



Food with Wine Coalition

- Client:** Food with Wine Coalition
- Location:** Louisville, Kentucky
- Project Goal:** Educate and inform Kentucky's thought leaders as to the benefits of changing existing law to allow grocery stores to sell wine

Introduction

The Food with Wine Coalition (FWWC) (www.foodwithwine.org) is a non profit organization established by Kentucky's grocery store industry for the purpose of educating and informing Kentucky's thought leaders as to the benefits of changing existing state law to allow grocery stores to sell wine. At present, 34 states allow grocery stores to sell wine. Six of seven of Kentucky's border states allow grocery stores to sell wine.

Lifestyles have changed and wine has become a healthy part of a balanced diet when consumed in moderation. Across Kentucky, consumers are asking grocery store managers to sell wine to pair with the food that they are purchasing for dinner. There are three compelling reasons why the law should be changed:

- Expands consumer choice and competition in the wine marketplace
- Supports Kentucky's farm families by expanding the number of sales outlets for Kentucky-produced wine and increases the demand for Kentucky-grown grapes
- Adds much needed revenue to the coffers of the Commonwealth; based on what has happened in other states, the FWWC projects that through the increase in wine sales with expansion that an additional \$78 million in tax revenue will be generated over the first five years – without raising an existing tax rate

As this project was first coming together, the state's grocery industry realized that it would need the services of a management consultant to develop, implement and manage the Coalition and its various projects. The FWWC retained Luke Schmidt and L.B. Schmidt & Associates, LLC for this purpose in 2007.

Project Scope

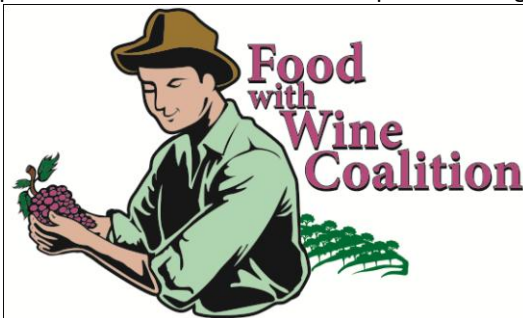
As consultant to the FWWC, Luke Schmidt has provided the following services to the Coalition:

- Design project scope and establish goals
- Manage Coalition; schedule meetings, establish Agendas and conduct meetings/teleconferences
- Develop collateral support materials such as one-pagers, project brochure, project promotional video, Web site
- Distribute collateral materials
- Conduct outreach to key writers and editorial boards to all daily newspapers, key radio stations and television stations; secure editorial support; serve as spokesperson for the Coalition; develop list of regional grocery industry spokespersons
- Develop PR campaign strategy with press releases, op-ed articles; solicit/secure talk radio and other media opportunities
- Begin outreach to key chambers of commerce, Kentucky Chamber and build support
- Develop and maintain the link with agriculture and the Kentucky grape and wine industry
- Coordinate outreach to Governor's Office and Members of the General Assembly;
- Coordinate legislation development and sponsorship
- Reconfirm respective positions of other interested parties

Project Results to Date

The FWWC has positioned itself to lead the discussion on this issue.

Luke Schmidt has developed various collateral materials which are being used to support the Coalition's position. The Coalition also developed a new logo.



The Coalition has developed a Web site (www.foodwithwine.org) which contains a wealth of information on the issue.

In addition, Luke Schmidt led the development of the Coalition's promotional video (this video can be viewed by clicking on the following link: <http://www.foodwithwine.org/conclusion.htm>).

As consultant to the Coalition, Luke Schmidt developed an extensive media distribution list and has called on over 40 key media outlets throughout the Commonwealth during two statewide media tours, including television stations, talk radio stations, NPR radio stations and all daily newspapers which resulted in hundreds of positive newspaper articles, radio and television news stories. Three newspapers have endorsed the Coalition's position. Press releases have been issued as needed.

Luke Schmidt has called on key local Chambers of Commerce in the Commonwealth's Top 10 markets. To date, the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce have both endorsed the Coalition's position.

The Coalition launched an initial statewide petition drive which included 110 grocery stores and which gathered 56,000 signatures. A follow-up online petition drive secured another 18,000 supporters.

Summary

Luke Schmidt has worked closely with a group of grocers who comprise the FWWC Steering Committee. The grocers have provided invaluable support, insight and counsel. A true partnership has been established. At the present time, Members of the Kentucky General Assembly continue to focus on critical issues such as the Commonwealth's severe budget shortfall, unfunded pension liabilities, etc. As such, although the foundation to support legislation to allow grocery store wine sales is now in place, the environment needed to pass this legislation remains challenging at best. The FWWC will consider the introduction of this legislation when the environment changes.

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