

## Top 10 QR Code Rules in the Wine Industry

To successfully apply QR codes to wine labels, we recommend following these simple rules.

### 1. Code Size: Make Your QR Code Noticeable

The larger the QR Code, the more stable and easier it is for a QR code scanner to read. QR Code symbols should be printed as large as possible within the available printing area.

TOO SMALL  
TO SCAN



For QR codes that contain a URL, the smallest size is generally recommended to be 1.25 x 1.25 inches (or 32 x 32 mm). These dimensions are for the printed part, and don't include the so-called "quiet zone" that borders the code. At this minimum size, all camera phones currently on the market can read the code. Reducing the size to 26 x 26 mm or roughly 1 square inch still covers 90% of the phones on the market. The latest camera models, which have improved macro capabilities, can however already deal with QR codes that are less than 10 mm (0.4") wide and high.

For reader accuracy, distinct contrast between the background and the QR code color itself is very important. The QR code should have a dark color on a light background. You cannot go wrong by treating the QR code as line art, using black on white. If the background needs to be in color, make sure that it is a solid color, not a screened tint. Avoid using cyan or magenta, but a 100% yellow background should work fine. Very light Pantone colors might also work, as long as the contrast with the bar code is high enough.

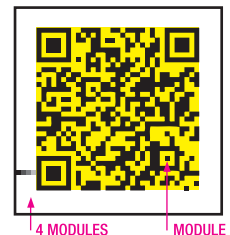
### 2. The Quiet Zone: Surround It by White Space

The QR Code symbol area requires a margin or "quiet zone" around it to be used.

The margin is a clear area around the QR symbol where nothing is printed. QR Code requires a four-module wide margin at all sides of a symbol. A module is the smallest pixel element of a QR Code.



For most phones a smaller quiet zone of 2 modules will work, but for optimum readability we recommend a 4 module quiet zone.



### 3. Enlist Early Adopters

They can help you train the market, but first they have to learn themselves. Because QR codes are still new, we advise that you give guidance about how to use them.

Some recommendations:

- Include brief text under the code, such as "Scan this to learn more," "See video," "Buy online," etc.
- Provide link to download scanning software.
- Download, copy and insert explanatory materials on QR Code use

**4. Mobilize Your Landing Page**

The whole point of using a QR code is to connect with the consumer in a mobile way, sometimes directing people to a landing page. So, make sure consumers can read your website on a mobile device when they use their smartphone to get there.



**5. Keep the URL Short**

Use a URL shortening site (TinyURL.com, for instance), if you are embedding a URL. The QR Code can be smaller and encoded with a higher level of error correction when the URL is short.

**6. Make the Content Valuable**

Think about your own mobile phone. How much time do you want to use it receiving a commercial for a business? When consumers choose to engage with you by reading your QR code, it is a fantastic opportunity. The experience should be positive, and you should reward them in some way for their time and effort.

**7. Limitations with Proprietary Codes**

Look for “three squares” in the top corners to identify a true “QR code,” which is “open source.” That is, it’s free. Several codes are confusing the marketplace, because they come from for-profit companies like Microsoft. Microsoft Tag, Scanlife’s EZ code and JagTag are often mistaken as QR codes, but they are not. The problem with these proprietary codes is that they can ONLY be read by the app that has been designed for them.



OPEN SOURCE SQUARES

**8. Make it Easy to Download a Reader**

Today, most smartphones do not come with 2D barcode reader software preloaded. This is beginning to change, as carriers, phone manufacturers and OS providers catch on. Until then, however, a smartphone user must download a free reader before he or she can scan a tag. So, for now, every QR Code campaign must include a simple means of locating and downloading the software.

**9. Test the Code on Your Product**

QR codes can be finicky. Don’t rely on a printed proof to make sure your code actually works. When using a QR code, opt for a printed proof of the actual label. Place the label on the product and then test the code.

**10. TTB Compliance and QR Codes**

If a wine label claims certain details about the wine’s style, how it was made, where the grapes were grown, etc. then the winery must maintain detailed records to back up all that information, as required by the U.S. Alcohol, Tobacco, Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB). The same federal requirements govern all information provided to a customer who uses his or her smartphone to read a QR code, which takes them to a brief video of the winemaker talking about the wine. Perhaps some of that same information was not on the actual label but is referred to in the video. The TTB regulations apply across the board. Whatever information a consumer is lead to by accessing a wine label’s QR code is considered either labeling or advertising material by the TTB, and so subject to their regulations.

Do you have additional questions about QR codes? Contact us at 800.429.4321

