Using Social Networking & the Internet to Market Your Product
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For more information on Small Farms, visit our website at: http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu/ or contact your local County Extension Agent.

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Using Social Networking and the Internet to Market Your Product

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There are 181,000 Social Media ‘Gurus,’ ‘Ninjas,’ Masters,’ and ‘Mavens’ on Twitter

- Social Media Authority - 4
- Social Media consultant - 9,031
- Social Media Evangelist - 20,829
- Social Media Expert - 5,555
- Social Media Freak - 287
- Social Media Guru - 18,363
- Social Media Marketer - 1,555
- Social Media Marketing - 57,220
- Social Media Marketing Expert - 1,704
- Social Media Master - 88
- Social Media Maven - 21,928
- Social Media Ninja - 21,876
- Social Media Pro - 250
- Social Media Professional - 648
- Social Media Specialist - 7,867
- Social Media Veteran - 10
  (my fave veteran lists 17 months of experience)
- Social Media Warrior - 104
- Social Media Wonk - 35

TOTAL 181,354

Bonus a most special category:
- Social Media **Marketer** - 174
Social Media Guru

- Social Media Strategy is a buzz word surrounding marketing on the internet nowadays. This is to develop a plan on how to utilize your “social media” accounts and how to engage your customers through them.

- Using strategy to approach any new tool to your business should be common sense. You wouldn’t buy a tractor without know what you were going to do with it.

- Your marketing scheme should fit into you plans for using the internet to market. Not the other way around (creating your marketing plan around “social media” or other online tools).
Communicating your message!
(aka Marketing)

What message do you want delivered about your product?

Marketing is anything that adds value. This can include:
- differentiation
- processing
- branding
- packaging

Why should they buy your product?
A basic business plan generally consists of 9 parts:
- Executive Summary
- Company Summary
- Product
- Market Analysis
- Strategy and Implementation
- Management Summary
- Financial Plan
- Contingency Plan

Where is your “message” in all of this?
A basic business plan generally consists of 9 parts:

- Executive Summary
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Where is your “message” in all of this?
Having trouble coming up with a marketing plan?

**Define your audience**
- Use demographic maps if you’re having trouble determining this
  - Fl.foodmarketmaker.com
  - USDA ERS Food Environment Atlas

**Why should they buy from you?**
- Different?
- Cheaper?

**What actions will you take to match these two goals?**
- Promotion
- Social Media
- Packaging
What do your consumers want?

- Attractiveness
- Quality
- Low Price
- Track Record
- Different
- Similar Values
- Demand/Brand
Attractiveness

Varies with marketing scheme
- Farmers Markets have more leeway because of home-grown perceptions
- Schools, retail, and restaurants have very strict requirements: Fancy/US No 1

Communication between you and your customer will improve knowledge on preferences for how to make the product more attractive
Quality

NO AMOUNT OF MARKETING SKILL WILL TURN MUD TO GOLD

If you have a low quality product you are out of the game from the beginning

If you are attempting to improve your marketing position, having a high quality product is essential
Low Price

This feature is incredibly important if there is no differentiating feature between your product and your competitors

- Gasoline
- Corn
- Soybean
- Other commodities

Even if your product is different and better, a customer who is unfamiliar with your “message” will not hesitate to buy the cheaper option.
Track Record

Essential to wholesale marketing but valuable to direct-to-consumer marketing as well.

Wal-Mart, Publix, Whole Foods, etc. need to know your food has never gotten anyone sick or had trouble meeting orders.

This is rarely focused on during direct-to-consumer interaction, but that doesn’t mean that it does not add value.
Values

Becoming more and more popular factor in marketing

Consumers want a product that is not only safe and reliable but also is produced in a manner in line with their values
  - Ethical
  - Sustainable
  - Etc.

Know your audience to better serve them the product they want
Demand/Brand

Consumers want a product that is wanted by others

Build an image that is constant and easily recognized so that consumers can identify your message when you are not around

Especially crucial when selling wholesale, but even D2C customers will flock to a busy booth before an unpopular one.
How and why the Internet can help market your product
Being seen...a lot

Accessible to nearly everyone with a computer

Google was searched 56 million times since I began this presentation

No longer just computers
  – Tablets
  – Smart phones

Connected all the time
Being Found

- Google Places
- Google Maps

Encourage vendors, farmers, markets, etc. to create a Google Places account as well.

