

The 5 levels to know if your wine tourism is really working: are you passing them all?

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Effective wine tourism isn't about attracting crowds, it's about mastering five strategic levels. From delivering quality experiences to your first guests, communicating core values, generating revenue, earning digital reviews, to building lasting customer relationships, each phase must work in harmony to transform occasional visitors into loyal clients and create sustainable business growth.

The other day I found myself reflecting on what I consider the true heart of modern wine tourism. Despite wineries thinking it's about opening the doors and waiting for tourists to

arrive (a common mistake), effective wine tourism has a precise structure: five levels that must work like the gears of a Swiss watch.

The first level: quality before quantity

Wineries almost always ask me the same thing: “How do we get more visitors?” But this is the wrong question. The right question is: “Are we managing perfectly the ones we already have?” Because only when you master the art of managing ten people can you think about managing a hundred.

A winery we regularly collaborate with told me this summer about hosting numerous high-profile events: aperitifs with hundreds of participants, live music, glasses sold on the spot. Excellent numbers, perfect atmosphere. Yet, digging deeper, an uncomfortable question emerges: how many of those visitors left truly knowing what that company represents? How many grasped the essence of its wines, the philosophy guiding every production choice, the story behind each label?

The answer, I fear, is discouraging. Most were there for the event itself, the aperitif, the atmosphere, the musical background. Legitimate motivations, certainly, but the opportunity to build a lasting relationship, to create value beyond the moment, was lost.

Yet the solution would have been simple: two words mid-evening, a microphone, a moment of pause. “Folks, I see you’re having fun. We are company X, this is our story, this is the owner who spent the evening in the kitchen preparing your bruschetta.” It doesn’t take much, it takes being strategic.

The second level: internalization of values

It’s not enough for people to know your name. They must understand who you are, what you represent. But be careful:

you must communicate two values, maximum three, during visits. Those that define you, that distinguish you from the competition and above all those that a person is able to remember even over time.

If after a visit to your place a tourist can't answer "Why should I choose you specifically?", you've failed the second level.

The third level: monetization

Here we enter the concrete. The experience must translate into sales. Not necessarily immediate (a future order is fine) but there must be a tangible economic return. Wine tourism is not charity, it's business. A business that can and must be profitable.

The fourth level: digital word of mouth

Reviews are the new word of mouth, we all know this but we often forget about it. Everything now moves on digital channels. A positive review is worth more than a thousand glossy brochures. But to get it you must ask for it, you must explain why it's important, you must facilitate the process.

The fifth level: loyalty

This is the Holy Grail of wine tourism. Transforming an occasional visitor into a loyal customer. But to do this the customer must know who you are, how to contact you, why they should buy from you. Companies must build a relationship over time, not limit themselves to a sporadic encounter.

As entrepreneurs, you must be brutally honest when analyzing your wine tourism business. This is not destructive criticism, but a necessary analysis to evolve. The truth is that very few companies manage to master all five levels simultaneously. It's normal, you shouldn't feel inadequate. But you must be

aware of it, because only from awareness comes change.

Key points

1. **Quality management of existing visitors matters more than quantity** of new ones
2. **Communicate two to three core values** that visitors can remember long-term
3. **Every wine tourism experience must generate tangible economic returns**
4. **Digital reviews are essential** modern word-of-mouth marketing tools
5. **Transform occasional visitors into loyal customers** through sustained relationships