

DOLPHINS – WP4

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THEME 2 : MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS (COMMUNICATION, LABELLING/BRANDING, DISTRIBUTION)

Preliminary :

- ?? First, we should bear in mind that French consumer's competence has been elevated thanks to a public and voluntarism policy about QOS (Quality Officials Signs¹) set up from 1960. So, the two notions of Origin and Quality may not be exactly superposed, e.g. the system of food Quality Officials Signs is not only linked to Origin aspects.
- ?? Secondly, the situation is totally different regarding the product category (fresh products or not), the indication of origin (PDO/PGI), the retail channel (Supermarket / direct marketing, within the production area / outside). In the same logic, I think we could distinguish Wine from the others products.

1- Diagnostic : the problematic of trust in OLP

1-1 The factors of trust in OLP are twice:

In a recent research (not yet published), we identified two main factors of confidence in OLP (in the case of fresh products):

↳ **Control system:** French *Quality Officials Signs* (institutional brand) give guaranty to the consumer thanks to a control system: especially Label Rouge (associated with PGI) and at a lower level AOC (e.g. PDO) and AB (Organic Agriculture). But on the other hand, controls draw products (in terms of general image) to an industrial world: that means for French consumers mass production and profit logic.

↳ **Short distribution channels:** to have trust in products quality, consumer preferences go to direct contact with producer, handcraft or retail merchant (considered as an expert in quality). Confidence is based on shared values between partners, "little" producers and "little" consumers. It is particularly the case of farm products with a PDO or PGI labels and organic products. On the opposite, products sold in Supermarket are depreciated : these are seen as a gesture without tie.

1-2 In the same logic, obstacles to confidence are also twice:

↳ **Opacity, lack of honesty and information:**

This criticism of opacity concerns PDO/PGI products and particularly those with the official brand *Label Rouge*. On that base, collective communications analysis of advertising type make by advertising institutions for OLP shows existence of a gap between :

- a collective communication based on backward-looking and pretty bizarre ("folkloristes") values ;
- technique reality of productions and producers point of view about their own system.

¹ AOC, Label Rouge, Certificat de Conformité Produit, Agriculture Biologique.

Then, it is the general problem of information asymmetry or we can say a gap of coherence about OLP.

For instance, the main axe about the communication of "calf breeds under its mother" in Red Label (PGI) is natural food of the calf at the udder of its mother (Value of Nature) whereas quality product is determined by getting a white meat, that implicate physical threats for animal like confinement.

↴ **Opposition between Quality and Capitalistic distribution channels**

Most of French consumers think that Quality research and Profit research are incompatible. For instance, in the case of organic products, profit research and mass production would lead to a lack of control credibility.

2- Consumer expectations and Recommendations

2-1 Cognitives expectations : more visibility and consistency

↴ **Communication:**

OLP should define a communication within a pedagogic processing on the following issues:

- Quality and Environmental promises for consumers: schedule of rules content, which characteristics;
- Control policy: On what apply controls, who is in charge of controls.

Then, it is also necessary for these collective institutions to put in line their technology (set of techniques and practices) with their communication. This problem comes from a gap of medium use for communication and from a gap of specific competencies. Often, OLPs promotion organisms ask for promotion agencies without previous definition of their values and knowledge about deep expectations of their customers. Then, publicists put models more often simplistic and stereotyped.

Limits of cognitive actions: linguistic studies and behaviour observations show that if a consumer asks and receives a lot of information about one subject, it is not sure that he integrates them in his images (information suitability) and a fortiori in his behaviour -cognitive dissonance (Gallen C.).

↴ **Labelling/branding:**

These cognitive aspects are in relation with the schedule of requirements and the system of control. So, it concerns the role of institutional and collective brands (PDO/PGI) more than privacy ones.

2-2 Relational expectations : increase the tie between OLP producers and consumers, create tie with citizens

Only a set of actions could communicate engagement and voluntarism.

↴ **Communication:**

?? The principle is to reintroduce producer in the middle of the system, as a mediator between nature-environment, product and consumer. he cares about nature and product.

In our previous paper, we have already underlined the fact that French consumer trusts in producers competence (because of the French rural tradition), more than processors or distributors.

?? And develop the exchanges between farmers and consumer-citizens:

Following this logic, production and selling point are also communication and mediation places. Then, consumer is not only a simple information receptor but becomes a kind of actor in an exchange personalised relation traducing by specificities in terms of language, conviviality, symbolic, knowledge... Producers and consumers build up together a system of values and share them next (Concept of "patrimonialisation").

Original communication initiatives are already observable for OLP. They are based on the part of relational and experience exchanged between farmer and consumer-citizen. Specifics initiatives which know a kind of success come from producers (farm visits, cooperatives visits...) and they are in relation with tourism (wines roads, guest room).

?? **OLPs Communication should cover a socio-cultural imaginary particularly rich:** the part of symbolic and intangible is essential.

*These notions are based on society deep collective values and integrate also individual experience of each user. OLPs are not only food products: cultural and heritage aspects are important. As elements of heritage, **OLP are characterised by a specific link with a place** ("terroir", country...) **and the time** (historic origin, traditions, biologic cycles and seasons...). The image of OLP is often build up and driven by tourists who become "terroir" and heritage actors. The image is linked to tangible characteristics of the product which can be verified after product user purchase (freshness, particular taste...) but also to a set of other things more intangibles (environment, landscape...).*

?? **But OLP should not be fixed in the tradition and the past** (what we call the French paradox of Label Rouge). **They should get modernity in the tradition.**

↴ **Labelling/branding:**

On the contrary to 2.1, these relational aspects are in relation with symbols and beliefs. So, it is the role of the privacy brands (PDO/PGI) to create ties with their customers and to define a range of products in function of consumer's behaviour, expectations and values.

We should distinguish here different situations:

- Product is sold within the area: to inhabitants or tourist...;
- Product is sold outside the area (within the country or not, within Europe or not): to connoisseurs or not...

↴ **Distribution:**

Propositions are :

- **Increase all the direct contact with public** (for the OLP which are sold in supermarket): supermarket sell promotion with producers, public events (meeting), open day;
- **Develop as much as possible purchase location perceived as shorter by consumer** (direct marketing).