

# The ‘real thing’: Branding authenticity in the luxury wine trade

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## Abstract

Authenticity is a cornerstone of contemporary marketing practice yet confusion surrounds the nature and use of authenticity in the brand arena. We identify six attributions of authenticity based on an examination of the strategies of 20 ultra-premium wineries and interviews with 30 wine consumers. These six attributes are: heritage and pedigree, stylistic consistency, quality commitments, relationship to place, method of production, and downplaying commercial motives. These attributes of authenticity resonated with consumers. The attributes of authenticity were both real and stylized versions of the truth.

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## 1. Introduction

The use of authenticity as a positioning device is resonating with consumers of goods and services (Grayson and Martinec, 2004; Peñaloza, 2000). Some go as far as to state “the search for authenticity is one of the cornerstones of contemporary marketing” (Brown et al., 2003, p. 21). However, confusion surrounds the management of authenticity from a brand perspective. Firstly, does authenticity have to be real, or can it be created from a stylized version of events, or fictional? Researchers have identified that authenticity is often more contrived than real (Brown et al., 2003). Managing consumers perceptions of authenticity will be critical because research reveals what is perceived as authentic must conform to consumers’ mental frames of how things ‘ought to be’ (Grayson and Martinec, 2004). Also, how far can one go in exploiting attributes of authenticity? Holt (2002) identified how creative activities or authentic brands risked devaluing themselves by being perceived as too commercial. Instead they must appear distant from commercial considerations. Yet the brand management literature is silent on how marketers can appear above commercial considerations.

The purpose of this article is twofold. Firstly, what are some attributes of authenticity in the commercial context? Secondly, how do firms seek to manage images of authenticity in the light of commercial pressures? These two questions are addressed with reference to case studies of 20 ultra-premium wineries and 30 wine consumers. For our purposes ultra-premium wines are priced at over US\$100 per bottle (Geene et al., 1999). Wine represents a fertile context for discussions of authenticity given the recent mainstreaming of wine consumption by New World wine-makers in the past two decades that have seen traditional producers, connoisseurs and critics complain about ‘Coca Cola’ wines and the lack of authenticity of mass produced wines.

## 2. Method

Case studies of 20 established, ultra-premium wine producers were developed. Thirty-nine interviews were conducted across these firms. Details on each case are provided in Table 1. Interviews were conducted with participants (in English) at their place of business, and on average lasted for 3 h. Questions evolved around the firm’s history, guiding philosophy, important events in the life of the brand, marketing practices, positioning, production

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Table 1  
Summary of case studies

Case	Region	Age (years)	Hours spent	Sources of information
NZ1	NZ	19	3	2 interviews with founder, winemakers and viticulturalist.
NZ2	NZ	22	12	4 interviews with founder and winemaker.
A1	Australia	100+	4	2 interviews with founder and winemaker.
A2	Australia	52	2	1 interview with winemaking team.
A3	Australia	45	3	2 interviews with founder and winemaker.
A4	Australia	19	3	2 interviews with founder and winemaker.
F1	Burgundy	100+	5	3 interviews with winemaker, marketer.
F2	Burgundy	37	3	1 interview with marketing manager and winemaker.
F3	Bordeaux	400+	18	2 interviews with owner/marketing manager, estate manager/winemaker/viticulturalist.
F4	Bordeaux	400+	4	2 interviews with managers.
F5	Champagne	200+	3	1 interview with current owner.
F6	Champagne	150+	4	2 interviews with marketing manager, CEO.
F7	Champagne	150+	6	3 interviews with current owner, marketing manager, winemaker.
F8	Champagne	150+	3	1 interview with current marketing manager.
F9	Champagne	150+	4	2 interviews with current owner and marketing manager.
F10	Champagne	150+	4	2 interviews with current owner marketing manager.
F11	Champagne	200+	4	2 interviews with current marketing manager and winemaker.
F12	Champagne	150+	2	1 interview with current owner/marketing manager.
P1	Portugal	23	4	2 interviews with owner/marketer and winemaker.
P2	Portugal	200+	4	2 interviews with CEO, marketing manager.

processes, and competitive pressures. All interviews were taped and transcribed.

