

# Public Relations Agencies and Consultants

## A Directory

by [Mick Winter](#)

Jan 2002 Issue of *Wine Business Monthly*

**Editor's Note:** This represents a good sampling of some of the independent specialists and consultants specializing in public relations for the US wine industry. Mick Winter's original intent was to use the "comments" section of each entry as fodder for an introductory article, quote them, and intermingle all their philosophies on winery public relations. The responses were so good, and indicative of various approaches, that it made sense to leave them in their entirety and in connection with each agency. The comments sections vary from none to quite lengthy, but all had equal instructions and opportunities to respond.

### July Ackerman & Associates

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### Services Offered

Our services are tailored to each client's needs and budget. While we can--and do--offer a full range of public relations services, we specialize in strategic planning and an emerging new form of consulting called "coaching." Clients who engage our coaching services range from large corporations to tiny start-ups. They hire us to coach on a project basis, to develop a specific skill--such as public speaking or working with the media--and/or because they want an ongoing partner in planning and executing their communications strategies. Coaching can be a very cost-effective way to go, because clients do the implementation themselves. A typical coaching relationship begins with a half- to full-day planning meeting, followed by weekly sessions that provide the structure and support clients need to stay on track. Of course, if a client would like us to handle public relations on their behalf, we can do that, too. Some of our areas of expertise include managing special events, developing press and sales materials, and staying in touch with key media targets. We also conduct market research for businesses that do business with--or want to do business with--wineries.

### Clients

Our clients include wineries, trade organizations, and businesses serving the wine industry--on both the east and west coasts. We also do some sub-contracting for larger firms.

### Comments

In the wine business, relationships are vital and reputation is *everything*. Public relations is the act of communicating effectively with those who influence or have the potential to influence the reputation of a brand and its organization.

People are much more likely to purchase a product in which they have confidence, especially wine. Special events, a form of public relations, provide a non-threatening way for consumers to try a wide variety of wines before investing in them. Awards and accolades from third parties, also generated by public relations efforts, are important sources of information to consumers seeking help in choosing which wines to buy.

In a nutshell, it all boils down to risk management. Effective public relations establish a positive reputation for a brand, which gives consumers the confidence they need to buy that brand.

Although wineries can do their own PR, the first question is, will they? Unless it's a crisis situation, PR is one of those important-but-not-urgent activities that often give way to more pressing demands, like making the wine itself or even sales.

The second question is, how effectively can they do it on their own? Some wineries have people on board who are great communicators. Others are better off sticking to winemaking. Or, at a minimum, they should hire a coach to help them craft and deliver their messages.

A winery will bring in a public relations professional for one or any combination of these reasons: They

don't have the expertise; they don't have the contacts; they don't have the time. Simple as that.

### **Adams Walter Communications**

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### **Services Offered**

Adams Walter Communications is a public relations agency that specializes in wine, food and the web. We help businesses, organizations and individuals discover and communicate what's unique about them to appropriate audiences. By developing communication programs that use creative strategies, proven tactics and all media (radio, television, print and online) we have built businesses, increased sales, secured markets and created strong and immediately identifiable images.

**Lisa Walter**, agency principal, has more than 13 years of experience encompassing corporate/wine industry public relations, media relations, publishing new-launch promotion, Internet/online marketing, promotional marketing and special event planning and management. We are continually motivated by strategic, ethical, results-oriented communication techniques and adhere to the articles of the *Code of Professional Standards for the Practice of Public Relations* as established by the **Public Relations Society of America**.

### **Clients**

Clients have included two non-profit wine industry organizations, a food/ wine Internet site launch, a new media publishing company, a wine industry trade Internet site, several wineries, a California State Assembly member and a wine industry "think tank."

### **Comments**

Public Relations can take many forms. In other industries, "PR" jobs listed in classified sections include everything from food sample providers at Costco to telemarketers. In the wine business, "PR" is used as a blanket description for everything from tasting room programs to shelf talkers to news releases to new releases to special events to taking a reporter to lunch. While none of these activities alone are PR, they could each be a part of a larger PR plan. Wineries that *commit* to a long-term and strategic PR campaign have a greater chance of securing more than market share...it's likely that they will also gain mind share. If a winery has the budget to commit to an on-staff PR professional or it happens to have a story/event/personality/product so incredibly unique that the media is banging down its door, it may not need help. However, a PR professional offers a valuable set of communication skills, the ability to assess the business from outside the inner circle and is media savvy and connected so that communication is appropriate and targeted.

