media to make more people aware of their brand, 62 percent use social media for promoting events and wine tastings, 57 percent use social media to increase their social media following and engagement, and 52 percent identified selling more wine directly to customers as their goal of using social media. As shown in Figure 15, wineries' primary goal is to use social media to draw in visitors

rather than as platforms for direct sales. This result is consistent with our findings that many surveyed wineries see shipping wine as difficult (Figure 8). The results are also consistent with the statement accepted by all surveyed wineries that attracting more visitors to their winery was the main goal of their social media presence and that 76 percent of surveyed wineries wanted to increase brand awareness. On the other hand, only 52 percent had the goal of selling more wine directly to customers. Our findings suggest that wineries view social media primarily as a way to promote winery experiences, events and customer engagement rather than to promote online sales.

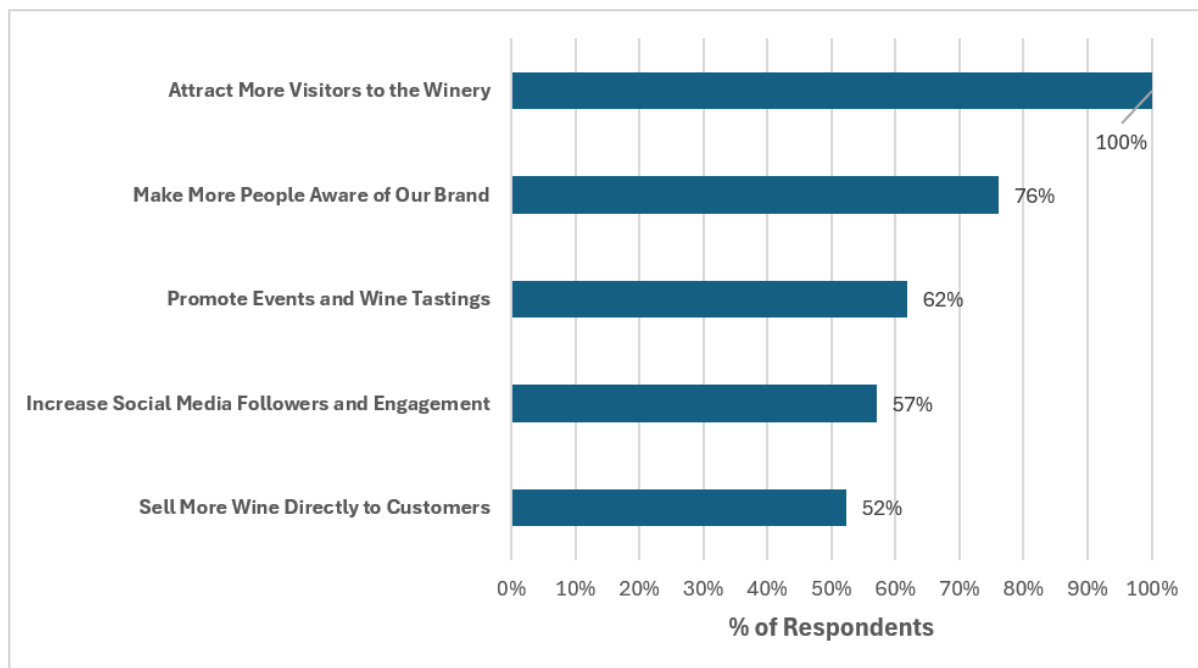


Figure 15. TN Wineries' Main Goal of Posting on Social Media. Survey Question: What is the main goal of your winery's social media presence? (Select all that apply): Promote Events and Wine Tastings, Increase Social Media Followers and Engagement, Make More People Aware of Our Brand, Attract More Visitors to the Winery, Sell More Wine Directly to Customers. Number of Observations=21.

5.2 Target Audience and Types of Content

Figures 16 through 18 show wineries' social media target audience, the content shared on social media, and what they believe attracts the most attention. Through using social media, 76 percent of wineries are trying to attract those over 36 years old and tourists, 71 percent are trying to attract residents, 62 percent wine enthusiasts, 38 percent casual drinkers, and 33 percent those aged 21-35 years (Figure 16). These results indicate that the wine industry in TN is more focused on attracting both in-state and out-of-state customers as opposed to wine enthusiasts and younger customers.

Product promotions (95 percent) and events (81 percent) were the most common types of content shared on social media, while behind-the-scenes content is third at 62 percent (Figure 17). When it comes to what types of content wineries believe are the most effective at attracting consumer attention, image-based is the leader (86 percent), followed by videos (67 percent) (Figure 18). Live video sessions (24 percent) are significantly less used, and paid influencer content (0 percent) is not used.

Our findings indicate that wineries believe that visually engaging content is very important when it comes to attracting customers, which aligns with social media being a visual marketing platform. Viana (2016) argues that because consumers are exposed to a massive amount of content on social media, wineries must post creative and polished content that captures consumers' attention. They also discuss how wineries should create content that leads to interactions to encourage consumers to share their experiences on social media.

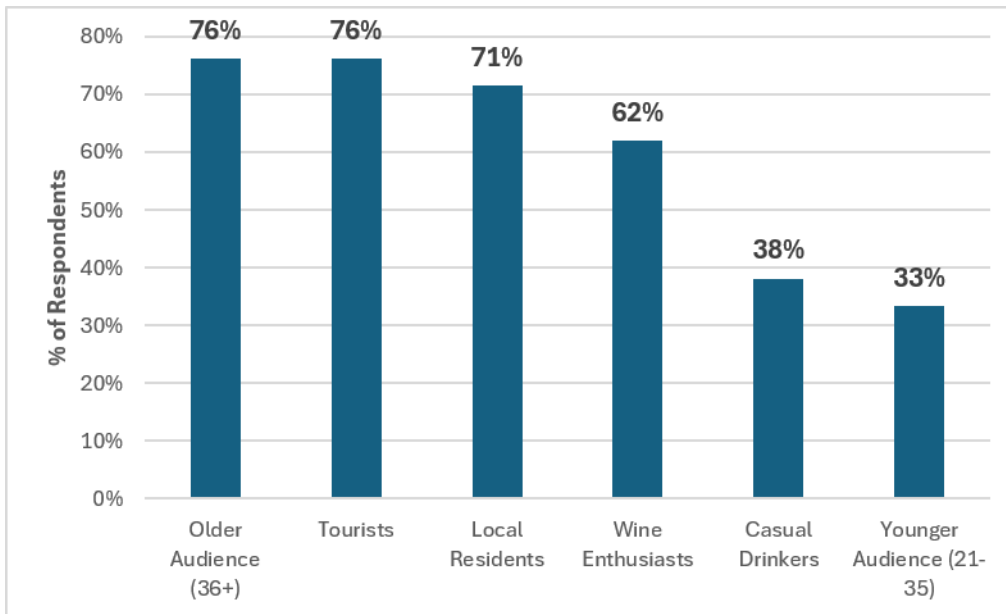


Figure 16. TN Wineries' Primary Target Audience on Social Media. Survey Question: Who is your primary target audience on social media? (Select all that apply): Local Residents, Tourists, Wine Enthusiasts, Casual Drinkers, Younger Audiences (21-35), and Older Audiences (36+). Number of Observations=21.