At each winery a tour of the production facilities in order to carry out observations and ask further technical questions (each tour lasted 1 h on average) was undertaken. Following this, interview and observational information was integrated with secondary information from the general wine press, news media, specialist wine books, and secondary data gained from the firms. Secondary data was analyzed to provide further background, triangulate the emerging themes (Strauss and Corbin, 1998), and identify the nature of the historical industry context the firms were embedded in. In all, 180 sources were reviewed.

To complement the case studies a further 30 interviews with regular wine consumers were carried out. Details of the sampled respondents are shown in Table 2. Respondents

were chosen from a mailing list of an up-market wine seller in Melbourne, Australia. Regular wine consumers that spent on average \$US500 a month on wine were selected. Not all of these consumers were experts, although their sheer experience with wine means they have more knowledge than low-involvement wine consumers. Consumers were asked questions relating to the importance of wine, occasion of use and information cues that drove purchase. Behavioral questions relating to average spend per month and frequencies of purchase were also asked. On average the interviews lasted for 1 h. These interviews were also recorded on tape and transcribed.

The case studies and the consumer transcripts were analyzed through within- and cross-case analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989). Throughout the study, a number of methods for improving the quality of the research were adopted. Experts were used to help select the cases, two researchers provided independent interpretations of both sets of findings, interviews were conducted over 3 years, and firm respondents were given the opportunity to provide feedback on initial findings, all of which reinforced reliability. Although colleagues performed independent coding of the transcripts, the interviews were conducted by the same interviewer, reducing the role of bias (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Table 2  
Demographic information for sampled consumers

Name	Gender	Age	Income '000
1. Graeme	M	61	80–100
2. Kim T	F	38	45–65
3. Sheila	F	47	65–80
4. Simon	M	32	45–65
5. Kingsley	M	40	100+
6. Rhonda	F	40	45–65
7. Greg R	M	50	65–80
8. Ian	M	57	100+
9. George C	M	55	45–65
10. Loris	M	52	45–65
11. Greg T	M	48	80–100
12. Andrew	M	52	100+
13. Anne	F	46	45–65
14. Jeff	M	32	100+
15. Ben	M	33	45–65
16. Monica	F	27	25–45
17. Monika	F	54	25–45
18. Kim	F	52	<25
19. John	M	62	80–100
20. Carol	F	58	45–65
21. Craig	M	39	100+
22. George B	M	60	80–100
23. Ian M	M	55	80–100
24. Philippe	M	51	80–100
25. Margaret	F	52	45–65
26. Jennifer	F	38	<25
27. Tania	F	34	65–80
28. Yee Sek	M	52	45–65
29. Carol	F	60	25–45
30. Janine	F	49	80–100

### 3. Findings

We identified six of attributes of authenticity. These are: heritage and pedigree, stylistic consistency, quality commitments, relationship to place, method of production, and downplaying commercial considerations.

#### 3.1. Heritage and pedigree

All of the wineries sought to use their individual histories as part of their brand building programs. A winery's history was often celebrated through public relations and marketing activities such as experiential tours of facilities. These programs had some value to consumers. For example:

I've been to the champagne region in France and enjoyed that very much and again I liked the whole history of going down to... they call it the 'cave'—sort of underground cellars, it's really a bit like feeling you're in a underground cave. (Anne)

They've been making wine for 800+ years—so they're very steeped in tradition—you've got vineyards that are so old it's not funny.... (Simon)

The above quotations identify the value Anne and Simon place on links between the brand and its past. Building a link between the brand and its history added a further nuance to the brand's meaning. For consumers, an established heritage also indicated reliability.

To me heritage is history... the name that the winery gets which will of course be partly a result of its history. *I. Like what for example?* Penfolds Grange has a heritage and a name that guarantees you a certain level of reliability. *I. What if it's a good name but hasn't got long heritage?* No because if it's got a good name, it's produced some good wine and that's fine, I'll keep giving it a shot. (Ian M)

Ian's passage identifies value in a winery's heritage, although this is not valued as an end in itself. As Ian makes clear, heritage has value because it indicates a consistent level of high quality. This value must be constantly renewed through commitments to ongoing quality production. When a wine label was able to live up to its heritage of high quality production, it gained stature or 'pedigree':

*I. What about heritage, does the wineries heritage matter to you?* Penfolds, Château D'Yquem—yes pedigree is important. *I. Pedigree?* At the end of the day, when you drink it, if what's in the bottle is not what you expected... you're only as good as your last success. So if I expect something good because of pedigree I'll pay a bit more and if it doesn't live up to expectation my disappointment would be greater. (Philippe)

The quotation above identifies two aspects to a brand's pedigree: that it will result in a price premium, and a higher expectation of performance. As a result, the ability to establish a consistent track record of performance builds brand value.

