



How to Draw in Customers & Increase Revenue

Marketing strategies and tips for farmers.



CCOF Foundation

The CCOF Foundation advances organic agriculture for a healthy world through education and hardship grants, technical assistance, and consumer education.

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- Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA.

Presenter, Jamie Collins

- Started Serendipity Farms in 2001, CCOF Certified Organic
- 20 acres, in three Central Coast microclimates, producing 75+ crops
- Produces value added products for retail sales
- CCOF Organic Inspector
- Organic Farm & Marketing Consultant
- Writer, farming & food



Why this presentation?

- In some regions of California, changes in the produce market, including meal kit deliveries, are impacting farms that sell directly to consumers
- CCOF Foundation's *Farmers' Marketing* series aims to share tips and tools with farmers to strengthen their sales and income at farmers' markets



Presentation Overview

- How to stand out
- How to keep customers coming back
- Creative marketing to increase sales
- Connecting outside of the market
- Reflecting & refining



Audience Activity

What are your biggest marketing challenges?

How to Stand Out in a Crowded Market



How to Stand Out

Customers respond to:

- Eye catching displays and produce
- Consistency
- Unique produce items that they can't find elsewhere
- A personal connection to the farm
- Friendly, happy marketeers
- Tasty Samples
- Scents of fresh flowers, herbs and vegetables

How to Stand Out

Develop your own farm 'style!'



How to Stand Out

- Advertise your farm with signs
 - Customers will remember your farm name and logo
 - These are dual purpose as they state the ‘We grow what we sell’ language
 - They can hide ugly totes too!



How to Stand Out

- Branding
 - Farm logo on
 - signs
 - boxes
 - hats
 - stickers
 - Organic certifier signs (if applicable)



How to Stand Out

- A gorgeous, abundant display
 - **Pile high and watch it fly!**
 - Use contrasting colors
 - Raise up to eye level
 - Create multi-levels to utilize space



How to Stand Out

- A gorgeous, abundant display
 - Pile high and watch it fly!
 - Use color artfully



How to Stand Out

- A gorgeous, abundant display
 - Pile high and watch it fly!
 - Use color artfully
 - **Break up the green**



How to Stand Out

- A gorgeous, abundant display
 - Pile high and watch it fly!
 - Use color artfully
 - Break up the green
 - **Tablecloths that highlight product**



How to Stand Out

- Experiment & grow
 - unique varieties for flavor and attractiveness
 - Or personal size items
 - winter squash
 - angel hair spaghetti squash
 - mini cabbages



Grow Unique Varieties

Beauregard Snow Peas



Scarlet Frills Red Mustard



Personal Size Produce Sells Well

Mini Iceberg lettuce for Paleo Customers



Variation of Honey Nut, Row 7 Seeds, called 898 squash



Grow Colorful Varieties



How to Stand Out

- Use your microclimate to grow what others can't
 - High on a hill, plant frost sensitive varieties
 - Low in a valley plant trees or crops that like or need chill time
 - Utilize hoop houses to have an earlier season or to extend the season



How to Stand Out

- Grow dual purpose crops
 - Leeks for scapes, flowers as well as the leek vegetable
 - Artichoke or cardoon flowers as well as the buds/stalks
 - Flowering greens or herbs can be sold as specialty



How to Keep Customers Coming Back

- Be consistent with
 - Display
 - Staffing
 - What you grow
 - but also throw in a few wild cards that peak interest!
 - Go year round (if it is an option)



How to Keep Customers Coming Back

- Provide personal and awesome customer service
 - Tell your farm story
 - Greet each person
 - Get to know people's tastes
 - Be grateful for their business, express that to them
 - Try to remember their names if possible
 - Give away free items to good customers, getting them to try new varieties you may not sell out of anyway
 - Use recycled packaging if possible, or reuse the plastic baskets by pouring fruit into paper bags, most customers are aware of the issue of plastic and appreciate farmers that are not adding to plastic waste

How to Keep Customers Coming Back

- Communicate
 - What's new and exciting this week
 - What's coming up next week
 - Signage explaining what you are selling is key!



How to Keep Customers Coming Back

- Recipes and cooking advice
 - Simple preparation tips
 - Recipes using other produce you are selling – upsell!
- Give out samples
 - Be sure to follow health regulations!



Creative Marketing to Increase Sales

- Selling three or more colors of the same vegetable or fruit makes them sell better!
 - raspberries
 - carrots
 - beans
 - cauliflower
 - orange, purple, green and Romanesco!



Creative Marketing to Increase Sales

- Radicchio leaves separated and sold loose to show off color, helps people to buy it when heads are not selling.



Creative Marketing to Increase Sales

- Put high dollar produce on ends of the stall



Creative Marketing to Increase Sales

- Being creative when things don't go as planned
 - Sell bok choy flowers when plants bolt
 - Sell excess seedlings
 - If you over plant artichokes, sell as planting stock
 - Leek issues? Sell flowers
 - Too many squash? Sell the flowers, chefs love them!