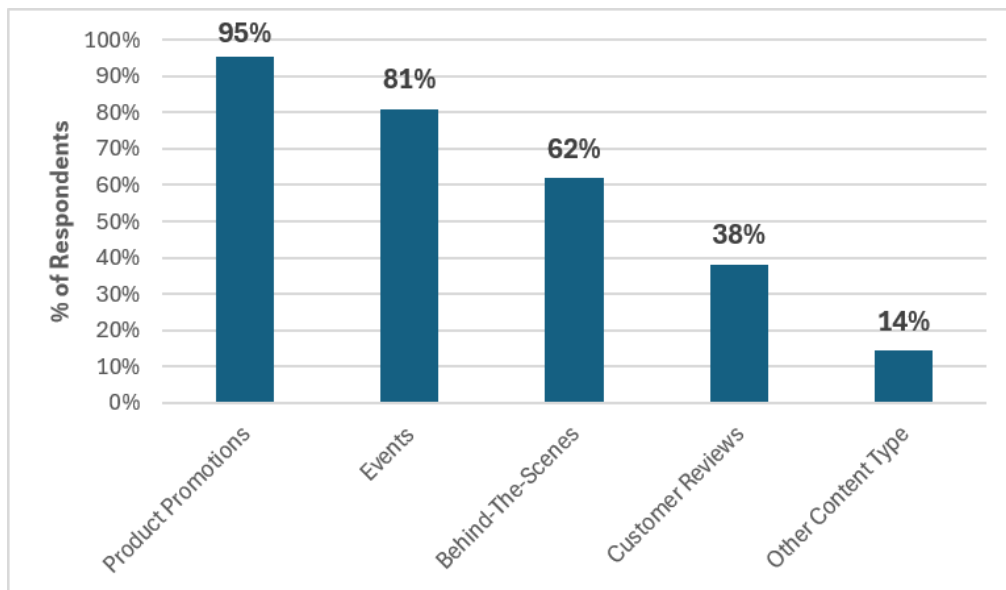


Figure 17. Types of Content Posted on Social Media by TN Wineries. Survey Question: What types of content do you share on social media? (Select all that apply): Product Promotions, Events, Behind-the-Scenes, Customer Reviews, Other Content Type. Number of Observations=21.

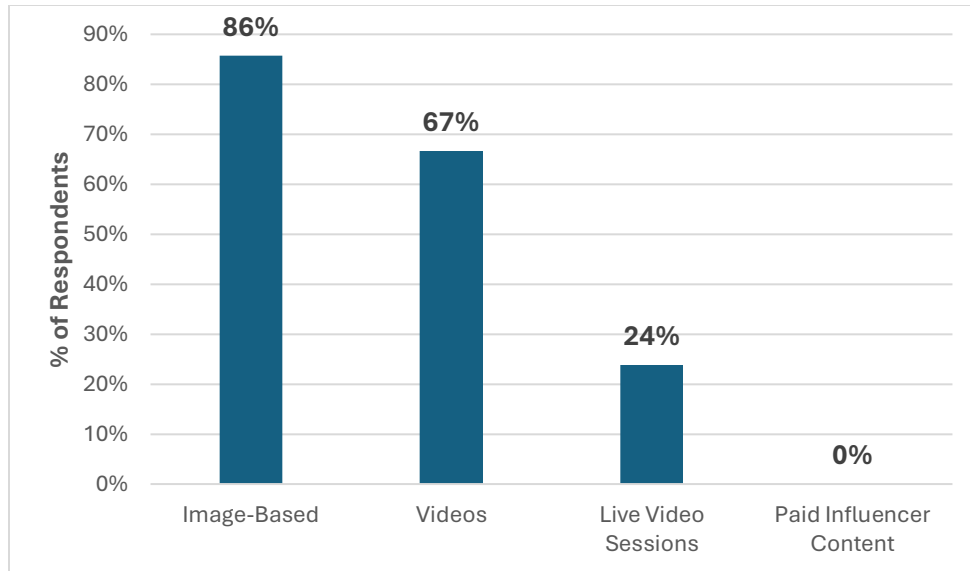


Figure 18. Types of Content TN Wineries Believe Attract the Most Attention.
Survey Question: Which types of social media content do you think attracts the most consumer attention? (Select all that apply): videos, image-based, live video sessions, paid influencer content. Number of Observations=21.

6. FUTURE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

6.1 Social Media Use Over the Next Three Years

According to the results in Figure 19, over half of the wineries in the survey (52 percent) are going to expand their use of social media over the next three years, 43 percent are going to be using social media at about the same rate, and 5 percent are going to reduce their use. Overall, TN wineries are going to continue to utilize social media in future marketing efforts.

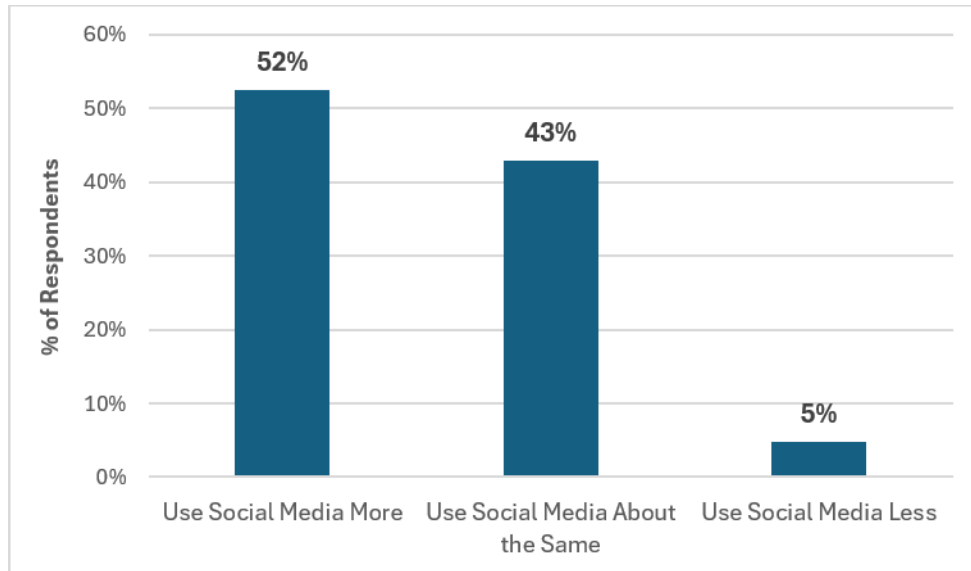


Figure 19. Marketing Change Over Three Years. Survey Question: How do you see your use of social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) for marketing your winery and/or wines changing over the next three years? Use Social Media Less, Use Social Media About the Same, Use Social Media More. Number of Observations=21.

6.2 Reasons for Not Using Social Media

The survey asked, “If you do not use social media to market your winery, please select the reasons why not”. Only seven wineries responded that they do not use social media to market their winery. Of those who responded, four stated “other reasons” as why (but did not state what those were), two stated they would have to hire someone to do it, and one responded that they do not know how (Figure 20). Notably, none of the respondents said it was because they think it would not be effective or it would take too much time. These findings suggest that barriers to social media adoption in marketing could be from a lack of staff, expertise or other factors specific to the winery rather than the effectiveness of social media marketing or time.