### **Balzac Communications & Marketing**

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### **Services Offered**

PR Consultation and execution, marketing analysis and consultation, graphic design, and crisis management.

### **Clients**

Canandaigua Wine Company: Columbia Winery, Covey Run, St. Chapelle, Alice White, Vina Santa Carolina, Talus, Dunnewood, Inglenook, Marcus James, Heritage, Almaden. Seagram Chateau & Estate Wines Company: Sterling, Mumm Cuvee Napa, Barton & Guestier, Sandeman, Trimbach, Classified

Growths of Bordeaux, Great Estates of Burgundy, The Monterey Vineyard. Delicato Vineyards: Delicato Monterey Vine Select, Monterra, Delicato Family Vineyards. Bouchaine, Union des Grands Crus de Bordeaux, The Hess Collection, Court of Master Somelliers, Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter Task Force.

### **Comments**

Public relations concerns managing the relations the company has with its various publics, from media and consumers to distributors, shareholders, and employees. There are hundreds of brands fighting for shelf space and share of mind. Public relations is a powerful tool to help a brand stand out from the crowd.

We offer only three things to our clients: The time to get things done, the expertise to do things right, and the creativity to make things fly. But we must be doing something right--Balzac employees have gone on to key industry PR positions at Fetzer, Paterno, Mondavi, Sutter Home, and Allied Domecq.

How should a winery's PR budget compare to its advertising budget? This depends on the size of the winery. A small winery simply cannot afford to have a national advertising presence. In that case, the winery should dedicate virtually all of its budget towards PR. A larger winery needs to take advantage of all of the various communications techniques, and should budget accordingly. But in every case, the budgets should be spent in the most cost-effective manner possible.

### **Benson Marketing Group**

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### **Services Offered**

Founded in 1997, Benson Marketing Group is a leading wine marketing agency integrating strategic consulting, Public Relations, and Internet products customized for the wine industry. Benson Marketing Group is the only full-service marketing agency, and the only Internet-savvy agency, with an exclusive focus on the wine industry.

### **Clients**

Chateau Montelena, Niebaum-Coppola, Cakebread Cellars, Charles Krug, Stonegate Winery, Delicato, Free the Grapes!, Rutherford Dust Society, Meritage Association, Clos LaChance, Bell Wine Cellars, and others.

### **Comments**

Public Relations is a component of marketing. To be truly effective, PR must be fully integrated into the marketing campaign, and reinforce the other components of a marketing campaign. More specifically, we often start campaigns by conceiving the "big idea," the key message that will create a long-term sustainable advantage for our client. Then, and only then, do we decide which marketing tools will serve our goal and meet our budget. While PR, and especially media placements, are often key to a successful campaign, just as often it is direct Email, website marketing, advertising, POS, and even special events that reinforce the "big idea" with big results.

Wineries need to use PR because they need to stand out in a marketplace that is both competitive and fragmented. There are 2,100 wineries in the US producing over 10,000 new products every vintage. And there isn't a retailer or distributor in the country that could logistically stock and sell all U.S. wines (let alone imports). It is an information-intensive consumer product, with a fragmented, disconnected group of retail options for the consumer: supermarket, wine merchant, restaurant, online, tasting room, newsletter, etc.

How does a winery create an advantage with consumers and the trade? And can it sustain this advantage? PR--including media placements, ratings, reviews, special events, cause marketing, speeches, fundraising, etc.--is one effective tool to use but it simply must be combined with other marketing tools into a cohesive package to be both effective and cost effective. We believe traditional, stand-alone PR is dead.

Here's why. Today's wine enthusiast, fortunately, is connected, sophisticated and loyal when given a chance. To us, the distinction between PR, advertising and sales promotion is irrelevant; they should be

viewed holistically. We've sent out direct Emails for winery clients that have purposefully excluded an overt sales message, focusing instead on a vineyard strategy or winemaking philosophy. They sold over \$10,000 of wine online from those e-mails alone. Is that advertising or PR or sales? Who cares? It's a little of everything from our perspective. From the consumers' perspective, they liked the message, medium, and the brand. So the answer to your budget question is that formulas don't work; the question wineries should be asking is, "what is the best and highest use of each dollar invested to achieve our goals?"

