

North Dakota Farmers Markets and Growers Association, Inc.
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Bottineau, ND 58318

Temporary Return Service Requested



NORTH DAKOTA FARMERS MARKET & GROWERS ASSOCIATION, INC

GROWING NORTH DAKOTA FROM WITHIN

Summer
2010

www.ndfarmersmarkets.com

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National Farmers' Market Week

The National Farmers' Market week begins August 1st. This is a great time to organize your own special events and marketing campaigns to spread the word about your market. Offer a special market wide discount, organize a free craft activity, have a live band, a raffle, prizes, or other fun event to draw people in. Be sure to display and hand out materials informing visitors about your market and how farmers' markets benefit the community.

Need some help coming up with materials? The USDA and the national Farmers Market Coalition put together an entire ad campaign called 'Markets Are Up' for 10th Annual National Farmers Market week. Materials from this campaign are still available. At the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service site you can find postcard mailers, a document of various talking points, a flyer, a brochure with a glossary of market terms, and a press release template. At the 'Markets Are Up' store at the Farmers Market Coalition website you can purchase decals and brochures.

Use this national recognition of farmers' markets to your advantage to spread the word about your market.

Farmers Market Coalition - <http://www.farmersmarketcoalition.org/> The Farmers Market Coalition serves a rapidly growing industry with information and representation at state and federal levels. They help to build networks, link peers, and connect farmers markets old and new with tools and resources for success.

www.AMS.USDA.gov – to access farmers' market pages, use the 'Farmers Market and Local Food Marketing' link on the left navigation bar.

Market Grant Update

This year the NDFMGA is pleased to be providing additional assistance to markets through the Market Exploration Grant. This program is engaging markets in the collection of useful information for the association in return for their work, the markets receive \$500. We are happy to say checks have been sent out. The information collected will be used to strengthen and improve the NDFMGA. Our thanks go out to all the markets who applied and their help in doing this vital work for the association.

Marketing the Market: Promoting Farmers Markets, Vendors, and Local Foods

When it comes to marketing, many of us have little to no training or experience. We do what we've always done before, a few posters, couple of fliers, maybe a newspaper ad and a banner. What you may not realize is that having a consistent and thoughtful marketing strategy can make a huge difference for your market and your vendors.

There are many great informational resources on marketing available through the NDFMGA and the Entrepreneurial Center for Horticulture. Here is a summary on some basic marketing techniques and strategies.

There are four main types of marketing strategies: active, passive, direct and indirect. Using a combination of techniques from all of these can increase consumer awareness, draw in new customers, increase repeat business, and increase sales.

Active Strategies: Includes two main methods, point-of-purchase advertising and direct selling.

Customers take less than a minute to decide if they are going to purchase a product. Point-of-purchase marketing focuses on making an impact in those all important first 30-60 seconds of viewing. This makes the display of produce, signage around it, cleanliness, and packaging extremely important.

Here are a few simple things to keep in mind for your point-of-purchase marketing strategy.

Uniformity: Create a seamless environment. For vendors, this means arranging your products in a consistent way, use the same colors, sign design, and display themes each week. Keep everything neat, organized, and full.



Left: These peppers give the viewer a nice sense of uniformity.



Right: Flowers can add to the sensory experience for the customer.

For market managers this may mean assisting and organizing your vendors. Establish guidelines for how vendors should set up (for example, no ground displays – customers rarely buy things from the ground). Reserve the right to relocate vendors to fill in gaps. Work to create a seamless flow in the market and consider assigning spaces. You may even want to include guidelines for how signs and information are presented. The more consistent this is across the market the more likely customers are going to view the information as reliable, credible, and professional. All of these things help the market run smoothly, makes customers feel more comfortable purchasing food, and benefits the market's image.

Need ideas for your website? Do a little browsing and research. See what other CSAs, markets, and vendors are doing with their sites. Use them for inspiration.