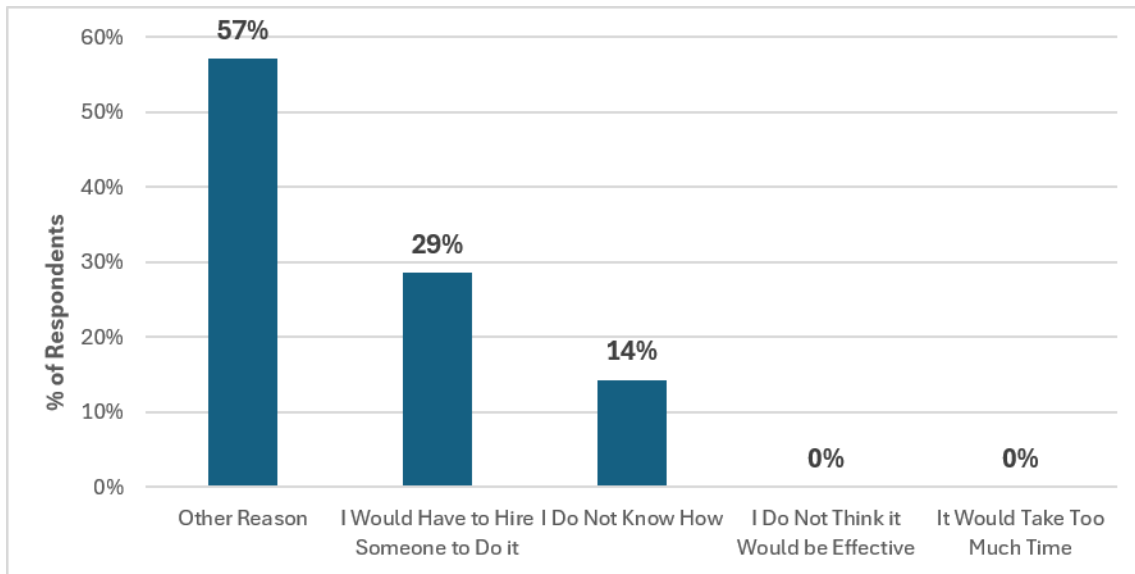


Figure 20. Why TN Wineries Do Not Use Social Media as a Marketing Tool. Survey Question: If you do not use social media to market your winery, please select the reasons why not (select all that apply): I Do Not Know How, I Do Not Think It Would be Effective, It Would Take Too Much Time, I Would Have to Hire Someone to Do it, Other Reason. Number of Observations=7.

7. SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING: COSTS AND MANAGEMENT

7.1 Paid Advertising

Of the 21 wineries that answered the question about whether they use paid social media advertisements to promote their wines and/or winery, 13 responded that they did (62 percent), while eight wineries responded that they do not use paid social media advertisements. Of the 13 wineries that use paid social media advertisements, 100 percent pay for ads on Facebook (Figure 21). Google ads were used by 62 percent of the wineries, 46 percent used Instagram ads, and 23 percent used other paid ad platforms. No wineries pay for ads on TikTok. The findings suggest that Facebook is the most widely used means of social media paid advertisements, either for its ease of use (winery managers are most familiar with it) or because it is seen as being the most effective.

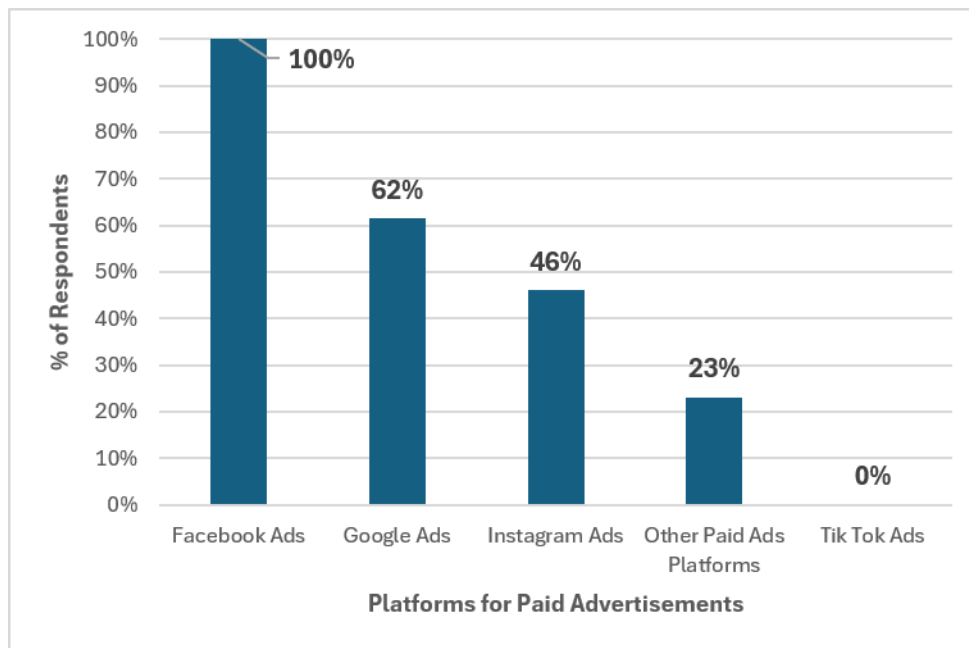


Figure 21. Platforms Used for Paid Advertising. Survey Question: If you answered yes to the question above, which platforms do you use paid advertisements on (Select all that apply)? Facebook ads, Instagram Ads, TikTok Ads, Google Ads. Number of Observations=13.

7.2 Social Media Costs and Benefits

Fifty-two percent of the wineries surveyed have someone “whose job it is to specifically manage your social media presence for your winery and/or wines.” This indicates some wineries rely on a dedicated social media manager, while others assign those responsibilities to staff members who perform multiple roles within the winery, or the owner holds the responsibility.

Figures 22 and 23 provide insight into how much time and money TN wineries devote to marketing and advertising on social media. Fifteen percent of wineries spend less than one hour per week on social media advertising (Figure 22). Thirty-eight percent spend two to three hours per week on social media advertising and 24 percent spend 15 to 20 hours on social media advertising. Thus, there is a very large variation in how much time responding wineries devote to social media marketing.

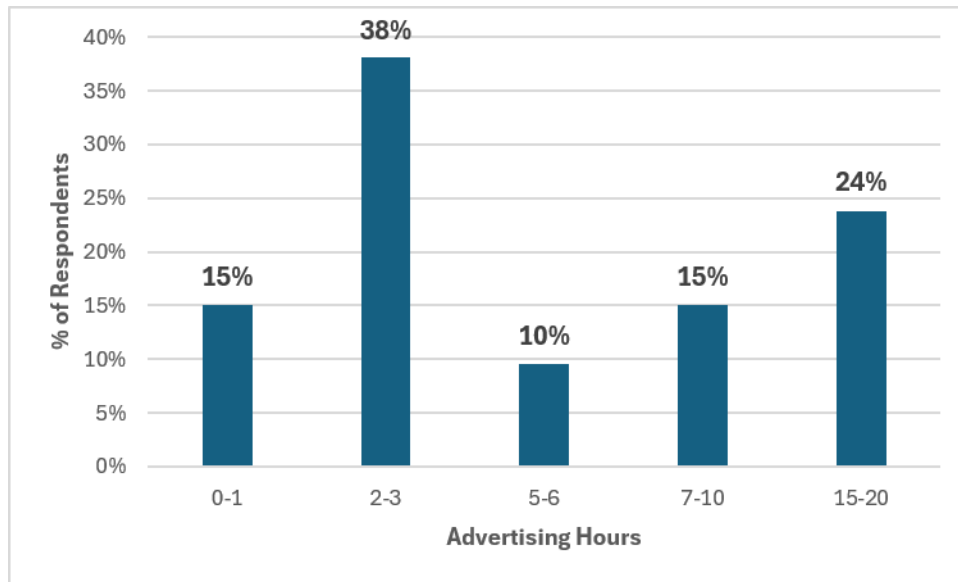


Figure 22. Hours Per Week Spent on Advertising. Survey Question: Approximately how many hours per week are spent on social media advertising for your winery and/or wines (insert 0 if you don't use it)? Number of Observations=21.

