



**VINTAGE 2024 RELIEF AND SUPPORT
CRAFTED IN BC WINES**

COMMUNICATIONS & PR PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Considering the July 25, 2024, BC provincial government announcement granting temporary relief for BC wineries to incorporate out-of-province grapes for the 2024 vintage, Wine Growers British Columbia (WGBC) has developed a strategic communication and PR plan to support the wine industry through this transitional period.

This plan aims to provide consistent, clear, and concise messaging that aligns with the recommendations of the Vintage 2024 Relief and Support Replacement Wine Task Group.

By addressing the unique challenges of the 2024 vintage and introducing the "2024 Crafted in BC" positioning, the plan equips industry with the tools to uphold consumer confidence, preserve the integrity of BC's wine industry, and ensure transparency as the region navigates this temporary adjustment.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Vintage 2024 Relief and Support Crafted in BC Wines Communications & PR Plan** is a strategic initiative by Wine Growers British Columbia to support the BC wine industry through the challenges posed by the 2024 vintage. In response to severe freeze events that devastated grape harvests, the BC provincial government has permitted the temporary use of out-of-province grapes. This plan introduces the "2024 Crafted in BC" positioning to maintain winery operations, uphold industry integrity, and reassure consumers.

The plan focuses on transparent communication, stakeholder alignment, and consumer trust. It sets clear goals to protect the BC wine brand, sustain industry operations, and facilitate a phased return to 100% BC grapes. Targeted strategies include empowering wineries with storytelling tools, nurturing collaboration, and engaging key audiences.

Key tactics cover stakeholder communications, public relations, consumer education, and digital engagement, supported by monitoring. The plan also outlines an exit strategy to transition back to 100% BC wines. Through this approach, the industry will showcase resilience, preserve its reputation, and emerge stronger from this transitional period.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

The BC wine industry faces a significant challenge following severe freeze events in 2022 and 2024, which devastated or damaged vineyards and left most interior producers without a viable crop for the 2024 vintage.

In response, the provincial government has allowed the temporary use of out-of-province grapes to maintain operations, protect jobs, and support the sector's economic sustainability.

The Vintage 2024 Relief and Support Replacement Wine Task Group, established by Wine Growers British Columbia, comprises 25 representatives from BC wineries, retail, and trade sectors.

In response to the provincial government's July 25, 2024, announcement permitting the temporary use of out-of-province grapes for the 2024 vintage, the task group convened on September 5 and 19, 2024. Their objective was to develop marketing, merchandising, and communication recommendations to facilitate the market introduction of "Crafted in BC" wines positioning, ensuring transparency and maintaining consumer trust during this transitional period.

This transitional period necessitates a robust communication strategy to balance transparency, uphold industry integrity, protect BC wine's reputation and identity, and align stakeholders behind a shared vision for recovery and resilience.

GOALS

PROTECT AND SUPPORT

Safeguard the market share, cultural vibrancy, and integrity of 100% BC wines.

SUSTAINABILITY

Ensure the viability of wineries & grape growers, jobs & employment

PHASED-IN INTRODUCTION

Allow for the phased-in introduction of Crafted in BC wines (i.e., vintage renewal)

OBJECTIVES

CLARIFY INDUSTRY SCOPE AND MANDATE

Reinforce the role of Wine Growers British Columbia (WGBC) as the leading organization representing and supporting the BC wine industry, and provide a clear understanding of its scope, mandate, and commitment to advocating for industry-wide success.

MINIMIZE CONFUSION AND BUILD TRUST

Provide consistent and transparent messaging to minimize confusion among consumers and trade regarding product placement, labeling, and categorization, while reinforcing the integrity and quality of BC wines.

EMPOWER STORYTELLING

Support different winery approaches, allowing producers to share the authentic narratives that align with their unique brand values and strategies, while addressing the realities of the 2024 vintage.

SUPPORT THE '2024 CRAFTED IN BC' POSITIONING

Establish and support the "2024 Crafted in BC" umbrella as a marker of resilience, quality, and innovation, ensuring its adoption and acceptance in the market.

DRIVE DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER (DTC) ENGAGEMENT

Strengthen direct-to-consumer sales by equipping wineries with tools and strategies to communicate transparently, to strengthen consumer relationships and loyalty.

