How will wine business relationships change?

scritto da Fabio Piccoli | 13 Maggio 2020



No matter how hard we try, we can never deeply understand what changes will affect wine markets after such complex pandemic of whom we still know a little (whether about spreading either about duration). Still, it is useful trying to imagine a few situations not so much about statistics as business positions and functional strategies taken by companies.

It is particularly interesting to understand how much this catastrophic event will affect business relationships. That is a fundamental topic for a product as the wine that finds just in relationships the critical marketing success.
Indeed, we highlighted more than once how the effective building of relationships, especially the human ones, is fundamental to establish an appropriate presence on the market.
What we did continuously is identifying the necessity of

building somehow a strong relationship with importers, distributors and consumers to get mutual advantages.
At that point, most performing companies on markets were the ones who always put their teams regularly on-site to get in touch with buyers. Will be like that in the future as well?□□If we just look at the present, we would say that in the future, at least the nearest one, the wine market will still want to keep its distance. For this reason, it is hard to imagine, at least in short to medium term, a return to traditional relations on the wine markets. That kind of relationships that took place in full product presentation events (fairs and b2b events), additional activities of the importer in numerous restaurants and wine bars, continuous trips by export managers to various corners of the planet. □We have not to consider the activities highlighted above as scenarios that will completely change, or even worse, that will disappear, but inevitably there will be evolutions. And what could these evolutions be? On the traditional fair front, we are already witnessing these developments with shifting of the various appointments in times that are hopefully more "peaceful" (up today, more than 200 events have been rescheduled). But probably it will not be only a reschedule but also a reconsideration of the setting of many events dedicated to the world of wine. □From our point of view, on this front, we will need much more focused initiatives than in the past, even the most recent one.
To be honest, we cannot ascribe this need only to the current emergency because it has been a long time since operators have asked the fair system to organize more targeted events through, in particular, a more accurate selection of the target to be involved in the events.
We believe that there will be an acceleration in this regard, and this cannot be considered as negativity.
Not for chance when VeronaFiere announced the reschedule of Vinitaly to 2021 (18-21 April) they anticipated the need for a New Deal for the fair trade system which, in our opinion, also implies a reshape of the organizational models. But this also applies to all b2b initiatives which will have to take more and more into consideration the best possible guests profiling.
In this direction, however, companies' ability to judge the

initiatives in which they participate no longer in terms of numbers but of the quality of the participants will also be needed.
And moving on to companies, it is clear that we will also see changes in the export management front. Indeed, in the first phase of the post-emergency, a sort of “post-war” period will be likely where the more “brave” (and structured in this sense) companies will face the first markets that will gradually reopen.
We will look at something like this shortly in China, where the first export managers who manage to reach this great country will certainly enjoy favourable conditions. However, how many ready and willing companies will be the first to restart on the export journey? Probably not all those that existed before Covid-19. And in our opinion, the figure of the multibrand export manager and resident manager already present on the field will enter the area, much more than before.
It is no coincidence that in these days, we are already reading on LinkedIn about professionals who are “offering” themselves for export support in Asia, obviously starting from China. But it is equally evident that this emergency will undoubtedly lead to an acceleration in the identification of “remote relationship” tools. In this direction, the current growth of e-commerce must be considered not only as a “temporary remedy” but perhaps as a phase of higher “education” for consumers and the trade towards this distribution model.
On the other hand, it is known that the majority of our habits develop in particular conditions when we are forced to “do things”.
The same “home delivery” is training numerous distributors, including wine, in a way that until recently was a heritage of only a few operators.
But attention does not mean, from our point of view, that the different subjects involved in the wine trade will no longer meet, will no longer shake hands, will no longer need to build faithful relationships. Still, we will do it more carefully, avoiding unnecessary dispersions, moving just to move.
And that’s not necessarily bad news.