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# **Connecting with Customers in Winery Visitor Centers: An Empirical Study Of Professional Sales Techniques**

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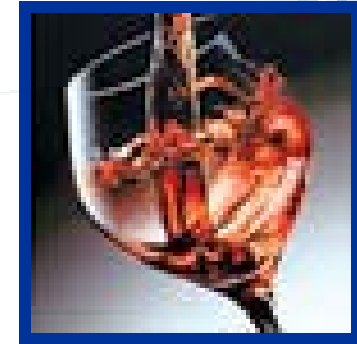
**Professor of Marketing, SSU Wine Business Program**

**Liz Thach**

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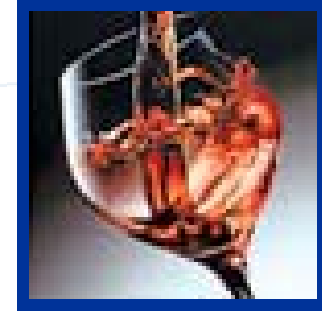


## **AGENDA**

The Role of Visitor Centers  
Stages of Professional Selling  
Research Study  
Empirical Findings  
Future Research



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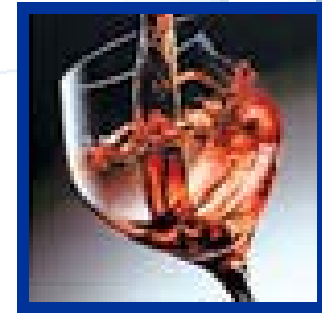


# The Role of Visitor Centers

Revenue generation  
Brand awareness and loyalty  
Marketing research  
Tourism aspects



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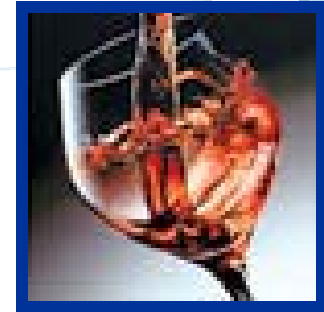


# Stages of Professional Selling

1. Greeting and introduction
2. Needs Assessment
3. Building Trust
4. Purchase assistance
5. Ongoing relationship



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## Research Study

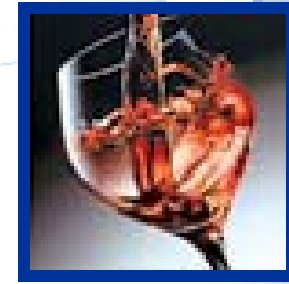
- Mystery shopper evaluations
- 284 total observations, 38 wineries, each shopped 4-20 times
- Napa, Sonoma, Paso Robles wine regions
- 2003-2007



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### **Stage One: Making the Introduction (Percentage of Visits, N=284)**

Item	Unaccept able	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Memor able	Me an
1.1. Visitor was greeted promptly, within 30 seconds	8.5%	10.9%	13.7%	25.4%	41.5%	3.8
1.2. Tasting procedures were clearly explained, including options for tours and refundable fees	2.1%	13.4%	35.2%	26.4%	22.2%	3.5
1.3. Employees presented basic information about the brand and for what the winery was best known	14.9%	19.1%	31.6%	17.0%	17.4%	3.0



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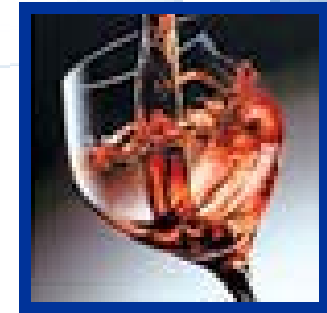
### *Stage Two: Needs Assessment (Percentage of Visits, N=284)*

ITEM	Unacceptable	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Memorable	MEAN
2.1. Employees ask about wine preferences, "What is your favorite type of wine?"	22.7%	24.1%	20.9%	17.0%	15.2%	2.8
2.2 Employees engage visitors in open-ended questions regarding their wine preferences in order to assist visitors in tasting and purchasing decisions	14.1%	24.3%	22.5%	19.4%	19.7%	3.1
2.3. Employees offer visitors an opportunity to ask questions – from very basic to highly technical	4.2%	11.3%	31.0%	31.3%	21.8%	3.5



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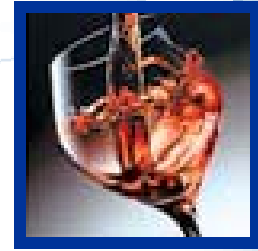
## ***Stage 3: Establishing Trust (Percentage of Visits, N=284)***

<b>Item</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Below Average</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Above Average</b>	<b>Memorable</b>	<b>MEAN</b>
3.1. Employees seem friendly, outgoing, and personable.	2.1%	7.0%	28.2%	30.6%	32.0%	3.8
3.2. Employees attempt to establish rapport – ask questions about visitor	12.7%	14.5%	18.7%	25.8%	28.3%	3.4
3.3. Employees appear well-informed. They know about the winery and its wine brands.	3.5%	8.8%	28.6%	33.2%	25.8%	3.7



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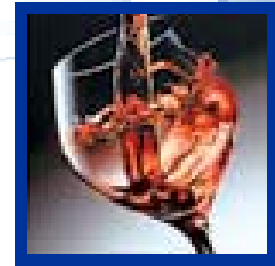
## *Stage 4: Purchase Assistance (Percentage of Visits, N=284)*

Variable	Unacceptable	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Memorable	MEAN
4.1. Employees provide assistance with purchase decisions	12.7%	17.0%	31.1%	25.1%	14.1%	3.1
4.2. Employees mention any special promotions, discounts, or sales currently being offered	18.2%	17.6%	26.9%	22.3%	13.4%	2.8
4.3. Employees ask about additional items or wine, suggest an up-sell or cross-sell	20.6%	21.0%	25.3%	17.8%	15.3%	2.8



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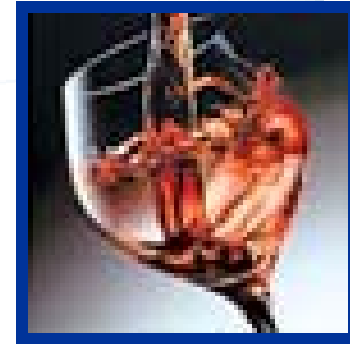


## Stage 5: Developing an Ongoing Relationship (Percentage of Visits, N=284)

Item	Unacceptable	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Memorable	Mean
5.1. The employees make visitors feel welcome at the winery	5.3%	13.0%	27.5%	26.8%	27.5%	3.6
5.2. The employees invite visitor to return again in the future	14.1%	20.1%	23.0%	16.6%	26.1%	3.2
5.3. The employees describe benefits of joining the wine club (asked when winery had open wine club, N= 264)	17.8%	13.3%	22.8%	26.4%	19.7%	3.17



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## Future Research

- Other regions with different clientele.
- Actual visitors, not mystery shoppers so that sales and visitor impressions, and future intentions could be assessed.