

Navajo Farmer's Market Resource Guide

Version 1.0



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Introduction

Emergence Group is an Indigenous 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the economic growth of Diné (Navajo) and Hopi through collaborative stewardship which fosters targeted projects that are locally created, led and sustained.

In 2022, Emergence Group established the Navajo Food/Agriculture Collaborative to foster dialogue and networking with the goal of increasing the local food economy on the Navajo Nation and Hopi. A priority identified is to increase the capacity of local food producers.

Over the past two years we have been focusing our efforts on the framework needed to support a Food/Ag economy and on those producers who can benefit from knowledge and technical support to grow their production.

Why this guide?

The majority of food producers on the Navajo Nation are small growers, many are not able to supply produce across an entire season or provide the diverse types of produce of interest. There are, however, many intermediate opportunities for growers closer to their local communities. Communities are also gaining interest in providing more access to healthy locally grown foods.

Who should have interest in this guide?

Anyone who finds value in providing opportunities to access healthy foods closer to home would benefit.

- Chapters
- Senior Centers
- Community Centers
- Veterans Offices
- Church Groups
- Public Health organizations, i.e. Wellcenters, Diabetes Programs
- Other Non-profit organizations
- Grassroots Organizations
- Entrepreneurs
- Community Members
- Agricultural Cooperatives
- Villages

What this document is intended to achieve?

The document is intended to identify the areas to consider when setting up an initial Farm Stand and showing how this initial stand can mature into a Farmer's Market over a number of years.

Each of the areas to consider when setting up a Farmer's Market have been broken down to consider how to begin, if you have not had any type of opportunity to share produce, meat or value-added products in your community. Those using the guide can identify where they and those produce they have access to best fit and grow from there.

Emergence Group is available to walk you through the guide or answer any number of questions related to the work. Contact us at info@foodagriculturecollaborative.org

DUTIES OF A MARKET MANAGER

The duties of a market manager make up an extremely varied job description. Market managers wear a number of different hats, and the hats change with the seasons. While farmers markets tend to be seasonal, there is plenty of work to be done by farmers' market managers throughout the year. The following is a summary of all the tasks that farmers' market managers need to perform.

YEAR ONE

Pre-Season

Identify what you can accomplish - one market day, three market days? Set date(s) after talking to 2-3 local producers.

- Develop advertising and promotions plan
 - Media campaign
 - Promotional materials—signs, banners, brochures
- Develop market operations
 - Basic Market Rules
 - Secure necessary permissions
 - Review market site for improvements
- Recruit farmers/vendors
 - Develop recruitment strategy and execute
- Establish budget/funding sources
- Develop community relationships
- Hold preseason vendor meetings to communicate all of the above

In Season

- Enroll farmers and vendors in the market.
 - Maintain database of all vendors, contact information, and licenses if needed
- Assign vendor spaces
- Place all signage prior to market opening
- Ensure all market rules and local chapter regulations are adhered to
- Carry out promotional plan

- Resolve any disputes that arise with vendors, customers, or local government
- Maintain market grounds in a safe manner
- Conduct periodic customer counts and collect vendor sales information

PostSeason

- Evaluate the market season—what went right, what could be improved upon, counts of customers and customer comments.

YEAR TWO

Pre-Season

Identify what you can accomplish - two -four market days. Set date(s) after talking to vendors and customers from Year One and new possible vendors.

- Develop advertising and promotions plan
 - Media campaign
 - Promotional materials—signs, banners, brochures
 - Special events
- Develop market operations
 - Basic Market Rules
 - Select opening/closing dates for market
 - Secure necessary permissions
 - Review market site for improvements
- Recruit farmers/vendors
 - Develop recruitment strategy and execute.
 - Identify and recruit additional farmers/vendors
- Establish budget/funding sources
- Develop community relationship
- Hold preseason vendor meetings to communicate all of the above

In Season

- Enroll farmers and vendors in the market through vendor agreements/ market applications
 - Maintain database of all vendors, contact information, and licenses if needed

- Assign vendor spaces
- Place all signage prior to market opening
- Ensure all market rules and local chapter regulations are adhered to
- Carry out promotional plan
- Resolve any disputes that arise with vendors, customers, or local government
- Maintain market grounds in a safe manner
- Operate info booth for consumer questions, educational materials, etc.
- Act as liaison between vendors and market advisory committee
- Conduct periodic customer counts and collect vendor sales information

Post Season

- Evaluate the market season—what went right, what could be improved upon execute
- Counts of customers and customer comments.
- Develop community relationships

YEAR THREE & BEYOND

PreSeason

- Develop advertising and promotions plan
 - Media campaign
 - Promotional materials—signs, banners, brochures
 - Special events
- Work with market committee on market systems (review, update, and create) to promote sustainability for the market
 - Rules and regulations
 - Strategic planning for the market
 - Committee development
- Develop market operations
 - Select opening/closing dates for market
 - Secure necessary permits
 - Secure market liability insurance (NM Markets available through NMFMA)
 - Review market site for improvements
- Recruit Farmers/Vendors
 - Develop recruitment strategy and execute
- Establish budget/funding sources
- Develop community relationships

- Hold preseason vendor meetings to communicate all of the above
- Ensure WIC/Senior paperwork is current

In Season

- Enroll farmers and vendors in the market through vendor agreements/ market applications
 - Maintain database of all vendors, contact information, and licenses if needed
- Assign vendor spaces
- Place all signage prior to market opening
- Ensure all market rules and local chapters regulated are adhered to
- Carry out promotional plan
- Resolve any disputes that arise with vendors, customers, or local government
- Maintain market grounds in a safe manner
Conduct periodic customer counts and collect vendor sales information

PostSeason

- Evaluate the market season- review data and customer, vendor thoughts on the sessions.