Boutique wineries need a minimal amount of PR counsel, but growing and medium-sized wineries can leverage an agency's connections to writers, events, and other focal points, without the salary and compensation of a full-time employee. PR agencies have the luxury of being very externally focused, without the day-to-day crises that an in-house PR manager faces.

So the advantage of hiring an outside agency is partly financial (we can achieve results, sooner, with less money, than it would take you, the client, to hire and train), and partly competitive, since an agency worth its salt will open up many, many doors for its clients.

### **Brown-Miller Communications**

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### **Services Offered**

Brown-Miller Communications provides a host of services for our wine industry clients, including media outreach, spokesperson training, publication design, counsel, crisis management, strategic planning and social marketing.

### **Clients**

American Society for Enology and Viticulture (ASEV), the American Vineyard Foundation (AVF), the California Association of Winegrape Growers (CAWG), Cork Supply USA, Cork Supply Australia and Unified Wine & Grape Symposium.

### **Comments**

Companies within the wine industry, as with any field, need to stay competitive and consistent with the image they present of their product, their employees and themselves. Public relations in essence is a strategic function dedicated to the development, promotion and enhancement of the reputation of a business and its products through communication to all relative audiences.

Public relations can help wineries and wine associations build and strengthen their communications and standing within the industry, among peers, consumers and staff alike. Although significantly less expensive than advertising, public relations is extremely effective in swaying public awareness, the collective consciousness and ultimately buying dollars. With the proper training and tools, public relations can be directed either internally or by an outside firm.

### **Diaz Communications/Jo Diaz**

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### **Services Offered**

Diaz Communications provides its clients with the following: wine writer relationship development, press releases, collateral material design and development, outdoor photography, wine education, I.T. and marketing strategy, Web site design and IT maintenance, operations and systems management, direct marketing strategies, psychographic research skills, marketing plan development, strategic sales, market

planning, & management.

**Clients**

Not available.

**Comments**

Public relations is the consistent and persistent result of press releases and public relations efforts that winery and personality feature stories develop. The relationship between wine writers and public relations people cannot be underscored. Many winemakers and proprietors prefer not to work directly with the press. Having been an artist, I understand how difficult it is to promote oneself. One cannot easily say, "Aren't I great? Didn't I do a magnificent job?" Perhaps this is why Van Gogh cut off his ear, rather than talk to one more client. Public relations people have an affinity and understanding for the media (many of whom have worked both sides of these professions; i.e., media and public relations).

PR is company-influenced publicity directed at promoting or protecting its image or its individual products. By increasing the company's image, the company's market share also increases. Although one cannot measure PR execution as compared to sales execution, budgets for public relations should be strong. People are more cynical about advertisements, and rarely talk about the latest, greatest advertisement; however, people talk about stories that they've read each day. PR proves itself to be more effective dollar-for-dollar.

**Fineman PR**

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**Services Offered**

Brand PR, Crisis Communications, Latino Marketplace Communications and Community Relations, Strategic Marketing Counsel, Media Relations/Product Publicity, Reputation Management, Web Strategy and Communications, Tradeshow/Special Events, Community Relations, Employee Relations.

**Clients**

Hanzell Vineyards, Oeneo Closures USA, Chateau Montelena Winery, Jackson Wine Estates (KJ), Seguin Moreau, Foster Farms Poultry, Discovery Foods, Annabelle Candy Company.

**Comments**

Consumers are faced with many purchasing decisions everyday. No other purchasing decision involves such a huge and confusing array of choices as selecting a bottle of wine. Therefore, it is imperative for a winery to differentiate itself and generate trust among consumers by building a name that means and communicates something desirable to its audiences. We believe that "Brand PR" is the most powerful and lasting answer. The value and success of Fineman PR's strategic Brand PR programs are based on our efforts to build reputation while fulfilling marketing objectives. We heighten awareness, stimulate trial and support repeat purchase by placing a branded product or service at the forefront of a trend or timely issue, or by positioning the brand as a significant option to fill a consumer need and/or lifestyle demand. With the power of a provocative story, Brand PR communicates the brand promise and forms an appealing brand personality. It can also bring new vitality to an established brand. By nurturing emotional connections between the consumer and the brand, with quality impressions, Brand PR promotes trust, loyalty and lasting value and it helps to bring the consumer back to your bottle of wine.

