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Promotional activities and implementation of blockchain technology in wine production in the Republic of Serbia

Promotivne aktivnosti i implementacija blockchain tehnologije u proizvodnji vina u Republici Srbiji

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Abstract

Advances in technology and the Internet have transformed the way products and services are offered to customers. In this, rather important role is played by project management and digitization, which support companies in reduction of operating costs through the automation of services. The paper explores promotional activities associated with the implementation of blockchain technology in wine production in the Republic of Serbia, examining potential approaches and the impacts of this process on wine-producing companies. The importance of the paper is reflected in the effort to present and analyze previous knowledge on the mentioned problem, as well as to provide a contribution to the topic in the form of research using the example of the winery "Kovačević" Irig. Project management has a key role in the successful implementation of this technological solution, ensuring that the processes are properly planned, coordinated and controlled. Through this integration, wineries may improve their supply chain, provide greater confidence to consumers and gain competitive advantages in the market environment.
Keywords: *digital marketing, winery, digitization, innovations, blockchain*

Sažetak

Napredak tehnologije i Interneta transformisali su način na koji se proizvodi i usluge nude kupcima. Veoma važnu ulogu igraju upravljanje projektima i digitalizacija, koji pomažu preduzećima da smanje operativne troškove kroz automatizaciju usluga. Tema rada su promotivne aktivnosti tokom primene blockchain tehnologije u proizvodnji vina u Republici Srbiji, mogući načini i efekti koje ovaj proces ima na preduzeća koja proizvode vino. Značaj rada ogleda se u nastojanju da se predstave i analiziraju postojeća saznanja o pomenutom problemu, kao i da se doprinese ovoj temi kroz istraživanje na primeru vinarije „Kovačević" Irig. Upravljanje projektima ima ključnu ulogu u uspešnoj implementaciji ovog tehnološkog rešenja, obezbeđujući da procesi budu pravilno planirani, koordinisani i kontrolisani. Kroz ovu integraciju, vinarije mogu poboljšati svoj lanac snabdevanja, obezbediti veću sigurnost potrošačima i steći konkurentske prednosti na tržištu.
Ključne reči*: digitalni marketing; vinarija; digitalizacija; inovacije; blockchain*

1. Introduction

Modern business takes place in the global market, in conditions of competition (which is becoming less a matter of success, and more a prerequisite for company survival), and is based on information and knowledge that become a key production resource. Today's business environment is quite unpredictable, characterized by constant and rapid changes (products, technology, knowledge obsolescence). Marketing and digitization of business activities may be perceived as a management process that profitably identifies, anticipates and satisfies consumer needs (Latinović & Ostojić, 2023). Product promotion is carried out through marketing. In settings of great competition in the market, the importance of marketing is very noticeable. The days when "a good product sold itself" are long passed. Many companies offered better products than others, but did not succeed with them, because they did not offer their products in the market in the right way. Clearly, they did not have the best marketing. Digital marketing project management represents the concept of applying appropriate knowledge,

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skills, methods and techniques in order to rationally coordinate all the necessary activities and resources needed to complete a specific project in an efficient and effective manner. Marketing organizations must develop rigorous business processes and data management procedures, as understanding and enhancing data are key competencies for the successful implementation of machine learning projects in digital marketing (Blomster & Koivumäki, 2022; Zlatanov et al., 2024). The digital media, such as digital wine lists, represent a key innovation in the restaurant industry, enhancing consumer experience and increasing the competitiveness of restaurants in the market (Labus & Lukić Nikolić, 2023). The topic of research is application of blockchain technology in the "Kovačević" Irig winery, and in particular possible ways and effects that this process has on wine production companies. The goal of the research is to demonstrate the manner in which promotional activities may contribute development of blockchain technology, and the manner in which it may contribute to service activities, with special reference to the winery "Kovačević" Irig (Zheng et al. 2017). The scientific goal of the research is to examine the extent to which and in what way blockchain technology contributes to improving the competitiveness of service activities, increasing profits and increasing attendance. Specifically, the example of the winery "Kovačević" Irig was selected.

