



FARMERS MARKET
PLANNING TOOLKIT
MARKETING YOUR MARKET



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INTRODUCTION



As any farmers marketer can tell you, marketing is a critical part of being successful in the local foods economy. The WVFMA recently completed the first round of the WV Farmers Market Training Network, a pilot program funded through the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, where we studied high need training topics for farmers markets in the Mountain State. What we found is that marketing was far and away the most requested training request among the markets we studied.

What we found also is that consultants that were selected to work with markets on these projects had difficulty understanding the unique needs of a farmers market. In order to address this situation, the WVFMA has worked with a marketing firm, MESH Design and Development, as well as other contributors such as media experts and farmers market practitioners, to bring together the worlds of marketing and farmers markets to create the “Farmers Market Planning Toolkit: Marketing Your Market.”


We are very proud.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is meant to be a practical guide to marketing for WV farmers markets. Each section of this document will highlight a different category of marketing that can be utilized by farmers markets, and will give you information and guidance on what those marketing terms mean, why those strategies are important to farmers markets and what sort of farmers markets each type of marketing may work for.

In addition to this, there are several hands-on planning tools included throughout the document and in the appendices that can be utilized by farmers markets, such as check lists, templates and collaborative planning documents. These pieces are meant to supplement the decision-making processes of your farmers market, and most can be used separately or within the context of the whole document. If your market chooses to hire a consultant or expert to help with your marketing, these tools may also be useful to them in providing a “farmers market context” for their planning and activities.





BRAND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

WHAT IS IT?

“Branding” is a term that refers to the identity you build for your market. Many people think it is just a logo, but a good brand considers every piece of communication that goes out around your market. This includes not only your logo, but the colors, typography (fonts!), words, graphics and photographs, and all other images that people associate with your market. Your brand can be applied to packaging and print materials, market signage, giveaways, advertising around your market, your website, and your social media presence. The more consistency you have between these different venues of communication, the easier people recognize your market, and the more trust they build with the market.

A good brand creates a relationship with your customers, as well as new potential customers, and stands for trustworthiness, consistency, quality, and all the other important qualities of a farmers market.



Your organization's brand identity is the unique, cohesive compilation of its name, culture, personality, reputation, perception, ideals and values. Your brand should inspire, grow, and evolve as your organization moves forward. In your case, most farmers market's identities, or brands, will represent high quality food that is fresh and healthy, support for the local economy, and

relationship-building with the people that make your food. In West Virginia, farmers markets can in many cases serve as a central meeting point for people, revitalizing the idea of a town square, where commerce and personal interactions overlap. In a time where we don't know where so much of our food comes from, farmers markets can reconnect people with their food, and with one another at the same time.

There are Two Parts of a Brand Identity:



Visual Identity

Visible *elements* of a *brand*, such as *color*, *form*, and *shape*, which encapsulate and convey the symbolic meanings that are difficult to impart through *words* alone.



Verbal Identity

A Verbal Identity is all the words important to communicating about your market. From the way you say your market's name (or abbreviate it), to the words you always associate with your market, to your elevator pitch about your market (a brief 30 second explanation of what your market does and why it's important). Tone and voice are both important to the verbal identity of your market. If you want your market to feel friendly and approachable, that is the tone you should use when you speak about it.

When these combine and are executed well at a market, they create what we call a "Brand Experience".

A "Brand Experience" is the experience a consumer feels when they are in a store or market. Starbucks is well known for creating a strong brand experience in their cafes, from the way their stores are designed (they always have positive messaging throughout their shops that has nothing to do with coffee, like "experience wonder!"), to the friendly, personal service they provide (they ALWAYS ask for your first name to put on your cup when you order a drink!). When in Starbucks, a customer always feels like they are receiving personalized service in a friendly environment that inspires them.

If you can create a friendly, approachable feeling at your market, that is consistent week to week, you develop an experience for your customer that is recognizable, makes them feel comfortable, and leaves them feeling the way you want them to feel. Your brand experience is created through a combination of all the big things as well as the smallest details. It is portrayed through visuals (signs and the design of your farm stands, as well as the type of tables you use, the type of baskets, the type of business cards, the type of bags your customer walk away carrying their purchases in), as well as the way your vendors speak to customers.

Your brand creates a brand narrative around the work your market does so well. Narratives and storytelling, when told consistently by different people and through marketing materials, help reinforce customer service and quality product, and give customers a human connection to the market.



WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Having a branding strategy is valuable to farmers markets because it helps communicate who you are and what you are doing. It makes current customers feel comfortable, attracts new customers, and helps make sales.

Building a brand develops recognition around your market, and when this recognition is supported by positive customer service and quality products, it helps reinforce trust in your market and helps build customer loyalty (and brand loyalty).

Why Build a Brand?

Branding makes selling easier.

“With a well-managed brand, your company hardly needs to introduce itself. Within your target market, people will already know your business, its personality, and the promise you make to customers—all based on what they've seen and heard through your marketing communications.

Without a well-managed brand, you'll spend up to half of every consumer contact trying to introduce your business and make your case, while some well-known Brand X down the street can spend that time making the sale.”

<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/building-a-brand-for-market-success.html>

IS THIS RIGHT FOR MY MARKET?

Yes, all farmers markets should have a strong brand. Regardless of your ability to attain funding for design work, the tips in this brand strategy chapter can help you think about the identity of your market and how you want it to be communicated to and perceived by your community.

Working With a Designer or Design Firm to Establish Your Own Brand

If you can identify a funding stream of \$750 to \$3,500, you can hire an independent designer or small design firm to design a logo and visual identity system for you. Refer to the “How to Design a Logo or A Visual Branding System” section below of tips and steps to work with a designer or design firm if you pursue this route.



Using the WVFMA branding at your Market

If you are just starting up, and cannot identify a funding stream to hire a designer, we would recommend using the West Virginia Farmer's Market Association branding for your market, with your local name next to the logo, until you can identify funding to design a brand of your own. The WVFMA branding system has been designed with WV's farmers markets in mind and should be an accessible branding platform for all shapes and sizes of market. Refer to the *West Virginia Farmers Market Association Branding Tools* section on page 14 to read more on how your market can use our branding tools to get started!

GETTING STARTED

How to Figure Out What You Are All About: The Foundation of a Brand

1 Create a Dialogue Within Your Organization
Use the Identity discovery questionnaire we have developed (*Appendix A: "MESH Brand Brainstorm Briefing Survey"*) to brainstorm within your farmers market board, committee or organizing group to talk about your perception of what your brand's assets are.

2 Create a Dialogue With Your Customers and Community Members
Talk to your target audiences about why they like working with you, what your greatest asset is, and what you could do better—in a printed questionnaire at your market or an online survey (survey monkey is a great tool!)—look for patterns in their answers to identify your strengths and weaknesses. View your “weaknesses” as opportunities to grow and improve your market! This is important to understanding how your customer/community perceives you, which is the foundation of your brand, but it is also vital to good customer service.

Encourage community dialogue—build consensus around the understanding of your identity and your message, so as many people as possible feel a part of it (this can be done in community forum groups, group conversations, and on social media). Don't just crowd source ideas, but open up dialogue platforms for people to talk about them—to share information and spread new ideas! (*See Appendix B: "Sample Questionnaire for Target Audiences"*)

How to Design a Logo and/or Visual Branding System

If you have the funding, the best route is to work with a professional designer or design firm to have a truly professional brand for your market.

When working with a designer on a basic branding package, it's best to come equipped with the information above: a good understanding of how your market wants to represent itself, and a good understanding of your target audiences. For a basic logo and branding package, you should ideally ask for a final deliverable package of logo files that can be used on different mediums (jpegs, eps files, and png files), color recommendations, and a font recommendation. Ideally, the font should be open-source, so that you do not have to pay to use it on different computers but it is free to download online. Additionally, you can ask for brand guidelines, a pdf document of varying size that summarizes all the work around the brand so anyone at the market can use the branding easily.

If possible, you can also have print collateral designed, from business cards and print promotional pieces, to environmental signage and a website, all based on your brand. With the basic brand guidelines, though, it is possible to tackle these things as a market if you have someone that can use some type of print design program well. Alternatively, you can easily have a stamp of your logo made at a low cost, which can easily be applied to any materials you'd like to feel “on-brand”. A stamp can work for things like business cards, letterhead and envelopes, as well as bags, notecards, recipe cards, and other fun extras you could distribute.