The wineries sought to demonstrate this track record by developing library stocks and holding regular tastings of their back catalogue. The wineries also highlighted the proven ability of their wines to age as a point of differentiation from newly emerging 'cult brands'. For example:

These people [cult wines] are doing enormous damage—when someone opens these expensive wines in 20 years they will think they have been made a fool of, as they will not last, they are built for early drinking. (F3)

The quotation above identifies that the wineries sought to demonstrate that they had 'paid their dues' (cf. Caves, 2000). This also resonated with consumers:

He's actually got chardonnay up there that he produced in 1976... it was golden, it was beautiful, it was just unbelievable, so good. It was 30 years old. (Greg T)

As the above quotation identifies, significant emotional value is derived from wines that continue to improve with age. A winery's actual age also represented value because it represented the potential for greater wine quality. This came about because these consumers understood that wineries with older vines could produce higher quality wines.

The more established wineries would have older vines. Now, older vines may not produce as much grapes but it's a far better quality grape. Some of them are so old they have to be premium wines because they don't get the quantity from those vines... (George B)

George's passage identifies that older vines add value because they represent the potential for better quality. Loris' passage below identifies that wineries with a recognized pedigree had a competitive advantage over younger wineries because they could demonstrate a history of high performance.

I mean they're all going to say their wine is good... but what I look for is longevity, the history behind it. Those that have stood the test of time. Those that have been bottled in 1997 and the wineries say for those of you who had our 1997 Cabernet, 2005 is the best year. (Loris)

#### 3.2. Stylistic consistency

The cases were concerned that the dilution of their traditional wine styles due to the need to be 'fashionable'.

We are dealing with one of our greatest challenges now, which is to retain the popularity of our wine as it matures. People used to think we were trendy, whereas now there are a number of 'new boys on the block'. We have to project that we are committed, we make great wine, and we are passionate about it. We also have to continue to deliver the goods and be relevant to today's consumer.... (NZ1)

The product is everything, so you have to be careful, maximum careful of what you are doing with the product, it is not sort of destroying the company. (F7)

I do not make a wine for a consumer. I make a wine that best expresses the vineyard and the vintage. I do not change it to suit a particular segment. (F3)

The above quotations identify the view by the brand managers to slowly evolve the style rather than evolve it in relation to changing consumer fashions. Consumers also identified stylistic consistency as an aspect of authenticity. For example:

*I. So when it comes to purchasing a wine, what are the factors that you consider important?* Taste, consistency of the fact that when you buy the bottle you know it's going to be drinkable. So that limits the sort of labels that I know about that I'm prepared to sort of try. (Greg T)

Greg's passage identifies the value of stylistic consistency. For Greg, wines without an established track record represented a serious risk because he is unable to judge whether they will continue to deliver the same taste year-in-year-out. These consumers were not risk takers and thus preferred known wine labels, tolerating little taste variation from year-to-year. Not all consumers valued consistency in this way. For example:

A wine that's constantly identical from year to year bothers me, the idea that it is ever so slightly different in every bottle is extremely appealing if you're searching for what's real. (Simon)

Simon's passage is typical of variety seeking consumers who identified the importance of seasonal differences to authenticity. Nevertheless, all of the consumers interviewed had little toleration for large variations in quality. For these consumers, consistency of style rather than taste presented the very essence of authenticity. For example:

*I. If a wine said it was 'authentic', what would it have to do to?* Consistent taste. There are a lot of wineries that if you buy a dozen you want to make sure the whole dozen tastes good, not the one bottle you tried at the cellar door. In a way quality is important and if you change too much, like this year the wine was exceptional, next year it tastes like crap, people tend not to go back. There is too much risk. (Kim L)

Kim's passage equates consistency of taste and quality with being authentic. Failure to deliver this experience is viewed as failing to stand behind the brand, communicating a lack of sincerity by the winery.