Make it Easy on the Customer

- Sell tomatoes on the vine, people like the convenience of grab and go, and you sell more than if they were sold separately



Make it Easy on the Customer

Pre-bagged produce is easy to grab & go

Bags of loose greens for \$5



Mesh potato bags



Make it Easy on the Customer

- Use cardboard 3 packs to display
 - 3 kinds of berries
 - Cherry tomatoes, small peppers and tomatillos for a salsa making three pack



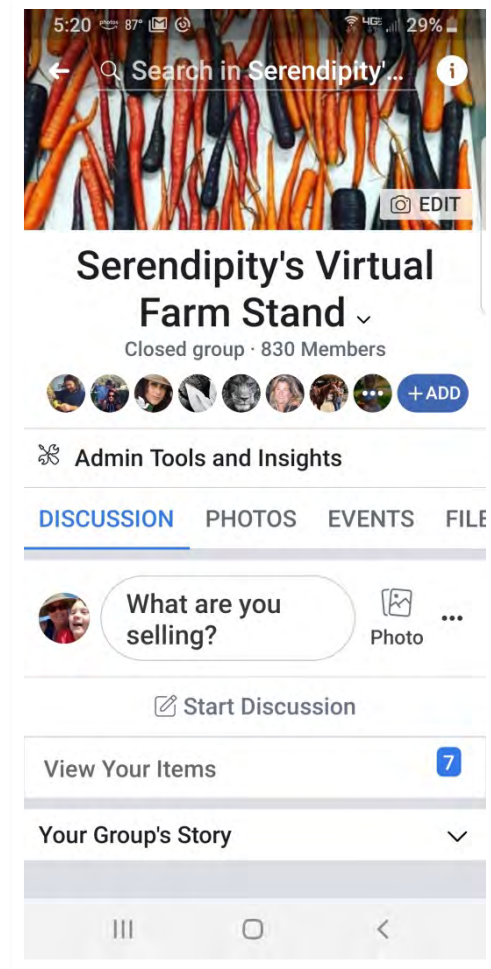
Make it Easy on the Customer

- Value Added Products
 - Makes use of what you don't sell
 - Lots of regulations around value added products!
 - Check with your local Ag dept and Health dept to determine how to sample, what you can make and still sell in the certified market area, how it has to be produced, how it should be labeled, etc.
 - Look for grants for value added products, they are available!



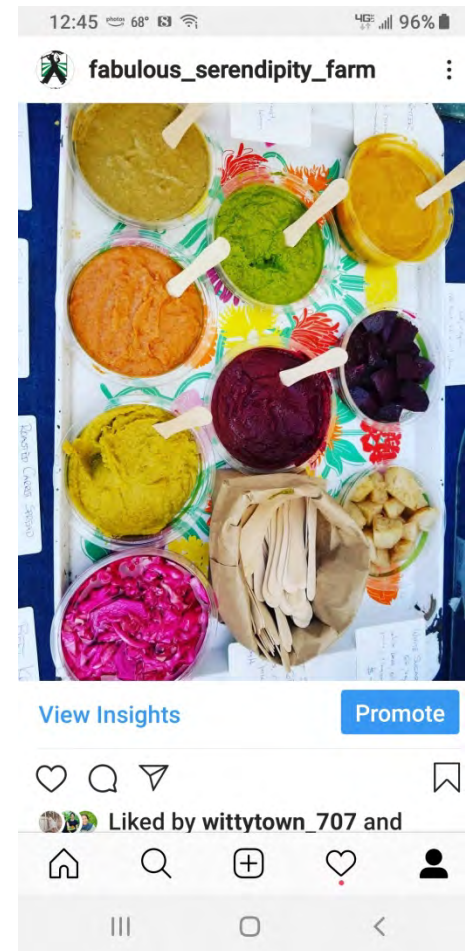
Connecting Outside of the Market

- Facebook, FB Groups
 - Virtual Farm Stand to sell overstock of produce
 - Creating a group catches your customers more than just posting on your page because it alerts them there is a post
 - Great for building online community



Connecting Outside of the Market

- Instagram
- Link Facebook to Instagram so they repeat the same information
 - Saves time
 - Some people use one or the other platform so you are able to catch more people's attention



Connecting Outside of the Market

- Twitter
 - Used for short texts to quickly relay info
 - Tweet real time where your food can be found
 - You can link to Twitter from a Instagram post
 - This is great for pop- up markets or food trucks



Connecting Outside of the Market

- Thinking about who you are already connected to
 - Marketing to Mom's Groups
 - Relatives' employers
 - Neighbors – Next Door
 - Local stores and restaurants

Connecting Outside of the Market

- Invite customers to your farm
 - Farm visits
 - Farm dinners
 - You-pick



Reflection & Refining

- Look at what worked and what didn't, etc.
- Here are some examples of what didn't work in years past
 - Dry farming an orange tomato the size of an early girl to try and come up with a dry farmed golden girl but it had no flavor.
 - Grew a lot of heirloom squash that grew so big we had a hard time selling them
 - Do a cost analysis to be sure what you are growing is making money

Farmers' Marketing Resources



- Webinar Recordings

- <https://www.ccof.org/ccof-foundation/organic-training-institute/past-events-recordings>

- Organic 101 for Small & Midsized Farms
 - Organic Cost Share Webinar
 - Assessing Crop Profitability for Farm Business Planning

- Upcoming Offerings

- Sign up for the CCOF eNewsletter to learn about upcoming trainings: www.ccof.org/subscribe-newsletter

Questions & Ideas





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Have more questions about this presentation? Email Jamie at: info@serendipityorganics.com