For a website, WordPress is a great open-source resource with simple, well-designed templates to apply your branding to (if you have someone available that feels comfortable with a platform like WordPress). (*Refer to Appendix C: Print vendor resources for resources on printing for your market.*)

Pricing ranges for this type of work, depending on the firm. If you can secure funding, you can achieve a professionally designed, custom branding package for somewhere between \$750 and \$3,500. Some low-cost options that farmers markets have had success with are working with local colleges and universities that have graphic design departments to design logos as class projects or capstone projects for graduate students. In some cases, other markets have tapped graphic designers to donate their time to work on these projects. We caution that, although low-cost options can seem very appealing, especially for smaller markets, there is often a you-get-what-you-pay-for component to this sort of work. Our recommendation is to work with a professional designer whenever possible, and to compensate them fairly. Supporting local designers and artists with fair compensation supports the local economy just as much as supporting local farmers with fair compensation for their products.

Also, while it may be tempting to pull together a logo in PowerPoint or from clipart, we would strongly recommend that, if you want your market to feel professional and be able to compete with other local food distributors, investing the funding into a professional logo and brand strategy will make all the difference. Alternatively, you can also use the WVFMA branding tools, as described in the “WVFMA Branding tools” section of this toolkit.

How to Talk About Your Market

Meet together with all people that may represent your market and come up with a common set of words you'd all like to use to describe your market. When you are all using the same language- if it is good, authentic, and concise - people will catch on to this and start to repeat it themselves.



TIP: Keep it concise. Make sure to mention why your market is so great (i.e. its differentiating factor). Always stay very, overwhelmingly positive. Be consistent in the big picture description, but everyone has their own reason/ story/ anecdote about why they love their market. While John, the market manager, can explain how he loves the people at the market (and include a quick story about something that happened to illustrate this), Sandra, the vendor, may speak about how she loves connecting people directly with the food she farms on her land, with her own hands.

Best Practices

Be Consistent

Be consistent between all your different communication outlets.

Always use the same logo on anything that represents your farmers market.

Always use the same color palette, and the same typography (the same 1-2 fonts).

As you consistently, correctly, use your visual identity, you will help build equity in the organization’s identity and build recognition around the brand.

Be Transparent

Be genuine in your messaging. Honesty and positivity is always the best policy!

Be Authentic

Your logo should be your own, should be authentic, and should represent your unique market. Don’t copy other people’s logos.

Stay Short and Sweet

Be concise. This helps people understand exactly what you are about. Short and sweet makes content: approachable, digestible, and shareable. This is important when you are giving your “elevator pitch,” as well.

Create Custom Content That Informs People

When you can share valuable information that your audience can relate to, they are more likely to engage with you than if they feel you are just pushing your market, trying to sell them something, or trying to directly force them to change a behavior. Talk about the specific veggies of the season and their health benefits; talk about how farmers markets improve local economies; talk about recipes people can make around your product.

Connect with People Through Stories

When you build a brand around a few strong stories, people can connect with big picture concepts easier, and relate to your market with more ease. Stories make communicating ideas easy and approachable. Try developing 2-3 stories around your market that inspire people, and everyone can tell these stories in the community. If you can pass these stories along to customers, who then tell the stories in the community, you begin to build consumer advocates. Story-telling is a tactic which resonates with all customers and cultures, but is especially valued in Appalachia; therefore a branding strategy that incorporates story-telling is especially important component for West Virginia Farmers Markets.

Keep People at the Center of Every Decision You Make

Ask yourself:

How will this be perceived by the people that work with you at the market?

How will this be perceived by your current market customers?

How will this be perceived by potential new market customers?

Go the Extra Mile

Give your audience a little more than they expected.

Advising your vendors to give your customer a little something more, a “golden nugget”, builds a relationship with your customer and gains their loyalty. It can be as simple as a recipe, a nice package for their purchase, a tote bag, or a piece of advice on how to use their purchase more wisely.

Activate Every Encounter

Building brand through every impression you make increases your exposure to people. Be thoughtful; know that everything you say and do represents your market, even when you are “off-duty.”

Create “Customer Advocates” or “Brand Ambassadors”

When you have good, personalized customer service, build a relationship with your customers, build loyalty around your brand, and give your customers the tools (elevator pitch, sound bytes, print promotions, online media) to easily share with others, you create what we call a “customer advocate” or a “brand ambassador”. Imagine the multiplier effect if not only the people of your market and vendors are representing your brand, but all of your customers are also spreading the word. Through both word-of-mouth and social media, the amount of people that know about your market multiplies. Additionally, these days people trust their friends’ opinions of where to shop more than anything else.

You can read more about this concept on Web-Strategist and Forbes Magazine.

<http://www.web-strategist.com/blog/2010/07/13/forbes-how-to-create-a-customer-advocacy-program/>

<http://blogs.hbr.org/2013/05/how-to-create-true-customer-ad/>

<http://www.forbes.com/2010/07/12/social-media-walmart-intel-microsoft-customer-advocates-jeremiah-owyang-forbes-cmo-network.html>

When in Doubt, Use a Chalkboard

Sometimes for one reason or another, your market doesn't have the time or resources to create a brand or the supporting marketing materials that surround it, or to even print out the WVFMA materials. When there is no time for anything else, use a chalkboard. Chalkboards have the look and feel that will always work with any farmer's market. They are tactile, hand-written, personalized, and cost-effective as they can change from week to week! Chalkboards would be great for vendors, but a chalkboard style sandwich-board is great for any market.

This chalkboard is from Market Grown, a campaign to support local farmers in Alachua County, FL, designed by Melissa Clinard.



Consider Your Brand Values in Every Decision You Make

If your brand's focus is people, interacting consistently in person and in social media situations, like Facebook, both reinforce that people are important to your market. If sustainability is important to your market, when you are printing materials that support your market try to use recycled paper. Use chalkboards that can be reused (as mentioned above). Encourage your vendors to use more sustainable materials. When purchasing tents, tables or anything else that the market would own, try to find things that feel natural and can have a second life at your market (no plastics, Styrofoam, etc., instead recyclable cardboards, reusable wood products, totes instead of plastic bags, burlap sacks, glass/ball/jam jars) (Look to the natural materials of farms for inspiration.)

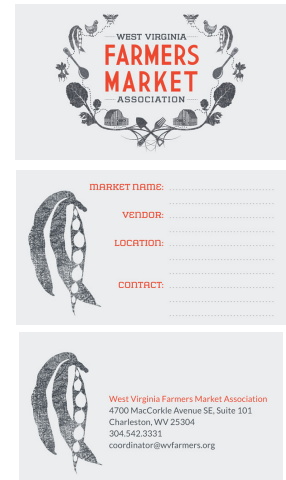
West Virginia Farmers Market Association Branding Tools

West Virginia Farmers Market Association has developed customizable branding tools for your market to use. This can work in tandem with your current marketing/branding, or you have the option to use all WVFMA marketing at your market! We can provide your market with letterhead, business cards, notecards, recipe cards and signage for your market. The branding tools will immediately make you appear competitive with other local food stores, and bring your market in-line with local messaging by just printing out what you've been provided. If you are a start-up market, this is a great way to appear professional and put-together very quickly and easily, and gives you time to concentrate on operations of the market.

For more information on this, please contact the WVFMA directly, at coordinator@wvfarmers.org.



Letterhead front and back



Business card front and back



Note card front and back 5.5 x 4.25 in



Recipe card front and back 8.5 x 5.5 in



Banner 2 x 6 ft



Merchandising

Merchandising is the activity of trying to sell goods or services by advertising them or displaying them attractively; or the activity of selling products that are related to something (such as a television show, movie, or sports team) in order to make money, according to the Miriam Webster Dictionary.

If you have a strong brand foundation, you can use it as leverage to create merchandise that supports your brand.



Merchandising is good for a few reasons:

1. It acts as a fundraiser for your market
2. Every time someone wears or carries something with your name and brand, they become your brand advocate, and represent your market to their friends, family, and contacts.
3. The more places people see your brand, the more brand awareness you can build, and as a result the more people know your market exists as a real option for their shopping needs.