### 3.3. Quality commitments

Consumers viewed uncompromising commitments to quality as critical to claims of authenticity. For example:

\$50 and more then you start talking about the best wine of that label. It wouldn't be an every year wine, it would be made by the chief winemaker usually what they call reserve wine. It would be made in that area as a rule, it

wouldn't be a blend except with their own fruit at their own winery. So that would be a superior wine that's very well controlled in their blending development because if they have a flagship and it gets a bad reputation it affects their reputation, so they have to be careful. It takes a lot of time to pick the grapes and blend the wine. It's labor intensive and it's high technical expertise. And of course it's in quality wood, American or French oak which costs a lot of money, it's left for between a year to two and a half years in oak before it's bottled and then it's left again on the shelf. (Greg R)

Greg's passage identifies the value from investing in areas that improve wine quality. For example, Greg identifies the value of single vineyard wines, purity through the use of the winery's own fruit, care in selecting fruit, intensity of care throughout the process, labor input, the use of oak, and time cellared before release, all of which represent significant costs to the winery. For the wineries, commitment to quality represented both a quest to continually make great wines, and a commitment to their consumers.

Clearly we have to face the world changing and those, aristocrat consumers still exist, but we can't reference them solely, it's always anticipation, you can't focus on what is satisfying right now. Instead of just living on our loyal customers, we have to keep on living with them, keep satisfying them, make sure they will never feel betrayed because we are not living up to their expectations. (F12)

Each of the cases developed marketing programs to communicate uncompromising commitments to quality. This message was enhanced through the development of second and third labels, and the declassification of large percentages of the crop into non-labeled wine that was sold to third parties. These labels helped express the winery's dedication to quality, via greater selectivity in raw material. Consumers appreciated such efforts:

Guigal-best Cote Rotie single vineyard, and then they have all their other labels supporting it. This means they recognize the different levels of quality within their vineyard, and gives them more credibility in my view. (Ben)

Ben's passage refers to how the firm Guigal releases a number of labels from its best vineyard (Cote Rotie), which reinforces the brand's commitment to quality, through becoming more selective in the material from the same, high status vineyard site.

### 3.4. Relationship to place

The use of region of origin has a long history in the wine trade and was seen by all the wineries as a core brand attribute. This attribute of authenticity was expressed through commitment to *terroir* ("the holistic combination in a vineyard environment of soil, climate, topography, and



the ‘soul’ of the wine producer”; Guy, 2002, p. 2). For example:

The Bordelaise say to us Burgundians, ‘where is the art?’ For them, their wine is a blend of different parcels and varieties in a vineyard. For us, our wine comes from a single variety, and a single vineyard. Therefore we are hands off, letting nature do her work. (F2)

The use of terroir as a guiding philosophy is expressed in a number of ways. Some wineries identify themselves as merely stewards of the land, taking a great deal of care to emphasize non-intervention with nature, while others will identify the source of their grapes on wine labels. Many Champagne houses also make public commitments to sourcing from only the best vineyards.

All the consumers valued relationship to place in some way. By labeling wine as a ‘single vineyard’ wine added value because it meant the product had a traceable origin. For example:

Penfolds just blend them all so I don’t know. I know they have Shiraz, they don’t even have pure Shiraz, it’s Shiraz–Cabernet most of the time. So what grapes they blend it from I wouldn’t have a clue. (Tania)

Tania’s passage highlights the value of being able to trace a wine to a real place as opposed to a ‘placeless’ blend. Tania also values single varieties because they are seen as ‘pure’. For some consumers place had value because it decreased risk. For example:

*I. What does region tell you?* It’s just I know usually they produce good wines so therefore I’m safe if it’s a good region. *I. You’re safe?* You know that particular region produces quality wines. I wouldn’t buy an unknown, a little country town in Victoria. But Yarra Valley and Margaret River, the odd Barossa Valley although I’m not big about that region. *I. All these would be Cabernet or a Shiraz?* Yes. (Carol)

Carol’s understanding of the role of place is limited to a few regions. Carol builds simple links between a place and generic types of wine such as ‘Margaret River for Cabernet or Shiraz.’ Such links reduce the risk of purchasing a wine because it is from a place that has an established track record for a wine style. In contrast, consumers with greater wine expertise had a more detailed understanding of relationship to place, and more cosmopolitan tastes (they were variety seekers). For example:

*I. Chianti—which is a specific type of grape?* No it’s a region of Tuscany. The grape variety is called Sangiovese, which is grown here in Australia, but we can’t make Chianti, because Chianti is from a place. It’s like champagne. We make sparkling wine here in Australia but it can’t be called champagne. And it’s different, you have a glass of champagne and you have a glass of Australian sparkling wine, everyone is going to pick the champagne as their

favorite, because it’s the whole ideology behind it. And that’s what I love, particularly in Tuscany, Chianti is just rolling fields, old buildings and a lifestyle. And when I drink Chianti, I think of that. *I. How about terroir?* I wasn’t going to say it—but that’s exactly what I was talking about—France is France, Australia is Australia—that’s terroir. I mean it’s a French term and the French don’t like anyone else using it because they believe that their soul is in the soil. It’s their whole way of life, the wine brings out everything, not just the climate, not just winemaking techniques, and terroir is the body of the wine, the soul of the wine. So it has a very deep meaning to it. So what the people put into it, the families that have lived there for eight generations, it’s all part of the terroir. (Ben)

Ben’s passage is typical of the nuanced understanding held by wine experts. For expert consumers, relationship to place had value because this made the respective wine label a unique product of its environment. Ben goes beyond this, realizing that when consuming a wine from a specific place, he is also experiencing the history or soul of the brand. In contrast to Carol, Ben delights in trying new wines because they are authentic expressions of a particular place. Rather than acting as a risk reduction cue, for consumers like Ben and Simon (see below) links to place signal value in a more a positive way, representing the potential for a unique experience. For example:

In Australia everyone strives to make their Chardonnay like Meursault which is in Burgundy, but we can never achieve it because I mean we’re a different country, a different climate, there’s so many aspects, once again it comes down to artistry. A French artist is very different from an Australian artist. You can’t compare the two. (Simon)

Simon’s passage identifies the positive view of place-based differences and the resulting inconsistency in wines from different places. For Simon, as for other expert consumers, authenticity was derived from both place-based differences, adjusted for the ‘hand of the artist’. That is, these consumers did not buy on place alone, but also understood that creative artists had a critical role in creating a high quality wine that remains a unique expression of that place. In contrast less expert consumers made generic judgments about links between place, wine style, and overall quality (e.g., ‘New Zealand for whites’).

### 3.5. Method of production

The consumers were all interested in how wine was produced. The majority of interest in method of production was related to a need to know what went into producing the final product.

Moët and Chandon do very good tours, it’s interesting to see how it’s made, and see exactly what goes into the process of what you’re drinking. *I: So do you use this information?* I just think it’s nice to know what you’re consuming and how

the process is and what it's all about—I find it quite intriguing. (Janine)

Janine's passage identifies the importance of knowing what goes into the final product. For Janine knowing how the product was made creates more interest in the wine, and enhances its authenticity by providing a link between the final product and the creative process. Consumers distinguished between mass-marketed wines, blended wines, and those produced in small batches.

The big batches and what have you, it's not actually all their own wines, they're actually brought it from around the area, it might even be interstate and put in these wines to keep up their production quantity, they're actually brought into the blends and that sort of thing. Take De Bortoli for instance, they've actually bought from other vineyards to blend with their wines. I find these little ones that only produce 100 cases, but the grapes that they use are their own and specially selected. I'm interested in those wines because I think they're more contained in their own world and are more intense in flavor. (George B)

For George, boutique wines were preferred because they represented wines from a particular place, and were more likely to result in a more pure expression of a certain grape type than a wine blended from many regions. For George, mass-produced wines represented diluted or impure products. He also identified the importance of knowing that an actual identifiable person has created the brand, which was a critical point of interest in relation to production methods.

### 3.6. Downplaying commercial motives

Although many of the consumers purchased mass-marketed wines for specific occasions, they valued these far less than those that were less overtly commercialized. We found evidence that the very process of appearing commercial detracted from a wine's value.

*I. Are any wines that have exploited their history for commercial gain?* I'm sure there's some. *I. Would you react to any specific brands because they've done that?* Yes, but if I committed myself to go to a function they've sponsored for instance, as an example, I'd grin and bear it but deep down it might upset me a little. I'd be disappointed. (John)

While John valued heritage, he did not value the overt use of that heritage in marketing campaigns. John's quote however goes further, in that it rejects highly commercialized wines per se. For John, scarcity has value and authentic wines are those that are difficult to find because they are made in small batches (consistent with the discussion on method of production and relationship to place). Other consumers also reacted in the same way.