Need a starting point? Check out the Austin, TX farmers market website. This is an excellently designed website. Note the uniformity, prominence of the logo, and reoccurring color scheme.

www.austin-farmersmarket.org

Market Spotlight: Farmers' Market and Beyond

Fundamentals of Organic Seed Production:

Wednesday, August 4, 2010 9:00 am – 4:30 pm.
NDSU Carrington Research Extension Center
Pre-registration deadline: July 25th
\$15 per person including noon meal and refreshments.
Registration at the door is \$20.

For more information call 701-883-4416 OR visit our website at www.organicseedcoop.com Click on Events.

Soil Health Tour:

Full Season Cover Crops, September 16, 2010, Menoken Farm, please call 701-250-4518, Ext. 3 by September 9th.

Farmers' Market and Beyond in West Fargo knows the importance of promoting the market. They draw in their customers using a combination of marketing techniques. Their marketing efforts have helped the market draw 200 – 400 people each week.

For passive marketing, Farmers' Market and Beyond places ads in The Forum and The Pioneer. They also issue press releases, advertise in area magazines, and place flyers around town. The day of the market they use signs on street corners to direct people to the market as well as increase awareness of the event. They also have a website through the West Fargo Park District at www.wfparks.org where everything from the latest posters for the market to the bylaws are posted.

Other marketing techniques utilized include personal phone calls and e-mails, letters, visiting other area markets and events and promoting the market at things like Dakota Pride. Besides encouraging people to visit the market, Kim Wangler, the market manager, also likes to use these events to recruit more vendors. The more vendors, products, information and events available at the market the more people it will draw in.

Currently, there are anywhere from 8-22 vendors at Farmers' Market and Beyond, depending on the time of year. These vendors sell a number of different items including jams, jellies, flowers, berries, herbs, meats, organic produce, bread, homemade crafts and food related home-based businesses.

All of this hard work is paying off as the number of vendors and visitors increases each year. This year the goals are to maintain the friendly atmosphere of the market and encourage entertainers and food vendors to become part of the market. Kim Wangler would also like to see information on health, wellness, fitness and nutrition set up in booths as part of the market. This would turn it into not only a marketplace for customers to buy food but also educate themselves and learn to lead healthy, happy, and full lives.

This vibrant market is run by the West Fargo Park Board, the Park District Executive Director, the Recreations Specialist and a Board of Directors. The market is located at South Elmwood Park and runs on Thursdays from 4-7 pm July 8th through October 14th and Saturdays 9:00 am to 1:00 pm from August 28th through October 16th.

Have questions about this market? Want to learn more? Contact Kim Wangler at kim.wangler@wfparks.org or call 701.433.5360.

North Prairie Farmers Market Festival will be Saturday, August 21st at 11 a.m. at the North Parking Lot, Civic Auditorium, Minot, ND. There will be vendors, classes, and entertainment. Christy Rost, author of two cookbooks, culinary instructor, and a passionate expert in the celebration of Home and Family will be there. Christy's expertise was featured nationwide on PBS and CREATE TV stations.

More info coming soon on: www.northprairiefarmersmarket.com

Questions? Want to learn more? Contact the NDFMGA or the Entrepreneurial Center for Horticulture. We'll be happy to help!

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edu/ech.shtml

The NDFMGA will once again be conducting a simple, 'dot' survey at various markets across the state. Don't be surprised to find us out there one day at your market!

Other things you should keep in mind while developing your brand:

- Be sure to use your logo a lot! Include it on signs, e-mail signatures, your website, brochures and fliers. You want people to see it, recognize it, and associate it with all the wonderful things at the market. The NDFMGA even has FDA approved stickers with our logo on it that you can safely attach right to your produce!
- Choose a typeface, colors, and a look. A consistent look helps unify things and make them more recognizable. Be sure to choose type that is easy to read! Stick with a few colors and again, make sure it is visible and legible.
- Set some standards. You don't want your logo or brand to be associated with negative experiences or things. Encourage quality though out your market and all of your promotional materials.
- Have talking points and convey a consistent message. Don't confuse people by saying one thing about your market one week and something contradictory or completely different the next.
- Be professional. Encourage your vendors to come ready for the market, clean and dressed appropriately. You want customers to recognize your vendors and differentiate them from other customers. Another good way to do this is by having buttons or nametags made for vendors to use.



