



## **You Are What You Look Like: Preparing the Product**

**Presenter: Marty Butts, Small Potatoes Marketing**

### **Webinar Questions and Answers**

- 1. Should I eliminate price signs and require the customer to ask? That way they will engage with me.**

No! Many people will not ask for your prices. 'Some people feel that if they ask the price then they are committed to the purchase. Since they aren't ready to make that commitment without the price, they will simply walk on rather than ask. Also, your signs will help you to hold consumers at your table while you finish up with customers that were there ahead of them. They can see the product, know the price and begin to make purchasing decisions or know what questions they want to ask and be prepared to what for their turn with you. Without those signs, customers will not wait for your attention.

- 2. If you have a value-added item that has many different varieties - do you suggest sorting by type/flavor etc. does it matter**

I organize by type and then separate by color to make each variety pop. For example, I put all pickles together, all jams, all salsas, etc. But within each category, I separate by color of the label. But keeping like product together is the way people shop. When someone is looking for low-sugar jams, they are more likely interested in ALL low-sugar products. The goal is just to make it easiest for people to shop.

- 3. What are some suggestions for displays for farmers selling meat or cheese which must stay in coolers in warm weather leaving a BARE table.**

A good display is definitely more of a challenge for meat and cheese, or anything that requires it remain refrigerated. I would start with some farm pictures. Consumers really connect to pictures of the farm and especially with the animals. Then use a large sign, maybe a chalkboard or dry erase board, to list all of your products and their prices. Then you can build your display around these items. If you can put some of your more attractive cuts of meat, fish, chicken, etc on display with ice packs, then they will draw consumer attraction. Just be sure to swap the products out every 30 minutes or so. You don't want the tops of the product to get warm and then have a food safety issue. Plus, people will not buy the display product, so keep rotating them out so you can sell everything.

Another idea is to put clear plastic tops on your meat coolers. Then consumers can see what you have. Scales are also a focal point. Put the scale up front on your table. Customers like to see the weight and it also gives your display an old-time farm feeling that consumers love.

Maybe you can use empty containers of your product for display while you keep the actual products behind the table in a cooler. For example, the dairy vendor in this presentation makes flavored yogurts. They use empty containers of each flavor on the table in their display. Then when a customer wants one, they will pull out a fresh, cold container of the desired flavor.

Eggs can be displayed on ice packs and you can make some attractive displays with the cartons. Some people will use painted wooden eggs in a display carton to let people know that they have eggs to sell.

#### **4. Any neat display suggestions for juices (grape, raspberry, etc)?**

Juices won't need a huge amount of product out. But you need to remember the 5 critical elements of a good display. Have signage to identify and price your juice flavors. Build in height and depth with layers. Add a table covering to highlight your juices. Then separate them out by flavors, using the colors of the labels or the juice itself to separate colors.

#### **5. Do you sample every single product or do you limit it?**

It really depends on the products. Value added products are easier to sample everything than fruits and vegetables. But it also depends on the regulations of the market and local municipality. If possible sample as much as you can. But if you cannot do everything, do a couple of products each week, then mix them up by sampling different products each week.

#### **6. How do you handle people who sample like crazy but don't buy?**

I don't think of it as people acting like crazy. I think of it as a cost of doing business. Keep in mind that while they may not be purchasing, they may be bringing customers to you. Think about it, they like your product enough to keep coming back for more. Then they are talking to others about your product. They want to see for themselves how good your products are and they come and buy. No telling how many people the "crazed" sampler has brought to you.

The only time I get concerned is when I see someone, particularly kids come back repeatedly in one day. Then I might say that I think they have had enough or they need their mother's permission before they can come back again.

#### **7. What info do you recommend putting on a T-shirt?**

You want to brand your t-shirt, so your logo is the one critical piece to have on your shirt. If you have a web presence, you might consider your web address. If you have a catch phrase, you can include that too. But this is a case where "less is more", so you can be as simple as just your logo, as long as your name is part of the logo.

The same would be true of any branded attire – hats, aprons, etc. If you don't have clothing with your logo, then carry through the colors of your logo. So if your main colors are forest green, then you wear a forest green shirt and cap. It's a way to set yourself apart from others and create an image of your farm for your customers.

#### **8. If you don't have a T-shirt with your logo on it, how should we dress? Anything in particular.**

Incorporate your brand color scheme into what you wear. If your brand incorporates forest green and orange, then you should be wearing these colors – and always wear these colors. And everyone should be wearing the same color shirts. It helps people to relate that color to your business. But if you do have a shirt with your logo on it, this is the shirt you should wear EVERY market day.

### **9. How do you handle recipes/handouts in bad weather?**

When it is raining I pull my table farther in under my tent. That way when customers come to my table they are protected from the rain. It's a nicety that I think customers appreciate. Then they stay longer and buy more product.

### **10. What is your standard discount, if any, for restaurant / wholesale accounts?**

I set one wholesale price for my products. That stays the same for any type wholesale account. That just makes it much easier to manage. To price them, I keep in mind that the supermarket will double the price I charge. So if I am charging \$3.50 per pound, they will retail it at \$7.00 per pound. So do a walkthrough of the places you plan to sell to and see what they are retailing the products for. This will give you an idea of what they may be willing to pay you for your products.

### **11. What info is in your wholesale goody bag?**

The wholesale goody bag should include:

- A sell sheet that identifies your product, prices, terms, contact information and farm information
- Samples of the products you want to wholesale
- Business card
- Farm brochure if you have one
- Any information you have on display that you share with retail customers
- Samples of anything that sets you apart from others or specifically what the buyer is looking for.

### **12. Any ideas on how to clean produce quickly, on the spot, without a sink?**

Produce should be brought to the market already clean. When you are in the market you should have your product ready for sale and you don't have the time to clean when you should be paying attention to your customers.

### **13. For farmers, producers, do you have comments on other Social Media (twitter, instagram, pinterest, youtube channels)? Which ones should we focus on?**

Minimally you should have a facebook page. Not only does it help you to engage in consumers, but many other social media platforms will work in combination with Facebook and help you create content for Facebook. Other than that choose any platform that you can do well. Instagram is going to be the biggest upcoming social media. But this is a photo sharing platform. You post the photo, add a caption and that is it. You just then share it, through facebook, etc. Works in combination with a smartphone.

Pinterest is getting very popular and great way to share information, pictures. If you like Pinterest for yourself and you are good at it, then this is another good one to use. Youtube is good for developing content that you can share on your facebook page. Twitter is the least important for retail sales.

#### **14. What about blogs?**

Only if this is something that you like to do and can do it well. It can then share each blog entry on your facebook page. But unless you can maintain this with regular frequency (i.e. once or twice a week) and customize it to your customer, then this is a great tool to help you build customer relationships. But only if you use it well and you share it on other social media platforms.