Wine scientists and winemakers as two communities: Bridging the gap through boundary-spanning activities

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The South African wine industry knowledge network
Academic engagement

Organisational factors
- Formal incentives
- Organisational support

Individual characteristics
- Intrinsic motivations
- Extrinsic motivations
- Perceived constraints

Industry engagement and knowledge transfer by oenology researchers

Institutional factors
- Discipline
- National policies

Funder expectations
- Public versus private funding

Benefits and drawbacks
- Research productivity
- Research quality

Adapted from Perkmann et al. (2013, 2021)
Practitioner knowledge uptake

**Individual characteristics**
- Learning intent
- Absorptive capacity
- Values and beliefs
- Motivation and rewards
- Innovativeness
- Centrality

**Knowledge source**
- Geographical distance
- Organisational distance
- Distance of the knowledge base
- Credibility
- Social capital

**Knowledge characteristics**
- Technical/practical
- Perceived usefulness
- Complexity/ease of use
- Observability
- Timing

**Transfer channel**
- Social learning
- Experiential learning
- Technical learning
Unit of analysis
- Researchers
- Practitioners
- Intermediaries

Research objective
Exploratory

Research design
Case study

Research Methodology
Mixed methods

Research method
- Semi-structured interviews
- Electronic questionnaire
**Objective 1**
What are the current internal and external relations of science?

**Objective 2**
What are the internal operations and external relations of the community of SA oenology researchers specifically?

**Objective 3**
What factors characterise the institutional landscape and information-seeking behaviours of SA winemakers?

**Objective 4**
What can be concluded about boundary-spanning activities as ways to strengthen knowledge exchange and practice adoption in the SA wine industry?
Research phases

1. Researcher interviews
2. Winemaker electronic questionnaire
3. Winemaker interviews
4. Intermediaries interviews
Winemaker groups

- Very interested in research
- Not interested in research
- Spend more than 30% of time on marketing
- Regularly talk to suppliers
- Under 40
Benefits of industry engagement

- Funding
- Source of ideas
- Source of practical information
- Source of “how not to do things”
- Source of grapes, juice and wine
- Improving their science communication skills
- Personal enjoyment
Drawbacks of industry engagement

Can affect the quality of the journal

Can affect the research agenda
Perceived organisational constraints

- Lack of time to engage in non-academic activities
- Lack of institutional funding for knowledge transfer activities
- Lack of institutional recognition for knowledge transfer activities
- Lack of institutional training for knowledge transfer activities
Perceived individual constraints

- Lack of know-how to communicate with the industry
- Lack of journalistic talent
- Lack of self-confidence
- Not knowing whom to speak with
- Not knowing the audience’s level of knowledge
- Uncertain of industry needs
- Perceiving industry to lack interest in research
- Lack of desire
Memorable quote

“If you want to be seen as a professor, you must know more and more and more about less and less and less. And you must publish and publish and publish and publish in a research area that nobody else has done. And it doesn’t matter if it is only about the orientation of the hairs on the legs of a flea, as long as that is what you are publishing in and churning out post-grads. That is what the university takes seriously.”

“They like to be seen doing it [knowledge transfer], but the university systems do not reward it.”
Main results - winemakers

- Prefer social and experiential learning to technical learning.
- Prefer practical, application-oriented information.
- Differ in their desire for technical understanding.
- Google, suppliers and other winemakers are the most common sources of information.
- Immensely trust the DVO and DVO researchers but rarely interact with them.
Winemaker knowledge sources

Formal education
- Stellenbosch University
  - Elsenburg
  - CPUT

Social learning
- Tasting groups
- Study groups
- Colleagues
- Neighbouring winemakers
- Wine shows

Suppliers
- Preferred suppliers
- Face-to-face, phone, emails, websites, seminars

Technical learning
Winetech Technical, Winetech Scan, SU workshops, Cultivar days, Google

Experiential learning
- Experience
- New products, processes
Diffusion of innovations
Knowledge creep
(Weiss, 1978)

“Knowledge accumulated from various sources over time, detached from its origins”
Memorable result - winemakers

30%

Male winemakers:

Female winemakers:
Acknowledgements

- Winetech (South Africa Wine)
- Stellenbosch University
- Participants in the study
- Prof Nelius Boshoff
Conclusions and final words

Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance.  
Confucius

If you can't convince them, confuse them.  
Harry S Truman
Thank you
Enkosi
Dankie