Examples of logos are located throughout this article and to the right is a good example of a vendor display that keeps produce off the ground and easily accessible.



Indirect Marketing Strategies: This is also sometimes known as public relations. Indirect marketing utilizes third parties to help spread the word about your market. You may already be doing some indirect marketing. This includes things like asking local businesses to display your poster or flier for the market. However, there are other indirect marketing techniques you may not be familiar with.

Here are a few things to try:

- Network with civic and business groups. Many organizations welcome guest speakers at their events. This could be anything from a Girl Scout meeting to a corporate retreat. The more people who know about you, the better. Good places to start include the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary club, 4-H group, schools, and area health centers.
- Co-sponsors something. Maybe a community group is putting on a benefit supper or some other event. Donate some local produce to the cause and be a co-sponsor. Maybe there is a community education class you can assist with or the area hospital is doing a nutritional program. See if you can get involved.
- Provide education and training. Again, this is something you can do with another organization or something you can arrange on your own. Focus on things that your customers may be interested to learn about, health, nutrition, gardening, cooking, canning, crafts, or anything else you can think of.

There is so much more you can learn about marketing and many great resources available on this topic. I highly recommend "New Directions in Marketing For Farmers' Markets" by Kirsten Krokowski and Terry Gauvette. Much of the information for this article can be found there along with even more useful tips and advice.



Vendor tip:

Create new and beautiful signs each week with a reusable chalk board and colorful chalk!



Information: One of the great things about farmers' market customers is that they want to be informed. Vendors should include information about their production methods, farm location, history, and interesting farm stories. The market in general can inform customers about health benefits, other community events, and nutrition. Remember, presentation affects how credible the information is. Colorful signs are great so long as they are tastefully done. Handwritten signs are not recommended unless they are carefully created, nor are cardboard signs. A great way to achieve an upscale look that is still fresh, affordable and personal is through the use of a chalkboard with colorful chalk.



Presentation: Packaging is important. Many consumers base their decisions on how a product looks and containers are just as important as what is in them. Colorful plastic or fabric containers are more effective than cardboard and certainly better than no container at all. Obviously, not everything needs a fancy package, but remember that how you bundle, sell, and present your product makes a big difference.

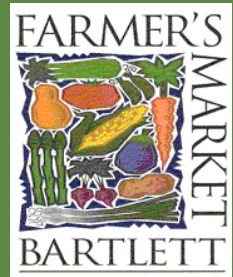
Sell related products side by side, fresh breads next to cheeses, jams and jellies; coffees next to desserts. Market managers may even want to arrange vendors in a similar fashion. This technique can increase sales by 20-25%.

Never sell anything from the ground. Not only is it harder to customers to see and examine, it also comes across as less professional and even unsanitary. People rarely buy things from the ground. Instead use covered tables, shelves, and displays. Your goods should always look good. As things sell, fill in gaps with more of the same product or a different one. Signs with prices should be consistent, clean, neat, and easy to see.

One great way to ensure all of these things is by creating a visual plan. Vendors should do a basic layout of their stand each week. This will help you to think about where you need signs, where to place products, and how to best attract customers in advance so you aren't scrambling the day of the market. Market managers may want to do something similar with the entire market, deciding where to place vendors, entertainment, and signs. Plan how customers should move through the market, create a rhythm and flow and consistent, positive image for the market.

Direct selling is when you speak in person to the customer. Always be friendly. Greet customers with a smile and statements like "Welcome to the market", "Do you have any questions?", or just a simple "Hi, how are you?" This makes people feel comfortable and more willing to hear what you have to say.

Do a little planning. You may not like the idea of a 'script', but do think



Market Tio:

Your market is a local destination! Create a simple website and have the area Chamber of Commerce link to you as a local event/destination. The easier you make it for someone new to the community to find you, the better.



"From East Tennessee Hands"

about things before you even set up your stand or market. What are the benefits of buying your products? What questions might your customers have? Do you have some unusual produce you might want to explain and introduce people to? If you plan ahead and have talking points and answers to potential questions in mind, you will likely feel more comfortable and relaxed with talking to potential customers.

