

MARKETING AGRITOURISM WHILE PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICE

- Module 2 -
Extension Training to Support Agritourism
Development in the Northeast

Funded by the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture
Research and Education program
Award No. ENE11-121

MARKETING BASICS

For many farmers, agritourism is a new business model that requires very different marketing strategies.

TRANSLATING GOOD IDEAS INTO GOOD BUSINESS!

The world is full of good ideas.

**Good marketing helps turn your good ideas
into business volume and drives
entrepreneurial success.**

**Your business success will be predicated upon
presenting your ideas to the right audience, in the right
manner, at the right time and place.**

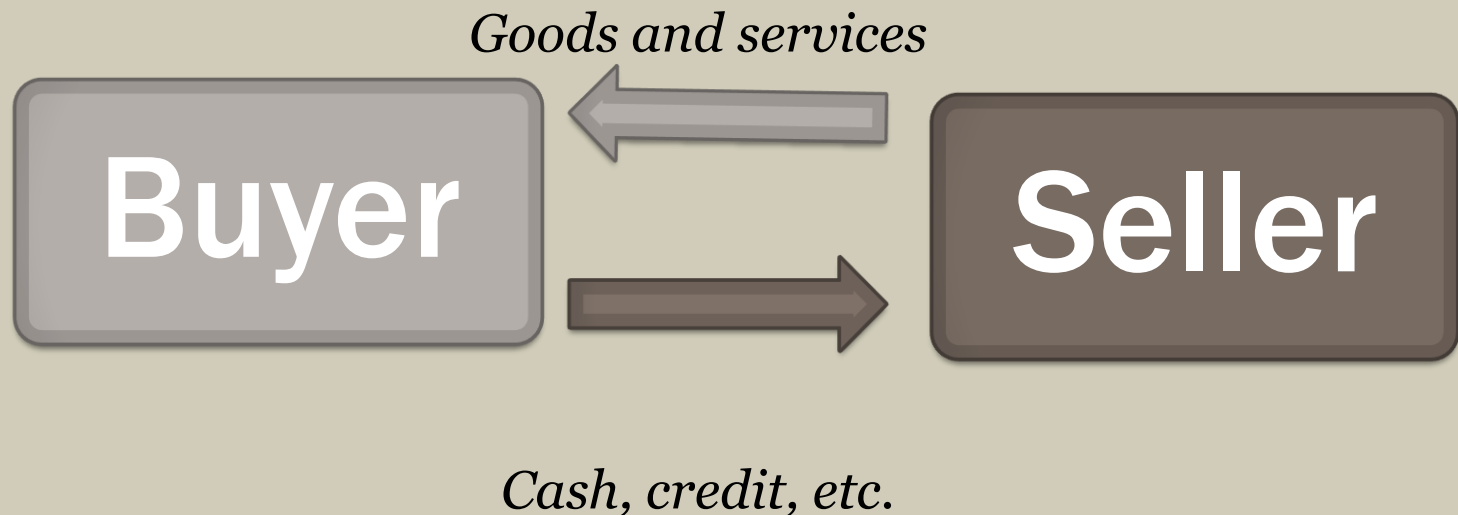
WHAT IS MARKETING?

The process of ensuring that customers' needs are identified and met in order to generate value for the business.

Successful marketing is more than advertising and promotion!

MARKETING

Marketing is a series of activities to facilitate the exchange of something of value between a seller and a buyer.



WHERE DO I BEGIN?

THE 4 P'S OF MARKETING

- **Product** (or service): What is being offered to the target market?
- **Price**: How much will be charged for the product?
- **Placement**: What distribution channels will be used to reach the target market?
- **Promotion**: How will awareness of the product be raised within the target markets?



THE FIRST P – *PRODUCT*



- **Points to remember about selling:**
 - View the “product” from the eyes of your customer
 - It’s not just sweet corn and hayrides
 - It’s the entire experience!
- **Don’t forget about the other “products” experienced by visitors, including:**
 - Employee courtesy
 - Visual appeal and cleanliness of the farm
 - Convenience and availability of parking
 - Recipes or information on how to cook/prepare fresh farm products
 - Ancillary services (e.g., acceptance of credit cards, bathroom facilities, and accommodation of individuals with special needs – the elderly, persons with disabilities, parents with baby strollers)

The point to remember about selling things is that, as well as creating atmosphere and excitement around your products, you've got to know what you're selling. - Stuart Wilde (author)

DEFINING YOUR PRODUCT: THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEES



All employees contribute to the quality of visitors' experience.

