



Market Matters

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Preparing For Opening Day

“Farmers Market Management Skills” Desmond Jolly, UC Small Farm Center University of California Dept. of Agricultural and Resource Economics

Most markets take about a year to develop and involve countless hours of volunteer work by many people. The day the market opens is the culmination of a long period of hard work, and it is an exciting event for everyone. Following are suggestions from managers who have opened markets throughout the United States to help ensure a smooth and successful first day.

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Send Invitations

Everyone who has helped in developing the market should be invited to participate in opening day activities. Also invite local officials, community leaders, local church and religious organization leaders, and local celebrities. Board members and vendors also should invite their friends and families. At least one month prior to opening day, send out press releases to local newspapers and to radio and television stations. Be sure to mention any planned special events in addition to the market’s opening and emphasize the bounty of fresh, locally grown

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Organizational Details: Mission Statement

From Marketshare, program of Marketumbrella.org For the complete worksheet go to marketumbrella.org

A mission statement is a simple declaration of your market’s purpose. It can be thought of as answering three questions:

- What needs or opportunities do we address?
- How do we address them?
- What values guide our work?

Although a mission statement should be simple, crafting one often isn’t. That’s because board members, donors, staff, volunteers, vendors, and shoppers, may all have different ideas about your purpose, as well as different words to express that purpose. One good way to identify your mission, therefore, is to ask a sampling of these constituents to answer the three questions posed above, and then to identify the common themes that emerge. In crafting your mission statement, try to avoid

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“Local newspapers are always interested in positive community events to cover”



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produce that will be available. Always highlight the potential for media photo opportunities.

Local newspapers are always interested in positive community events to cover, and the colorful richness and abundance of farmers tables piled high with produce create excellent photo opportunities. If the market plans to have cooking demonstrations or other food-related activities, make sure the food editor of the local paper receives an invitation. Events involving children also are popular with the media. As is always the case in promoting the market, delivering press releases in person, along with a basket of produce, is a great way to create a positive impression and ensure coverage.

“The market has to try and get the mix just right. Too many vendors, and they go away with leftover produce and are not excited to come back.”

The goal of opening day, however, is not necessarily to have all those who are invited attend the event. You want a good number of people to attend. That number is largely based on the number of vendors participating in the market. Martin Barnes, who helped organize the Davis Farmers market in Davis, California, points out that “the market has to try and get the mix just right. Too many vendors, and they go away with leftover produce and are not excited to come back. Too many shoppers, and they will be frustrated that stall after stall is sold out or has only slim pickings.” It may take a few weeks, a few months, or even a few seasons for the market to grow into itself and find the right balance of vendors and shoppers. In organizing the opening day, it is important to strive for a balance between the two, but do not expect perfection. Alice Whitlatch, a vendor and manager at the Cedar County Farmers Market in Tipton, Iowa, says that it took an entire summer before people in town became accustomed to the market and regularly remembered to attend it. But that market is now in its fifteenth year.



Confirm with Growers

Stay in touch with the vendors! While the manager may have seen growers at a recent grower meeting, they all will definitely need a confirmation call at least a week or so before opening day. Farmers have to deal with shifting weather, constantly changing market prices, and many other unpredictable elements. They have learned to be flexible and keep their options open. Simply because there is a schedule to keep and the market is expecting their participation does not necessarily mean that they see it the same way. Calling just one week in advance will help to give the manager a more realistic vendor count while still allowing time to contact alternates. The phone calls are also important components of making vendors feel more comfortable. Make sure they are clear about the produce they can bring, the stall space they will have, and other pertinent details. Make sure they have reviewed the grower’s checklist. Ask if they have any final questions. Ask if they know when to arrive and how to get to the market. It might be wise to ask them to plan to arrive at least a half an hour early to allow for unexpected delays.

