



BOGO's, Buy Backs, and Freebies
Promoting Your Products
Marketing Webinar for Direct Marketing Farmers
1/29/13 and 1/30/13
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Webinar Questions and Answers

- 1. Should your name portray what your product is? Wake Robin, the example used here, doesn't portray dairy.**

It is not necessary for your name to portray what you actually do. Instead, it needs to be memorable so that people will associate it with who you are and what you do. In this case, the name is derived from a wildflower that grows profusely on their farm. It gives the impression of a quiet, serene pastoral image to their customers.

- 2. We have a sheep farm that sells breeding stock and wool products made from our flock. We recently started selling veggies at a local farmer's market. We are using a logo that was designed for our sheep business. Our tag line is "We're All about Ewe". Because of the addition of our vegetable line, should we change our logo.**

Rather than changing a logo that has already been established, evolve the logo instead. You might try to incorporate the past; i.e. the sheep into a new logo that is more inclusive of your whole farm, maybe adding rows of crops in the background behind the sheep. The current tagline can still be effective, as it promises that you are all about your customer. But if you want to alter it to incorporate the current business, it could be something like "It's all about Ewe and veggies too!".

- 3. What adjustments should be considered to the BRAND of a family farm that is highly diversified? i.e. we raise beef cattle for breeding stock and for beef, we have a garden center, a U-Pick and wholesale berry orchard and other business enterprises within the farm. Do we use multiple tag lines depending on the enterprise we are talking about on the farm?**

Most likely the farm is named for the family and the family name can be the brand and be incorporated into each of the farm enterprises. Maintain the same font, coloring, attitude, etc to make the brand consistent. So it's not necessary to have a logo for each enterprise. Have the family name as the central brand/logo and use this within each of the enterprises.

- 4. Can you give some examples to make something more memorable?**

It's all about the simplicity of the image. Keep the logo to only 1 or 2 colors. More than that and it becomes less memorable. Also, maintain the same fonts throughout the brand, marketing materials and promotions. Finally, keep the graphics simple. The more simple the design, the easier it is for the consumer to recognize it.

- 5. Do you have any thoughts on branding a farmer's market as a whole?**

Use the market name, or if you don't have one, create a unique name – location based, community based. But be sure it's a name that will fit your market for many years (i.e. if you location has to change and that's your name, you'll need to start from scratch.) The logo and brand does not have to capture each individual product being sold in the market. Rather use something representational of all the food/ag products sold in the market, for example, a carrot can represent the entire market.

6. What about copywriting your logo?

Once you have created something, you are the copywriter and that gives you certain rights. So when you create something and begin using it in the public domain, you have rights to that piece. If someone copies it, you can get a cease and desist order to have them stop. You are protected by copyright with any piece of original artwork you create - most often logos are covered under this because they are original artwork. However, names, taglines and other brand assets are most often NOT covered under copyright, and if you are concerned that these elements are at risk of plagiarism, get them trademarked. Trademarking is more complicated and can get expensive because you will most likely want to hire legal support!

7. Are there good, free resources for learning about trademarking and copywriting?

You can Google these concepts and get lots of free information. Since the regulations surrounding trademarking and copywriting change frequently, you will want to revisit the web frequently for updates. But the best option is to contact a local law firm and pay for an hour of their time to get your questions answered. One hour is not that expensive and you will get correct and up to date information.

8. Am I allowed to use images from Google for my promotion materials?

No, click on the images that come up on a Google search. They will take you to where the image resides. This site will tell you if you can use the image and how the image can be used. Often, they will allow using the image only for educational purposes and will not allow it to be used in your logo/brand or marketing materials. Better to go to www.istockphoto.com and purchase usable images there, following the guidelines for usage with each photo.

9. What about using the clip art at Microsoft Office sites? The clip art there is free.

Again, these images are generally allowed for personal or educational purposes and not allowed for marketing purposes. On each of the clip art sites is a page that gives the legalese for usage of the clip art.

10. I have approached a few graphic arts /logo designers. Can you give a range of figures for what would be a reasonable fee structure? I have been quoted from between \$80 to \$160 /hr.

The \$80 hourly fee is reasonable. The one requiring \$160 per hour is steep and should come with extras, such as frequently winning awards and with a team approach to their work. But it is better to get a project quote rather than an hourly quote. You will have no idea how long it will take to create your logo, but if you know the end price, you are better able to make a decision on whether it is affordable. You can also look at the quote and find ways to cut the costs. For example, if they offer you 3-4 designs to choose from, you can ask them to cut it down to only 2 or 3. Many agencies will want to meet with you so they can get a better feel for who you are. You can cut back the amount of time they have with you to cut the cost of the final project.