Agritourism is a hospitality business - the importance of customer satisfaction cannot be overstated.

- **Are employees readily visible and identifiable?**
 - Consider apparel with a farm name or logo and name badges.
- **Are employees instructed to approach and welcome customers in a friendly and sincerely helpful manner?**
- **Are employees knowledgeable about all aspects of the farm and its products?**
- **Are employees well-versed in a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)?**

An informed, knowledgeable employee enhances the visitor experience.

DEFINING YOUR PRODUCT: THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEES



All employees contribute to the quality of visitors' experience.

Agritourism is a hospitality business - the importance of customer satisfaction cannot be overstated.

Consider likely questions from visitors:

- Are there any other attractions I should visit while in this area?
- What accommodations are available nearby?
- Are there any good places to eat?
- Where is the nearest gas station?
- What is it like living in this community?
- Are there any special events happening in town?
- Are there any retail stores near here?
- What is the farm's history?
- Do you use pesticides/antibiotics?
- Are your crops genetically modified?

PROVIDING QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Measured by how well *customer expectations are met!*
- Key = *exceeding customers' expectations*
- Promise only what can be delivered and deliver more than promised
- Customer expectations based on:
 - Past experiences
 - Word-of-Mouth
 - Your marketing
- Complaints can improve business, it's all in the response!
- Listen to customers & be willing to change
- Cultivate community awareness, image, & partnerships



At your service: What customers say matters most

Knowledgeable staff	47%
Friendly staff	14.7%
Service after the sale	12.5%
Readily available staff	12.4%
Flexible policies for returns/exchanges	8%
None-Product is all that matters	2.8%
Not Sure/Other	2.6%

MSN Money- Zogby International poll

Knowing customers and their expectations is a requirement for delivering quality service!

QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE HABITS



Employee Perspective

- Make a good first and last impression
- Communicate clearly
- Mind your manners
- Know your job/community
- Handle problems effectively
- Be sincere and honest
- Be accessible

Owner/Business Perspective

- Give employees proper training - Do NOT assume they know your expectations
- Treat employees the way you want customers treated
- Happy employees = happy customers
- Evaluate & reward employee performance

Each guest can influence 100 other potential customers

THE SECOND P - *PRICE*



Setting an appropriate price point for each product or service is critical.

- Don't be afraid to charge!
- Analyze competitors' pricing
- Examine trade publications
- Conduct research on target customers' willingness to pay for the products/services
- Know your full costs!
- Conduct a break-even analysis

Pricing & budgeting are discussed in more detail in the next presentation

THE THIRD P - PLACEMENT



Placement refers to distribution. How will visitors access your products/services?

The goal of agritourism is to bring customers onto the farm. The farm is your primary distribution channel. It must be safe, clean, and inviting to the public.

- **Ensure that risks of injury to farm visitors are minimized**
- **Maintain a high level of aesthetic appeal**
- **Make it easy for visitors to identify:**
 - Driving directions to the farm
 - Days and hours of operation
 - Product availability for seasonal items
 - Rest room facilities
- **Visitors may not be familiar with all farm products offered.**
 - Clearly mark items in retail displays
 - Offer preparation tips and recipes
 - Clearly identify and direct visitors to areas in fields open for pick-your-own
 - Provide signage identifying each crop
- **Provide areas for resting or children's play**
 - Consider accessibility issues and the needs of parents with baby strollers, elderly visitors, and persons with limited mobility

THE FOURTH P - PROMOTION



Advertising and Promotion Examples

- Print media (newspapers, magazines, visitor guides)
- Press releases
- Farm website
- State or county promotional websites
- Farm visits directories
- State departments of agriculture
- State Farm Bureaus
- Chambers of Commerce
- Tourist Bureaus/Destination Marketing Organizations
- Travel and tourism writers
- Road signage and billboards
- Direct-to-consumer mailings
- Social networking tools
- Brochures
- Travel & tourism websites
- Customer E-mail list serves
- Networking
- Cross promotions with other local businesses
- Host community events
- Radio or television

Factors to consider: Cost
Geographic coverage
Accessibility to/use by target audiences

WHAT DO AGRITOURISTS USE?