FACILITATE THE TRANSITION BACK TO 100% BC WINES

Enable a phased return to 100% BC wines by providing a roadmap that supports wineries in navigating the temporary changes while maintaining long-term industry sustainability.

FOSTER COLLABORATION AND INDUSTRY ALIGNMENT

Encourage collaboration across the BC wine industry to align messaging, share resources, and present a unified voice to trade, media, and consumers during this transitional period.

ENHANCE TRADE AND CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

Reinforce confidence in the BC wine industry by addressing potential concerns with transparent communication and showcasing the collective commitment to quality, authenticity, and sustainability.

TARGET AUDIENCES

BC WINERIES

- Winery owners, winemakers, vineyard workers, and their teams across BC.
- This audience is directly impacted by the 2024 vintage challenges and any usage of Crafted in BC wines.
- Resources and consistent messaging needs to be provided to this group in order to have all align with their industry's broad strategy while at the same time being empowered to share their authentic brand stories.

LIQUOR RETAILERS

- Includes liquor stores, wine shops, and other retail outlets selling BC wine.
- This group is instrumental in educating consumers and maintaining trust at the point of purchase
- This audience needs clear guidance on labels, product placement and storytelling for Crafted in BC.

WINE TRADE

- Sales agents, restaurateurs, sommeliers, and on premise buyers and servers.
- Need detailed information on the Crafted in BC position including its rationale.
- This audience needs to be able to relay Crafted in BC effectively to their customers so their customers can make informed buying decisions.

MEDIA

- Mainstream legacy media, wine journalists, lifestyle media, bloggers, and digital creators who influence public perception of the BC wine industry.
- This audience requires transparent, engaging stories about the resilience and innovation behind the Crafted in BC positioning, as well as access to industry leaders for interviews and commentary.

GOVERNMENT

- Includes municipal, provincial, and federal government bodies responsible for industry regulations and support programs.
- It is critical to maintain open communication with government, emphasizing the industry's commitment to sustainability, transparency, and economic stability during this transitional period.

INDIRECT AUDIENCE

PUBLIC/CONSUMER

The role of Wine Growers BC communications and PR is not that of selling but to educate and provide messaging and positioning to industry and stakeholders so that the industry can tell their story to their customers and more broadly to consumers.

Consumers will require messaging that assures them of the continued quality and integrity of BC wines while introducing them to the Crafted in BC story as a symbol of resilience and adaptability.

EXTERNAL KEY MESSAGES

WE SUPPORT ALL BC WINERIES

Rising to every challenge with ingenuity and unwavering commitment to quality.

CELEBRATE THE CRAFTSMANSHIP OF BC WINE THAT BRINGS QUALITY TO EVERY BOTTLE

By choosing BC wines, you're supporting talented, passionate winemakers who continue to create exceptional wines.

EXPERIENCE THE DEDICATION AND SKILL THAT MAKE BC WINES A TRUE EXPRESSION OF PLACE

Every BC wine has a story, and the 2024 vintage is a story to tell! Look on the wine label to find out where the grapes come from. BC VQA is still your quality assurance that the wine comes from 100% BC grown grapes.

STRATEGY

To develop and implement a comprehensive communications and PR plan that supports the successful introduction of Crafted in BC wines, while maintaining the integrity and reputation of the BC VQA brand and the broader BC wine industry.

This strategy will ensure clear and consistent messaging across stakeholders, empower wineries to share their unique stories, foster collaboration and industry alignment, and build consumer and trade confidence in BC wine during this transitional period.

THE PLAN WILL

- 01** Provide transparent and unified messaging to minimize confusion about product placement, labeling, and categorization.
- 02** Reinforce the continued commitment to quality and authenticity that defines BC wines, even as temporary measures are introduced.
- 03** Equip wineries with the tools and support to communicate their individual approaches to the Crafted in BC positioning.
- 04** Drive awareness and trust in Crafted in BC wines through targeted PR efforts, education, and engagement with media and trade.
- 05** Emphasize the industry's long-term vision with a phased roadmap for the return to 100% BC wine production.
- 06** Position Crafted in BC wines as a testament to the resilience, innovation, and adaptability of the BC wine industry.

By balancing immediate needs with long-term goals, this strategy will enable the successful integration of Crafted in BC wines into the market while strengthening the foundation of the BC wine industry.

