



Sustainability in Practice (SIP) Certification Public Relations/Branding Campaign Request for Proposal

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) process is to invite interested companies to submit their proposal to develop a branding expansion campaign for the Sustainability in Practice (SIP) Certification program.

Overview

SIP Certification is a distinguishing program for sustainably farmed vineyards and wines. The comprehensive rules for SIP (known as Standards) address many interrelated elements of the whole farm system. Habitat conservation, energy efficiency, pest management, water conservation, economic stability, and human resources are some of the key elements. In order to qualify for certification, growers must have their practices verified through in-depth records and on-site audits by accredited independent inspectors. For consumers, the SIP Certified seal assures that the farmer has completed a rigorous process verifying that the fruit was grown with respect for the people and the land and the wine was made with SIP Certified fruit.

SIP Certification is a project of the Vineyard Team, a non-profit farmer organization formed in 1994 with a mission to educate and guide growers towards environmentally and economically sustainable farming practices. SIP evolved from the Vineyard Team's award winning self-assessment and has been peer reviewed by over 40 environmental, regulatory, and academic representatives.

The program launched in 2008 with 3,700 certified acres. Today, there are over 30,000 certified acres and nearly one million cases of wine bearing the SIP seal, with more qualifying each year.

Purpose of Branding Campaign

In six years, SIP Certification has seen rapid growth, and we are proud of our achievements. That said, growth has slowed in the past two years. There are other areas within California and the nation that SIP can grow into. The program has a great reputation and appealing logo. It is time to take the SIP name to the next level by expanding on the existing brand, increasing awareness and differentiating from competitors. This campaign is threefold:

For Vineyards and Wineries: Make SIP Certification the preferred program for sustainable winegrape farming. Define the benefits of SIP Certification to Vineyards and Wineries. Certification is a tool to authenticate and communicate sustainable practices and add value to grapes/wines. Establishing SIP as the premier certification program will attract new vineyards and wines to become certified.

For Consumers: Make SIP Certification a household name for sustainably produced wines. When shopping, sustainably focused consumers should seek SIP Certified wines.

For Gatekeepers: Make SIP the favored green certification for distributors and on premise stores. Gatekeepers should prefer SIP Certified products over other eco-friendly wines.

Comparable Green Certifications

Today's consumer has numerous green certifications to choose from. Probably the most commonly confused and related certification is USDA Organics. While organic farming and SIP have some overlapping practices, SIP Certification applies to the whole farm where as Organics looks at just some aspects of farming including habitat and the use of non-manmade pesticides. SIP looks at sustainable practices on every level of the winegrowing process, from farm labor to agriculture – from energy conservation to water quality. Because SIP addresses the whole farm, you will find organic wines that are also SIP Certified.



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For sustainable vineyard farming certification programs, SIP has one direct competitor, California Certified Sustainable Winegrowing (CCSW). Both programs share the goal of promoting sustainable farming practices however, SIP is a stellar *distinguishing* program, whereas CCSW is designed to be *inclusive*.

Here are the main differences in the programs:

- SIP is a practice and performance based program – every requirement and management enhancement has to do with practices and is measurable, therefore auditable. CCSW is a *process* based program. For example a question on soil erosion in the SIP program says, “What percentage of the vineyard is cover cropped during the winter?” CCSW would ask, “Do you have a plan to prevent erosion during winter?”
- SIP has a high threshold for eligibility – not every grower could qualify.
- SIP prohibits the use of high risk pesticides.
- SIP contains a chain of custody component that allows qualified wines to include the SIP seal on the wine bottle.

SIP sets the gold-standard for sustainability with rigorous requirements and transparency. The SIP brand is synonymous with trust that the wine was made with respect for the people and planet.

Current Marketing

Various platforms are used to outreach SIP Certification:

- www.sipcertified.org
- Social media including Facebook, Twitter and G+
- Program brochures
- Educational presentations for certified vineyard staff, industry events, policy makers, classrooms
- Wine pouring and education at food and wine events
- Industry advertisements (magazine and online)
- Press releases/press interviews
- Individual marketing efforts from SIP Certified participants including certified wines, distributor materials, on premise signage, advertisement, etc.

Campaign Deliverables

We are happy with the existing logo and what the SIP brand represents. This campaign should focus on broadening knowledge and participation in the program. We would like a roadmap on how exactly to increase awareness, updated brand narrative for materials and support executing the campaign.

Proposal Schedule

The schedule is based on our current timelines, but is subject to change.

Project Milestones	Deadline
Email Intent to Submit	October 1, 2013
Proposals Due	November 1, 2013
Final Selection	December 15, 2013
Campaign Commencement	February 1, 2014



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Proposal Guidelines

By responding to this RFP, the vendor agrees to be responsible for fully understanding the requirements and other details of the RFP, and will ask any questions to ensure such understanding is gained. The Vineyard Team retains the right to disqualify vendors who do not demonstrate a clear understanding of the needs. Furthermore, the right to disqualify a vendor extends past the contract award period and the Vineyard Team will be at no fault, cost, or liability.