Based on findings from various agritourism-related studies, visitors to agritourism farms typically learn of them via:

- Traditional Word-of-Mouth
- Social Media - The New Word-of-Mouth
- Internet – Search Engine & Farm/Business Website
- Road Signage
- Discovered ‘by chance’ while en route to another destination
 - Highlights the importance of having proper road signage

A FIFTH “P”?



Positioning. This refers to the process of creating a unique impression for the operation within the minds of the customers.

Ask the farmer/owner:

“How will your customers describe your agritourism operation to their friends?”

Or, more importantly,

“How do you want them to describe your farm?”

Positioning is the opportunity to create this unique identity in a customer’s mind.

A FIFTH “P”?



Exercise: How would you want your customers to complete the following statements?

Loyal Customer 1: “*Oh! Farmer Brown? His farm is wonderful! They are really great at [fill in the blank].*”

or...

Loyal Customer 2: “*The Brown Farm is famous around here for its [fill in the blank].*”

**ESTIMATES VARY, BUT
MARKETING SHOULD
ACCOUNT FOR
10%-30% OF THE TOTAL
OPERATING BUDGET**

MARKETING PLAN



WHAT DOES A MARKETING PLAN DO?



A Marketing Plan is a Road Map for Success!

- Defines the product/service
- Helps define, understand, & reach target markets
- Should be a guide for the future, but is not cast in stone!
- Should be evaluated regularly & updated as needed.

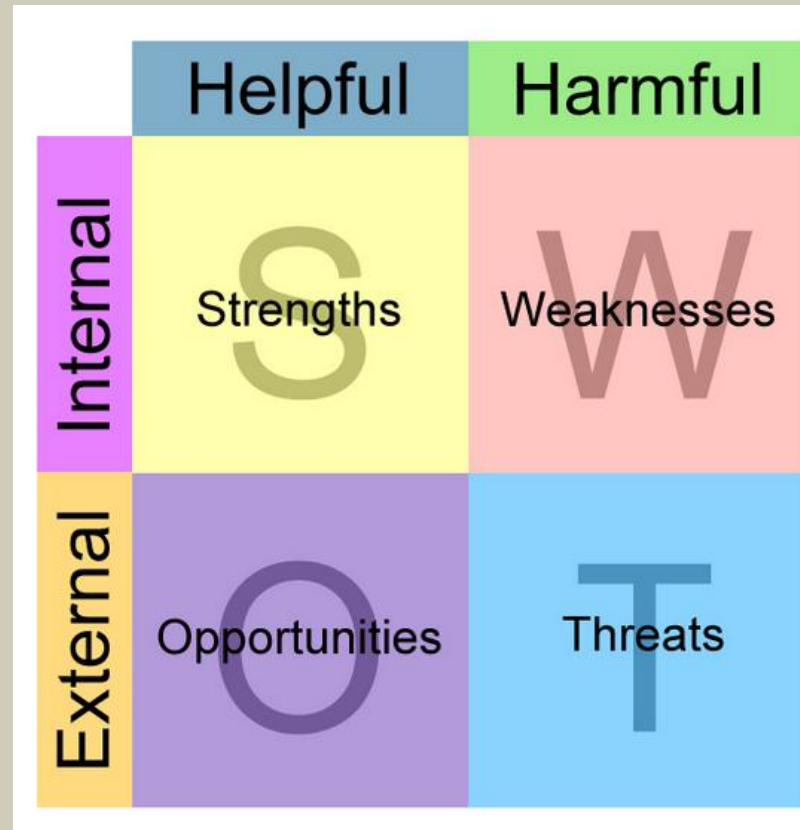
WHAT DOES A MARKETING PLAN COVER?