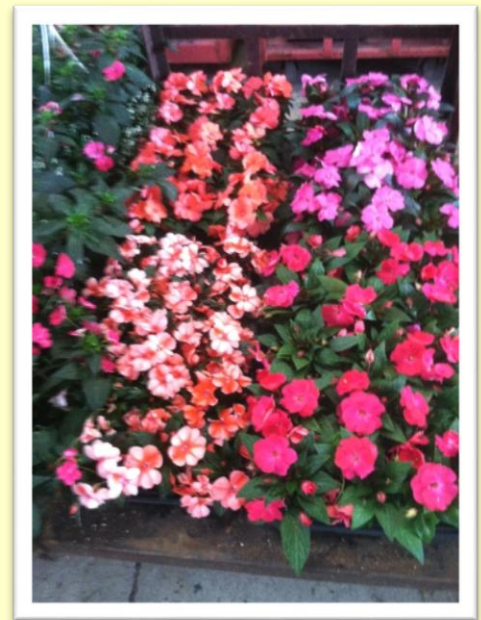
Check Permits and Licenses

Mission Statement from page 1

buzzwords and jargon in favor of words that everyone can understand. Plain language will help your mission statement to remain relevant and inspirational over time. On the other hand, it's good to review even the best-written mission statement every five years, or so, to ensure that it still reflects current needs or opportunities and speaks compellingly to current constituents.

Here are some sample mission statements to get you started.

1. Greenmarket's mission is to promote regional agriculture and ensure a continuing supply of fresh local produce for New Yorkers. Greenmarket supports farmers and preserves farmland for the future by providing regional, small family farmers with opportunities to sell their fruits, vegetables and other farm products to New Yorkers.
2. The Fondy Food Center was created as a long term response to this lack of access to healthy food and jobs. Farmers Market stands were found to be a traditional, low investment way to make fresh food available and to contribute to the economic vitality of the neighborhood.
3. NFMA's mission is to support Washington's small farms and farming families by providing effective direct sales sites for our region's small farmers and by educating consumers about farm products and the benefits of buying direct from local farmers.
4. The mission of Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles (SEE-LA) is to promote and engage in self-sustaining community and economic development activities within the city of Los Angeles, including sustainable food systems, social and cultural programs, and economic revitalization projects.
5. The mission of marketumbrella.org is to cultivate the field of public markets for public good.
6. The mission of the Crescent City Farmers Market is to benefit farmers and fishers, consumers and neighborhoods in the fertile crescent of Greater New Orleans by operating weekly, year-round markets where food producers and harvesters market the fruits of their labor directly to consumers in public settings.
7. The San Francisco Public Market Collaborative is: dedicated to the vision of a permanent public market that will serve our diverse populations, help to preserve our rich agricultural and culinary heritage, and enhance our quality of life.



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As early as a month before the opening day, check to make sure all permits and licenses are in order. This will allow time to follow up on anything that might have been overlooked. It also might be wise to call local officials and run through the list of local requirements one last time. These calls will serve as a reminder of the market's presence to emergency service agencies such as the police and fire departments.

Coordinate Staff and Volunteer Support

Plan well in advance to have sufficient staff members and volunteers to help coordinate opening day. In addition to helping with placement of signs, markers, and barriers, you may need volunteers to direct vendors to their stalls and to participate in crowd control and customer assistance. Larger markets can especially benefit from having extra sets of eyes at each entrance. These volunteers can help direct trucks to their parking places and keep customers out of harm's way. During the market, they can answer customer questions, assist with enforcing market rules, and expedite urgent or emergency needs.



Be sure to make confirmation calls to all the volunteers. In addition to confirming participation, check to make sure that everyone has appropriate transportation, especially if they are expected to transport bulky or heavy items such as barricades, tables, or chairs. If there is not already a staff/volunteer contact list, put one together and distribute copies. Ease of communication facilitates smooth operations.

Upcoming Penn State Extension Events

Selling the Food You Grow in Pittsburgh

Grow Pittsburgh, Penn State Extension, and Pittsburgh Food Policy Council are pleased to announce the launch of an online resource guide titled An Urban Grower's Guide: Selling the Food You Grow in Pittsburgh. The goal of the guide is to encourage city residents to grow and sell produce by providing resources that explain the relevant rules and regulations. A workshop to showcase the new website content followed by Questions and Answers. Registration is free.

May 19, 2016, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

<http://extension.psu.edu/business/farm/events/selling-the-food-you-grow-in-pittsburgh>

Cooking for Crowds: A Volunteer's Guide to Safe Food Handling

When: June 7, 2016, 1:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Where: Lebanon, PA

Preparing food in large quantities is different than food preparation in the home. Program helps non-profit organizations and their volunteers understand the risks involved with preparing large volumes of food and the important food safety practices that need to be implemented to ensure a safe event.

<http://www.cvent.com/events/cooking-for-crowds-a-volunteer-s-guide-to-safe-food-handling/event-summary-7c757403531a48889ca874bddfac57fb.aspx>



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