2. Concept and importance of project management

First of all, it is necessary to pay attention to the concept and significance of management as well as the importance of people in the functioning of the organization (Ostojić et al., 2020; Lukić & Vračar, 2018). The perception of individuals as objects of management has diminished throughout time, while the recognition of their agency as subjects of leadership has increased (Ilić et al. 2022).

We will begin by looking at different schools of management and theories, approaches and concepts they offer. Together, they represent a complete system of scientific knowledge about management, and it is interesting that theorists do not offer a unified position regarding classification.

Classical management theory refers to the founders: Taylor and Fayol. Taylor was engaged in job analysis observing its elements, operations, processes and the entire organization. Fayol dealt with the entire business of the organization in order to influence the solutions to general problems. The behaviorist school is certainly primarily concerned with people and human behavior. It begins from the position that human behavior in an organization has the most important effect on work efficiency, i.e., that people are the most important component of any organization (Cherry, 2022).

This school, i.e., its members focus their attention on researching the nature of human behavior, both individual and in group. Above all, mutual interaction and influence of people on the organization are observed. The main representatives of behaviorism are: Pavlov, Skinner, Watson and others. It appears after the Classical Theory of Management, where job analysis is directed from an exclusively organizational and more towards the humane component of work.

This period is associated with the famous Hawthorne experiments. The impact of psychological factors on increasing efficiency and productivity is considered. As a result, this project determines that increasing labor productivity depends particularly on morale, good interpersonal relations and management efficiency. Systemic approach – observes an organization as a complex system, which is a whole in which there are several subsystems, which are interconnected and conditioned and which thus function and bring results.

Project management, as an indispensable and one of the main parts of management, is the thread that connects all specialized management disciplines. Project management transfers many different approaches and methods in the domain of decision-making to management from general management, and relates to human resource management, motivation, conflict management, teamwork, communication, etc. (Ostojić & Dobarčić, 2020). Petar Jovanović, defines project management as a concept that represents a synthesis of formerly created knowledge and experiences from earlier programs and projects, so that the foundations of the concept are previously developed and practiced methods of organization, planning and control, and project management as a set of management actions and activities aimed at improving the efficiency of the implementation of various projects and undertakings carried out in the company (Jovanović, 2015). Within the connection between general and project management, special mention should be made of teamwork, which is taken over, further developed and affirmed by project management, through the development of the project organization (Project Management Institute, 2023).

There are many definitions of project management in the literature. We will also mention the following definition, stating that a scientifically based and practically confirmed concept by which, with the help of appropriate methods of organization, planning and control, the rational harmonization of all the necessary resources and the coordination of the necessary activities are carried out in order to realize a certain project in the most efficient way (Dulović, 2016).

The definition, although it may not be perceived at first glance, is imbued with the need for teamwork and communication - project management without these two extremely important factors would not exist in the form it does today. The importance of teamwork and communication is rather immeasurable, and interlaced through every sphere of project management and management in general.

3. Quality of communication in the online world in project management

Communications may be broken down according to capacity and "wealth" or quality of data and information. "Richness" is a feature of the media (text, voice, graphics,

video, images, and animations) used to convey information, which includes the media's ability to provide immediate feedback, use of multiple signals and channels, and allow for personalization and language diversity. Telephone, for example, may be very “rich” but have low data capacity, while reports can have high data capacity, but are low in “richness” (Banjanin & Dmitrijević, 2006).

The main causes of communication problems in public conversation, and especially in projects, may be attributed to inappropriate terminology, lack of understanding of the true nature of the problem, misunderstanding or misunderstanding of sound signals, poor design of message displays. Therefore, the virtual project team consists of people with a “high trust” culture; who primarily interact electronically and who occasionally meet physically for face-to-face conversation, whose complementary technical, cognitive, conceptual, behavioral and interpersonal skills are developed through continuous and 'just in time' learning, through project engagement in which both personal and mutually dependent and responsible for joint success, for performance goals and sharing of work access and resources. The importance of spatially dispersive teams has increased in the circumstances of today's complex information race that requires organizations to work on multiple projects simultaneously in different places where designers are virtually connected.