There was also wide variation in the amount of money wineries spent on social media advertising and/or management during 2024. Fifteen percent of wineries stated that they spent no money on social media advertising (Figure 23), suggesting that a winery owner or a staff member(s) handles the marketing in addition to other roles. Twenty-five percent of wineries spent between \$200 and \$600 on advertising and/or social media management, and 25 percent spent over \$10,000 on social media advertising and/or management. The diverse costs may be related to labor, advertisement expenditures, content creation, or other factors. Additional cost, time and effort should be taken into account when considering the most efficient way to use social media marketing.

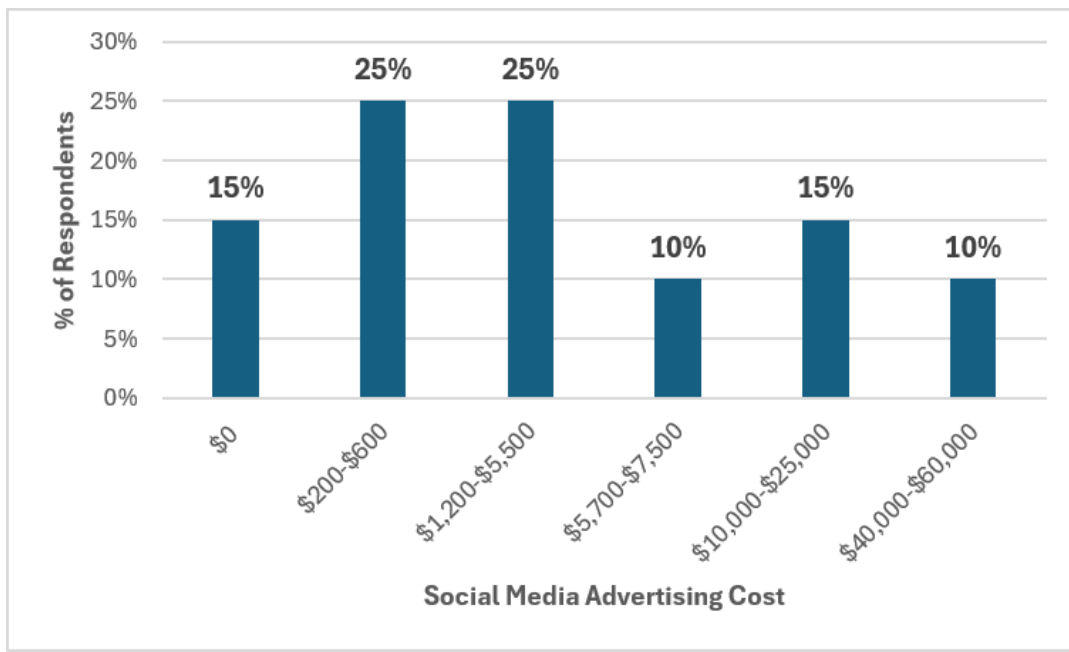


Figure 23. Cost of Advertising Per Year for TN Wineries. Survey Question: Approximately how much did you spend (in \$) on social media advertising and/or management for your winery and/or wines in 2024 (insert zero if you don't use it)? Number of Observations=20.

Figure 24 reports the impact social media has had on the winery and/or wine marketing costs. Somewhat surprisingly, 43 percent of wineries consider social media (which many think of as being free) to have increased their overall marketing costs. Meanwhile, 5 percent consider social media to have significantly reduced marketing costs, 14 percent consider social media to somewhat reduce their marketing costs, and 38 percent consider it to have had no impact. The results illustrate considerable variation among the respondents. There is a wide variety of results based on how wineries experience the costs of social media. While some wineries may have additional expenses relating to social media marketing and content creation, others see it as a cost-effective marketing tool that reduces the need for more traditional and costly forms of advertising. For those that consider it an increased cost, this could be because of the

effort it takes to post content across several social media marketing platforms to keep page fans engaged, or the increased salaries for employees managing social media and paid advertisements.

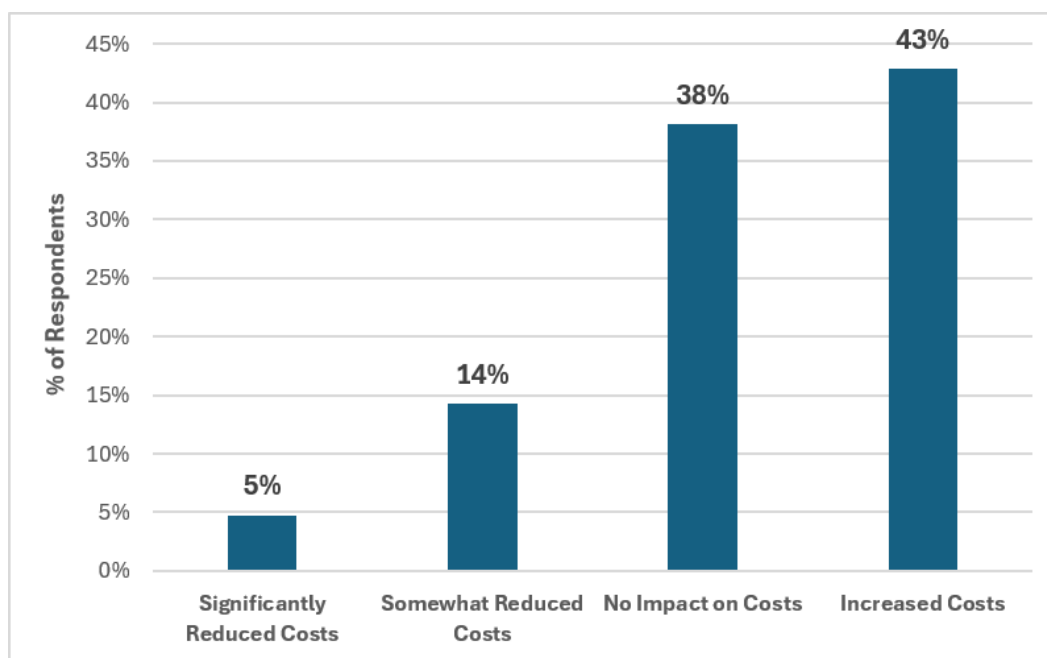


Figure 24. Impact of Social Media Marketing on Costs for TN Wineries. Survey Question: What impact has social media had on marketing costs for your winery and/or wines? Significantly Reduced Costs, Somewhat Reduced Costs, No Impact on Costs, Increased Costs. Number of Observations=21.

Provided the time and costs associated with social media, we also asked how much wineries agreed or disagreed with the following two statements: “social media marketing is vital to the success of our business,” and “there are much better ways to market my establishment than social media.” Despite the costs and times involved in social media marketing, 85 percent of wineries still agreed or strongly agreed that social media marketing is vital to the success of their business (Figure 25). Only 10 percent of wineries agreed that there are better ways to market their establishment than social

media (Figure 26). Thus, wineries overwhelmingly agree that social media marketing is critical to the success of their marketing campaigns.