- Mission statement
- Description of target or niche markets
- Description of service/products
- Detailed plan of promotion strategies
- Description of the competition
- SWOT analysis
- Marketing budget
- Quantifiable marketing goals

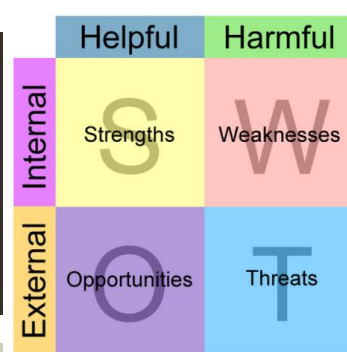


SWOT ANALYSIS

- Evaluate **internal** capabilities and limitations of the business:
 - **Strengths:** What is being done well? What are the advantages?
 - **Weaknesses:** What is being done poorly? What can be improved or avoided?
- Evaluate **external** factors that influence the business:
 - **Opportunities:** What are the current trends? Expected changes that can be taken advantage of?
 - **Threats:** What obstacles exist? What is the competition doing?



EXAMPLE SWOT ANALYSIS



Strengths (Internal)

- Prior business experience
- Good connection with the community

Weaknesses (Internal)

- Young employees w/ little to no experience – need training
- Repairs needed on farm to ready for visitors

Opportunities (External)

- Increasing interest in local food
- Little competition currently exists

Threats (External)

- Uncertain regulations
- Slow economy

UNDERSTAND THAT WHICH CANNOT BE CONTROLLED!

- General economic conditions
- Competition
- Substitute or complementary products and activities
- Federal, State, local laws and regulations
- Trends in target market characteristics
 - Age
 - Income
 - Cultural and ethnic composition
 - Evolving consumer preferences
 - Social trends

But...look for opportunities even in the areas outside of your control!

Agritourism ONLINE Advertising & Promotion Resources

*Much of choosing the correct
advertising & promotion strategies
comes down to knowing the audience!*

INTERNET & SOCIAL MEDIA

- The Internet is the most important marketing tool today!
- An agritourism business must have a web presence!
 - Not having a web presence gives the impression (to certain audiences) that you/the business does not exist
 - Instant access to information & resources 24/7
- Internet sites/social media also allow you to research what others (your competitors) are doing

78% of Americans use the internet regularly

As of December 2012, 67% of online adults use social networking sites

Nearly 40 million US consumers accessed travel sites or apps from their smartphone in July 2012

WEBSITE TIPS

- **Business needs to be found!**
 - Search engines can't find pictures
 - Ask customers what they searched to find your business
 - Use key terms throughout text
- **Make contact information readily available/easy to find**
 - Provide physical address and GPS coordinates
 - Write out state name
- **Keep website updated**
 - Use good quality photos & keep them current
 - Pricing
 - Current events
- **Use the “3-clicks in” Rule**
- **Link to other things to see and do in the area**

- *Hire a professional*
- *Create your own*
- *Use a blog*
- *List in an online agritourism database*

WEBSITE TIPS

- Provide information for the media
- Make sure employees know information posted & know farm history!
- Use spell check
- If music is used, provide an option to turn on/off
- Users do not read – they scan using an F-Pattern
 - Use short sentences, bullets, pictures



Webmaster Guidelines for a Google-friendly site
<http://support.google.com/webmasters/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=40349>

SOCIAL MEDIA

facebook®

twitter

GROUPON®

SurveyMonkey®

flickr®
from YAHOO!

scvngr
www.scvngrhunt.com

Blogger™

livingsocial

You Tube
Broadcast Yourself

foursquare

Pinterest

Picasa™

DEAL\$TER

WordPress

GROUND RULES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

- Link everything!
- Integrate applications

The screenshot displays the Applecheek Farm website with a green navigation bar at the top containing links for About Us, Products, CSA, Buyer's Club, Store, Blog, Events, Tours, Catering, Friends, Contact Us, and FAQ. Below the navigation bar is the Applecheek Farm logo, which includes the text 'APPLECHEEK FARM' and 'SUSTAINABLE ORGANIC FAMILY FARMING'. To the right of the logo are five small images of farm animals: a brown cow, a turkey, a chicken, a duck, and a black and white cow. Below these images is the website URL 'www.applecheekfarm.com'. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'Connect With Us' featuring social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Email, along with a Facebook 'Like' button showing 179 likes and a 'SHARE' button; 'Community Events' with a notice for a 'Feb 4th. Benefit Dinner to Support Pete's Greens! Details'; 'Farm Videos' with a 'more' link; 'Support Our Farm' with a 'Buy Local!' icon and a 'Join Our CSA' button; 'Get Farm Updates' with an email input field and a 'Go' button; 'Reserve your Turkey' with a turkey image; and 'Meet Farmer John' with a red button. A large red arrow points from the text 'Integrate applications' towards the social media icons in the 'Connect With Us' section.