11. If I am going to work with a professional to design my logo/brand, how should I pick one?

You would look at hiring an agency the same as you would in hiring an employee. You want to meet with them and interview them. Get to know how they work and whether that will fit your needs. Ask about their fees and ask to see samples of their work. Ask how deep their bench is – do they act as a team or is each person in the agency acting/creating unilaterally. You will get the best bang for your buck with a team approach. Ask for references. Who do they currently work with and contact them for their opinion of their work, their fees and their integrity.

To help find an agency you can contact adhub.com. But you may also look at logos and brand identities that you think are good work. Ask that company who they use. If they are not direct competitors, chances are they will share that information with you.

12. How important to product promotion is the packaging of a sold product?

Unfortunately, packaging can be as much as 90% of the promotion of the product. Think in terms of “perception is reality”. When a product is packaged in a haphazard or unprofessional manner, people will think the product is also haphazard and unprofessional. They are turned off by the packaging and won't buy the product. However, a well packaged product will attract attention, give the impression of a great

product and encourage sales. It doesn't matter whether the product is really good, it's the perception that the packaging brings to the product.

13. Are business cards still relevant?

Yes, especially in business to business marketing. But customers will still pick up your business cards at the market or your farm stand so they have contact information. The business card is handy and a size that stores easily in a wallet. But a better idea at the market or your farm, would be an index sized card that offers more than just your contact information. It will be unique and memorable. But usable information on it and it will become a keeper, posted on the consumer's refrigerator for future reference.

14. What about small, affordable tokens i.e refrigerator magnets?

These are great "freebies" that you can provide your customers. They give information, help them to recognize your brand and keep your business at the forefront for the customer. Local print shops are great resources for promotional items and their printing costs are usually competitive because they work with a number of businesses they will outsource the job to. You can also go to www.Vistaprint.com for more ideas. They will create some of the promotional items for you, especially affordable business cards.

15. Are punch cards successfully used for promotion?

Punch cards are good in theory, but unfortunately they are often left behind in a drawer - only frustrating the cardholder who forgot to bring it to market that week. This is especially true when the requirement is make many purchases (i.e., buy ten, get an eleventh free). That is a lot of times the customer must remember their punch card! Instead, consider a shorter time frame: buy five, get the sixth 1/2 off - or free, depending on your price point. Also, be clear what exactly the customer has to do to get a punch in their card. Is it spend over \$10? Is it a certain item you want them to purchase? Is it bringing a friend with them? The punch card is a promotional tool that can be used to encourage the type of repeat business you want. It's worth a try!

16. What is your feeling on professional produced plastic corrugated signage?

Some people are concerned that they are using signage that is too professional while selling at a farmers market. They are not like the others using homemade signs. The concern is that they are not folksy enough and this will hurt them. Instead, it gives the customer the perception that you have taken great care in creating professional signage, making it easier for them to know what your product is and the price, as well as reinforcing your logo. The professional signage will help you to gain sales.

17. What is relationship between price signage size and product display? How Big is too big for price signs. 8x11 seems big for market signage.

When you place signage in your baskets or displays of product, only 1/2 to 1/3 of the sign is visible to the customer, so an 8X11 sign will be needed to ensure enough signage is visible to include your brand and the product price. But also, you want a sign that is big enough to include additional product information. A sign can be your "silent salesperson", so the more information you can include on a sign, the more informed your customer will be and the more likely they will stay at your booth waiting their turn to be waited on since you have already "answered" their questions.

When doing special promotions; i.e. buy one get one free; you will want to use extra large signage to make it prominent so every customer can see the sign from a distance.

18. Is there a "best way" to organize frozen/refrigerated foods for sale at farmer markets?

Because you cannot display your refrigerated or frozen products, you need to find other ways to make your table attractive and informative. Use signage and pictures of the product to draw attention and let people know what you have. Some people will use empty cartons or packaging to display on the table. Others have found coolers with clear tops to let consumers see in, without compromising the temperature controls of the coolers. But the bottom line is to make your table both attractive to draw people to you, and informative to educate them on your products.

19. Can the food safety course created by the Farmers Market Federation of NY be accessed by any grower from the website? This isn't the same thing as a GAP's audit I know, but is there some type of audit if you take the training?

The Farmers Market Federation of NY, in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County has created a series of guidelines for food safety at direct marketing venues, i.e. farmers markets, roadside stands, CSAs, etc. The guidelines are not GAPs for farm production and post-harvest handling, but guidelines to keep food safe while en route to and during retail sales. The guidelines are fairly universal to anyone, although there are a few guidelines that follow NYS regulation, such as temperature requirements. The guidelines are available at <http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/food-safety/protocols.html> and available to anyone. The guidelines are self-regulated and not subject to audit.