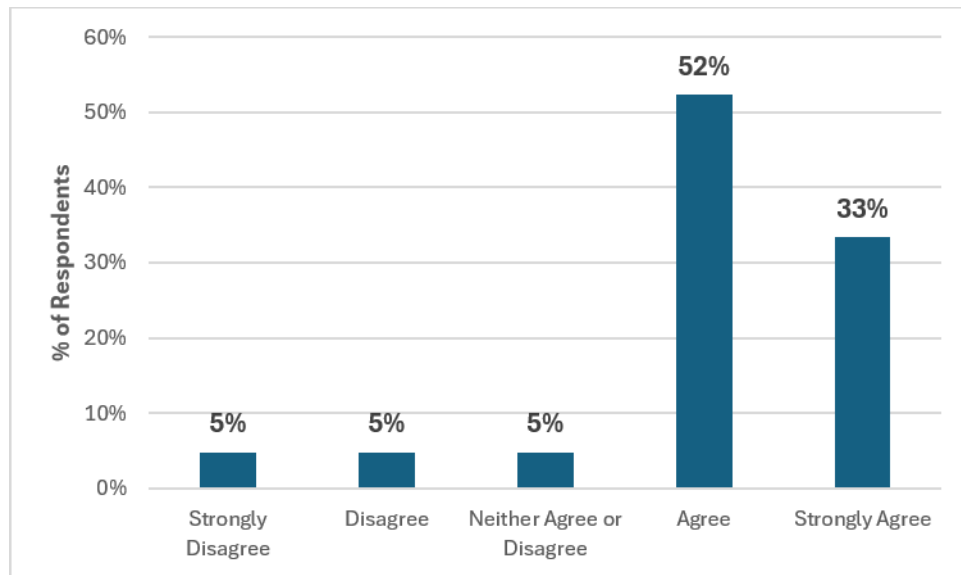


Figure 25. Is Social Media Vital to the Success of Your Winery? Survey Question: How much do you agree or disagree that social media marketing is vital to the success of our business? Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree. Number of Observations=21.

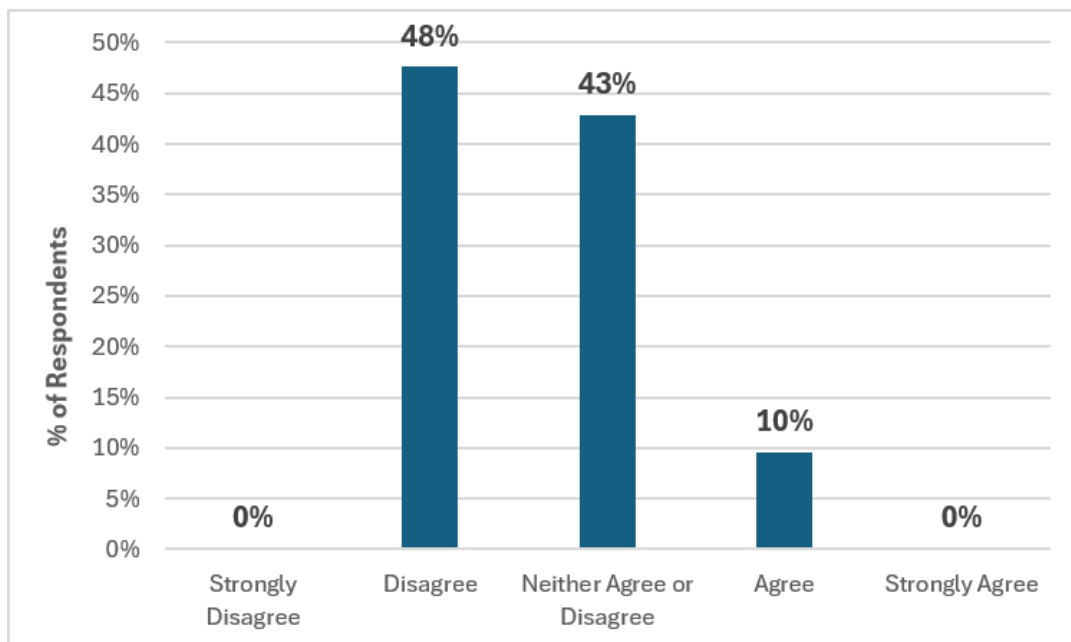


Figure 26. Are There Better Ways to Market Than Social Media? Survey Question: How much do you agree or disagree that there are much better ways to market my establishment than social media? Strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree. Number of Observations=21.

7.3 Tracking Customer Engagement

There are a wide variety of ways in which wineries track customer engagement based on social media marketing. Seventy-six percent of wineries track customer engagement (comments, shares), 62 percent track sales and number of followers/likes, 52 percent track website traffic, and about 38 percent track event attendance (Figure 27). Results suggest that wineries place significant importance on tracking customer engagement when measuring the success of social media efforts. While sales and followers are seen as important, the results may indicate that wineries view customer engagement as a tool for building relationships with customers and maintaining brand awareness. The use of multiple metrics shows that wineries recognize the importance of monitoring social media to evaluate the effectiveness of their social media marketing efforts.

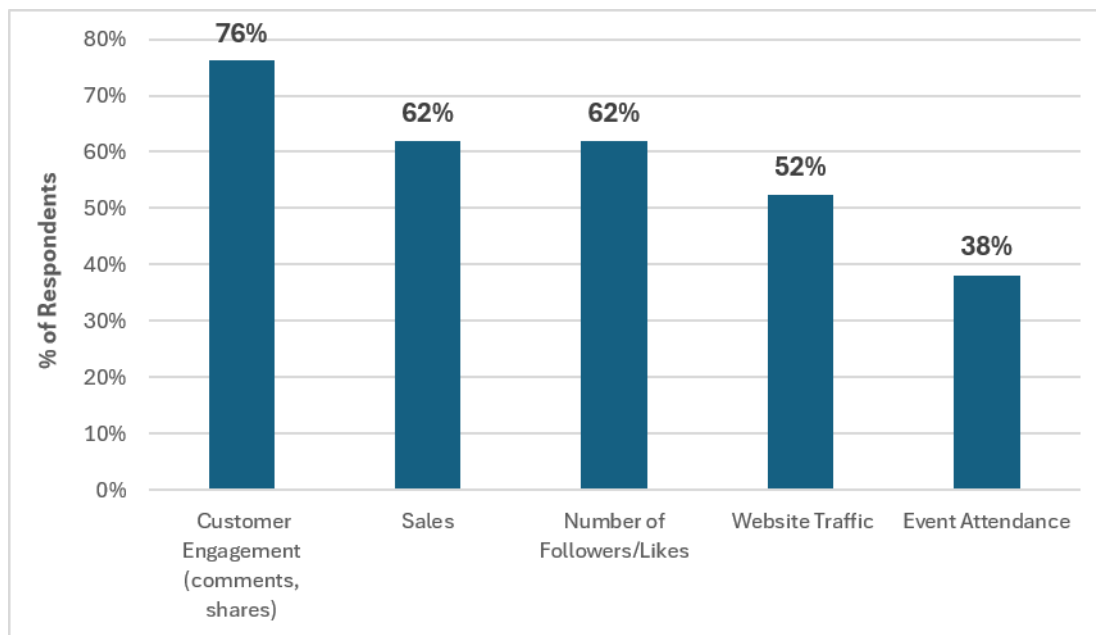


Figure 27. How TN Wineries Track Customer Engagement. Survey Question: Which metrics do you track most often to measure the success of your social media efforts (select all that apply)? Sales, number of followers/likes, customer engagement (e.g., comments, shares), website traffic, event attendance, other. Number of Observations=21.

Some TN wineries use their customer reviews, testimonials and ratings to help market their winery and/or wines (Figure 28). Forty-eight percent may place some of them on their website, 33 percent share reviews/testimonials in email newsletters, 29 percent post the reviews on social media, 29 percent do not use the reviews and 14 percent use them in advertisements.