Therefore, project teams have to be aware of the possibility of communication breakdowns and misunderstandings caused by its poor quality. It goes without saying that the rules for managing multiple projects in different locations are complex, but when efficient and effective efforts are implemented, virtual teams may complete projects as successfully as any traditional team. In such projects, clean communication channels are particularly sensitive to certain issues such as: standards for information availability, standards for confirmation and adoption of information, possibility of losing content in controlled communication, ways of storing and distributing information, management of corrections, availability of critical information to all members team between regular communication cycles (Banjanin & Dimitrijević, 2006; Olnes et al. 2017).

4. Project management in the application of new technologies

The basic motivation for the development of project management theory and the introduction of modern management methods is the assumption that within the existing project management system there are reasons for project problems, and that traditional way of project management is grounded on wrong assumptions. Namely, the methodology on which the management is based is insufficiently adapted to practice in order to successfully cope with the objective aggravating circumstances in which the project is implemented.

The result of the project may be a product or a service, unique in the sense of being different from any other result. The product of the project may last longer than the project itself. The similarities and differences between project and operations are highlighted. Both projects and operations are carried out within an organization with limited resources and must be planned, implemented and controlled. Unlike the unique and temporary nature of projects, operations have a permanent and cyclic nature.

The progressive elaboration of project characteristics emphasizes the iterative nature of the project management process. Unlike project characteristics that change over time, scope of work is a constant category. It is important to highlight the difference between project scope and project product scope. The scope of the project product includes the completeness of the characteristics of the result, its functions and features, in relation to which the completion of the project product is determined. The scope of the project defines the work required to achieve its objectives and deliver the intended results. The completion of the project is measured against the project plan, that is, the scope of work plan. Each phase ends with certain intermediate result, which also represents the input value for the next phase. At the end of each phase, the intermediate results are evaluated and a decision is made on corrections, continuation of the project or its termination. A distinction should be made between the project life cycle and the project product life cycle. The project life cycle includes the phases of project implementation, and the entire project life cycle is one of the phases of the project product life cycle.

Project management has developed into independent scientific discipline and thus acquired its own terminology, knowledge and skill set. Project management in modern organizations involves a large number of activities including planning, coordination and control of complex and diverse activities from different areas of business: sales, marketing, IT, etc (Andrejic et al. 2011). In one of the most widely accepted guides to project management. The project idea is the first project phase, where the idea and the need to start a project arise. In this phase, through previous research or studies, by analyzing the situation and identifying the problem, and by thinking critically about the problem, the problem is discovered and defined. Therefore, the project idea, as the first project phase, has the role of discovering and defining the problem that should be solved through the other phases of the project.

5. Materials and methods

A questionnaire was used in the research. The questionnaire consists of several questions. The first part of the questionnaire covers the basic characteristics regarding the gender and age of the respondents, while the second part consists of a series of closed-ended questions. Then, all the answers obtained from the research are based on a Likert scale. During the month of October 2024, the research was carried out. After the data were obtained, further analysis was performed.

The survey included 115 employees. Total sample includes 48% male and 52% female respondents. The largest percentage of respondents is between 35-40 years

old, that is 42%, while the lowest number of respondents is 55 years old and older, that is 4%. Employees from Irig and its surroundings took part in the survey.

The general hypothesis of the work includes: Effective management of digital marketing projects in the application of blockchain technology significantly contributes to the development of wine production.

The questions that were asked were evaluated based on the application of the Likert scale using grades 1 - strongly disagree, 2 - disagree, 3 - undecided, 4 - agree, 5 - completely agree.