Similar services available from Bing and Yahoo.
Engaging Customers

Once found, a good online presence will communicate your message 24/7.

Tools available through social media allow you to engage your customer and answer questions publicly.
Search Engine Optimization
• Just a buzz word?
• Kind of

Search Engines focus on finding websites that are relevant to the searched terms
  – Backlinks
  – Regular updates

The basics of SEO are the basics of good website design
Backlinks

Google originally named “Backrub” because of its method of using backlinks to sort websites.

How to capitalize on backlinks:

- Have multiple sites and profiles link back to your page.
- Place a link to your website in all of your social media profiles and directory listings.
- Ask vendors to list you within their website.
Regular Updates

Easiest way to influence SEO

Search engines assume that if a website is updated regularly the information will be more relevant.

It will also help with perception at the consumer level.

Social Media and Directories are constantly updated so this is a great way to stay at the top of the search engine results even if you don’t have the time or resources to keep a full website up to date.
Elements of a Great Website

Information needed to make the decision to buy

Communication of the “message”

A method to contact the business
Additional Tips for SEO

Include major metropolitan areas and neighborhoods served by your farm.

SEO is not everything—focus on giving your buyer a reason to buy from you and a method of doing so.

Make sure the appropriate pages are indexed for search:
- Third-party Webmaster
- Google Webmaster Tools
How do I know it’s working?

Google Analytics and similar services

Measure amount of visitors, how long they stayed, where they were from, etc.

Great method for measuring ROI on a website
“I don’t have the time/money/savvy to run a full-blown website”
Creativity

Social Media gives you the tools to easily add variety to your marketing plans

Experiment with new ways to add to and engage your audience

• Live stream from farmers market booth
• Make a series of YouTube videos of what a day on your farm is like
• Use Pinterest to show off a recipe using your product
• Use Facebook and Twitter to expand the reach of each of these ideas
Social Media

Engage Audience

Create new B2B and B2C connections
  • Use Facebook following to demonstrate value of connecting with your business

When done effectively, creates a relationship with customer through interaction and engagement
1 million websites have integrated with Facebook

80% of users are connected to a brand or business

23% of users check their accounts 5x or more per day

850 million active users worldwide

77% of B2C customers and 43% of B2B companies acquired customers through Facebook
69% of twitter follows are suggested by friends

34% of marketers have generated leads using twitter
80% of users are women, 50% of users have children.

Pins with prices get 36% more “re-pins” than those without.

28% of users have annual household income greater than $100,000, Pinterest is 4x more likely to inspire a purchase than Facebook.

Average time spent on Pinterest is 1 hour 17 minutes.

57% of users interact with food-related content, the number 1 category.
What does a social media presence do for you?

- Builds demand for product
- Expands reach of message you are trying to communicate
- Connection to current audience expands to their networks which likely have similar
  - Values
  - Interests
  - Preferences
  - Location
Social Media is Time Consuming

Constant updates needed to stay relevant and engaging

Best practices suggest responding to a majority of comments and all questions or messages

Time generating content is time not spent farming, so what if you don’t have time for social media?
Online Directories

- Local Harvest
- MarketMaker (soon to be Florida Fresh Market)
- Farmmatch.com
- Many, many more—connect with your customers to find which ones they’ve used to find you
Search by zip code for:

- Farm
- Farmer’s Market
- CSA
- Restaurant
- Grocery

LocalHarvest
FarmMatch
Building Community Through Food

www.FarmMatch.com is FREE to sign up

Connecting
Farmers Markets
Buying Clubs
Delivery Sites
Farms
Restaurants
Consumers

Put yourself on the Map

I'm on the map, come join me.
Joel Salatin, Polyface Farm
“Why do I need more customers? I sell out every week!”

Selling out is only half of the marketing equation.

Higher Demand = Higher Price

– Higher Price = Higher Profits
In Conclusion

The tools of the internet offer an abundance of marketing advantages.

Social Media and similar services require no cash, only time.

Internet presence is vital to the success of a business in this day and age.

Communicating your message to the consumer should remain the priority.
Thank You

Questions?

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