**Sam Folsom**

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### **Services Offered**

Welles Folsom & Associates is a comprehensive public relations resource for wineries and wine-related business, offering professional expertise in services ranging from positioning and public relations strategy to media relations and special events. Welles Folsom works closely with clients to craft appropriate messages and stories for target audiences, to develop materials that effectively communicate the company's story and to carry out successful public relations campaigns. Specific services include media tours, story pitching, press releases, press kit development, newsletter writing, media training, creative promotions, product launches and event publicity.

**Wine clients:** Atlas Peak, Evans & Tate, Fritz, Frog's Leap, G.H. Mumm, Guenoc, Hall/Kathryn Hall, Mumm Napa, Perrier Jouet, Rabbit Ridge, Southern Wine Group (Argentina), Waterstone, William Hill Winery, Z 52

### **Comments**

Public relations is a cost-effective way for wineries to reach new consumers, distinguish themselves from competitors and raise their profile with the trade. Public relations includes the actions one takes to influence others to talk (or write) about them, as opposed to advertising, which is talking about oneself. If successful, these actions create a credible third party endorsement of a product or a company, in the form of media coverage or a personal recommendation from an opinion leader.

Experience working with the media, extensive knowledge of the editors, writers, producers and broadcasters interested in wine-related stories and strong writing skills are important qualities to look for in choosing a public relations representative. An effective public relations program should be consistent, ongoing and broad-based, employing a range of tactics to reach consumers, media and trade.

### **Huffman Communications**

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### **Services Offered**

A complete marketing, design and communications company. Marketing, design, public relations and advertising for traditional and interactive media. We provide professional, innovative marketing communication services to clients looking for great creative and willing to build lasting relationships. At Huffman Communications, we utilize the best of today's technologies coupled with the historic tradition of good marketing practices to generate brand recognition, collapse the sales cycle, provide greater dollar-for-dollar value from a marketing budget, and create a positive public image.

Ah heck, we're strategically creative people with a keen understanding of your customers many touch points including company branding, advertising, core messages, online technology, channel communications and public relations.

### **Clients**

ExceptionalWines.com, Kempkey Risk Management Services, Maldonado Vineyard Management, The Vintage Bank, Barrel and Associates, Nomatic LLC, Wine Business Strategies

### **Comments**

It's important to recognize PR as an investment no different than a good package or brand ID. The written and visual vocabulary should be considered one-in-the-same. An investment in good PR is not just providing a timely press release about a new product. Provide the editors with objective knowledge about your company and industry, consistent with your brand. Editors work very hard to find facts, source materials, in essence to provide their readers with interesting yet factual information. Being a consistent resource for information, relative to your category and industry, is not won overnight. It relies on trust and consistency. This is built over time.

What is truly different from the PR times of old, are the tools which are now available. Consider using web based PR portals to announce your release in concert with a personal investment of releases set direct to the sources of industry content. This is where a professional organization can come into play. First they

should have a database of personal contacts, but also should be members of several online PR-Wire services.

### **Hunter Public Relations/ Pam Hunter**

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### **Services Offered**

As an independent consultant to the wine, food and travel industry, I provide market strategies, editorial services, trade, media and consumer outreach. Often, I have delivered both the creative vision and the galvanizing force that enables organizations to achieve their established objectives. In a quarter of a century, I have built a widely effective Rolodex® and, more importantly, the relationships that support it. To my clients, this means I know where to find, and how to rally, the best available talent on two continents.

My skills in result-full event planning and execution, creation of collateral materials and publishing are all called into play. The cross-fertilization among my clients, vendors and industry contacts is very beneficial to all of my clients.