In *Appendix C: "Print Vendor Resources for Resources on Printing for Your Market"* you'll find printing resource options for different types of collateral you can merchandise. Collateral can include, but is not limited to, tote bags, aprons, t-shirts, recipe card packs, notecards, tea towels, postcard sets, seed kits, bumper stickers, kids sticker

packs, mugs, thermoses, key chains, farmer's market books and maps of region. When you are choosing what type of collateral may make sense to merchandise for your market, think about what your consumer would use, and what means something in relation to your market and its core values. For example, a mini-truck with your logo on it might not make sense to sell at your market, but a reusable thermos or a reusable tote bag, that is in-line with most market's core values of reuse/sustainability, would connect more with most farmers' market consumers.

Lastly, if you have a great logo, it's wonderful to use in lots of places. It is always smart, though, to consider other graphics and text you can use that support your market's ideologies. If you have a logo made, as your graphic designer to create some supporting graphics and text that can also be used. For example, farmer's market's consumers would relate to merchandise that said something about eating locally.

The West Side Farmer's Market once hosted a farmer's feast that they advertised with text that read: "EAT delicious and local food, ENJOY great company, and EXCHANGE ideas about local farmers markets."

The WVFMA is in the process of producing a poster to share that says: "GROW, GATHER, FEAST" and "EAT Local, EAT Better".

In addition, they are preparing a print piece they'll share with their member markets on the "Top 10 Reason to Eat Locally." In addition to their logo, they have a supporting, custom-illustrated pattern they can use in different merchandising applications, like aprons. Each graphic illustration within the pattern is also provided independently, and can be used in notecards or other merchandising pieces to represent different products throughout West Virginia. This versatility in a branding strategy is a perfect set-up to explore lots of different paths and ideas in merchandising!

The image features a repeating pattern of various farm-related icons in black and white. The icons include cows, chickens, barns, spoons, crossed forks, apples, bees, leaves, and pea pods. The pattern is set against a white background with a wavy, dotted line border. A solid red horizontal band runs across the middle of the image, containing the title text in white, bold, uppercase letters. Below the red band, the pattern continues on a white background.

SIGNAGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHICS

WHAT IS IT?

Signage and environmental graphics are a way for farmers markets to advertise critical information and to project their brand to community members and customers – both current and potential. It serves as a visual indicator to passers-by that there is a farmers market, and it is open! Or it can be more permanent signage that tells people there is a market in that spot every X day. Within the market, signage helps customers navigate around, find vendors they may have liked when they came in, and build that brand experience that makes the customer feel like they are in a comfortable, familiar space when they return.



Signage can be anything from wooden signs, to sandwich boards, to horizontal banners in front of tables or at the back of stands, to vertical pop-up banners, to individual vendor table signs. It can be custom printed on brand with your market, printed on one of the WVFMA templates, or executed on chalkboards!

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Creating signage and environmental graphics on your market's site that are consistent with your branding will enhance brand awareness, increases visual exposure of the market, and enhances consumer experience while at the market.

IS THIS RIGHT FOR MY MARKET?

Every market should have at least one sign, near the road or at the entry, indicating there is a farmers market, and it is open! The bigger your market, the more signage is important to have throughout, and for different vendors.



Barbour County
Community
Garden Market,
Phillipi, WV, 2013



GETTING STARTED

If you are using the WVFMA signage to customize for your market, refer to the section previously called West Virginia Farmers Market Association Branding Tools.

If you would like to produce signage under your own brand, by yourself or with a designer, here are some things to consider when you are getting started:

Large signage by the roadside is important to draw passers-by in, and indicate to people that have heard about your market elsewhere where you are located. Hours and days open are also very helpful on this sign.

Signage at the entrance welcoming people, with your markets name is important to set the tone of the market – inviting and friendly. Hours and days open are also very helpful on this sign. This signage could even some fact about the market, harvests, season, or any other relevant fun fact that relates to the market and shares information with your customer.

If the market has its own table, this is a great place to sell your market or WVFMA merchandise, to promote your market, and to share education and informative information with your customers. You could share anything with them on local harvests, farmers' news, seasonal information, health information, a diagram of your market if it is big, or hold community dialogues here (like best recipes to share, or a sign up for a community forum on a topic relevant to your market, or a farmer's feast dinner).

Signage at each vendor's table is also very important. It is ideal if it has some type of consistency from table to table, but can also vary if that is the theme of your market.

There are many different ways to produce signage:



- The easiest, as previously mentioned, is with chalkboards.
- Second easiest would be craft paper on clipboards that can change week to week.
- The most difficult, but most in-line with farmers market values, would be a handmade or hand-painted wooden sign.
- You want a material that will endure weather, and last you a long time.
- If you want to go with a printed sign, some type of recycled vinyl could be a good solution.
- Paper is lovely, but will not endure and wrinkle easily through time.

Creative Ideas for Your Market






-  Community murals—Designed under an artist, inspired by the brand graphics, but implemented by the community
-  Hand-painted corner signage by the road (permanent wooden sign)
-  Branded signage for each vendor - Customizable signs, chalkboards, business cards, logo stamps, aprons, etc.
-  Large-Scale standing chalkboard or marquee somewhere with a lot of foot or car traffic opening where the market manager can hand-write info for each week, such as featured products, vendors or events
-  Markets who have a strong social media presence and can cross-promote accordingly.



Photo courtesy of the Charleston Area Alliance's SAGE Program, Charleston, WV 2013;
SAGE logo designed by MESH





EARNED MEDIA



WHAT IS IT?

“Earned Media” is a term for free press coverage given to an organization or event. An example of this would be a newspaper sending a photographer or reporter to a farmers market event, rather than the farmers market paying money to advertise in that newspaper. News outlets, radio stations, newspapers, TV stations and even popular blogs can be sources of earned media.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

This marketing strategy is valuable to farmers markets because it is a no-cost way to reach a wide audience within their community and promote their market. As the trend of highlighting local foods has gained popularity, media outlets in West Virginia have become extremely receptive to giving air time and print space to farmers markets in their areas. A few easy tips and guidelines will help your market effectively communicate with the press in your area and tap into this important marketing resource.

IS THIS RIGHT FOR MY MARKET?

This marketing strategy makes sense for markets that are well organized and have access to a board member, vendor or volunteer who is willing to devote 3-5 hours per event or announcement to engaging in media promotion and outreach. This individual would ideally have strong written and verbal communication skills, fully understand the mission and activities of the market and be approved by the organizing body of the farmers market to act as the “voice” of the market when dealing with the media. This is particularly useful in communities that have a strong local media presence; also extra effective for farmers

GETTING STARTED

Ideally, a farmers market organizing body would meet prior to the beginning of the season and map out a timeline for earned media outreach over the course of the season so that the designated individual(s) responsible for these duties can plan their activities accordingly. (Of course, things have a habit of popping up in an unplanned way, and your market will need to be flexible in response!) Having 2-4 planned earned media “campaigns” per season is a good target for a farmers market. Opening day of the season, special events, new programs at your market (such as implementing SNAP acceptance) and human interest stories (such as a new/innovative vendor or offering at your market) are examples of good subject material for press releases.

A press release is the most convenient way, from a news outlet’s point of view, for your market to communicate with the media. This is the format in which they are accustomed

to receive information, so it is in a farmers market's best interest to learn how to write an effective press release. (See "Appendix D: How-to Guide for Farmers Market Media Outreach" for a step-by-step guide on media outreach; see "Appendix E: Storytelling Toolbox" for writing tips; see the following page for an example of a press release.)

Example: Press Release



For Immediate Release
September 20, 2013
Contact: Lauren Kemp, Expo Coordinator
304-697-3007
lauren@unlimitedfuture.org



Tri-State Local Food Expo will bring hundreds of buyers and growers together

Huntington October 23- Huntington 30 Mile Meal and West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition will link hundreds local food producers with food buyers at a local foods exhibition on October 23, from 1:30 to 5. **Organizers of the Huntington Local Foods Expo are actively signing up food buyers and growers from surrounding counties who want to participate and/or be listed in a directory of people who grow and buy local food.**

Tri-State residents who grow or process food will be able to connect at the event with buyers from restaurants, grocery stores, schools, institutions and other food venues. Organizers aim to increase sales of locally-produced food by fostering long-term buyer-farmer relationships. Attendees will taste locally grown fruits and vegetables and take part in a buyer-grower "speed dating" session. Speakers will explore ways to build relationships between farmers and food buyers. Organizations and agencies that provide products and services such as product liability insurance, food packaging products, training, and affordable loans will exhibit.