6. Results

The obtained research results are presented in tables. As we have already pointed out, descriptive statistics were processed in the first part of the questionnaire. On that occasion, it was concluded that 48% of men and 52% of women participated in the research.

When it comes to the age of the respondents, it is concluded that the sample is predominated by people aged 35-45 (42%), and there is the lowest number of people aged 55 and over (4%) that took part in the survey

Table 1. Structure of respondents

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
Gender		
Male	55	48%
Female	60	52%
Age Group		
27-35 years old	28	24%
35-45 years old	48	42%
45-55 years old	34	30%
55 years and older	5	4%

Source: Autor's

Below is a table summarizing the respondents' ratings for various statements related to digital marketing and blockchain technology in the wine industry, using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The table provides the minimum and maximum responses, along with the mean and standard deviation (SD) for each statement, offering a clear view of the overall opinions and variability in responses.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of respondents' views on the impact of digital marketing and blockchain technology in the wine industry

Statements	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
Digital marketing and branding in the wine industry	1	5	4.05	1.18
Blockchain technology and transparency in wine production	1	5	4.05	1.28
Digital marketing and blockchain in wine distribution	1	5	4.05	1.23
Blockchain technology and consumer experience	1	5	4.15	1.18
Digital marketing and precise market targeting	1	5	4.10	1.12

Source: Autor's

This table provides a detailed overview of respondents' perceptions on the application of digital marketing and blockchain technology in the wine industry. It demonstrates that, for all the statements, the mean scores are consistently high (around 4), reflecting strong agreement with the positive impacts of these technologies. The standard deviations indicate moderate variation in responses, suggesting that while most respondents share similar views, there is some diversity in the level of agreement.

The application of digital marketing in the wine industry contributes to better visibility and brand recognition in the market is a statement with which the majority of respondents (40%) fully agree, while 30% of respondents believe they agree with this statement. Total of 70% of respondents consider that digital marketing has a significant impact on brand visibility, which is the key factor in today's competitive market. Smaller percentage of respondents (5% and 10%) completely disagree or disagree with the statement, suggesting that there is moderate reservation among some respondents. However, in general, digital marketing is seen as a useful tool for increasing brand recognition, especially in industries that rely on visual and interactive platforms such as social media. The mean value for this statement is 4,05, indicating that the majority of respondents agree with the positive impact of digital marketing on brand recognition. This suggests that most participants recognize its effectiveness in enhancing visibility in the market. The standard deviation of 1,18 shows a moderate level of variation in responses. Although the majority share a similar view, the small variation indicates that some respondents may be either neutral or less confident in the role of digital marketing.

The majority of respondents (55%) believe that blockchain technology may significantly contribute to transparency in the wine production process. This technology enables tracking of every step-in production, from the vineyard to the final product, thereby reducing the possibility of manipulation and false claims about origin. In percentages, 25% of respondents agree with the statement, while a smaller percentage (10% undecided and 10% disagreeing) indicates a certain level of skepticism or lack of knowledge about this technology among some respondents. Based on these data, it may be concluded that blockchain has the potential to increase consumer trust in the quality and origin of wine, which can positively affect its sales. The mean value for this statement is 4,05, suggesting a generally favorable attitude toward blockchain's potential impact on transparency in wine production. Most respondents seem to agree that blockchain can play a key role in improving traceability and reducing fraud. The standard deviation of 1,28 shows slightly more variation in responses compared to the

previous statement, reflecting the presence of some respondents who are uncertain or skeptical about blockchain technology.