### **Clients**

Current clients include: Robert Sinskey Vineyards; Schramsberg Vineyards and Winery, Jordan Winery, the Culinary Institute of America, Greystone, Mayacamas and Emporio Rulli. Past clients have included: The Napa Valley Wine Auction, the Napa Valley Vintner's Association, the Livermore Valley Winegrower's Association, the California Wine Institute, the State Department of Food and Agriculture, Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, Stag's Leap Winery, Shafer Vineyards, Freixenet U.S.A., Fisher Vineyards, Scharffenberger, Pat Kuleto Restaurants, Sutter Home Winery, Beringer Vineyards, William Morrow Publishing and Encantado Mezcal de Oaxaca.

### **Comments**

In my view, not all wineries need public relations. Indeed, many modest-sized properties would do better to focus their resources on developing quality viticultural and winemaking programs. After that, an intelligent sales program staffed by the industry's best wine educators is of immeasurable value not only to that brand in particular, but to our hope of creating a nation of wine consumers.

With the dawn of 2002, we are seeing an increasing degree of hyperbole, dishonesty and generally meaningless material whirling around America's young wine industry. The transition from disregarded domestic wines to the new world taking its rightful and credible position among the wines of the world has only just occurred. We need to protect this fragile position and build upon it by adhering to quality and honorable standards as an industry.

A clear internal and external communications program is essential to any smooth-running business. This might be achieved by staffing a winery with good communicators. And, it may be helpful to have a public relations or communications consultant on hand in the seminal stages of a winery launch to help define this program and set it in motion. After that, keeping the lines of communication open and paying for hourly consulting services could be useful.

Unless a winery's production is large, I don't see a meaningful advertising program as being affordable.

There are, however, many viable means of communicating with a winery's constituencies that may make sense. If these are not evident, certainly, a communications consultant will be helpful in making them so.

When a winery is not able to rise above the plethora of brands to achieve attention and establish a market for its product, public relations is advised. In these instances, it is important that the property commit to a public relations program of at least a year in duration. This does not mean investing in the near-term expectation that a public relations agency or consultant will "get ink" for a brand. A few press clippings does not a successful public relations program make. Over the years, we have all watched vintners gloat over a single score, a section cover, a syndicated column that would change their lives. And, these things did offer the proverbial 15 minutes of fame.

To buy into public relations is to commit to giving share of mind and human resources to working closely with an agency or consultant to achieve a common goal. Just as the continuity of a discipline is important

when a vineyard consultant leaves your vineyard or a wine consultant leaves your winery, so it is critical that the management team of a winery be in step with the public relations consultant you select. Together, you will agree to a philosophy that accurately and honestly represents your qualities, qualities as personal and unique as a fingerprint. The very fact that this philosophy is true to your identity will make it easy for you to integrate it into everything so that what you convey to your market resonates as believable.

**Julie Ann Kodmur**

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**Services Offered**

Finding your uniqueness and making it known as public relations and marketing consulting ideas! Brainstorming, trouble-shooting, identifying issues and problems and solving them introducing new products, labels, facilities media placement based on 20 years of relationships with national and local media--whether that's pitching news, new releases, or a new direction writing--press releases, newsletters, press kits, backgrounders, fact sheets, speeches

**Clients**

Zinfandel Advocates & Producers, Napa Ridge Winery, Forest Glen Winery, Coastal Ridge Winery, Smith-Madrone Vineyards & Winery, Napa Valley Wine Library Report, Sawyer Cellars, Society of Wine Educators, Gary Galleron, Stony Hill Vineyard, plus Oakville Grocery, GardenHome, Sea Star Sea Salt, Katz & Company, St. Helena Hospital

**Comments**

Wine industry pr is a blend of art, science, timing, diplomacy, a sense of humor and up-to-the-minute intelligence on the media. Well done, it results in coverage and third party endorsements that make it possible for the salesman to sell your wine and the buyer to buy it. It's a tool--a way to get the salesperson's attention. Well-done publicity keeps your name front and center; in tough economic times, you can maintain visibility and profile less expensively than through advertising or merchandising programs.

A winery can do its own PR, but can only benefit from up-to-date details and strategizing from a PR professional. Contact me for a public relations diagnostic which will give you a "reality check" on your publicity programming.

**The MacKenzie Agency**

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**Services Offered**

The MacKenzie Agency is a full-service public relations firm exclusively focused on building premium food and wine brands. We fashion compelling messages that enhance brand imagery and differentiate it from its competitors. These messages are then targeted to specific consumer, trade and foodservice audiences both directly and through the media they use.