The event will also produce a Buyer-Grower Directory of local food growers and buyers who want to make high-volume transactions. "Several Huntington restaurants already buy local products. The directory will make it even easier for growers and buyers to find each other," said event organizer Lauren Kemp. The publicly-available directory will include detailed information about growers and their products and the needs of each buyer. Buyers or growers who cannot attend the Expo can still sign up for the directory until October 16.

The Coalition and partners will present similar regional expos throughout the state. The West Virginia Department of Agriculture is supporting the Expos via a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant. Partners on the Huntington Expo include WVU Extension Service and the Charleston Area Alliance.

A \$15 registration fee is required for Expo attendees. For more information: <http://tinyurl.com/local-expo>. To register or ask questions, call event coordinator Lauren Kemp at 304-697-3007 (lauren@unlimitedfuture.org).

The image features a repeating pattern of farm-related icons such as cows, chickens, bees, leaves, and farm tools. A solid red horizontal band runs across the middle of the page, containing the text 'SOCIAL MEDIA' in white, uppercase, serif font. The pattern is mirrored above and below this band.

SOCIAL MEDIA

WHAT IS IT?

“Social Media” is a term referring to electronic social networking platforms such as Twitter, Pinterest and Facebook. These platforms create a “virtual community” of users who are already interacting with each other on a daily (and sometimes hourly or by-the-minute) basis. Often, these platforms can also intersect and impact each other. For example, if a vendor “pinned” a recipe to their Pinterest page, a farmers market’s Facebook page administrator could also cross-post that recipe to their Facebook page. Since Facebook is the most accessible commonly utilized social media strategy by farmers markets, this toolkit will focus on that particular platform – but if your market has the capacity to branch into other social media platforms, by all means incorporate that into your planning process!

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

There are many reasons why social media is an important, easily updateable, tool for farmers markets. These sites are an excellent way to connect with current and potential customers, promote upcoming events, feature items for sale at your market each week, share local foods cooking tips and more!

Social media is an important tool for reaching the next generation of young farmers market customers, for many of whom Facebook is a major source of news and information. These are dynamic means of communicating information in real-time, and can also alert and link users to information you’ve posted on more static sites like websites or blogs that your target audience may not check as frequently. Another important factor to consider is that these online communities already exist, and by attracting and tapping into those communities, you can involve many people and make them feel connected to your farmers market community. They become part of your marketing team!

IS THIS RIGHT FOR MY MARKET?

Social media is a marketing strategy that should be accessible for all farmers markets. At minimum, every market should build a Facebook page. It is a free marketing resource for anyone with a computer and internet connection. Using the planning tools outlined below, getting started with social media is fairly simple.

GETTING STARTED

Similar to traditional media publications like the Wall Street Journal and New York Times, social media websites (better known as “platforms” for communicating) cater to different types of audiences and deliver different types of information. The audience on each platform expects you to know why they choose to use that platform and which types of information they are interested in hearing. The more attuned you are to these expectations, the more popular your social media account will be. Following is a list of the top five social media networks plus typical behaviors and expectations of the audiences using them.

Basic Breakdown of Social Media Audiences and Information Types






					
Name	Facebook	LinkedIn	Twitter	Pinterest	Google+
Primary audience	All	Business	Young adults	Women, foodies, crafters	Men, students, software developers
Good for what?	Sharing text, photos, video, links	Sharing news, product info, testimonials	Sharing news, text updates, links to info	Pinning photos, video, graphics	Sharing text updates, links, photos, video
Best for what?	Sharing engaging content, reaching a large audience	Thought leadership	Sharing original and curated content	Sharing products, how-to/tips, e-books	Increasing your searchability and expertise

Chart from *How To Create A Social Media Posting Schedule*

It may be tempting to throw up a Facebook page willy nilly and start posting, but taking a few minutes to plan a social media strategy is a good way to make sure that everyone involved in running your farmers market has a chance to weigh in. Even if one individual is responsible (called the “Admin”) for running the site, it is usually beneficial to solicit feedback from the wider group of organizers prior to embarking on a social media campaign—that way everyone has the chance to express their opinions and a consensus can be developed regarding messaging and planned activities. This is doubly important when multiple individuals will be serving as admins and posting on behalf of the organization. See *Appendix F: “Farmers Market Social Media Strategy Planning Document”* for a planning tool which can be used by farmers markets to craft their social media strategy.

Facebook—The “Friend to Friend” Network

Facebook is primarily a network for friends and family to connect with one another. Because of this, it is important for businesses using Facebook to maintain a friendly and casual tone. Talk with your Facebook followers in the way you would want a friend to talk to you—share videos, images, “status updates” and more that appeal on a person-to-person level versus sounding like an advertisement.

Facebook is the social media platform most new marketers turn to first because it has the largest and most active network with the easiest learning curve. Facebook currently maintains 1 billion active accounts. The platform also provides easy options to share a variety of media including text, audio, video and images. Start by building a following on Facebook and add in other platforms as you become more adept at working with social media.

Facebook Tips and Best Practices for Farmers Markets

Day-to-day operating tips:

- Not as formal as a newsletter or other forms of communications
- Personalized—use “We, our,” first person language, etc.
- Keep it brief!
- Clear and concise—don’t bury your lead when you do have to make longer posts
- You can set Google alerts to notify you when possible content is posted online
- Never post anything inflammatory or offensive, or expressing a strong opinion that isn’t the official position of the organization
- Don’t post more than 1x per day—one is usually plenty!
- Never re-post
- Never tag anyone personally [just businesses, etc.], but allow tagging (in settings)
- Good words to use: new, free, cool, local
- Mid-morning and 4:30pm good times to post
- Inclusive—open to people of broad political and philosophical persuasion.
- Avoid preachy / political postings that are not an integral part of your mission (Example: a post about the desirability of eating organic vs. conventional food)



may not be a good fit if you have conventional vendors at your market—it may alienate people or be off-message for your market.)

Examples of Things to Post

Photos, photos, photos! Especially anything featuring artistic close-ups of produce/prepared food or kids (be sure to ask the parents first!)

Graphics—Funny (but appropriate!) memes, quotes or cartoons

Issues at hand - Articles about local foods in WV, scientific or economic articles which support the value of local FODs to a community or to individual health, etc.

Programs that can help your community members (Example: canning classes at your local extension office)

Recipes for items that will be present for sale at your next farmers market

Announcements for events at your market

Resources you find online that will help your vendors and area farmers (example: NCAT tax tips for small farmers)

Info about vendors at your market—some markets do a regular “spotlight” feature on a different vendor each week, month, etc.

Any training or educational events your market and/or vendors are participating in

Success stories

Events that partner organizations are having

What YOU are doing for the cause—when you go to meetings or conferences to build partnerships on behalf of your market

Give a “shout out” to funders or partners for their support

Resource: <http://philanthropy.com/article/How-Nonprofits-Can-Build-Loyal/137297/>





Spotlight on... the Wild Ramp!

The Wild Ramp, a consignment-model farmers market in Huntington, West Virginia, has done a really amazing job with their social media marketing strategy. Their Facebook page currently has over 4,000 “Likes,” and they successfully raised almost \$12,000 in funding from Kickstarter in 2012, as well as having a blog with regular postings about events, issues and vendors at their market. Each of these platforms is utilized to cross-post and promote each other, giving them an extra “bang for their buck.”

One example of a successful social media project they have undertaken is the way they came up with the name for their market, way before they even opened their doors. Their Facebook page started with only 2 “friends” plus one admin months before they ever had their first day of sales. A team of volunteers and interested vendors, many of whom later went on to become Board Members, received training from an experienced social media marketer and then launched a Facebook campaign to generate buzz. One of the pieces of this was the naming of the market.

