



Keeping an Eye on Your Customers

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Webinar Questions and Answers

1. In terms of CRM, what role should a business website play and what should it emphasize?

Your website should help you data mine for customer information. Create a place for them to sign up for your newsletter or email campaigns. Use the registration as a means to gather the information you want to track.

2. Are folks sensitive about giving out such personal info, given the identity theft issues we face today?

Yes, consumers are a bit more sensitive about that than they were in the past. However, you can still get people to share. Try creating a script to use when you or your staff approach consumers to ask for their information. Include why you want the information, what you will do with the information and above all else, be sure you let them know that you will never share the information with anyone. As long as you are putting people's fears to rest, most will be willing to share some of their personal information.

3. What percentage of your marketing budget should be spent on acquisition marketing versus relationship marketing?

Generally 25% of your budget should be spent on relationship marketing, while 75% would be on reaching new consumers.

4. You mentioned how much time to spend on CRM. I know this is very important, but as a small farmer and a few markets per week it seems that I almost need to hire someone.

Even though you are a small farmer, CRM is still very important. You should consider 5- 10% of your time should be spent on CRM. But once you have the system set up and have become familiar with it, it will be easier to use, more an automatic response and will take less of your time. Keep a notepad with you and when you have a conversation with a customer or hear something you want to remember, jot it down on the notepad. Then you can enter it into your CRM system when you return home and have the time to enter the information. Keep in mind the advantage that this system can offer your business – when you are able to build customer relationships with the help of your CRM system, then customers will be coming your market table or farm stand rather than to your competition.

5. What is a digital coupon?

A digital coupon is any coupon or offer that is made through an electronic means, email or social media, for example. It can be something they print out or something they show you on their phone or provide you with a code.

6. Don't coupons give away the store?

Make sure that the coupon has value to both the consumer and the business. Coupons don't have to have a big dollar value, rather use it as an incentive. A small dollar value can still show your customers how much you care about them and their business.

7. Don't customers feel that they get too many emails? This would be hard to get them to "buy" into this system.

It's true that consumers are bombarded with emails, but that doesn't mean that you shouldn't be sending emails to your customers. If you make your emails interesting and include the kinds of information that they want to have then your emails will be opened and read.

8. I already do a Wholesale weekly farm update with new harvests and pricing and delivery dates. I do all of this through gmail. Could this be done the exact same way?

Yes. But it would be better to use an Email Service Provider like MailChimp since they can give you a variety of analytics on your email campaigns.

9. How much money should be used for promo items like bags or tee shirts as maybe part of an email signup? Debating as to use bags as purchase \$20.00 and receive free bag instead of outright give for signing up for email. The bags/tees are more as promo for advertising.

I would not recommend using a tote bag or anything else as a free gift for signing up for your email or newsletter. That cheapens your message. Rather you should think of the message within your email or newsletter as the incentive to sign up. Tote bags, however, are a great giveaway in that they help to promote your business wherever people go with your tote. But use them as part of a loyalty program rather than as an incentive to signup for your email or newsletter.

10. I find some folks don't want to give email but will use Facebook (and vice versa). Would you post coupons on Facebook?

Absolutely. The whole point of digital coupons is the ability to share them among friends and family. Facebook will do that as easily as emails.

11. Do you need to ask folks for their text address, or use their email address?

Rather than ask for their text address, just ask for their phone number. Some people want to get a phone call or phone message from you. But then collect both phone number and email address.

12. What questions are good to ask on Facebook. I've had trouble getting responses?

Never ask "yes" or "no" questions. These do not encourage conversation. Rather make your questions open-ended. Also make sure the question will create a conversation that is important to your customers. For example, "Next week the eggplant will be ready. Does anyone have a great eggplant recipe to share?" Give your customers an opportunity to share; whether it's an idea, a recipe or an opinion.

13. MailChimp will auto post to Facebook and Wordpress. I have been autoposting to Facebook, but copying and pasting into Wordpress blog so the whole post shows. Any thoughts on importance of posting into Wordpress (photos using up my server space) vs just letting MailChimp post a link to the newsletter?

If you are not posting the entire message or newsletter, then make your message tease a bit to encourage them to open the link.

14. When you do a web search for "mailchimp newsletter best practices" you may find several useful articles to read, including:

<http://blog.sourcmetrics.com/email-marketing-newsletter-best-practices/>
<http://kb.mailchimp.com/article/best-practices-in-writing-email-subject-lines>

<http://kb.mailchimp.com/article/best-practices-for-lists>

15. In surveys, do you give them answers to choose from plus a text box, or just leave it totally open-ended?

I like to use a combination of both. When you supply a series of answers the survey program can provide you with the analysis of responses. But consumers always want an opportunity to provide their opinion, suggestions or vent. The text box is their opportunity to do that.

16. Suggestions for loyalty program for a self-serve farmstand? Can't think of much other than a prepay and get "farmstand dollars", or let them put paper in money box when they purchase and we keep track when they reach a certain amount. A lot of customers want to write down what they got and the money they put in so it would work for some, maybe?

This is actually a great idea and it gives you information that you can track. You can also just put out a clipboard and ask for their feedback on whatever it is you are trying to analyze. But if you are not concerned about tracking consumer information, you may want to leave a message that encourages them to come back. For example, Thank you for stopping, next month we'll have a special offer in the box for you.