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## The Power of Communication as one of the most important Marketing Tool for Competitiveness of Wine Producers

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In the last few years, wine market was characterized by fast changes because of significant changes in consumers' eating habits and lifestyles that, consequently, impacted wine consumption and demand. In this scenario, wine producers that want to win competitors must definitely be market-oriented.

For wine producers, to be competitive means to focus on strategic business decisions, to keep the brand in the market, to increase new consumer segments and to move towards a diversified production that points to research and innovation, looking constantly for quality.

Communication is nowadays one of the main strengths of competitiveness and especially strategically-market-oriented wine producers, are aware of it.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which is fundamental to the strength and competitiveness of EU farming and of the agri-food sector as a whole, gave directions in order to develop communication channels of EU farms. Those direction were incorporated into the Sicilian Regional Planning within the Rural Development Programme 2007/2013 (Programma di Sviluppo Rurale, PSR 2007/2013) that provides, measures to finance wine producers that want to invest in communication, information and promotion activities for productions of quality ("DOCG" – Designation of Origin Guaranteed, "DOC" – Designation of Origin, "IGT" – Typical Geographic Indication). This confirms the fact that both producers and Institutions believe that, for wine sector, investments in marketing activities and in communication (with regard to quality products), are crucial for its growth and for the expansion of quality productions.

Therefore, this scientific paper has the objective to know how much Sicilian wine producers believe and invest, efforts and money, in communication strategies in order to understand how the Sicilian wine communicates to consumers. In particular this paper wants to highlight the differences and similarities among Sicilian wine producers in their approach on investment policies for marketing and communication, trying to identify groups of companies homogeneous in choosing different communication tools (homogeneity in spending among wine producers). Moreover we want to highlight what are, for producers, the most important communication tools and what are the least in order to identify the key elements that drive their strategic choices.

For the survey it was used a *stratified with proportional allocation sampling*. A proper questionnaire, with mostly closed answers and only few open answers (with unique interpretation), was submitted to a sample of Sicilian wine producers.

Through the use of hierarchical Cluster Analysis it has been possible to know directions of Sicilian wine producers towards investment in communication and to obtain Sicilian wine producers' homogeneous groups according to investment expenses (how much they spend) and type communication tools (what they spend for). Moreover it was possible to identify the measures of similarities and dissimilarities of expense items for communication and find the ones preferred by producers.