



The Hidden Cost of Busy Season

A Winery Owner's Guide to Keeping More of What You Earn



Why your busiest months may be costing more than you think, and how to protect profitability as your winery grows.

Explore how to keep your profits where they belong: in your winery.

Understanding the True Cost of Growth

Most wineries spend months preparing for busy season because it is one of the most important opportunities of the year to drive revenue, strengthen customer relationships, and build momentum for the months ahead. Additional staff are brought on to handle increased traffic, inventory levels are adjusted to support higher sales volume, events are scheduled to attract visitors, marketing efforts ramp up, and wine club shipments are carefully planned and executed.

These investments require time, money, and effort, but they are made with a clear goal in mind: creating a stronger, more profitable business.

Growth Should Improve Profitability

The challenge is that many wineries overlook a cost that quietly grows alongside their success.

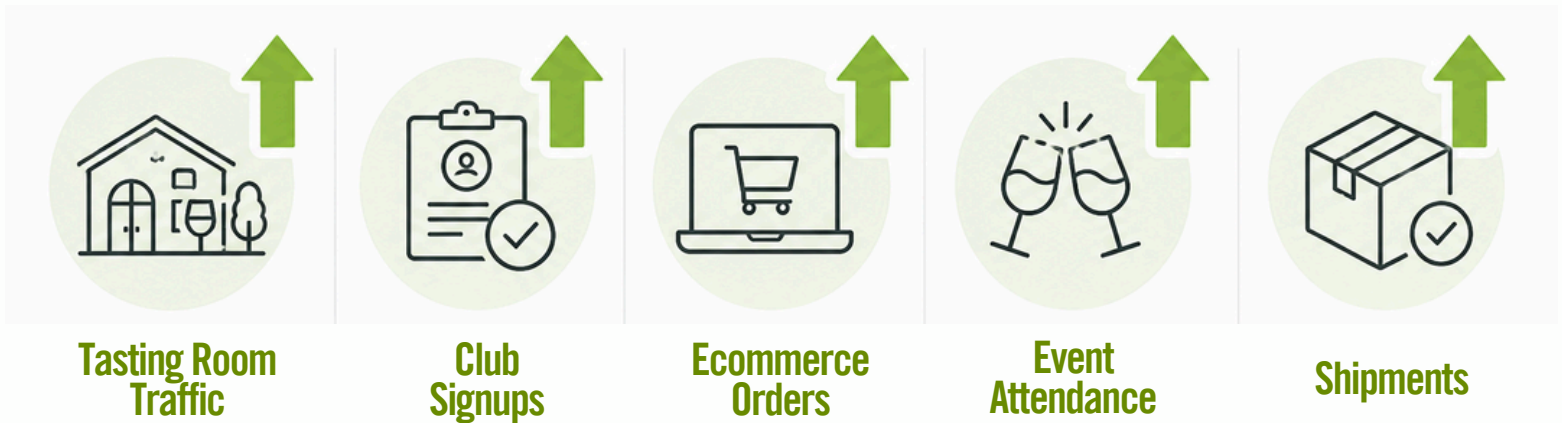
As more guests visit, club memberships expand, online orders increase, and events fill up, some technology platforms become more expensive every time revenue grows. What appears to be a small cost at first can become a meaningful expense during the very months when your winery is performing at its best.

What This Guide Will Explore

- ✓ How software pricing models impact profitability
- ✓ Hidden operational costs beyond monthly subscriptions
- ✓ The true cost of disconnected systems
- ✓ Questions every winery should ask before they grow

What Busy Season Looks Like

Tasting rooms fill up. Events drive traffic. Club shipments go out. Online orders increase. Teams work hard to turn momentum into revenue that carries the business forward. Busy season is exciting. It's also when every system, process, and expense inside the winery is put to the test.



Growth Comes With More Than Revenue

Every winery expects labor costs to increase during busy season. Most expect hospitality and marketing costs to increase. Few stop to ask whether their software costs increase too.

These costs are expected because they're designed to generate more revenue. The assumption is simple: When the winery performs better, profitability should improve.

High Season Investments

Before evaluating technology costs, it's important to understand the realities of a typical winery busy season. These expenses are intentional investments designed to generate additional revenue.



Staffing

- Additional tasting room staff
- Event personnel
- Seasonal employees
- Extended operating hours



Inventory

- Increased wine production
- Merchandise purchases
- Packaging materials
- Shipping supplies



Marketing

- Event promotion
- Digital advertising
- Tourism partnerships
- Email campaigns



Hospitality

- Events
- Member experiences
- Live music
- Food pairings

The goal is simple: Spend strategically today to earn more tomorrow.

Unfortunately, some software pricing models create an additional cost that many wineries fail to account for.

Most Wineries Monitor Operational Costs

- ✓ Labor Costs & Percentages
- ✓ Cost of Goods Sold
- ✓ Event Profitability
- ✓ Wine Club Performance

The question becomes: **Does your software bill also increase?**
For some wineries, the answer is yes.