First they “crowd sourced” nominations for the name, receiving over 100 submissions via Facebook. Then the volunteers researched available domain names, existing markets in the surrounding areas etc., until they eliminated those that were not real possibilities. “It was a lot of hard work,” said Gail Patton, organizer. After they had narrowed names down to five promising possibilities, they opened it up to the public for voting. Folks could vote directly on their Facebook page, and also see which names were “winning” as the voting progressed. “It generated a lot of buzz,” said Gail, “people were really into it!” When the voting was closed, the Wild Ramp had emerged as a clear winner. Organizers had the logo designed by a professional designer, and a visual brand was born!

By the time the Wild Ramp opened its doors for its first day of sales, their Facebook page had over 1,400 Likes. Now, after almost two years of operation, the Wild Ramp is operating a \$350,000 per year business and has a very robust social media following. Said Gail, “We could no more have done this without social media than we could have flown to the moon by flapping our arms,” illustrating the impact this strategy has had on their market.

Twitter—The “News” Network

Twitter is primarily used as a way to quickly disseminate news and announcements to a large audience. More personal friend-to-friend conversations, such as the ones found frequently on Facebook, are less common on Twitter, although they do happen. Many Twitter users keep up with current events or follow trends and national/international conversations through the platform. Use Twitter for talking about things like upcoming events and initiatives as well as sharing articles related to farming and food. Messages that are action-oriented, from small behaviors like clicking a link to more involved requests like attending an event or making a donation, fit best on this platform.

Of all of the social media platforms, Twitter norms are the most difficult to learn and adopt. However, Twitter is the second largest social network with 560 million active users, and, following, is a great medium to connect with large numbers of people. Because the Twitter audience is geared to expect messaging that requires them to take actions, the platform may also be used to mobilize a large audience.

Pinterest—The “DIY” Network

Although men are active on Pinterest, women make up 68% of the platform’s audience. Industries related to weddings, fashion, children, crafting / home decorating and food do best on this platform. As a farmers’ market, there is great opportunity to make a devoted following on this site with 70 million users. Colorful images of food and community activities plus tips for favorite recipes are just a few examples of what would perform well here.

Google+—The “SEO” Network

While Google+ currently has 400 million users, owners of accounts on this platform tend to not be as active as people who are using Facebook, Twitter or Pinterest. However, there is a key advantage to having your business on Google+—a presence on the platform assists with search engine optimization (SEO) or the way that Google chooses to rank you in their listings when people in your area are searching for businesses related to yours. It is not necessary to post regularly to Google+ like you would to Facebook or Twitter, but it is recommended that you create a business page.

Search for your business name to see if Google has already set up a temporary account for you—this frequently happens. If you see your business name pop up on the first page with a web address connected to Google (for example: <https://plus.google.com/10275754774...>), click the link, then click the button that says, “Claim this business.”

If you don't see your business, visit <https://plus.google.com/+GoogleBusiness/> to create a page. Fill in as much information as possible, and, if you have a website, make sure to link to it.

LinkedIn—The “Professional” Network

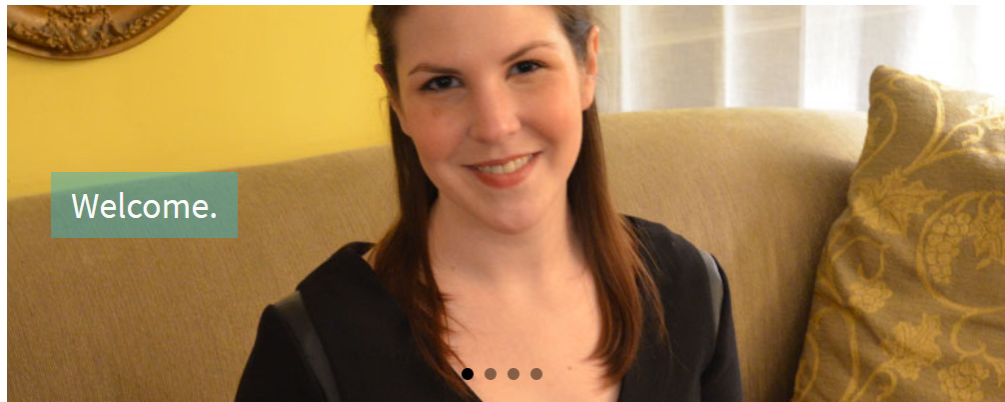
LinkedIn is a good way to network with other organizations working in your field, but provides less opportunity to connect directly with potential customers. The platform is primarily used for displaying each person's professional history and achievements. Businesses typically use LinkedIn to help with recruitment efforts and for B2B marketing outreach and visibility.

People who use LinkedIn may share stories, video, etc. in a similar manner to Facebook, but the subject matter is typically associated with business and career. LinkedIn offers “groups” clustered around business-oriented topics so that people on the platform may connect as individuals and businesses with others in their field.

Emma Fisher, marketing consultant, wrote this piece. Emma has eight years experience working to grow visibility for nonprofit organizations and small businesses. Her services range from public relations and campaign strategy to mass emails, events and fundraising. Find out more about her work at www.emmairenefisher.com.



HOME PORTFOLIO ▾ SERVICES ▾ RESUME CONTACT



About Me

I like collaboration. I like humor, levity and play. I like to face a tough situation, a challenge that is inhibiting the growth of a business, and come up with a solution that makes the papers.

The image features a repeating pattern of various farm-related icons such as cows, chickens, sheep, bees, leaves, and farm tools. A solid red horizontal band runs across the middle of the page, containing the main title in white, bold, uppercase letters. Below the title is a thin white dashed line.

EVENTS AND INBOUND MARKETING

WHAT IS IT?

Events and inbound marketing are actually two separate types of marketing. Events are stand-alone occurrences, outside of the regular market functions, hours or activities. An example of this would be a farmers market organizing a local foods dinner at an area restaurant, for which they would sell tickets and raise money for their market.

In-bound marketing is an activity or offering being held in conjunction with the existing market schedule and activities to drive increased customer traffic. An example of this would be spreading the word that a WVU Extension nutrition specialist was going to be doing a local foods cooking demonstration during an upcoming regularly-scheduled market day.

Although events and inbound marketing are different, the lines are blurry enough for us to treat them similarly for planning purposes.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Inbound marketing is a highly-utilized type of marketing by the farmers market community for many reasons! For one thing, it can grow your regular customer base because they can entice new customers to your market who have never been there before. Another reason is that the days that inbound marketing and on-site events occur are often huge sales days for vendors because of the larger-than-usual crowd. They also make the experience more fun and interesting for the customer, so it helps a market retain their regular customer base.

Additionally, stand-alone events can be critical because they can happen at times when vendors are not busy selling and can participate in the activities. Also because they can be fundraising tools for markets and/or a way to promote farmers market ideals and culture. For example, a “crop mob” of interested community members that shows up at a vendor’s farm to work together for the day promotes the sense of community togetherness and shared work.

IS THIS RIGHT FOR MY MARKET?

Inbound marketing should be an achievable marketing strategy for a market of any age, shape or size. Abilities to do on-site education, entertainment, etc., should be able to be identified within the existing network of community members, vendors, service providers, board members or volunteers.

Event-planning requires more capacity on the part of a market. Events are most successful in markets that have a well-established organizational structure, a market manager and/or extremely dedicated volunteers willing to donate their time to making an event happen.

GETTING STARTED

Like the preceding marketing categories, planning an events calendar is best done prior to the beginning of the market season, so that individuals can plan their time accordingly. (See Appendix G: *Farmers Market Event Planning Guide*). Partnerships are key to being successful, so don't hesitate to collaborate! So is promotion, so use that social media network to get the word out!