GROUND RULES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

■ Be Active and Interactive

- *Update often – At least once a week*
- *Monitor pages/accounts daily*
- *Don't only listen, participate and engage others!*
- *Allow visitors to post*
- *Create interaction – ask questions, photo contest, polls, share unique news/information related to the product/service, etc.*

■ Research - See what others are doing

- *Use Google search to answer questions – get tips*

■ Be personal – but not TOO personal!

■ Create a rulebook & assign responsibility

■ Educate employees – get them involved

■ Respond no matter what – turn a negative into a positive



Remember: It's called SOCIAL media for a reason!

Online Marketing &


Social Media mistakes



1. Setting up a social media account and then not using it
2. Not linking - not having follow/share buttons
3. Not separating business & personal accounts
4. Not including a picture
5. Not including links in Tweets
6. Not posting updates with context - include commentary
7. Not seeing social media as PR - respond no matter what
8. Not knowing what others are saying about your business

KNOW WHAT FOLKS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE FARM!

- Talk to your customers!
- Collect data from your customers
- Periodically Google your farm name (or use another search engine)
 - Helps to ID other review sites your farm is listed on – Yelp, TripAdvisor, etc.
 - Helps to ensure information posted is accurate
 - Helps to know what others think about your business
- Use Google Alerts
 - Alerts each time your farm name is mentioned



The screenshot shows the Google Alerts website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Google logo, the text 'Google Alerts (AFW)', and the URL 'www.google.com/alerts'. On the right side of the navigation bar, there are links for 'Settings', 'FAQ', and 'Sign out'. The main content area is titled 'Welcome to Google Alerts' and includes a brief description of Google Alerts as email updates of relevant search results. Below this, there are 'Some handy uses of Google Alerts include:' followed by a bulleted list: monitoring a developing news story, keeping current on a competitor or industry, getting the latest on a celebrity or event, and keeping tabs on favorite sports teams. A 'Create an alert with the form on the right.' instruction is present, along with a link to 'click here to manage your alerts'. On the right side, there is a 'Create a Google Alert' form with the following fields: 'Enter the topic you wish to monitor.' (with a text input field), 'Search terms:' (with a text input field), 'Type:' (with a dropdown menu set to 'Comprehensive'), 'How often:' (with a dropdown menu set to 'once a day'), and 'Deliver to:' (with a text input field). A 'Create Alert' button is located below these fields. A footer note states 'Google will not sell or share your email address.' At the bottom of the page, there is a copyright notice: '© 2007 Google - Google Home - Google Alerts Help - Terms of Use - Privacy Policy'.

MAKE SURE ALL MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS ARE CONSISTENT!

For example:

Signage on the farm

Advertising & promotional materials (print & online)

Employee apparel

Contact information – email, voicemail, etc.

REMEMBER....IT'S ALL ABOUT THE FARM **EXPERIENCE!**



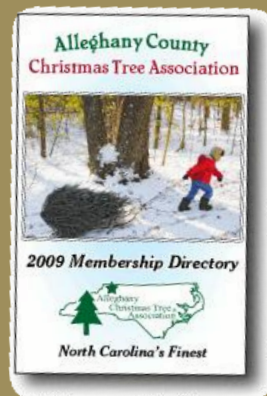
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PROVIDE & PROMOTE A UNIQUE, HIGH QUALITY EXPERIENCE!

MARKETING AGRITOURISM WHILE PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICE

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?



FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Supported by a grant from the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program

Award No. ENE11-121, “Development of Extension Programming to Support the Advancement of Agritourism in the Northeast”



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