The more successful the month becomes, the larger the software expense becomes and growth creates a penalty. Unfortunately, most wineries don't realize the impact until they review annual financials.

This could cost you - new equipment, barrels, bottles, marketing campaigns, additional staff, and so much more!

| Month | Winery Revenue | 1% Platform Fee | 0% Platform Fee |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| April | \$75,000 | \$750 | \$0 |
| May | \$95,000 | \$950 | \$0 |
| June | \$125,000 | \$1,250 | \$0 |
| July | \$150,000 | \$1,500 | \$0 |
| August | \$175,000 | \$1,750 | \$0 |
| September | \$130,000 | \$1,300 | \$0 |
| Total | \$750,000 | \$7,500 | \$0 |

How Percentage-Based Pricing Impacts Profitability

Understanding how software costs scale is just as important as understanding how revenue grows.

| Pricing Model | Percentage-Based Pricing | Fixed Pricing |
|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Monthly Cost | Increases as sales increase | Remains predictable |
| Budgeting | Harder to forecast | Easier to forecast |
| When Revenue Grows | Fees increase automatically | Costs remain stable |
| Best For | Lower entry costs | Long-term scalability |
| Potential Challenge | Success creates higher costs | Requires evaluating overall value |

Percentage-based pricing often appears small when viewed transaction by transaction. However, percentages compound quickly.

Percentage-based costs increase every time:

- A guest purchases another bottle.
- A wine club member upgrades.
- An event sells out.
- Ecommerce sales increase.

As revenue grows, so do the fees.

The result: the software provider benefits directly from your success.



If your winery doubles revenue next year, will your software costs double too?

The Real Cost of Disconnected Systems

Software expenses aren't always reflected in a monthly invoice. Many wineries also absorb operational costs created by disconnected systems and manual processes.

Common hidden costs include:

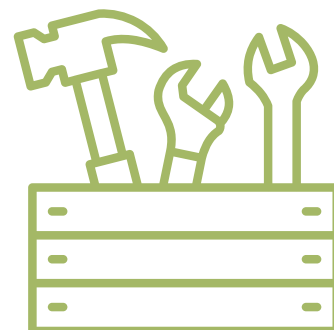
- Manual data entry
- Spreadsheet management
- Duplicate customer records
- Inventory reconciliation
- Reporting inconsistencies
- Staff training across multiple platforms



These inefficiencies consume valuable time, increase labor requirements, reduce accuracy, and can negatively impact the customer experience.

Many wineries also rely on a collection of supplemental tools to fill the gaps:

- Advanced reporting modules
- Sales tax calculation services
- Shipping label generation tools
- Carrier rate integrations
- Reservation platforms
- Marketing systems
- Customer data synchronization tools



The question isn't simply what the platform costs. It's how many additional systems, subscriptions, and manual processes are required to make it work. A connected platform can often deliver value beyond its direct price by reducing operational complexity and bringing more of your business into a single system.

Winery Growth Planning Worksheet

Questions Worth Asking:

How many systems are we paying for today?

How many staff hours are spent moving information between systems?

What would happen to our software costs if revenue doubled?

What are your top three growth goals over the next 12 months?

Use the questions below to evaluate your current technology strategy.

What percentage of your revenue comes from:

Tasting room sales _____
Wine club sales _____
Ecommerce sales _____
Events _____
Technology Review _____

How many systems are currently used for:

POS _____
Wine Club _____
CRM _____
Reservations _____
Ecommerce _____
Reporting _____
Inventory _____
Operational Review _____

How many hours per week are spent:

Manual reporting _____
Data reconciliation _____
Managing multiple systems _____
Customer record updates _____

Current Revenue

Annual Tasting Room Revenue \$ _____
Annual Wine Club Revenue \$ _____
Annual Ecommerce Revenue \$ _____
Annual Event Revenue \$ _____
Total Annual DTC Revenue \$ _____

Current Software Costs

Monthly Platform Cost \$ _____
Additional Software Costs \$ _____
Annual Software Investment \$ _____

Growth Projection

Projected Revenue Growth _____ %
Projected DTC Revenue \$ _____
Projected Software Cost \$ _____



Key Reflection Question:
Are your systems supporting growth?

Growth Should Work For You



Busy season is supposed to be rewarding.

The additional staff, events, inventory, and hospitality investments you make should create stronger revenue and healthier margins. Technology should support that growth, not quietly become more expensive because your winery is succeeding.

Whether you're evaluating software today or planning for future growth, understanding the true cost of busy season is an important step toward building a more profitable, sustainable winery.

Your next step!

Let us show you what growth could look like without rising software costs. We'll review your systems, identify opportunities to simplify operations, and help you keep more revenue in your winery.

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can help you
get started!**