Creative ideas for events and/or inbound marketing:

- 1** Regular "Market Basket" Raffles
Sell tickets at the market for a chance to win a food basket or products every week or month. This could create incentives to shop at your market.
- 2** Youth Poster Competition
Engage the community youth/schools to design poster art (maybe through vegetable/fruit drawings) and integrate the art into a poster for the market.
- 3** Healthy Recipe Book Competition
Collect recipes from vendors and customers. Publish one per year then sell. For higher pricing and best, on-brand results, hire a professional designer to compile book
- 4** Farmers Feast Fundraiser for Public (charge per ticket, maybe \$20/head)
Made with local food from farmers market vendors
- 5** Anything Involving Kids and/or Animals is Always a Big Draw!
- 6** Regular Live Music Can Draw a Crowd and Involve Community Members in the Market
- 7** On-Site Fundraising for Other Community Projects
Do a good turn for other do-gooders by hosting a fundraiser for their organization. Your market gets increased customer traffic and you increase your connectivity to other area projects.
- 8** Educational Activities Like Cooking Classes or Vendor Development.
- 9** Seed Exchanges
- 10** Craft Days



Charles Town Farmers Market hosts a community dinner on Main Street, Charles Town, WV 2013

EAT
 DELICIOUS LOCAL FOOD,
ENJOY
 GREAT COMPANY

— and —

EXCHANGE
 IDEAS ABOUT LOCAL
 FARMERS MARKETS

WEST SIDE FARMER'S MARKET
invites you to

THE FARMER'S FEAST

THURSDAY, MARCH EIGHTH
 TWO-THOUSAND AND TWELVE *at* HALF PAST SIX O'CLOCK
WVU CHARLESTON EXTENSION OFFICE
 4700 MACCORKLE AVE SE, SUITE 101.

We are determined to have the hours of our operation suited to West Virginia growers, and we acknowledge your wishes for the opening season.
 RSVP to John Porter, WVU Extension
 (304) 756-9275 or jporter@mail.wvu.edu.

Event Flier from West Side Farmers Market's "Farmers Feast," designed by MESH, Charleston, WV 2012



Example of a Successful Marketing Campaign: WV Urban Agriculture Conference

Farming. It's so citified.
The West Virginia Urban Agriculture
Conference Marketing Campaign

The Concept

Blending urban elements with agricultural themes is the creative approach of the West Virginia Urban Agriculture Conference's marketing campaign, developed by the communications staff at West Virginia State University Extension Service.

The idea began with the notion of creating a sleek, clean and somewhat humorous visual identity with a logo of a chicken wearing a necktie.

While the planning committee was receptive of the design, one worry was that the logo doesn't depict enough elements of agriculture to be all-inclusive of what the conference has to offer. To address that concern, a series of supporting marketing materials were created that continue the theme of blending urban and agricultural elements using the "It's so citified" language.

GARDENING. IT'S SO *citified.*



BEEKEEPING. IT'S SO *citified.*



FARMING. IT'S SO *citified.*



Above: Additional marketing elements were created to depict all areas of the conference's offerings.

Social Media

With a limited marketing budget, social media was the driving vehicle for creating buzz about the conference. A conference website was setup to provide information, schedules and registration capabilities. A Facebook page and Twitter handle were also generated. A conference hashtag—#wvuac14—was also selected and accompanied posts on the social media accounts.

FARMING. IT'S SO *citified.*



WV URBAN AG CONFERENCE



West Virginia Urban Agriculture Conference

394 likes · 57 talking about this

Update Page Info ✓ Liked ✓ Following

Farming/Agriculture
 The West Virginia Urban Ag Conference is coming to Institute April 11-12, 2014! Hosted by WVU Extension Service, WVSU Extension Service and Northeast SARE.

Photos Likes 394 Twitter

Status Photo / Video Offer, Event +

What have you been up to?

West Virginia Urban Agriculture Conference changed their cover photo.
 Posted by Stacy Herrick [?] · 11 minutes ago



Like · Comment · Share

8 people saw this post Boost Post

West Virginia Urban Agriculture Conference added 7 photos to the album *Stu Takes Charleston*.
 Posted by Matt Browning [?] · 43 minutes ago

Highlights

22 Friends
 Like West Virginia Urban Agriculture Conference



Invite Your Friends to Like This Page See All

Type a friend's name... Invite

- Kim Mullins Invite
- Yuma Nakada Invite
- Brent Hartinger Invite

Recent Posts by Others See All

West Virginia State University
 "This is more than just a conference," says Melissa ...
 4 2 · Yesterday at 9:01am

Above: The conference Facebook page was the most heavily trafficked of the social media elements.

The Birth of Chicken Stu

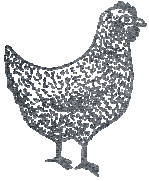
To generate additional buzz, the chicken depicted in the logo was given a name—Chicken Stu—and garnered the official spokes-chicken of the conference. Chicken Stu began tweeting, or rather “clucking,” his journey from the barnyard to the city so he could attend the conference. Stu’s Twitter account—@StuUrbanAgWV—is a collection of tweets from Stu himself as he makes his way across town, visiting with conference partners, urban agriculture sites, and some popular tourist destinations around Charleston. A stuffed Stu was created for photo opportunities, along the lines of the Flat Stanley or Traveling Gnome concepts.

The image displays the Twitter profile for Chicken Stu (@StuUrbanAgWV) on the left and a collage of four photographs on the right. The profile header shows the account name, handle, and bio: "Spokes-chicken for the West Virginia Urban Agriculture Conference, coming to Kanawha County April 11-12, 2014! Follow my journey from the barnyard to the city. The Coop In Charleston, WV · urbanagwv.com". It also shows 60 tweets, 209 following, and 77 followers. The tweets list interactions with local groups, registration deadlines, and mentions of local news and politicians. The photos show the stuffed chicken character being held by a group of people, sitting with a group of children, and being used as a prop during a meeting with the Charleston Area Alliance.

Above: Stu’s Twitter account is from the point of view of Stu himself as he makes his way around Charleston, visiting with groups like local 4-H kids, conference partners, and even the Governor and Fist Lady of West Virginia. Stu was given a slightly snarky personality for a humorous approach to this campaign element.

Reception

As of March 31, almost two weeks prior to the conference, the Facebook page had nearly 400 “likes” and Stu’s Twitter account was closing in on its goal of 100 followers. The marketing elements were succeeding in generating buzz, with locals game for the chance to have their photo taken with Chicken Stu for his Twitter feed.



“...intriguing marketing campaign.”

–April Hamilton, The Sunday-Gazette Mail

“I’ve been seeing that chicken all over Facebook!”

–Sarah Plumley, Sarah’s Bakery, Charleston, W.Va.

“...genius and extremely adorable.”

–Shane Arrington, Herald-Dispatch

“Hilarious!”

–Adventures on the Gorge, Fayetteville, W.Va.

“The WVE office loves Chicken Stew...er, I mean, Chicken Stu!”

–West Virginia Executive Magazine

Follow the West Virginia Urban Agriculture Conference:

Website: urbanagwv.com

Facebook: [fb.com/wvuac](https://www.facebook.com/wvuac)

Twitter: [@UrbanAgWV](https://twitter.com/UrbanAgWV)

Stu’s Twitter: [@StuUrbanAgWV](https://twitter.com/StuUrbanAgWV)



Do you Stu?

[@STUURBANAGWV](https://twitter.com/StuUrbanAgWV)



APPENDIX A: MESH BRAND BRAINSTORM BRIEFING SURVEY

MESH Design and Development – Farmers Market Brand Brainstorm Briefing Survey

General:

- Who, from your market, will be involved in the development of this brand:
- Your market's main competitors:
- Target audience (age, group, gender, lifestyle, location, etc.):
- Current interaction with this audience:
- Concerning interaction, what works well?
- What needs to be improved?
- What should this project ideally achieve for your farmers market?

Visual Identity:

- What words would you like people to associate with your market?
- Do you have a specific style of design in mind?
- Do you have a color scheme you'd like to use?
- Please fill each of the following in 5-15 words (examples provided below):

Qualities of Target Audience:

- Purpose:
- Brand qualities:
- Brand lifestyle:
- Brand inspiration:

Below is an Example of the “Qualities of Target Audience” Fill-In for a Modern Children's Toy and Clothing Company:



Purpose

Décor, play, inspire imagination, promote physical and intellectual development, heirloom



Brand qualities

Simplicity, healthy, eco-friendly, organic and natural, sustainable, classic and Modern, high quality, stylish, contemporary, timeless



Brand lifestyle

Represent a modern and functional approach to play and parenting
Harkens a sense of nostalgia for simplistic past
Makes parent feel holistic, responsible, and still cutting edge



Brand ideals

Blending together old and new
Encouraging belief that beautiful, well-made objects are critical to stimulating children, accelerating their development, and enhancing their well-being



Brand inspiration

Inspired by modern learning theories, products that encourage creativity, instill independence and a desire to accomplish, and help foster a sense of self



APPENDIX B: SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TARGET AUDIENCES

Q1. Please indicate all of the following roles that apply to you:
Farmer, Vendor, Volunteer, Customer

Q2. Please indicate your occupation:
Agriculture and/or Forestry, Hospitality and Food Services, Real Estate, Construction, Arts and Entertainment, Retail, Student, Finance, Non-profit, Unemployed, Law, Business and Management, Health, Services, Education and Academia, Other (please specify)

Q3. What is your age?
5-9, 10-13, 14-17, 18-22, 23-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-65, 65+

Q4. How often do you come to the farmer's market?

