

Sample Informed Consent Form For a Virtual Focus Group

You are invited to participate in the research project "**Pivoting after a Societal Shock: Leadership Skills to Transform the Wine Industry**", led by principal investigators, Dr. Armand Gilinsky and Dr. Adele Santana.

We will use the focus groups with wine industry professionals for data collection. These groups will meet virtually, over SSU's HIPAA compliant Zoom, to discuss the state of leadership in the industry and the profile of leaders who foster innovation. The duration of the conversation will be from 60 – 90 minutes.

Please read the information below. Your typed name on a reply to this e-mail will serve as a digitally signed e-mail consent to participate in this research. All respondents and their affiliations will remain anonymous for reporting purposes. Your participation is voluntary. You may cancel your consent to participate at any time. All Zoom transcripts will be anonymized and retained on a secure, password-protected with dual authentication server. An executive summary of the aggregated results will be shared with you upon written request.

Again, all data gathered will be recorded and reported anonymously to protect individuals and their affiliations, encrypted and stored in a secure location for protection, and will not be used for any future research studies.

Purpose of the project

In this project we will attempt to learn more about Leadership in the Wine Industry. We will investigate which leadership skills are necessary to pivot the wine industry after societal shocks such as COVID-19, natural disasters, political upheaval, and climate change. We are looking for answers to questions such as whether leaders should maintain tradition or create better business models, and if collaboration and cooperation can lead to shared resources, networks, information technology and know-how in order to sustain and grow these businesses. To answer such questions, our team of researchers is conducting virtual focus groups during summer 2021 with wine business leaders to obtain qualitative data about the state of their businesses, their current activities, and the perceived skills to lead move ahead.

Your participation

You are invited to participate in one of the focus groups, along with other 6 participants. In this focus group you will meet virtually, over Zoom, with other Wine Industry [Sonoma State University (SSU) Wine Business MBA graduates/ SSU Wine EMBA graduates/ well-known wine leader/ wine industry expert] to discuss the state of leadership in the industry and the profile of leaders who foster innovation. The duration of the meeting will be between 60-90 minutes. You are being invited because you are a [SSU Wine Business MBA Alumnus; SSU Wine Business EMBA Alumnus; well-known Wine Leader; [an]Industry Expert]. Your participation is voluntary and if you decide not to participate, there will be no consequences for you, your organization, or your relationship with SSU.

Risks and discomfort

There is a possibility that participants might feel uncomfortable sharing their opinions amidst industry peers. There is also a possibility that the discussions could generate anxiety for some of the participants, as they discuss matters of leadership and the current state of the wine industry in our region. If this happens to you, you have the freedom to not share your opinion on topics that generate anxiety or that make you feel uncomfortable.

Potential benefits

Your discussion with peers and investigators may provide you with the opportunity to expand your understanding of the industry, establish new connections, and to be at the forefront of the conversation about

what makes Wine Business leaders innovative and what leaders need to learn to take their companies into the future in the current context. The purposes of disseminating these analyses include: (1) providing data about leadership skills in the wine industry that have not been reported previously, (2) advancing knowledge of the best practices in the wine industry, and (3) developing improved academic curriculum to prepare the next generation of wine industry leaders.

Confidentiality (how information will be handled)

The focus group meeting will be recorded and transcribed utilizing the HIPAA-compliant application Zoom and saved through SSU's Google drive, which is only accessible by our password-protected G Suite. The platform is protected by layered security encryption, which puts secure walls around the server. The recordings will be transcribed and retained in a password-protected file accessible only by the research team, then the recording file will be deleted. Your name and affiliation will be deleted in the transcription. Aggregated anonymous data will be analyzed by the research team and reported in peer-reviewed academic conferences and journals and also in trade publications. An executive summary of the data analyses will be provided to participants upon written request. The purposes of disseminating these analyses include: (1) providing data about leadership skills in the wine industry that have not previously been reported, (2) advancing knowledge of the best practices in the wine industry, and (3) developing improved academic curriculum to prepare the next generation of wine industry leaders. Prior to the start of each focus group meeting, we will have a conversation with all participants to express the importance of confidentiality and anonymity, but we cannot guaranty the participants in the same focus group will honor, confidentiality and discretion. We will not reuse the results for any future research purposes.

This focus group discussion will be transcribed verbatim by professional and confidential audio transcription (otter.ai, see <https://otter.ai/> and <https://otter.ai/privacy-policy> for more information.) You will be given the opportunity to opt out of the use of this software before the focus group begins.

Compensation

There is no compensation for your participation in the focus group.

Decision to Quit atAnyTime: Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relations with Sonoma State University, the investigators, or the industry. If you decide to participate, you are free to skip parts of the conversation, or withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time.

Rights and Complaints

Please contact the research team if you have any questions about this project. Our contact person is Co-Investigator Adele Santana (adele.santana@sonoma.edu). If you have a question about your rights as a human subject, contact **irb@sonoma.edu** or phone **707.664.2066**.

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION ON WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD, AND AGREE TO THE ABOVE INFORMATION. IN ADDITION, YOU ACCEPT BEING AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDED, YOUR QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED AND YOU CERTIFY THAT YOU ARE AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE AND FREELY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

(My typed name here serves as a digitally signed email consent to participate in this research.)