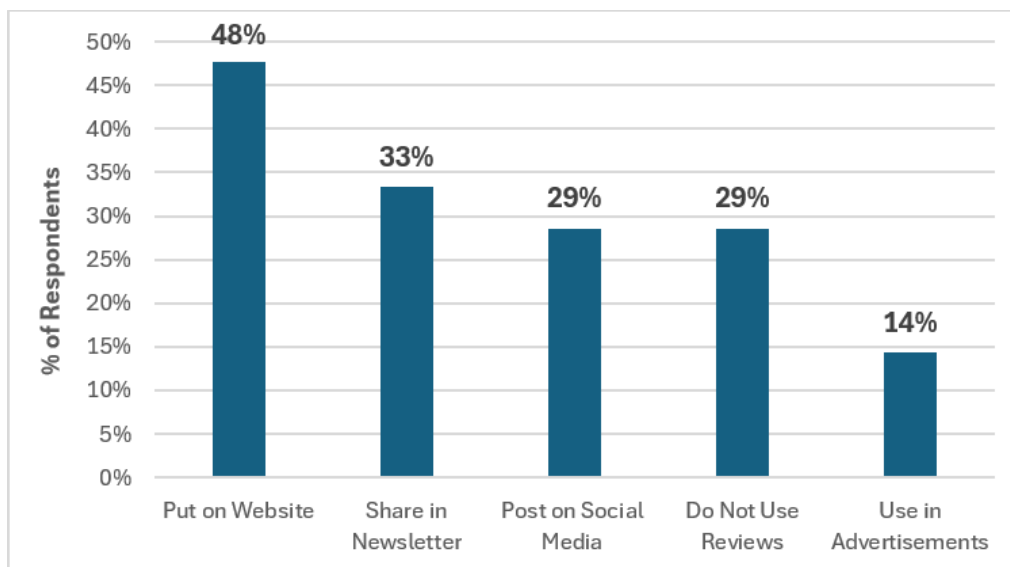


Figure 28. What TN Wineries Do with Reviews and Comments. Survey Question: How do you use customer reviews, testimonials, or ratings to help market your winery and/or wines (Select all that apply)? Post them on social media platforms, share reviews/testimonials in email newsletters, put them on the winery website, use them in advertisements (e.g., printed, online ads), I do not use customer reviews, testimonials, or ratings to help market my winery. Number of Observations=21.

Regarding how quickly wineries respond to customer comments/reviews on social media, 48 percent of wineries respond the same day, 24 percent respond within a week, 14 percent respond immediately, 14 percent respond within 1-2 days, and none reported responding rarely or never respond (Figure 29). The widespread use of reviews and testimonials suggests that wineries take them seriously, and customer feedback is important to winery marketing and customer engagement efforts.

Furthermore, the results indicate that wineries value responding to comments and reviews to maintain strong customer relations and engagement.

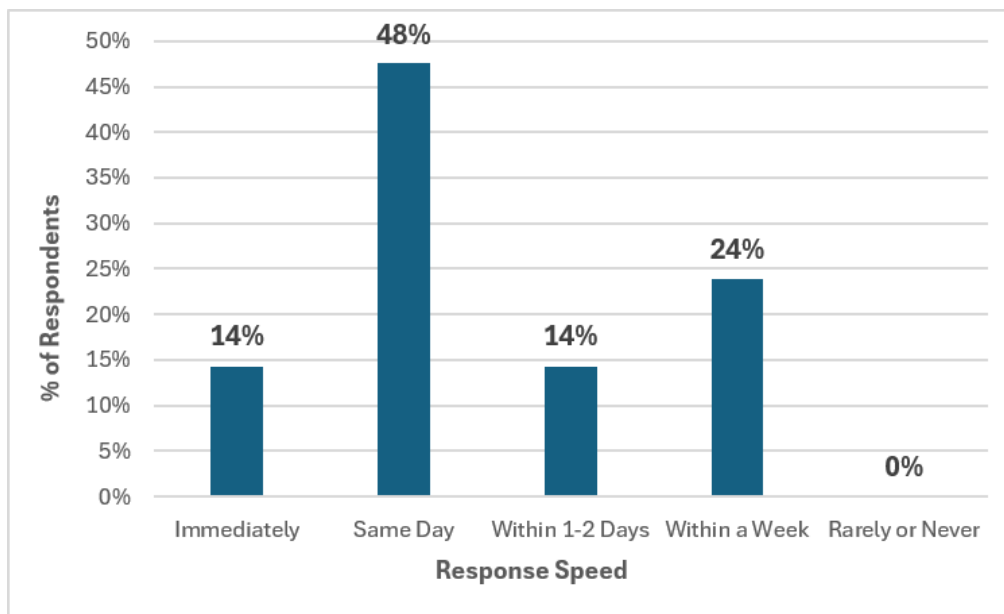


Figure 29. How Fast TN Wineries Respond to Reviews and Comments. Survey Question: How quickly do you respond to customer comments/reviews on social media? Immediately (within a few hours), Same Day, Within 1-2 Days, Within a Week, Rarely or Never. Number of Observations=21.

8. SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGES

Figure 30 reports the challenges TN wineries face regarding social media marketing. Roughly half of wineries reported they lack the time, have difficulty creating content, and lack the budget to manage social media effectively. Thirty-eight percent believe they have limited knowledge or expertise in social media marketing and low follower engagement or growth. Ten percent have uncertainty about which social media platforms to use. Figure 30 illustrates a wide variety of challenges rather than just one or two single issues. There are both resource-related and knowledge-related challenges when utilizing social media marketing. The results indicate that producing content,

allocating time, and securing adequate resources for marketing may be among the most significant challenges facing TN wineries.

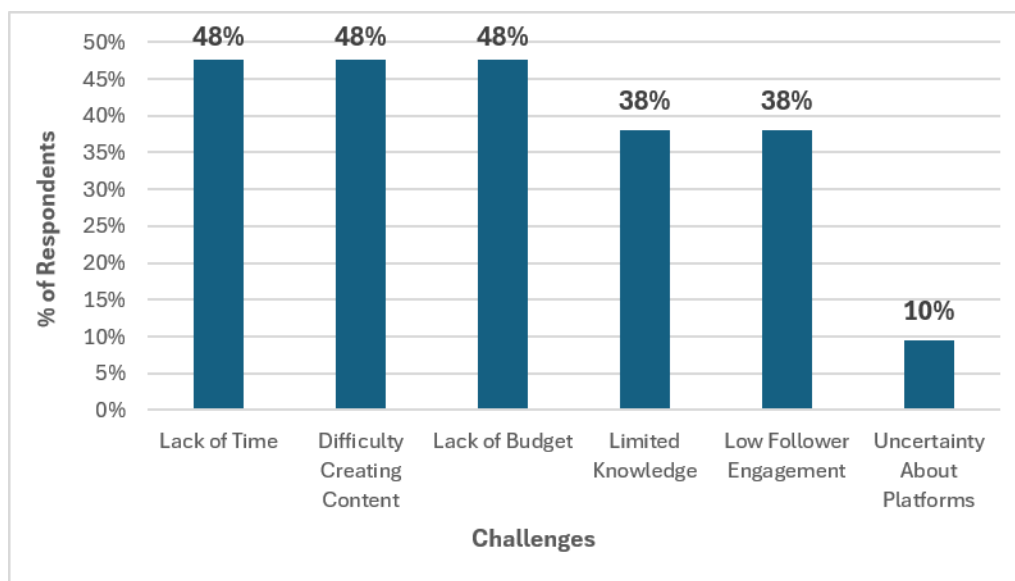


Figure 30. Challenges Facing TN Wineries Regarding Social Media Marketing. Survey Question: What challenges does your winery face in using social media effectively? (Select all that apply): Lack of time to manage accounts, limited knowledge or expertise in social media marketing, difficulty creating engaging content, lack of budget for social media advertising, low follower engagement or growth, uncertainty about which platforms to use. Number of Observations=21.

There are several ways wineries could receive assistance with their social media marketing capabilities (Figure 31). Fifty-seven percent of responding wineries believe training workshops would improve their social media marketing, 43 percent thought an intern would help, 38 percent believed mentorship would help, and 10 percent selected “other” ways. Of the two respondents who chose “other,” they both wrote in “financial.” Thus, besides education through training workshops, interns and mentorship, financial help could also assist wineries with social media marketing.