TACTICS

UNIVERSAL INDUSTRY MESSAGING

Develop a single, customizable industry paragraph with core messages for wineries to adapt.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS

Create tailored one-pagers with key messaging and positioning for:

- **Wineries:** DTC messaging, online marketing, and social media strategies
- **Retailers:** Merchandising and POS recommendations
- **Wine Trade:** Trade-specific messaging and opportunities
- **Media:** Press kits, story angles, and media maps
- **Government:** Briefings and updates

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In early 2024 a survey from the Bottleneck Drive Association in Summerland was conducted with 2000 consumers responding, to ask if and how they would support BC wineries if grapes came from elsewhere in the 2024 vintage. Results and insights were shared with the entire BC wine industry.

To collect input from the industry side, key retailers and on-premise sommeliers were also polled for input by the team at Wine Growers BC, in order to gain trade insights.

The results among trade and consumers were consistent; the key take-away is that people will support BC wineries even if their grapes are from outside BC if it means protecting jobs, and as long as the wineries are transparent on their labels, and they don't raise prices.

The combined research and input provides a foundation to create educational materials for industry (infographics, FAQs) and ensure the materials resonate and align with expectations.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MEDIA OUTREACH

- Draft and distribute press releases and advisories
- Conduct targeted story pitching to wine and lifestyle media
- Appoint industry spokesperson(s) for unified representation
- Host a press conference and maintain ongoing media engagement
- Monitor and report on media coverage

SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL CONTENT

A robust social media strategy will be essential to create and distribute content tailored to each platform, engaging diverse audiences while ensuring transparency. Social media posts must echo and align with messaging shared through trade and press channels to maintain consistency and avoid confusion. Consistency across all communications is critical to ensure WGBC remains proactive in its messaging, preventing the need to respond reactively to potential social media misinterpretations or commentary.

EXIT STRATEGY

A phased communication plan to transition back to 100% BC wines will be established, ensuring clear messaging at each stage.

MONITORING AND FEEDBACK

Continuously gather feedback from stakeholders and consumers to adapt and refine the messaging.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMING & RESPONSIBILITY

ONGOING COMPONENTS THROUGHOUT ALL PHASES

- **Transparency** Maintain clear and honest communication with stakeholders and consumers
- **Collaboration** Engage stakeholders regularly to align messaging and strategy
- **Monitoring** Continuously gather data to assess progress and adapt as needed

Unless stated otherwise, all steps in this plan will be carried out by the WGBC Communications and Marketing team.

IMMEDIATE PHASE

DECEMBER 2024 – JANUARY 2025

OBJECTIVE

Lay the groundwork for communication and initial industry alignment.

DELIVERABLES

Finalize Communications Plan for WGBC board approval

Timeline: Draft by December 11, 2024, feedback by December 13, 2024, final approval by December 20, 2024

Create a universal industry messaging paragraph

Timeline: Completion by January 20, 2025

Develop and Review Tailored One-Pagers and Materials

Timeline: Initial drafts by January 25, 2025, final versions by January 31, 2025

Draft First Press Release and FAQs

- Incorporate consumer insights into these foundational communication pieces
- Timeline: Press release draft by January 25, 2025, FAQs finalized by February 5, 2025

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Internal alignment calls with stakeholders
- Initial outreach to stakeholders to share foundational materials

STAGE ONE: INITIAL LAUNCH

FEBRUARY – APRIL 2025

OBJECTIVE

Public launch of Crafted in BC messaging, focusing on transparency and education.

DELIVERABLES

Finalize and distribute stakeholder materials (one-pagers, FAQs, messaging)

Timeline: February 2025

Conduct initial media outreach with key press and trade publications

Timeline: February 2025

Host stakeholder information sessions (virtual or in-person) for wineries, retailers, and trade

Timeline: March 2025

Host a press conference and release the second press release highlighting program milestones

Timeline: April 2025

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Engage stakeholders through direct outreach and events
- Monitor feedback and adapt materials as necessary

STAGE TWO: ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

MAY – SEPTEMBER 2025

OBJECTIVE

Maintain momentum with targeted messaging and strategic outreach.