Peter Lehman was a very good independent producer because he made great wines. The winery grew and was taken public and it became totally second grade. The other

was Andrew Garrett. You saw Andrew Garrett and you knew it's a good wine. Now you see Andrew Garrett and you know that's something you definitely shouldn't drink. The thing is it's been so unbelievably commercialized. Because the thing is, don't forget that sometimes these wines are being made in large amounts. Andrew Garrett used to have his own winery, he made good wine, then he sold his soul. The reason he sold his soul is because he made a hell of a lot of money and then after that his wine ran down hill over night. It isn't worth it. (Andrew)

Andrew's passage identifies the decrease in value that came from the commercial exploitation of successful niche brands. With two examples, Andrew identifies how brand's he personally liked lost value when they appealed to the mass market. In both cases the brands were viewed as selling out.

The producers also understood the opposition of their consumers to mass-marketed products. All the marketing managers downplayed their marketing prowess and business acumen. While not anti-marketing, these producers were certainly anti-image based promotion. For example:

I think there is no marketing, what can I say, sort of bad marketing where you market your product like you would market a perfume. It's not fake marketing, it's just the best presentation, just to put the wine in front of the consumer, that's all. (F7)

I'm probably attracted to the way the label looks a little bit too. I would be more inclined to go with the bottle with the label that's quite straight lined, plain, 2 maybe 3 colors. Not the fancy Mona Lisa on it. For plain labels I think then that the money is going to the wine, it's not on the label. (Jennifer)

The quotations above identify a preference for naïve marketing, which is marketing that enhances the intrinsic qualities of the product, and no more. Nevertheless, the producers had quite a sophisticated understanding of marketing practice, and the outward rejection of market-oriented practices was a far cry from the reality of the firms' approaches. In the cases studied, wine styles constantly evolved to account for consumer trends, social changes, and changes in the quality of competitors' products. However, the wineries did not highlight this as their policy, instead openly denigrating such responsiveness to market trends as being false, and inauthentic. For example, the next passage comes from a winery commenting on another competitor's attempt to attract new consumers by making small bottles of champagne for younger consumers to drink through a straw.

Putting Champagne in a small bottle with a straw is false marketing. My customers do not drink anything out of a straw! Doing this is not going to get them to drink and appreciate the top wines. (F5)

Historical analysis of all the firms revealed that real commercial goals drove early actions, and involved adaptation to consumer tastes, the development of brands via publicity and advertising, and the manipulation of prices as a means of displaying status and signaling scarcity value. Nevertheless, the deliberate downplaying of commercial motives in favor of a production orientation was valued by consumers, who saw these strategies as defining elements of authenticity.

To me authentic would be about how sincere it was in its marketing. Authenticity... it was about integrity, about labeling, about not over-selling itself. There's a brand that calls itself Ocean Grove—now Ocean Grove is an area near Geelong. This wine is actually from another part of the country altogether and it calls itself Ocean Grove. Now to me there's something misleading about that. That to me is not an authentic approach to marketing. I think that mass marketed wines that purport to be high quality wines is insincere. Like your Yalumba's and your Rosemount Estate where you see very young, trendy things drinking it and pretending it's a fine wine—I don't think that's very sincere. *I: So how do you define authentic wine?* To me it's about integrity and it's about congruence between how it sells itself and how it actually is. (Shelia)

For Sheila authenticity related to truth claims such as actual links between stated region of origin and the sourced raw materials, but it also related to concepts such as integrity and sincerity. Authenticity consisted of appearing in a way that befits a 'fine' wine. That is, this aspect of authenticity was primarily stylized.

#### 4. Discussion

The findings contribute in a number of ways. Firstly, they identify six attributes of authenticity. These are: heritage and pedigree, stylistic consistency, quality commitments, relationship to place, method of production, and downplaying commercial motives. Although these six components are derived from a single industry context, it is possible to transfer the results to other settings. Brands such as Gucci, Prada and Adidas reference their history in their stores through historic photos of designers in old workshops. Many luxury brands also reinforce heritage and pedigree by referencing past and present celebrities that have used their products and drawing on museum stocks for in-store displays.