Think about what your customers may need and provide solutions. Farmers' market customers are often looking for ways to improve their experience with local foods. Give them helpful tips, like how to store their produce, good recipes to try, and information on why they would not only enjoy local foods but how it can be good for them. End your conversations with things like "Can I help you with anything else?" If the customer feels like you are friendly, helpful, and meet all of their needs, they are more likely to come back.

Passive Strategies: This includes things like TV, radio, and newspaper ads as well as mailings, use of the internet, and e-mails.

Internet: A survey done by the National Advertiser's Association showed the 71% of people have access to the internet daily and of those people 80% use it as their main source of information. Newspapers, radio, and even TV ads are being replaced by online media. An internet presence for you your market and vendors is an increasingly important component for your marketing strategy.

Your own website or a series of pages on a larger website (like a chamber of commerce website or parks & recreation website) is the best way to advertise your market online and spread information to potential customers. If you don't already have a website you may be surprised how easy and affordable it can be to create one. If you would like more information or advice on creating a website for your market, please feel free to contact us.



A web banner for the Minneapolis Farmers Market website.

Some important things to keep in mind when designing your website:

- Your home page should be simple and contain your logo, a clear and concise headline, and very basic information. Additional information should be on supplemental pages.
- Have an 'About Us' page. Include contact information, market location, days and hours as well as information about your vendors and what customers can expect to find at the market. You may also want to include a bit of the history of your market and information about the market manager and staff.
- Use pictures! Large blocks of text lose people's interest quickly. Pictures and graphics keep people interested and do a great job of portraying and promoting your market.

Of course, having a website doesn't do any good if no one knows about it. Make sure to include the web address on all your signs. Include it in any communication you send out, letter, e-mails, fliers, newspaper ads, et cetera. Link your page to other websites and find other websites that will link to your site. Contact area Chambers of Commerce, local newspapers, city guides and information sites, local tourist destinations, area schools, health care systems and



CSA Tip:

Contact your local health care providers and talk to them about doing a joint nutrition education session for the public. Market your CSA as a good way to stay healthy.



providers, corporations, and nonprofit organizations. Many of these places have websites and you will find with a simple phone call they are often happy to link your site to their pages. Send your web address to the NDFMGA and we'll link it to our site!

Other passive strategy ideas:

Generate an e-mail list to send out to vendors, customers, and anyone else who wants to sign up. You can use this to send out monthly newsletters, a calendar of market events and activities, notify people of specials, discounts, and promotions, and maintain contact with people during the off-season.

Create professional brochures and distribute them to popular places in the community. Have them available at local schools, libraries, banks, businesses, and health care centers. Besides having these places display a flier, a brochure is something a potential customer can take home, have on the fridge, and keep to remind them about the market. It also is a chance for you to get more information to them.

Besides placing ads in your local paper, invite them to come to the market and do a story on it or write one for them. Community papers are often happy to have great, local, human interest stories to include. Write an article on the history of the market – has it been around for 20 years? Is it located in a historic part of town? Maybe write up a human interest piece. Maybe you have a loyal customer who has been coming for years and has interesting stories about the market. Maybe one of your vendors has led an interesting life or has moved from California to North Dakota and loves it here. Be creative. Another great idea is to write up an educational piece, explain the products available at your market and how they going to the market can improve the reader's life.

Direct Marketing Strategies: One important aspect of a direct marketing strategy is branding. A brand helps people to recognize your product or your market. It includes everything from your market or business name to the logo, colors, tag line, and mission statement. Think about what you stand for, what you want to convey to your customers. Then develop this into a consistent and recognizable 'brand'.

One of the most basic and important parts of branding is your logo. You can pay someone to develop a logo for you. It will be money well spent. You may want to try contacting an area college or university. Students with graphic design and business skills are sometimes required to do community service projects. Designing a logo (or even a website) for a farmers' market can be one such project for them. Also, markets and vendors who are members of the NDFMGA are able to use our Dakota Grown: It's All Good! logo. We sell products with this logo and also will provide it to you, free of charge, so you can use it in your own signs, banners, and displays. Just contact us and we'll provide you with what you need.