DELIVERABLES

Update PR and communication materials based on stakeholder feedback

Timeline: Monthly updates

Plan and share mid-year updates or success stories to maintain momentum

Timeline: July 2025

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Continue stakeholder engagement
- Host webinars or events for trade and media education

EXIT PHASE: TRANSITION TO 100% BC WINES

AUGUST – NOVEMBER 2025

OBJECTIVE

Communicate the planned return to 100% BC wines and conclude the Crafted in BC program.

DELIVERABLES

Develop a roadmap for transitioning back to 100% BC wines

Timeline: September 2025

Announce timelines for 2025 harvest wines featuring 100% BC grapes

Timeline: October 2025

Finalize and release exit messaging and press materials

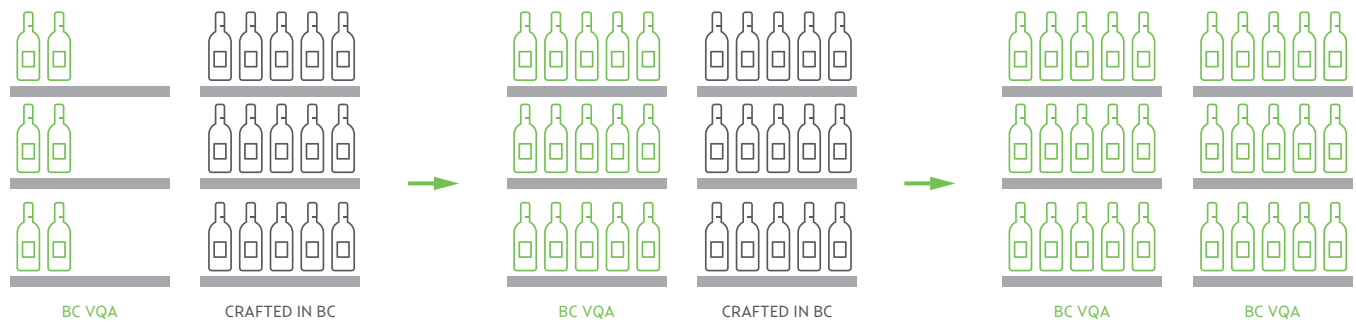
Timeline: November 2025

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Conduct final media push celebrating the return of 100% BC wines
- Compile a final report evaluating the program's success

SHELFSPACE RECOMMENDATIONS

WINERIES' IDEAL PLACEMENT OF REPLACEMENT WINES



- As BC VQA wines become less available, they will gradually take up less of the BC Wines shelf.
- As BC VQA wines become available, they will gradually take over 100% of BC Wines shelf again.

APPENDICES



Vintage 2024 Relief and Support Crafted in BC Wines

November 2024

In response to the July 25, 2024, government announcement allowing temporary relief for BC wineries to use out-of-province grapes for the 2024 vintage, Wine Growers British Columbia (WGBC) has developed the following messaging map. This tool ensures consistent, clear, and concise communication in support of the the [Vintage 2024 Relief and Support Replacement Wine Task Group Recommendations](#), while addressing the realities of the 2024 vintage and the introduction of 2024 Crafted in BC wine to the market.

SUPPORTING MESSAGES		
Supporting Message 1 The BC wine industry has faced many challenges over the past few years, most recently the severe freeze incidents in late 2022 and early 2024 causing significant crop loss in both the 2023 and 2024 vintages. First and foremost, we are winemakers and as many small, family-run businesses, these losses have been hard.	Proof Point 1.1 A few interior vineyards dodged the cold and will produce a small, quality crop from the 2024 vintage, but most vineyards in the interior were affected and as a result won't produce a crop at all in 2024. Luckily, the maritime climate at the coast meant Vancouver Island, Gulf Islands and the Fraser Valley went unharmed and will produce a healthy crop.	Proof Point 1.2 Fortunately, with an estimated 14-18% vine death from the 2024 freeze, there are many resilient vines growing strongly and pushing new trunks or shoots and setting themselves up to be ready to produce a crop again in 2025.
Supporting Message 2 No grapes in 2024 means no wine and therefore no income from that vintage for many wineries. With support from government and our amazing wine community, these challenges have been met with tremendous ingenuity from BC wineries working together to save jobs and maintain the vitality of the BC wine industry.	Proof Point 2.1 An interim solution for one year that allows wineries to bring in grapes or juice from other places outside of British Columbia – Washington, Oregon, Ontario for example – has been reached. This is a one-off, with just enough wine being made to keep the doors open and employees employed until we get the vines back on track for 2025.	Proof Point 2.2 Winemakers are excited to have this one-time challenge and a chance to work with grapes from a different climate and terroir and will be committed to crafting the same high-quality wine they are known for. These Crafted in BC wines will be clearly labelled as to where they are from and will not be blended with or labelled as being BC wine.
Supporting Message 3 Sometimes being forced to reset is a good thing. Those growers that were unfortunate and did lose their vines have been given the opportunity to	Proof Point 3.1 Luckily wineries still have lots of wine to sell. There is a misconception that there is no BC wine for sale. There is plenty of wine from vintages	Proof Point 3.2 So, while yields will be down for a few years until new plantings come into production over the next 2-3 years, there will be a good quantity of BC