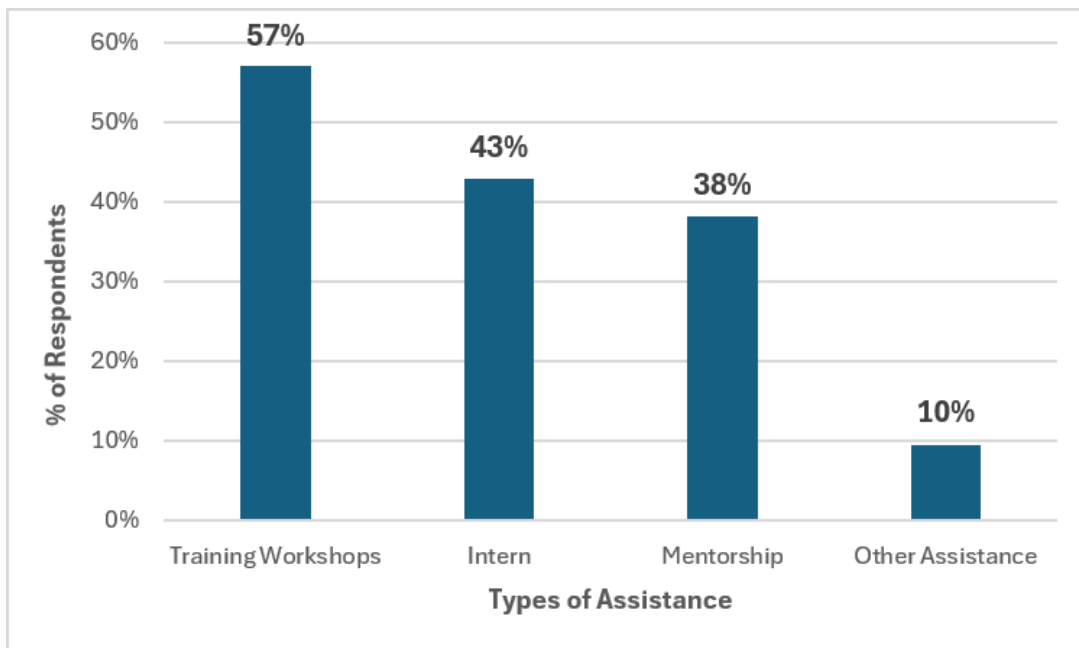


Figure 31. Types of Assistance TN Wineries Believe Will Be Helpful. Survey Question: What types of assistance would help you improve your social media marketing? (select all that apply): Training workshops, mentorship, intern, other. Number of Observations=21.

The ways in which wineries would like to receive training about social media marketing are as follows: 81 percent prefer online training, 43 percent want in-person training, while 5 percent selected “other” (and wrote in the request of a recorded seminar). Importantly, no responding wineries stated they did not want training (Figure 32). Together, this indicates that all respondents want some sort of training regarding social media but differ to some degree in how they want to receive that training.

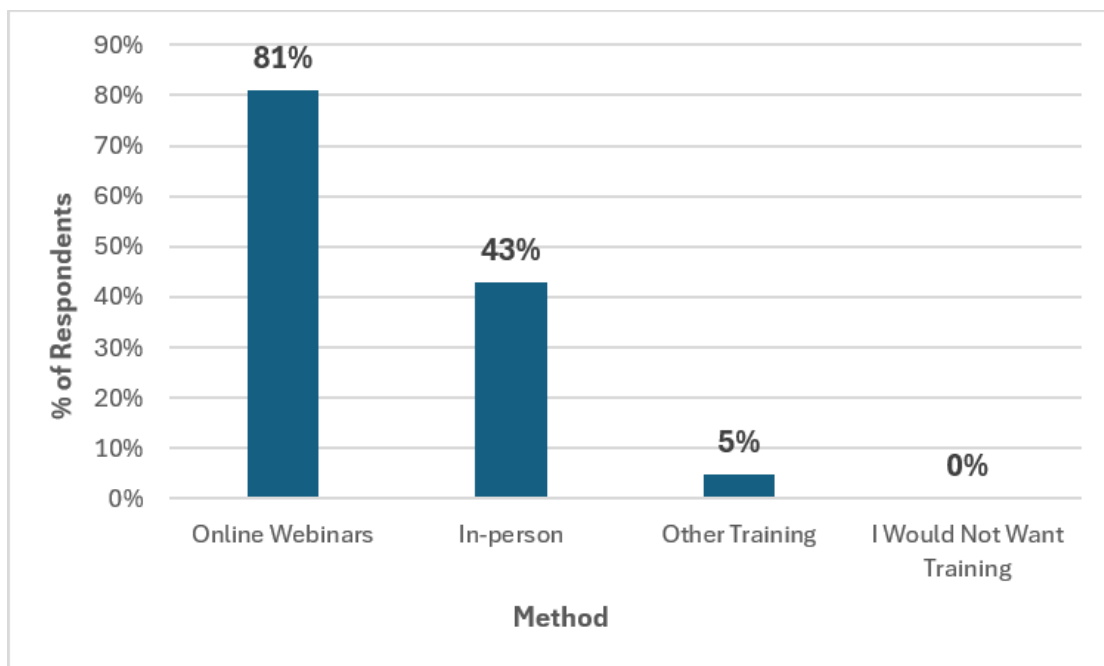


Figure 32. Methods of Receiving Social Media Marketing Assistance. Survey Question: How would you prefer to receive training on social media marketing? (Select all that apply): In-person, online webinars, other, I would not want training. Number of Observations=21.

9. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In 2025, we surveyed 21 TN wineries to evaluate how TN wineries use social media to market their wines and wineries. There was consistent agreement among wineries regarding the importance of social media marketing. Eighty-five percent of wineries strongly agreed or agreed that social media marketing is vital to the success of their businesses, and only 10 percent of wineries agreed there were better ways to market their establishment than social media. Fifty-two percent of wineries plan to expand their use of social media over the next three years. Facebook and Instagram were the primary platforms used by the TN wine industry. While social media marketing was clearly important to the wineries in our sample, they still utilize and rely on a variety of online marketing channels such as their own website, state-specific channels (TN Wines website), Google Search and wine trails.

Social media is primarily used by TN wineries to attract more visitors, increase customer awareness, promote events and tastings, and improve customer engagement and wine sales. Many wineries would like help in learning how to utilize social media more effectively, including how to use it to expand their marketing efforts to reach more people. The cost, labor, and time dedicated to social media by wineries vary substantially, with about half (52 percent) of wineries having an employee designated as a social media manager. Overall, social media is a valuable marketing tool that is going to continue to be an important part of wineries' marketing and advertising campaigns in the future.

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11. APPENDIX: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Screening Questions

1. Are you at least 18 years old?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. Is your winery located in TN?

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. Are you a primary decision maker for the winery?

☐ Yes

☐ No

The next questions are about your winery.

4. What year was your winery established?

5. In what TN county is your winery located?

6. How would you describe the location of your winery? (select all that apply)

☐ Rural

☐ City center

☐ Outside of a city

☐ In a tourist destination area

7. How many of the following types of workers (including yourself) did your winery employ in 2024?

	Number of Employees
Full Time	
Seasonal or part-time	

8. Approximately how many winery customers did you have in 2024?

9. Approximately what percentage of your customers visited from the following states? (responses should add to 100%)

TN (In-state): _____

Ohio: _____

North Carolina: _____

Alabama: _____

Georgia: _____

Kentucky: _____

Florida: _____

Other States (you don't need to list them all but can):: _____

Total: _____

10. What events or promotions does your winery host to attract visitors? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Wine tastings
- ☐ Vineyard tours
- ☐ Wine & food pairings
- ☐ Music/entertainment
- ☐ Seasonal festivals
- ☐ Private events (weddings, corporate, etc.)