Q5. If you frequent our farmer's market, why do you come? Check all that apply:
Healthy food, the people, to buy local, to support local farms, better prices than supermarket

Q6. What do you love most about your farmer's market?

Q7. What could improve about your farmer's market?

Q8. Why do you think farmers markets are important to West Virginia's culture and economy?

Q9. What is your favorite stand at the market?

Q10. Do you have a favorite story about your local farmer's market?

Please note, you can also ask about education level, and annual household income to find out even more helpful information about your current market consumer.

Survey Monkey is a great tool to send a questionnaire online.

You can sign up here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/>

There is a free option to get started, and you shouldn't need to pay a fee unless you have an overwhelming amount of responses.

If you are using Survey Monkey for an online survey, it is best to provide multiple choices instead of fill-in-the-blank when possible. This will allow Survey Monkey to more easily break down answers into data that is easy to analyze (charts and graphs) and can take less time to sort through individual answers.

APPENDIX C: PRINT VENDOR RESOURCES

Printing Resources

Below are a few printing resources MESH has found useful for past projects. We have suggested some vendors through research, but have not worked with all of the below. We suggest contacting the vendors yourself to gauge if they seem right to work with you on a printing project, or else look for a local vendor in your area you may be able to work with. Local is always best when possible!

Postcards

1000 set psprint.com \$150

Canvas totes

<http://cheaptotes.com/> (minimum order is 100)

100= \$150

500= \$750

1000=\$1500

Stickers

<http://paperslam.com/stickers.html>

2.44"x 3.75" 176 for \$50

416 for \$100

or for car stickers 106 3"x 5" for \$50

Stamps

<http://www.caseyrubberstamps.com/>

<http://www.rubberstamps.net/>

1x1= 4.95

2x2= 11.95

3x3= 24.95

Custom label and tape printing options

<http://www.continentalpackaging.com/specialty.htm>

<http://www.uline.com/CustomProduct/CustomStaticKraftTape.htm>

<http://www.tapejungle.com/kraft-paper-tape/>

http://www.bhumitapes.com/custom_printed_tape.html

<http://www.brownskraftlabels.com/rectangle-labels.asp>

<https://www.websticker.com/custom-labels.php>



Patterned Tapes and Bakers Twine

If you can't afford custom tape, you could also order colorful patterned tape from a vendor like WASHI. If you pick one pattern, you could always use this for your market. Alternatively, this tape and baker's twine could be great recommendations for you to share with your vendors for their packaging. This is a great vendor on ESTY that provides these things, but you can find them many different places online. <http://www.etsy.com/shop/PrettyTape>

Silk Screen

Try partnering with a local artist or designer if you'd like to set up a screen-printing table at your market for a day, or have someone screen-prints your goods. Screen-printing has a hand-made quality that is consistent with the hands-on approach all farmer's markets have! The printing feels tangible, hand-made, and beautiful.

Aprons

<https://www.kng.com/> 18 aprons for \$63

Letterpress Business Cards

<http://themandatepress.com/>

This press, though located on the west coast, does a beautiful job with letterpress business cards, at very good rates. They will print custom cards for you, or you can chose from some of their design work!

Signage

Handmade wooden signage

Check around with local artists to see if anyone is willing to paint a wooden sign on reclaimed wood!

Vinyl Banners

Vistaprint

\$27.50 for one 6x2.5 outdoor vinyl banner

\$34 for one 8x2.5 outdoor vinyl banner

(It's cheaper the more you buy at once)

+ shipping costs

Locally, Dunbar Printing and Morgantown Printing and Binding both do vinyl printed banners.

Chalkboard Sandwich Boards

Online you can find many options for these boards. Pick the size and design that make the most sense for your market. They usually cost around \$100.

Other Chalkboard Options

Contact roll, sticks on to any surface, similar but maybe less messy than chalkboard paint 18"x6' = 15.72

Chalkboard can of paint is \$10 (make your own chalkboard sandwich board!)

Or 3-pack of mini chalkboards \$25

APPENDIX D: HOW-TO GUIDE FOR FARMERS MARKET MEDIA OUTREACH

Note: All of this will be more effective if you have taken the time to introduce yourself to the reporter or editor at a non-busy time. Call the reporter (not on deadline) and ask if you can stop by for a short appointment to talk about what the market is doing and planning to do.



Step 1: Write Press Release

- 1** Before you start, take time to write out answers to the questions “Who? What? When? Where? Why?”
- 2** Write the press release as if you were writing the story. Smaller newspapers, especially, will cut and paste your words verbatim and run the story.
- 3** Give your press release a title that names a location in the coverage area of the outlet you are targeting. (Examples: “Monroe Farm Market Expands their Charleston Area Deliveries” or “West Side Farmers Market Dishes up Brunch for Charleston Residents”) Most media representatives are swamped with e-mail and will not even open a press release that does not explicitly refer to a location or organization in their coverage area.
- 4** Tell the editor or reporter what they can expect to see. Be sure they know there will be something good to photograph or film. You greatly increase your chance of coverage.
- 5** Get quotes from individuals regarding the subject of the press release. Work them into the story. Good sources for quotes are: your farmers market board members, vendors, customers and/or public officials. It is acceptable to draft quotes for people, but you must give them a chance to approve/edit the quote before the press release is distributed.
- 6** Give contact information for interesting people they can contact to interview. This greatly increases your chances of coverage.
- 7** Make sure you give credit where it is due—mention funders, sponsors, co-hosts, etc.
- 8** Be sure to include contact info for your organization in your story and at the top of the release.

- 9 Double check to make sure that your answers in step 1 are all covered in your release.
- 10 Run spellcheck and have someone else proofread, if time.

Step 2: Draft and Distribute a BRIEF Cover E-mail With the Press Release Attached

- 1 A subject line that includes the title of the press release.
- 2 The name of your market and any other co-hosts.
- 3 Any relevant dates or locations.
- 4 What exactly you are asking of the media outlet (i.e. Are you inviting reporters to cover the actual event? Are you writing an advance promotional story about an event to promote registration or attendance?)
- 5 If you are inviting reporters to attend, include parking info or directions.
- 6 Name and contact info for the individual they can follow-up with for interviews or further information.
- 7 Attach:

Your press release, saved as a Microsoft Word document. The media representative may want to cut and paste from this document, which is not possible if it is saved as a PDF, for example. Do NOT use Word Perfect and do not send PDFs.)

One or two high-resolution photos, if available, including a caption suggestion in your cover email.

Step 3: A Few Days Later, Make Follow-Up Phone Calls to the Outlets to Which You Sent Press Releases (Do NOT Skip This Step)

- 1 Find out the least busy time to call. Do not call during the three hours before deadline if you can help it.
- 2 Keep it brief. Editors and reporters are busy.
- 3 Introduce yourself and the name of your market
- 4 Ask them if they received the press release (Be in front of your computer so you can re-send the email if necessary while you are on the phone.)

- 5 Briefly recap the information in the press release, as well as the “ask” you are making of that press outlet.
- 6 Ask them if they have any questions. If you want to suggest an interesting angle, do it.
- 7 Ask them if they plan to cover the event. (For example: Will they send a reporter to your event?)
- 8 Thank them for their time and invite them to follow up with you if they have any further questions.