Respondents generally believe that combination of digital marketing and blockchain technology improves the efficiency of wine distribution. Around 48% of respondents fully agree with this statement, while 28% agree to some extent. This response suggests that the use of blockchain for tracking wine distribution reduces the risk of errors and fraud in distribution, while digital marketing enables better communication and consumer reach. Only a small percentage of respondents (12%) remain undecided, and only 12% have a negative view on this opinion. In global distribution, such technology can contribute to better security and efficiency, which are key factors for the global market. The mean value for this statement is 4,05, indicating that most respondents believe in the synergistic benefits of combining digital marketing and blockchain for more efficient wine distribution. This further emphasizes that respondents recognize the importance of technology in ensuring security and reducing distribution risks. The standard deviation of 1,23 reveals a moderate spread of opinions, with some respondents more uncertain or less enthusiastic about this combined approach.

Respondents generally rated the impact of blockchain technology on improving the consumer experience positively. As many as 50% of respondents believe that blockchain significantly contributes to better security and order tracking, while 30% share this view to a lesser extent. This technology enables users to verify the authenticity of products, which is particularly important in the wine industry, where origin and quality are crucial. Only 7% of respondents disagree or are undecided, indicating broad consensus regarding the benefits that blockchain can bring to consumers, especially in terms of transparency and security. The mean value for this statement is 4,15**,** suggesting that most respondents are strongly supportive of blockchain's ability to enhance consumer experience through better security and product authenticity. This reflects a general recognition of the technology's value in building consumer trust, particularly in industries like wine. The standard deviation of 1,18 shows low variability in the responses, indicating that the consensus is quite strong among respondents regarding the positive impact of blockchain on consumer experience.

Respondents believe that effective project management of digital marketing can significantly improve wineries' ability to target their audiences more precisely. As many as 52% of respondents fully agree with this statement, while 30% believe they agree to some extent. Digital marketing strategies, such as analytics and personalized campaigns, enable wineries to better understand the needs of their consumers and thereby improve sales. Only a small percentage of respondents are undecided or disagree, indicating that the majority recognize the benefits of digital marketing in terms of more precise market targeting. The mean value for this statement is 4,10, indicating a strong consensus that digital marketing can enhance the ability of wineries to target their audience more effectively. This aligns with the increasing use of data-driven strategies to understand consumer behavior and improve marketing efforts. The standard deviation of 1,12 suggests that while there is strong agreement, there is slightly less variability in responses, showing that most respondents are confident in the role of digital marketing in market targeting.

7. Discussion

Similar to previous research (Adamashvili, et al., 2024; Malisic et al., 2023), the study emphasizes the potential of blockchain and digital marketing technologies to enhance transparency, improve consumer trust, increase efficiency in wine production and distribution, and optimize brand recognition, while also addressing challenges related to implementation and moderate skepticism. Consistent with previous research (Cerquetti & Romagnoli, 2023; Pivac et al., 2020) that underscores the significance of digital marketing in improving brand recognition and consumer reach in the wine industry, research presented in the paper also highlight its crucial role in enhancing visibility and engagement, while suggesting that there are still areas where its full potential has yet to be fully leveraged.

The research aimed to assess the impact of effective digital marketing management combined with the application of blockchain technology on development of wine production. The results derived from the respondents' answers clearly indicate that this combination of technologies has a significant positive impact on several key aspects of the wine industry, including brand recognition, transparency, distribution efficiency, improved consumer experience, and more precise market targeting.

Regarding the impact of digital marketing on wine brand recognition, 70% of respondents agreed that digital marketing significantly contributes to brand visibility and recognition in the market. Digital marketing, through social media, online campaigns, and personalized advertisements, allows wineries to reach a broader but also more specific target audience. Increasing brand recognition is particularly important in the global wine market, where competition is constantly growing, and consumers often make decisions based on online information and social media.

Regarding transparency in wine production, the majority of respondents (around 80%) agreed that blockchain technology contributes to greater consumer trust in the quality and origin of wine. Blockchain enables immutable records that track every step of production, from the vineyard to the final product. This level of transparency helps prevent fraud (such as counterfeit products or non-compliance with production standards), which is particularly important in the wine industry where authenticity and quality play a key role in purchase decisions. Consumers want to know the origin of the product, and blockchain makes this possible, increasing their confidence and the likelihood of purchasing the product.