Stylistic consistency is also transferable to other contexts. For example, Coke's disastrous choice to introduce New Coke in the mid-1980s saw the value of the brand fall overnight. Quality commitments are an important aspect of authenticity in other products. For example, poor quality products from Cadillac and Apple saw consumers desert these brands. Many brands also refer to place in their communications. For example, car brands such as Mercedes

and BMW reference Germany. Also, brands have often suffered a crisis of identity when they attempt to remove links to place. For example, British Airways suffered when they attempted to re-brand as a global airline and remove the British flag from their tails in favor of more multicultural designs that reflected their global customer base.

Many brands also make reference to craft production methods or the role of designers or craftspeople in production. For example, Rolls Royce always promoted the fact that parts of the car were handmade (particularly the famous grill). Also, celebrity chefs such as Jamie Oliver and Wolfgang Puck give the impression they are involved in the production of food that comes from their franchised restaurants. Lastly, many brands make a virtue of commitment to social causes such as Ben and Jerry's and the Bodyshop. These brands deliberately downplay their commercial motives to differentiate themselves from mainstream brands.

Secondly, we address concerns on whether authenticity can be true, stylized, or false. All of the identified attributes of authenticity represented both objective and subjective sources of authenticity. This created a rich, multi-nuanced brand story. These rich brand stories are important because by drawing on all attributes of authenticity they can appeal to consumers with different levels of expertise and different degrees of variety seeking behavior. For example, producers did undertake real commitments to quality, retain old production methods, and reject many aspects of mass marketing (among others). On the other hand, many attributes of authenticity were stylized versions of reality (downplaying commercial motives, natural production, and unchanging wine styles), and some consumers viewed authenticity in terms of 'how things ought to be' (cf. Grayson and Martinec, 2004). As a result, marketer projections and consumer understanding of authenticity consisted of both objective (real) and subjective factors (stylized or fictional). Such results can also be transferred to other contexts. For example, consider how Coke projects images consistent with American values yet produces the product worldwide. Car manufacturers such as Mercedes do the same, retaining German styling, but producing in low cost countries. Gucci goes further, mythologizing links between the brand's founding family and the Medici by maintaining the fiction that they were saddle makers for the Medici in order to build links to the past (Forden, 2001).

Finally, the use of understated branding and promotion, the intense focus on intrinsic product qualities as the driver of market value, the projection of stylized images of craft production, continuing timeless production methods, and limited production runs provides a new take on the value of a production orientation to brand value. These firms adopt a production orientation that runs counter to the institutionalized norms of the modern wine market. Although these firms complement their production focus with some limited

consumer oriented activities, overwhelming they adopt the view that consumers must adapt to the product rather than the product being adapted to the consumer. This runs counter to modern marketing theory.

#### 4.1. Future research

Although the six attributes of authenticity identified here are transferable to other industries, further research is needed to identify possible other attributes of authenticity. Further research is also needed at the brand manager and consumer levels. In regards to brand management, research could examine managing long-term projections of authenticity by building historical case histories of brands or undertaking longitudinal research. Such research may uncover the relationship between changing brand meaning and the evolving social context. Also, is there a contingent relationship between the attributes of authenticity and the brand? The six attributes identified here make sense within the context of wine production, and would transfer to other agricultural products, but would they transfer directly to technology brands? And if so, would the expression of each attribute differ? We suggest future research with consumers to determine the possible fit between certain types of brands and expressions of authenticity. Finally, how do brand managers deal with the inherent tension between the need for relevance and the need to downplay commercial and scientific prowess? Observational case studies are needed to go ‘behind the scenes’ of espoused marketing practices to identify how firms walk this fine line.

At the consumer end a number of questions arise. Firstly, research could also examine how fine the line is between exploiting authenticity and reinforcing aspects of authenticity through experimental scenarios. Research is also needed to identify how perceptions of authenticity change as consumers become more or less involved in a product category. Further research is needed to examine whether consumers with different levels of cultural capital (Holt, 1998) or involvement attribute authenticity to different cues. For example, very low involvement consumers may see a mass-market ‘Chianti’ wine as authentic because the bottle

is encased in a cane basket, whereas a high involvement consumer may view this as kitsch. Another interesting question would involve examining consumer responses to challenges to authenticity. What happens if consumers find out that claims of authenticity are less than true?

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