The MacKenzie Agency also disseminates brand messages through newsletters, point-of-sale material, event marketing, spokesperson media tours, recipe development and cookbooks, trade show and tasting event participation, and other brand-building methods. As strategic counselors, we work with the winery's marketing team to position the brand within the competitive set, then execute media relations and

communications programs designed to provide a sustained competitive advantage to our clients.

### **Clients**

Confidential

### **Comments**

Public relations is a key marketing tool that provides one essential element that paid advertising cannot: credibility. Through media coverage, a brand or business receives an implied or expressed third-party editorial endorsement--not an advertising message that is bought and paid for, but an independent opinion by a respected source.

At its simplest, public relations is free publicity. But it's also much more than that. It's shaping a message that reinforces an overall strategy, then delivering that message through a variety of channels: the media; special events; direct to consumers (or trade or foodservice); and through third-party spokespersons, among others.

There is no rule of thumb on how to allocate a marketing budget, but it's safe to say that public relations delivers significantly more value. For the same amount spent on a couple of paid ads, a brand can invest in months of targeted, focused public relations activity. The cost-per-thousand consumer impressions for public relations is typically far below that for advertising.

While we have worked with many brands that have grown with only public relations to spread its message, we've also dovetailed our PR programming to support a brand's advertising investment. While a PR strategy may differ in key respects from an advertising plan, the two nonetheless should work together if both are in use.

Most brands find that working with a public relations agency is more cost-effective than bringing the effort in-house. First, at an agency, the client benefits not only from the talents but, just as importantly, the contacts of all the people who work there; with an in-house person, your reach extends only as far as the contacts of that individual. Second, the salary (plus benefits, plus overhead) required to hire an experienced in-house professional is often more than the fees charged by the agency--and the agency usually offers more experience. Third, the agency can offer fresh thinking and an unbiased outsider's view of the brand that is sometimes not available to an in-house person. Fourth, the agency provides a degree of insulation between the brand and the media, acting as a critical screen and filter. Finally, an agency brings a breadth of services that one individual can't provide, ranging from media contacts to copywriting to crisis communications to recipe development--a wide array of skills that an agency's staff can offer.

### **Magnet Communications**

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### **Services Offered**

Magnet Communications has worked with wines, spirits, and beers from almost every aspect of the industry: brands, importers, brokers, government agencies, retailers, and dot-coms; public and private, local and multi-national companies, based in the US and abroad; and B2B as well as B2C concerns. Not only do we know the trade and consumer media that cover these industries (about 1,100 writers strong, mainly freelance, encompassing print, TV, online, and radio outlets), we know the players along the way--including suppliers, distributors, on- and off-premise operators, trade associations, and local and federal BATF representatives. This impressive network, combined with the strength of our client portfolio, puts us in the enviable position of serving as a valued and reliable resource for the press. All told, we have over 50 years combined experience in the wine, spirits and food & beverage industry.

We have consistently helped differentiate our clients' products and services. We have launched new lines and revived old ones. We have used cause-related marketing and community relations to build brands beyond the bottle. We have engineered winning partnerships with the luxury foods and marquee restaurants we represent. We have run educational programs spanning consumer to distributor audiences. We have spearheaded multi-national, multi-agency marketing meetings. And the list goes on. If you need it, there is a very good chance we've done it. But, at the same time, every client represents a

fresh challenge. That's what makes it exciting for us.

We understand how to reach targeted consumers, motivate discerning palates, and do so while navigating legislation and other challenges unique to this business (our crisis communications capabilities are well-practiced and effective). Our focus and pride is achieving meaningful results that have a positive impact on our client's image and bottom-line.

#### **Clients**

Remy Martin, Bombay Sapphire, St. Supéry Vineyards & Winery, Fess Parker Winery, Fetzer Vineyards, Paso Robles Vintners & Growers Association, Vineyard Brands: La Vielle Ferme and Warre's Otima port, Treana Vineyards, Nicolas Feuillate wines.