Example: Email Cover Message



Kelly Crane <wvfarmers.org@gmail.com>

Media Invite: Wed, 10/23 - Huntington Local Foods Expo to Host Buyer-Grower Mixer for Farmers and Business Owners

4 messages

Kelly Crane <coordinator@wvfarmers.org>

Mon, Oct 21, 2013 at 1:36 PM

Bcc: news@wchstv.com, Josh McComas <news@wsaz.com>, akaull@wvnh.com, news@wowk.com, news@wvah.com, edawson@heralddispatch.com, lessmith@heralddispatch.com, parthenon@marshall.edu, nash24@marshall.edu, editor@waynecountynews.com, dianep@waynecountynews.com

Dear Huntington-Area media outlets:

You are invited to cover the **upcoming local foods buyer-grower exhibition**, hosted by the WV Food and Farm Coalition and Huntington 30 Mile Meal. The event will serve as a mixer for interested **buyers and sellers of locally produced farm products**. This event will be held on **October 23d, 1:30-5:00 PM at the Big Sandy Conference Center** located in Huntington. See attached press release for more details.

We are excited to announce that we have many area buyers already registered, such as Savannah's Restaurant, River and Rail bakery and Mission Savvy Juice bar and cafe. We also have many growers signed up, selling a wide variety of products from local honey and produce to Bison meat!

Please feel free to contact us for interviews or further details at:

Lauren Kemp
☎ 304-697-3007
lauren@unlimitedfuture.org

Thanks!



APPENDIX E: STORYTELLING TOOLBOX

Use it from idea stage through revision.

Kate Long, Writing Coach kate_long@hotmail.com (304) 343-1884



Cast of Characters: Past, Present and Future Inventory the possibilities. Who will appear in your story? Who do you want the reader to see? Know about? Who will take the plot where you want? Think beyond the “usual suspects.” What people might your main character encounter in daily life? Include people affected directly and indirectly.



Moving Picture Think like a screenwriter. Remember, your words create pictures in the reader’s mind, planned or unplanned. Choose words that make those pictures move. Put people—and other things that can move—in the subject when you can. In each sentence, consider movie: close-ups and wide shots, flashbacks and flash-elsewheres.



Movement Through Time Use “time” transitions to move your story. Consider past, present, and future: This happened, two days later this, but ten years ago (or ten minutes ago), this. Ask yourself: What led up to this? How does this story move through time: this happened, then this? What is happening simultaneously (meanwhile)? Where might this event lead? Connect with cast of characters: Who will react? Counter-react?’



Movement through Space Think active, descriptive verbs. How did the characters move? What did they DO? Who did what to whom? How did it happen? Tiny movements or big movements. Your choice: Move the reader through a space or across the world: “ten feet away” or “halfway around the world.” Transitions control the story.



Tension/Contrast What are the opposing elements in this story? What contrasts? What creates tension? Surprises? In this character? This place? What surprises you? Rule of thumb: The closer contrasting elements are placed together, the greater the impact: “I once was lost, but now I’m found.”










Word Choice and Syntax: Does it match your material? Your character? Is your syntax unnecessarily convoluted? Formal? Are you using words your characters would use? If not, is that a conscious choice? Important question: To whom are you writing? Use the “Hey _____” test. If you were telling this story to that person, what would you say?

Basic Craft Pointers: If I had to Choose Seven Things...

Kate Long writing coach: kate_long@hotmail.com

There are no “never” rules, but there are rules of thumb. You learn them so you can break them intelligently. I aim to help you become a conscious writer, who does not do things by accident.

When in Doubt...

-  Use plain words people use in conversation.
-  Make the subject of the sentence as alive and concrete as you can. Put human beings or things capable of movement (truck, raccoon, etc.) in the subject when as you can.
Minimize “things that can’t move” and “it, that, etc.” in the subject. When you do put them in the subject,
-  Avoid strangler sentences. Vary your sentence length appropriately.
Question every compound or complex sentence. Give every important idea or image its own sentence = full weight.
Avoid long phrases. If the phrase is that long, it probably needs its own sentence.
Shorter sentences = heightened drama, “look at this.”
-  Use active, descriptive verbs when you can. You have more verb choices if you put something that can move in the subject. Avoid weak or passive verbs in general.
When you use them, have a reason.
-  Eliminate clutter. Get rid of unnecessary words.
-  Write in subject / verb / object sentence structure. Do not stuff a bunch of words between subject and verb. (They may need their own sentence.)
-  Keep the concrete/abstraction balance heavily in favor of concrete. Question every abstract analysis. Can you frame it instead in terms of people doing or saying things? Avoid “talking-about-what’s-going-on.” Can you describe instead?



APPENDIX F: FARMERS MARKET SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY PLANNING DOCUMENT

NOTE: This planning document can be used by a board, committee or other group of farmers market organizers to focus their market’s social media strategy (this works for both new and existing social media sites/pages).

This planning process works best when there is one facilitator—outside expert or skilled internal member—who will lead the group in and exercise. Responses can be captured and compiled during the exercises (via flip-chart notes, dry-erase board, etc.), re-distributed to the group using this document template, and used to guide future social media-related activities.

How do we create a loyal online farmers market community?

1. Situating our social media strategy within our market’s community and mission.

Exercise 1: Identifying a Frame—Common interests that define this group of potential online community members

- (Example: “Love of local foods”)
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Exercise 2: Recruiting community members—How will we identify and recruit these potential community members, folks with these common interests?

TIP: Cast a WIDE net

- (Example: “Each vendor with a Facebook page for their business sends an invitation to their own Facebook friends/fans to “like” the market’s page”)
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2. Identifying Potential Community members.

These individuals will share the following characteristics:

- Need for belonging—Desire for sense of being part of the farmers market community
 - Need for recognition—Want to have a voice about their thoughts/opinions/experiences regarding the farmers market
 - Need for “safety”—A space where they feel comfortable interacting with those sharing similar ideologies/motivations
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Exercise 3: How do we make online folks feel like they belong and are a part of something?

- (Example: “Post pictures of our customers and their families shopping at the farmers market—but only with their permission!”)
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Exercise 4: How do we recognize or give our online friends/fans a voice?

- (Example: “Post at least one open-ended question per week to solicit feedback”)
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Exercise 5: How do we moderate the forum to ensure that it is a safe space?

- (Example: “Monitor recent posts for appropriateness and monitor notifications we receive about postings.”)

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3. Creating Community

The above potential community members will either create themselves, or identify an existing community to meet their needs. The ideal community will have:

- Connection points
- Support points
- Predictability/transparency

Exercise 6: How do we create additional connection points?

- (Example: “We will maintain an email listserve and send out monthly newsletters.”)
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Exercise 7: How do we create Support Points for community members to both receive and/or supply support to each other?

- (Example: “We will work with our local extension office to organize trainings for our vendors and/or customers.”)
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Exercise 8: How do we create predictability/transparency?

- (Example: “We will post at least 3 times a week so that our customers know that we are a consistent source of info.”)
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End- Goal: Characteristics of a loyal online farmers market community

- Pride
 - Passion
 - Trust
-

Exercise 9: How do we know when our community looks like this?

- (Example: “We will know that our community has pride when the members are regularly “liking” and/or sharing our posts.”)

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Exercise 10: How will we execute these plans? Who is responsible for each piece?

- (Example: “Joe Farmer is our paid market manager, so he will be responsible for posting a featured product from a specific vendor on Facebook every week, on the day before the market, to entice customers to the market—identified in Exercise 8.”)

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APPENDIX G: FARMERS MARKET EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

1. Overview

- a. List the organizations, including your market that are involved in hosting/organizing this event:
- b. Additional partners providing support
- c. What are the objectives of this event—what are you trying to accomplish?:
- d. Intended audience (i.e., who are you trying to attract?):
- e. Planning Committee:

2. Major Logistics

- a. Budget
 - i. Who is responsible for tracking the overall budget for this event?
 - ii. Projected “revenues” (What pieces of funding are coming from where for this event?)
 - iii. Projected Expenditures
- b. Location
- c. Date
- d. Food
- e. Entertainment
- f. Cost to participants

3. Detailed logistics

- a. Agenda of activities
- b. Pre-registration (if needed)
- c. Promotion of the event
- d. Evaluating the event (surveys, discussion with attendees and/or organizers, etc.)

- e. Volunteers and their tasks:

3. Following Up

- a. Sending thanks to organizers, sponsors, volunteers, etc.
- b. Compiling results of the evaluation and meeting to discuss outcomes

