

# When a Great Product Isn't Enough

## ON THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPANY VALUES

by Molly Thompson

**WE'VE ALL WORKED** at companies that hang posters displaying their values on the wall—and let's be honest, it always seems a little cheesy. But attitudes toward brand values are changing very quickly. According to the Sprout Social Index for 2022, "Company alignment with personal values is 74% more important to consumers than it was in 2021." Now more than ever may be the time to dust off that poster and really reflect on it. How does your wine brand align with and communicate those values? And what exactly are consumers looking for?

Thanks to a social media landscape that fosters higher consumer expectations as well as increased competition (the U.S. alone saw its number of wineries grow by 50% between 2009 and 2021, according to consumer data company Statista), wine brands face more of a challenge when it comes to standing out in the marketplace than they used to. At the end of the day, what works best for both them and for consumers in search of great wine? Authenticity and connection.

Story sells, and people want to be part of it. Has your vineyard been in the family for generations? Is your winery minority-owned and -operated? Do you collaborate with local producers? Do you practice sustainability? People want to support these kinds of things and want you to succeed because they see themselves in your brand. Make these details easy to find! Make room for them in a separate tab on your website, share them often on social media, and get them on the back of your bottles. Tell your story in a genuine, relatable way by featuring real customer sentiments, collaborating with influencers who align with your brand and target audience, and spotlighting your employees and partners.

Connection is critical, and social media provides a direct channel to your custom-

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and share your story and what you stand for. Be honest. Be vulnerable. Be attentive and present. People are actively looking for it! It's great to have an awesome wine with dinner, but it tastes even better when we know it is in support of a larger mission that brings us

all a little closer together.

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*Fresh Voices is a collaborative effort between The SOMM Journal, The Tasting Panel, and 501(c)(3) organization Dream Big Darling. The concept centers around providing opportunities to and amplifying the voices of the next generation of women in the wine and spirits industry. To learn more about Dream Big Darling, visit [dreambigdarling.org](http://dreambigdarling.org) or follow [@dreambigdarling\\_org](https://www.instagram.com/dreambigdarling_org) on Instagram.*

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*Molly Thompson is a certified sommelier and marketing account manager. You can follow her on Instagram [@starsinourglasses](https://www.instagram.com/starsinourglasses) and view her website at [starsinourglasses.com](http://starsinourglasses.com).*

ers. It is now used increasingly by younger generations as a way of discovering new brands, learning more about the ones they already know, and reaching out for customer support. Showing up actively on social media and being responsive to questions, comments, and mentions builds trust among your followers and helps ensure they have a positive experience with your brand. Even a simple "thank you" or reshare makes someone feel seen and heard and can transform a customer into an advocate.

People today are shopping with more intentionality, asking themselves more often, "What am I supporting with this purchase?" For brands, this is a great opportunity. Get in front of your audience