#### **Comments**

Public Relations is not a phrase we use much anymore to describe what we do. We like to describe what we are as a strategic marketing communications firm. We like to be a part of a holistic approach to marketing and public relations with our clients and get involved as counsel in as many aspects of that we can. Along the lines of traditional media relations, there is no substitute for a strong third party endorsement that resonates so clearly with both the business and consumer audiences in the world of wine. Unfortunately, public relations is often relegated to the category of dispensable in many wineries, but in effect, dollar for dollar it can yield even stronger results for the bottom line than other forms of marketing.

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Web: [www.ppcwine.com](http://www.ppcwine.com) (in development)

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#### **Services Offered**

Paige Poulos Communications is a full-service public relations agency offering an unusually comprehensive range of communications services, each of which is uniquely tailored to the needs of the wine industry. Marketing communications services include the writing of back labels, winemaker notes and sales kits. The agency maintains media lists for domestic and international publicity in a variety of disciplines, from trade communications to business and lifestyle story development.

PPC develops and manages seminars and educational programs for presentation at sales meetings, wine festivals and symposia. The agency also creates and manages proprietary special events both small and large, on-site or in-market. A new service of the agency is the development of relationship marketing programs to build brand loyalty and direct to customer sales. Services are custom-tailored to the needs of each client.

#### **Clients**

Gloria Ferrer, wine.com by eVineyard, Lancaster Estate, Laurent-Perrier Champagne, Gundlach-Bundschu Winery, Wente Vineyards Winery and The Course at Wente Vineyards, Wine Country Living magazine, and World Wine Market. Past clients have included E. & J. Gallo, Seagram Chateau & Estates Wine Group, Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards, and Swanson Vineyards, among others.

#### **Comments**

Wineries need to be actively engaged in public relations activities that reach all of their important audiences. A winery, like any company creating and selling its products, needs to communicate simultaneously and consistently with its own staff and sales personnel, its suppliers, its distributors, the trade that buys from distributors, and consumers that buy from the trade and directly from the winery by mail order or in the tasting room. Tall order! Each of the preceding audiences has its own ways of getting and interpreting information and applying that information to its own actions. Most wineries are not equipped to handle, in-house, such a diversity of communications in a timely and meaningful way.

Public relations does help sell wine by giving the market enough information to differentiate products, by inspiring buying confidence at every level, by attracting investors to allow for upgrades, expansion, etc. Public relations protects and enhances the reputation of a brand, a company and the leadership of a company. There is no set formula for splitting advertising and public relations expenditures. In fact, in my

opinion, advertising is a component of marketing communications. And some advertising is directed by public relations to enhance or create an image for a company with a specific audience. At PPC, in addition to myself as founder and president of the agency, we have five directors, each with a specific area of expertise. Titles are Director of Wine Communications, Director of Trade Communications, Director of Business and Lifestyle Communications, Director of Relationship Marketing, and Director of Client Services. This team of dedicated experts with many years of experience behind them brings a powerful perspective to any project. Hiring an agency gives a winery access to people that it could not otherwise hire as staff. When a winery invests in retaining an agency, it builds a relationship that effectively enhances its management team.

### **Harvey Posert/HPPR**

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Fax: 707.967.8376  
Web: None  
Email: [posert@napanet.net](mailto:posert@napanet.net)

### **Services Offered**

With 36 years of experience in wine PR, I offer public relations counsel in the following areas: image building, industry issues, industry leadership programs, marketing and crisis counseling.

### **Clients**

Clients include Robert Mondavi Winery, American Vintners Association and others.

### **Comments**

Public relations activities offer wine businesses a broad variety of image-building and marketing programs at affordable prices. The presence of a large media constituency is a great advantage for those in the industry.

### **Rootstock Marketing**

1867 Main Street  
Napa, CA 94559  
Tel: 707.258.9286  
Web: [www.rootstockmarketing.com](http://www.rootstockmarketing.com)  
Email: [wendy@rootstockmarketing.com](mailto:wendy@rootstockmarketing.com)

### **Services Offered**

Rootstock Marketing specializes in the design and development of wine marketing strategies for ultra premium, family-owned California wineries. Proprietor Wendy Ward works hands-on with small-production wineries; building brand and marketing strategies to most effectively present their wines. With a shared goal of increased awareness and sales, Rootstock Marketing believes those goals are effected with a consistent, comprehensive and professional marketing program.