20. Do you have examples where social media is being utilized by farm products consumers? We are investing in it but so far with very limited results.

There are many farms and ag-based organizations that are very effective at using social media. First, it does not require much time and its free, so that makes it appealing. We also see by statistics, that our customers are on social media, so this is your chance to reach them. First, promote that you are on social media. Use signage at your table, farm stand, etc, to let them know you are on social media and invite them to follow you. But also, give them a reason..."follow us on facebook, give link, to learn more about our farm, our family and our products". Then give them useful information in your posts, such as information about your production practices, what products will be in the market next week, and recipes to use the products you are selling each week. In the off-season (if you are not year-round), use your posts to engage them in the happenings on your farm as you gear up for the next season. Use human interest stories to draw interest and engage them in discussion.

21. If I was to start using social media, which is the best one, if I am only going to use one?

Probably Facebook would be the first choice. Many people use it in place of a website and it is very effective in engaging consumers. There are sections that a farm business can use to let consumers know more about them – the "About Us" section, the photos section, etc. all allow you to let people know who you are and what you are all about. The posts are like your website contents, giving your followers information and news about your farm and products.

Twitter will work, but it has limited post sizes, so it does not allow you to let people know as much about you and does not have the features that allow you to use it in place of a website. Instagram is basically photos. It can be a great place to hold your photos, but you can link to them through your Facebook page. Pinterest is a great visual site. It is rapidly catching up to Facebook because of its visual nature, but is not as good as Facebook in connecting to and engaging your customers. However, ALL four social media sites work well in partnership. But if choosing only one, it should be Facebook.

22. Are there popular hash tags in Twitter Farmers Markets ought to be utilizing? Also, I've never used Pinterest, seems like a lot of potential for pretty pictures... are there special tags to take advantage of?

Hash tags are used to align yourself with conversations taking place on social media. While there may be some that you could follow, the best idea is to create your own conversation, with your own hash tags that people will follow.

23. What about a you tube video to promote your farm or product?

You Tube is a great social media to promote yourself. It is inexpensive and people really enjoy the visual. First, you don't need a professional to do your videos. In fact, it is better if it is NOT professionally done. Use your movie function on your cell phone and take short videos of your farm. You can use this to create a series of short videos to tell stories about your farm, for example, the first video can be sowing seeds in the ground. A week later, the video shows the seeds sprouting and poking through the ground. The third video will show the plant starting to develop leaves, etc. Or create a video that shows how you prepare for market day, or create a "hints and tips" video on using your farm products. The goal is to educate your viewers about your farm and your products in short video clips. Once they are uploaded on You Tube, you can use the URL to link the video to your other social media venues, Facebook, Twitter, and even your email correspondence with your customers.

24. Any comments or cautions on using QR codes on product labels and at markets?

QR codes connect consumers to websites, phone numbers or product information to help companies educate consumers and provide them with easy access to more information. The advertising world was sure QR codes would take off and be a critical piece of advertising. However, they have been very slow to catch on. But as a caution, it is not appropriate in a direct marketing venue. One of the advantages you have over other retailers is that consumers have direct access to you, the farmer. You want to encourage your consumers to talk to you, ask you questions, learn about your farm and your products directly from you. That's how you build long term relationships with your customers. If your customers are, instead, using QR codes to learn more, then you are nothing different from the supermarket, faceless and impersonal.

25. Is there a simple way to offer products for sale and online ordering in email or other social media?

E-Commerce is increasingly important. You can create e-commerce on your website that will create a shopping cart system, allowing customers to purchase from your menu of products. Then, by integrating pay pal, you can easily collect credit card payment for each sale.

26. What would you add to this for promoting to restaurants?

It is especially important to have a clear brand for your business when selling to restaurants. They will want you to let them sample your products, then leave them with information, i.e. brochures, sell sheets. If you are well branded, then you will stand out as a consummate professional, raising your credibility with the chef. In addition, the brand is key if the restaurant chooses to promote their use of local foods by listing you on their menu. Your brand will stick out with diners who will then seek you out on their own. Another good suggestion for capturing restaurant trade is to offer to co-promote the restaurant. Let it be known on your website and your social media sites that your products are featured at XYZ restaurant. The chefs may find this appealing and use your products because of the extra bonus they are getting with your promotions.

27. Any advice on marketing local farm products to school districts for school meals?

Again, this is business to business marketing and your brand is key. It shows your professionalism and lends credibility to your product, making it a more appealing purchase for them. In addition to branding, you will need to do a great deal of cold-calling to reach out to school food service directors. When they ask for more information, you will need to have your marketing materials ready for them. Create brochures and sell sheets that will provide them all the information they need on your products and how to do business with you. Each piece should carry your brand and provide your contact information.