11. Through which channels do you primarily sell your wine? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ On-site at the winery
- ☐ Online sales/ ship wine
- ☐ Local retailers
- ☐ Regional or national distributors
- ☐ Restaurants and bars
- ☐ Wine clubs
- ☐ Events and festivals
- ☐ Other _____

12. Please answer how easy or difficult you consider the following?

	Very difficult	Somewhat difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Somewhat easy	Easy	N/A I do not do this
Shipping wine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Allowing online payments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Managing a wine club	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. What was the gross sales (wine, other retail, services provided such as hosting events) by your winery in 2024? (select one range)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ \$0 - \$100,000 | ☐ \$4,000,001 - \$8,000,000 |
| ☐ \$100,001 - \$250,000 | ☐ \$8,000,001 - \$12,000,000 |
| ☐ \$250,001 - \$500,000 | ☐ \$12,000,001 - \$20,000,000 |
| ☐ \$500,001 - \$1,000,000 | ☐ \$20,000,001 or more |
| ☐ \$1,000,001 - \$2,000,000 | ☐ If \$20,000,001 or more is selected,
could you please provide an exact value |
| ☐ \$2,000,001 - \$4,000,000 | \$ _____ |
| | ☐ Prefer not to answer |

Next, we are interested in learning about how your operation uses social media to market your wines and/or winery. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

14. How do you advertise your wines and/or winery? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Website (i.e., website devoted to your establishment)
 - ☐ Participate in the TN Wines website
 - ☐ TN Department of Tourism Development Platforms
 - ☐ Participate in the TN Wine Trail
 - ☐ Participate in a wine trail website (besides the TN Wine Trail) that includes your winery/wines
 - ☐ Facebook
 - ☐ Instagram
 - ☐ Tik Tok
 - ☐ X (formerly Twitter)
 - ☐ Beverage Testing Institute
 - ☐ Employ social media influencer(s)
 - ☐ Use artificial intelligence (AI) to write ads
 - ☐ Other (please explain)
-

15. Approximately how many followers (or likes) do you have for the social media page devoted to your wines and/or winery establishment (insert "0" if you don't use the platform or leave blank)?

	# of followers/likes
Facebook	
Instagram	
Tik Tok	
X (formerly Twitter)	
Other (please include other important sites you use and likes/followers)	

16. Does your winery establishment utilize a wine trail social media page, in addition to your establishment's social media page, to help promote your products?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

17. How often do you post content to the following social media platforms to advertise your winery and/or wines (including events)?

	Monthly	A couple times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Daily	NEVER (don't use)
Facebook	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Instagram	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tik Tok	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
X (formerly Twitter)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

18. How much do you agree or disagree that the following attract (or would attract if you don't use them) people to purchase your wines and/or visit your wineries?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Facebook	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Instagram	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tik Tok	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
X (formerly Twitter)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Google (that points people to your devoted business website)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Being located on a wine trail	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

19. What is the main goal of your winery's social media presence? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Sell more wine directly to customers
- ☐ Attract more visitors to the winery
- ☐ Make more people aware of our brand
- ☐ Increase social media followers and engagement
- ☐ Promote events and wine tastings
- ☐ Other (please specify)

☐ I do not use social media

20. Who is your primary target audience on social media? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Local residents
- ☐ Tourists
- ☐ Wine enthusiasts
- ☐ Casual drinkers
- ☐ Younger audience (21-35)
- ☐ Older audience (36+)
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ I don't use social media

21. What types of content do you share on social media? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Product promotions
- ☐ Events
- ☐ Behind-the-scenes
- ☐ Customer reviews/testimonials
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ I don't use social media

22. Which types of social media content do you think attracts the most consumer attention? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Videos
- ☐ Image-based
- ☐ Paid influencer content
- ☐ Live video sessions (e.g., Facebook or Instagram Live)

23. Have you used **paid** social media advertisements to promote your wines and/or winery?

- ☒ Yes
- ☒ No

24. If you answered yes to the question above, which platforms do you use paid advertisements on (select all that apply)?

- ☐ Facebook ads
 - ☐ Instagram ads
 - ☐ Tik Tok ads
 - ☐ Google ads
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
-

25. How do you see your use of social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) for marketing your winery and/or wines changing over the next three years?

- ☐ Use social media less
- ☐ Use social media about the same
- ☐ Use social media more

26. If you do not use social media to market your winery, please select the reasons why not (select all that apply).

- ☐ I do not know how
 - ☐ I do not think it would be effective
 - ☐ It would take too much time
 - ☐ I would have to hire someone to do it
 - ☐ Other (please explain)
-

Next, we are interested in the management of your social media presence for your winery and/or wines.

27. Do you employ someone whose job it is to specifically manage your social media presence for your winery and/or wines?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Somewhat (please explain): _____

28. Approximately how many hours per week are spent on social media advertising for your winery and/or wines (insert 0 if you don't use it)?

29. Approximately how much did you spend (in \$'s) on social media advertising and/or management for your winery and/or wines in 2024 (insert zero if you don't use it)?

30. What impact has social media had on your winery and/or wines marketing costs ?

- ☐ Significantly reduced costs
- ☐ Somewhat reduced costs
- ☐ No impact on costs
- ☐ Increased costs

31. Which metrics do you track most often to measure the success of your social media efforts (select all that apply)?

- ☐ Sales
- ☐ Number of followers/likes
- ☐ Customer engagement (e.g., comments, shares)
- ☐ Website traffic
- ☐ Event attendance
- ☐ Other (please specify)

☐ I do not track social media metrics

32. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Social media marketing is vital to the success of our business	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There are much better ways to market my establishment than social media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

33. How do you use customer reviews, testimonials, or ratings to help market your winery and/or wines (select all that apply)?

- ☐ Post them on social media platforms
- ☐ Share reviews/testimonials in email newsletters
- ☐ Put them on the winery website
- ☐ Use them in advertisements (e.g., printed, online ads)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

☐ I do not use customer reviews, testimonials, or ratings to help market my winery

34. How quickly do you respond to customer comments/reviews on social media?

- ☐ Immediately (within a few hours)
- ☐ Same day
- ☐ Within 1-2 days
- ☐ Within a week
- ☐ Rarely or never

35. What challenges does your winery face in using social media effectively? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Lack of time to manage accounts
- ☐ Limited knowledge or expertise in social media marketing
- ☐ Difficulty creating engaging content
- ☐ Lack of budget for social media advertising
- ☐ Low follower engagement or growth
- ☐ Uncertainty about which platforms to use

Other: _____

36. What types of assistance would help you improve your social media marketing? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Training workshops
- ☐ Mentorship
- ☐ Intern
- ☐ Other: _____

37. How would you prefer to receive training on social media marketing? (select all that apply)

- ☐ In-person
- ☐ Online webinars
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ I would not want training

Lastly, please provide us with some information about you. Remember, all answers are anonymous and none of the information you provide can be connected back to you.

38. What is your age? (in years)

39. Please indicate your gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say

40. Please indicate the highest level of education that you have completed.

- ☐ Some high school
- ☐ High school diploma / GED
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ 2-year / associate's degree
- ☐ 4-year / bachelor's degree
- ☐ Some graduate school
- ☐ Graduate or professional's degree

41. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your winery or social media marketing/advertising?

Thank you for completing our survey!



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