Good Faith Statement

All information provided by the Vineyard Team is offered in good faith. Specific items are subject to change at any time based on business circumstances.

Communication & Proposal Submission Guidelines

Communications shall not be effective unless from a company representative authorized in managing RFP's and contracts. In no case shall verbal communication govern over written communication.

Proposal Content

The proposal should include a cover letter that clearly indicates, at a minimum, the following:

- Company "fit" with the SIP Certification program
- Approach and process for branding development
- Marketing and outreach capacity and commitment
- Submit detailed schedule for execution including milestones
- Include an estimated fee schedule
- Supply at least three references that have used your firm for similar projects

Please email your intent to submit by **October 1, 2013** and submit your proposal on or before **November 1, 2013**.

Final proposals should be sent electronically to:

Vineyard Team
Email: beth@vineyardteam.org
Phone: 805.466.2288



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www.SIPCertified.org



SIP Program **Brochure** and **Tasting Map**

Press Release from SIP Certification

“Millions of California Wine Bottles Now Certified with the SIP™ Seal”

Article on SIP Certification

“SIPing the Good Life Part 1: SIP Wines of Monterey County & Arroyo Grande Valley”

SIP Certification Ads

Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance Wine Festival Program Brochure Ad



California Grocer Magazine Advertorial
(next page)

SIP is Setting The Gold Standard

California growers and vintners have captured the world's attention with wines that raised the bar on excellence and innovation. Now, they are setting the environmental gold standard with SIP—Sustainability in Practice—a third-party certification program that puts eco-conscious California producers in the spotlight.

Nearly two decades in the making and launched in 2008, the SIP seal of excellence appears on millions of bottles produced by nearly 160 vineyards across the state, reflecting the industry's deep commitment to protecting employees, communities and the environment.

The program was created by a network of farmers that are devoted to sustainable agriculture, with input from government agencies and environmental groups and experts. SIP's independent auditors have now inspected vineyards representing nearly 30,000 acres of wine grapes from Santa Barbara to the Napa Valley.

"What sets us apart is that the SIP sustainability model addresses both human and natural resources," said Kris Beal, executive director of the award winning Central Coast Vineyard Team, the nonprofit group that developed the program. "This represents a real commitment to environmental stewardship and equitable treatment of people who work in the industry."

In order to display the seal on products, growers must meet strict eligibility requirements related to soil, water and energy conservation as well as pest management and human resources.

Today's consumers demand more than ever before. Quality is a given but they also want to be sure that growers and vintners whose product they choose are preserving and protecting the natural environment now and for the future.

Visit www.sipcertified.org for more details about this important program. ■

**SIP
CERTIFIED**
Sustainability
in Practice

GREAT WINES
HEALTHY VINEYARDS

SIPCERTIFIED.ORG

Visit our website for a tasting map of certified sustainably farmed vineyards and wines.

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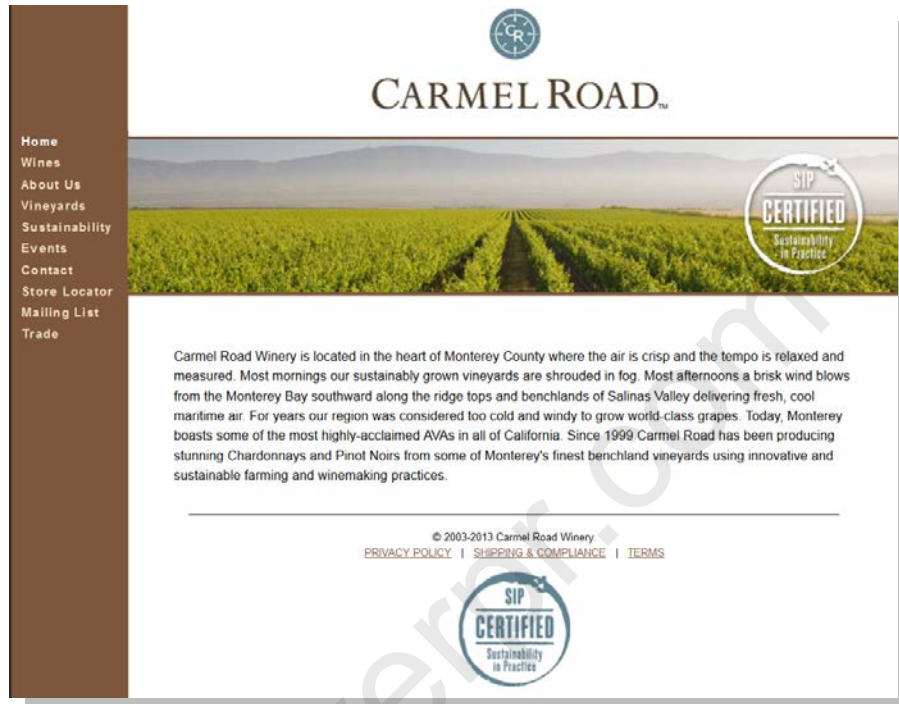
SIP Bottle Shots





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Wineries Use of SIP Logo



Carmel Road Website



Tangent Winery Tasting Notes