

Top digital strategist to show Wine & Food Conference delegates how to up their communication game at zero cost

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Wineries can easily and effectively raise their digital visibility and strategically enhance their impact without having to spend an additional cent and do so immediately. This is according to digital and media marketing maven Judith Lewis, who has been ranked by her peers as one of the most influential members working in the UK industry today.



Lewis, who has consulted to leading global companies such as Google, NBC Universal, AmEx, Virgin.com, Virgin Startup and others, will be the keynote speaker at this year's Wine & Food Tourism Conference at Spier near Stellenbosch, on 18 September.

She has built her formidable international reputation on the strength of her strategic understanding of how digital technologies can be applied to help businesses innovate and optimise performance. Her focus includes SEO (search engine optimisation), content strategy and link building. She also trains specialists in the field and contributes to publications such as the *Huffington Post*.

"My goal is for people to leave my Stellenbosch presentation with a comprehensive checklist of digital things they can do right away".

She will be stressing to Wine & Food Conference delegates how quickly and simply they can access their target audiences and improve how, what and when they communicate across multiple platforms, just by using free and readily available tools at their disposal.

"My perception of South African wineries is that they are making tasty, innovative wines and that they have amazing stories to tell but they are not currently getting all the acknowledgement they deserve. There just isn't the awareness. But by extending their reach, by better understanding trade and consumer points of contact and by building stronger relationships, they can more ably convert, retain, and engage more people.

"Today, there are around four billion people worldwide who use the Internet. About three billion of them are active on social media, of whom 2.9 billion are on mobile. The potential is enormous, if you know how to navigate your way through the clutter.

"Some wineries are already introducing micro-efficiencies that allow them to simply pull Instagram images and long-form content to Facebook and Twitter. It costs nothing and it's easy to set up.

"Analytics help you to understand where your audiences spend most of their time on your website, where they don't dwell at all, when they engage with your content and the type and format of content to which they are most receptive. Google, Instagram and Facebook analytics are all free and super-powerful in terms of the insights they give you.

"What does cost a bit, but doesn't demand a major investment, is finding a specialist to pull all this data together. That way you build a more coherent picture you can act on in structuring your digital communications more appropriately. In fact, with the right training, it is possible to develop the necessary in-house skills, pretty fast. And with the right know-how, you are better placed to challenge your digital agencies - where you are employing them - to ensure you are getting the best return on your investment."

Lewis recently addressed wine tourism delegates at the IWINETC, the International Wine Tourism Conference in Spain.

Convenor of September's Wine & Food Tourism Conference, Margi Biggs says: "We are delighted to have someone of Judith's calibre speak at our event. She is acknowledged as one of the foremost authorities in her field and is an excellent and entertaining speaker."

More than 15 top-level experts will be sharing the stage with her. Other high-profile personalities include trends analyst Dion Chang, Wesgro CEO Tim Harris, as well as immediate past Minister of Tourism Derek Hanekom.

Delegates will also get to witness the announcement of the honourees of the inaugural Wine & Food Tourism Awards. It will be presented by South Africa's National Minister of Tourism, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane. Wine, food and hospitality establishments will be highlighted in three distinct categories: Innovation, Service Excellence and The Authentic South African Experience.

Go to www.wineandfood.co.za for more information, and to register for the conference.

The theme of this year's conference is "Trends in Wine and Food Tourism".

Conference rates:

- **Regular price:** R3,800 plus 15% VAT

- **Student price:** R1,750 plus 15% VAT

- **Discounted price for RASA, SATSA, SAACI, SITE, FEDHASA and Cape Town Tourism members:** R3,420 plus 15% VAT

Special offer! When you register at full rate for this year's conference, you now have the opportunity to bring a junior staff member along at no additional cost. This is an excellent opportunity for those in mentorship positions to expose their mentees to all that's hot and happening in the wine and food tourism sector, and to learn first-hand from wine and food tourism experts in their respective fields.

Social media:

Twitter and Facebook: @winefoodconf

Instagram: @winefoodtourismconf

Hashtag: #wfconf2019

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