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rethink everything. What to plant, where and how to farm are all being re-evaluated as growers reestablish their vineyards to be even more resilient for the future.	2018-2023 still out there and still to be released over the next few years. Most wines take 1-2 years to make and then many will be aged in bottle for a couple of years before being released so there is no need to panic. BC wineries still have lots of wine.	wine made in 2025 and beyond.
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CLICK HERE FOR THE MESSAGING MAP

CRAFTED IN BC VINTAGE 2024 RELIEF AND SUPPORT REPLACEMENT WINES RECOMMENDATIONS



OVERVIEW

In response to the July 25, 2024, government announcement allowing temporary relief for BC wineries to use out-of-province grapes for the 2024 vintage, Wine Growers British Columbia (WGBC) formed the Vintage 2024 Relief and Support Replacement Wine Task Group. Comprising 25 BC winery, retail, and trade representatives, the group met on September 5th and 19th to develop the following marketing, merchandising, and communication recommendations to support the introduction of 2024 non-BC Replacement wines to the market.

GOALS

- Ensure the viability of wineries & grape growers, jobs and employment.
- Protect and promote authenticated 100% BC wine market share, culture vibrancy and sustainability.
- Allow for the phased-in introduction of non-BC replacement wines.

TACTICS

- Support different winery approaches.
- Support 'Direct to Consumer' sales.
- Minimize trade and consumer confusion.
- Allow for phased-in return to 100% BC wines.

KEY MESSAGES

- We support all BC wineries, rising to every challenge with ingenuity and unwavering commitment to quality. Celebrate the craftsmanship of BC wine that brings quality to every bottle.
- By choosing BC wines, you're supporting talented, passionate winemakers who continue to create exceptional wines. Experience the dedication and skill that make BC wines a true expression of place.
- Every BC wine has a story, and the 2024 vintage is a story to tell! Look on the wine label to find out where the grapes come from. BC VQA is still your quality assurance that the wine comes from 100% BC grown grapes.

ON-PREMISE WINE LISTING

WINE LISTS BY COUNTRY/REGION	WINE LISTS BY VARIETAL
Winery Name, Wine Name (Vintage), Vintage, Appellation or Geographical Indicator if permitted.	Winery Name, Wine Name (Varietal), Vintage, Appellation or Geographical Indicator if permitted.
FORMAT	
PLACEMENT	

*Crafted in BC wines to come immediately following Canada, BC

*Wines listed by country of origin.

SHELFSPACE RECOMMENDATIONS

WINERIES' IDEAL PLACEMENT OF REPLACEMENT WINES

BC VQA

CRAFTED IN BC

As BC VQA wines stop being available, they will gradually take up less of the BC Wines shelf.

As BC VQA wines become available, they will gradually take over 100% of BC Wines shelf again.

- Vendor mixed placement (i.e. all brands together, BC or non-BC).
- Crafted in BC wines should be as close to BC VQA wines as possible.

LABELLING

All standard regulations and guidelines from Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) continue to apply to 2024 vintage replacement wines.

*Geographical Indicators (i.e., Okanagan Valley, Okanagan Falls, etc.) are not permitted on 2024 vintage replacement wine labels. For the back label, please consult with the BCWA.

*The use of other appellations or geographical indicators (i.e., Oregon, Willamette Valley, Ontario VQA, etc.) is governed by the jurisdiction for that region and is the responsibility of the winery to verify with the appropriate body terms of use on their label.

CLICK HERE FOR THE CRAFTED IN BC TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

CLICK HERE FOR THE LINK TO LIVING THE WINE GROWERS BC BRAND