

NGWB Grant Final Report (FY20-21)

Contract #18-13-282 - NWGGA – Marketing

Grant Amount \$120,000

Contact Information

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Issue of Interest

The Nebraska Winery and Grape Growing industry in the state of Nebraska continues to be a under promoted industry. Many Nebraska consumers are still not aware of the fact that grapes not only grow but thrive in Nebraska and that award-winning wines are being produced and enjoyed in the state. By promoting the industry as a category, we will strive to introduce consumers to wines and the events and activities of wineries and vineyards as a tourism attraction. The Nebraska Winery & Grape Growers Association continued to promote the industry by continuously promoting Nebraska wines to Nebraska consumers.

Approach to Problem

This grant allowed for the following:

- Nebraska's Wine Passport Program. This program is designed to provide an incentive for Nebraskans, tourists and consumers to visit a significant number of wineries and tasting rooms across the state.
- Media Buy Plan and Placement. Examples include email, print, digital, tv, radio and social media advertisements
- Nebraska Cheers to the Red and White Campaign: Inaugural Husker Football campaign to encourage Nebraska wine for tailgates and as a pairing for husker football gatherings.
- Consumer Giveaways and Promotions: Wine Bucks prizes and promotions through social media giveaways.
- Nebraska Wines Apparel: Apparel for the new Nebraska Wines promo shop, a "walking billboard" for those who are the most eager Nebraska wine fans.

Goals/Achievement of Goals

Email Marketing: Since early March 2021, the NWGGA staff has fostered a consumer-focused email list called "**Nebraska Wine Fans**." Email marketing is one of the highest converting marketing strategies. By building this list, the NWGGA is able to:

- Market directly to a highly specific and interested group of consumers
- Gain demographic information on what markets in Nebraska are gravitating toward Nebraska Wines events and products
- Cross-reference and upload the list to optimize sponsored ad placements on social media

The Nebraska Wine Fans list currently has 7,586 subscribers.

In order to foster healthy growth of this list and keep sent emails at the top of visible inboxes – *avoiding junk and clutter*

folders – it was imperative to nurture the list by sending out highly valuable content to each subscriber on a regular basis throughout the year. The current nurture campaign structure is a weekly email – “***This Weekend at the Wineries***” - sent on weekly that lists local winery events, live music, food features, and wine releases that are coming up that weekend.

NWGGA has received extremely positive feedback from these emails from wineries, tasting rooms, and consumers. Emails are intermittently accompanied by promotional emails on Mondays or Tuesdays when there is an upcoming industry-wide event, product or promotion. These would include TOAST ticket sales, apparel releases, passport releases, giveaways and additional NWGGA events.

Nebraska Wine Passport: The highest converting lead generator for the email list is the Nebraska Wine Passport. By offering this free passport program to Nebraskans in exchange for their email, NWGGA is capturing information from their target market – someone interested in wine and visiting Nebraska wineries – while simultaneously promoting traffic to the wineries. All 35,000 passports ordered were dispersed as of May 21, 2021. An additional increase in funding from other under-utilized grants (Strategic Planning and Education due to COVID) allowed for additional printing of 20,000 passports. A total of 50,000 passports have been dispersed as of October 2021. Facebook ads were purchased and placed to promote the online sign up link for the Nebraska Wine passport. This enabled NWGGA to capture 3,615 emails directly from these campaigns.

Additional campaigns ran through digital, print, social media, radio and tv included B107.3’s Favorite Things Promotion, the Cheers to the Red and White Tailgate Tees and Giveaways, Omaha’s Choice Awards – Best Festival print advertisement, and general wine marketing through NRG Media. Due to such a positive response in sales of the Cheers shirts and TOAST apparel, additional funds were reallocated to stock a Nebraska Wines apparel shop that will launch at the fall TOAST holiday festival and then be routed online to the new nebraskawines.com website in 2022.

Results, Conclusions, Lessons Learned

The current audiences for Nebraska Wine Fans (Facebook and MailChimp) are an indicator of the interested audience we are reaching and converting. The net cast for consumers includes:

- Consumers 21-65+ years of age (all)
- Interested in wine, beer, alcoholic beverages (some, not all met)
- Interested in concerts, festivals, bars, tailgating (some, not all met)
- Located in:
 - o Nebraska
 - o western Iowa
 - o southern South Dakota
 - o northeastern Kansas
 - o northwestern Missouri

We currently are managing the email marketing subscriber list of 7,500 and a facebook community page of approximately 7,000. Overall social media reach for the 20-21 promotions was over 1.8 million impressions and reached over 462k people.

Progress Achieved According to Outcome Measures

The overall promotions for the 2020-2021 year were challenging with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The marketing committee and NWGGA team were able to adjust and fluctuate promotions to achieve the best results which resulted in the highest disbursement of Nebraska Wine Passports ever. By launching and testing other new campaigns, such as the Cheers tailgate campaign, NWGGA is excited to see the growth and new opportunities presented in the coming years for Nebraska wine industry promotion.