### **Clients**

Clients include Amizetta Vineyards, Titus Vineyards, Nichelini, Salvestrin Vineyard and Wine Company, Renteria Winery, and Kenefick Ranch.

### **Comments**

Many of my small production, family-owned clients have neither the time nor expertise to devote to public relations. A handful of clients come to the realization that their rough marketing is not effective as it could be while another handful of clients simply do not have the time to be working on an organized, professional marketing/ branding program...(they're too busy, racking, paying bills, pruning, blending, what have you!) Most of my clients do not have the means nor the desire to execute a big, flashy marketing campaign but simply want someone to guide them and help them build their brand with integrity. Ultra-premium, family-run wineries realize that the competition for awareness and differentiation is high, something that must be kept on top of to be effective. Rootstock Marketing provides a very hands-

on, cost-efficient service that makes sense to these unique wineries.

**Edwin J. Schwartz, Public Relations**

3275 Sacramento Street  
San Francisco, CA 94115

Tel: 415.346.2929

Fax: 415.346.6136

Web: [www.ejspr.com](http://www.ejspr.com) (in development)

Email: [laura@ejspr.com](mailto:laura@ejspr.com)

**Services Offered**

Our primary role is to obtain favorable product publicity for our clients and other marketing related services. Clients have used our creative talents to develop and write brochures, press kits, position papers, advertising copy, speeches, label design and strategic planning.

**Clients**

Baron Herzog, Calera Wine Company, Chalone Wine Foundation, Essential Spirits, Far Niente Winery, Flora Springs Wine Company, Joseph Phelps Vineyards, Laetitia Winery & Barnwood Vineyards, Lockwood Vineyard, Rancho Zabaco/ E. & J. Gallo Winery, Rutz Cellars, Spencer Roloson Winery, Wine Club.

**Comments**

Our agency has been in business for almost 30 years, bringing to our clients a wealth of experience and knowledge in public relations counsel, service and beyond. Our primary role is to obtain favorable product publicity for our clients, and we deliver results. At EJSR, we know that experience and strong relationships are fundamental to the successful partnerships we have with both our clients and the media we serve.

**Kit Wall Productions**

1458 London Circle

Benicia, CA

Tel: 707.745.6004

Fax: 707.746.6854

Web: None

Email: [kitwall@sprintmail.com](mailto:kitwall@sprintmail.com)

**Services Offered**

Media and Communications Specialist: Public and Government Relations, Grassroots Organization, Media Production, Speakers and Media Relations Training, Writing and Editing.

**Clients**

Zinfandel Advocates and Producers, Windsor Vineyards, Arrowood Vineyards, Kenwood Vineyards, Valley of the Moon Winery, Copia: The American Center for Wine, Food, and the Arts; "Nickel-A-Drink Tax" in 1990, Advisory Board Member, Women for WineSense

**Wark Communications**

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Glen Ellen CA 95442

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Email: [tom@warkcommunications.com](mailto:tom@warkcommunications.com)

**Services Offered**

Wark Communications offers an array of hands-on communications and public relations services including message development and delivery, press and media relations, copywriting, advertising strategy and design, media buying and graphic design services.

**Clients**

Current and past clients include: Coalition for Free Trade, De Loach Vineyards, Dutton-Goldfield Winery, Foppiano Vineyards, Matanzas Creek Winery, Mayo Family Winery, Schug Carneros Estate, Winebid.com, Wine X Magazine

**Comments**

Few marketing tools are more effective, particularly for the medium to small-sized business, than an ongoing, well thought out and executed public relations program. This is particularly the case within the wine industry where literally thousands of brands compete to hold the knife that will slice up a rather small consumer pie. The issue for the winery management is not whether to include PR and media relations in their marketing program, but how to include it. In fact, the overwhelming majority of wineries will not even consider advertising, while they will, and should, focus tremendous time on public and media relations. An outside public relations professional with experience working within the wine industry can often be purchased for far less than it would cost to hire someone of similar experience and talent. Firms are also often used to augment or bring different experiences to an in-house public relations department. In either case, it is the experience and the objective view of the client's circumstances that is of value when considering using an outside public/media relations firm.