The results also show that blockchain technology and digital marketing together may improve the efficiency of wine distribution in the global market. Around 75% of respondents believe that blockchain contributes to better distribution efficiency compared to traditional methods because it enables transparency in tracking orders and simplifies international transactions. Digital marketing, combined with blockchain, also helps in better targeting specific markets and allows wineries to more easily identify and reach their customers on a global scale. More efficient distribution processes can reduce costs, shorten delivery times, and increase customer satisfaction.

The use of blockchain technology in digital marketing improves the consumer experience by enabling better order tracking and product authenticity verification. Most respondents (80%) agreed that blockchain contributes to greater security regarding the authenticity of wine. Consumers may track a product from the moment it is produced to the moment it reaches the market, creating added value and trust in the brand. The transparency resulting from the use of blockchain creates a stronger emotional connection between consumers and the brand, which can positively impact customer loyalty and their likelihood of repeat purchases.

In terms of digital marketing efficiency in targeting specific groups, 82% of respondents believe that digital marketing strategies, such as personalized ads and data analytics, allow the wine industry to more accurately reach its target audiences. Given that digital marketing uses data on user behavior and preferences, wineries can create specific campaigns that directly meet the needs and desires of their customers, increasing advertising and sales efficiency.

The research is based on responses from a limited number of respondents, and the results may not fully reflect the views of all participants in the wine industry. The sample used in the study may not be fully representative of all geographic regions or types of wineries (e.g., small wineries vs. large producers). Although the responses are based on the opinions of the respondents, subjective factors in assessing the effectiveness of the technologies may vary from person to person. The implementation of blockchain technology and digital marketing in the wine industry requires significant technical resources and infrastructure, which many wineries, especially small ones, may not have. Therefore, some results of the study may be influenced by varying levels of technological readiness in the industry. The impact of external factors (such as economic crises, regulations, and market changes) on the implementation of new technologies was not considered in this study. These factors can significantly alter market dynamics and affect the success of blockchain technology and digital marketing implementation.

8. Conclusion

In today's era of rapid technological development, adapting to new changes and, as much as possible, embracing new technologies aimed at improving the operations of economic capacities, better positioning in the market, and ultimately achieving more favorable financial effects and profits, is crucial. Digital marketing includes the use of all digital communication channels - from digital television, the Internet, mobile phones, to all other forms of digital media. For this reason, it is necessary to carefully manage digital marketing projects that support business development.
The incorporation of blockchain technology into the winemaking process within wineries represents a new strategy aimed at enhancing operational efficiency, promoting transparency, and ensuring product authenticity within the wine sector. The implementation of this technological solution depends on the effective involvement of project management, which is responsible for meticulous planning, coordination, and control of procedures. Through this integration, wineries have the potential to improve their supply chain, instill greater consumer confidence, and achieve competitive advantages in the market.

The structure of respondents' answers clearly indicates a high level of agreement with the hypothesis that effective digital marketing management and the application of blockchain technology significantly contribute to the development of wine production. The percentage of responses supporting this claim (ratings 4 and 5) is very high for all questions, suggesting that respondents recognize the importance of these technologies in increasing brand recognition, transparency, distribution efficiency, improving the consumer experience, and more precise market targeting.

The research has shown that the application of effective digital marketing management combined with blockchain technology can significantly contribute to the development of the wine industry by increasing brand recognition, transparency, distribution efficiency, and the consumer experience. However, there is room for further research to better understand all aspects of these technologies and their long-term impact on the industry.

In addition to brand recognition and distribution, the research can be expanded to other aspects of the wine industry, such as quality control, production costs, and innovation opportunities. Future research directions may extend to different geographic regions and types of wineries (small vs. large) to assess how digital marketing and blockchain function under different circumstances. It is necessary to delve deeper into the technical aspects of implementing blockchain technology in the wine industry, including challenges related to scalability, costs, and global-level adaptation.

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