MARKET RULES

YEAR ONE

Identify your goals for having a market and set up rules that will ensure a safe and enjoyable market day for both producers and consumers. Some rules and regulations are more standard, such as a 'Code of Conduct' or necessary Food Handler's Certificate (if applicable). Choose the guidelines that make the most sense for the size, location, and goals of your farmers market.

YEAR TWO & BEYOND

Create more formal market rules.

When market rules are clear, concise, and easy to understand, they can minimize conflicts in the marketplace. Each market participant operates under the same rules, with the same requirements. By reading and understanding the rules, each

vendor is aware of what is expected of them: standards of conduct, what can be sold, and how to handle grievances with other vendors or grievances with the operation of the market.

Tips for Creating Effective Market Rules

There are several things to consider when establishing rules for farmers' markets. First, the rules define and complement the mission, or goal, of the market. The market mission can include such aims as meeting social and economic goals, revitalizing a local economy, creating vibrant public spaces, providing food access to otherwise food insecure neighborhoods, reclaiming and revitalizing public space, and creating opportunities for local agriculture. For example, if the driving force of the market is to provide a venue for local farmers, then the rules should reflect that by limiting the vendors to farmers only. Likewise, limiting the geographic region where participating farmers reside supports a local theme. If your mission is to provide local residents with access to fresh foods, then your rules may be broader in regard to who may sell in the market, including a broader product mix.

Rules should be reviewed and revised by the market management on a regular basis. Situations change and new issues arise. A review of the rules by the market's governing body will assure that the rules reflect the current state of the market.

Basic Elements of Effective Market Rules

The rules are an important market document that requires careful consideration and input from the vendors. The rules represent an agreement between the vendor and the market and establish each participant's rights and responsibilities within the market. The application process for entering a farmers market should include a copy of the rules and a statement on the application itself that states that the applicant has been given

a copy of the rules and will agree to abide by them. The applicant's signature on the application then becomes a legally binding contract to comply with the market rules.

Market governance

The rules should identify the governance of the market. Identify who operates the market, who sets the policies and procedures of the market and who applies those policies and procedures. Vendors in the market should know who will have the authority to implement the rules of the market on a daily basis.

General operations

Let your vendors know the season of operation and the days and hours of the market so they can be prepared. This section will also give the vendors the information they need about setup times and when they are allowed to leave. All details of operations should be clearly defined in the rules so there is no confusion and all market participants know what is expected of them.

Who may sell in the market

This section is critical to market operations and to fulfilling the market's mission. The definition of who can sell needs to be written in a way that can be verified and enforced

Also in this section is a definition of the products that can be sold at the market. For example, all farm products grown and sold by the producer of the products can be sold at the market. Some products require additional explanation. For example, if crafts are allowed in the market, what are the factors that will constitute an acceptable craft? Do they have to be locally sourced and made? The same applies to baked goods. Must the product be made from "scratch?" What about the ingredients? Must they be local or premade?

In addition to what products can be sold in the market, the rules should make clear that each market participant must comply with all local and

federal laws and regulations dealing with the products they are selling. It is also important that every vendor selling a product that requires some form of licensing or permit keep these current and on file with the market.

Guidelines for selling

When everyone participating in the market adheres to the same guidelines for selling in the market, then all vendors are given an equal opportunity to present their products for sale. Customers will be treated fairly and courteously. Some examples of rules that would fall under this category include:

- Signage. Many markets require that vendors post signage that identifies who they are and where they are from. Additionally, many markets require that vendors post their prices. Many customers will not ask for a price if it is not posted and they like to know that they are being treated equally.
- Other rules will govern how vendors must conduct themselves to ensure that the market is a comfortable environment for consumers and a fair place for all vendors to participate. For example, the rules may call for “no hawking, proselytizing, or loud music.” Other rules may call for no smoking or no alcoholic beverages/drugs at the market. Stall fees and assignments.

This section will deal with the fees involved in participating in a market, the size and location of selling space, and the rights of vendors in stall selection and retention. Fees should reflect the mission of the market. For example, if the intent of the market is to support local agriculture, the market may waive a vending fee but impose higher fees for food processors or crafters.

Compliance

How does market management handle complaints, rules violations, and grievances? This section will provide all participants a full

understanding of what to expect when issues arise. The compliance section must also outline the ramifications of violating the market rules. This typically includes a series of verbal and written warnings, suspensions, and expulsion from the market. The intent is to make it clear to vendors that the rules will be enforced and there is a consequence to noncompliance.

RECRUITING VENDORS

YEAR ONE

Familiarize yourself with local producers and other potential vendors, depending on what you allow in your market, i.e. local produce, craft, food.

YEAR TWO

Continue to cultivate relationships with local producers and vendors, make connections with other producers in outlying areas that have an interest in sharing their product with your community. The key to growing your market is to make connections and build Ké or a community with your vendors.

As the market grows, it is important that there are sufficient numbers of farmers and choices to satisfy customer demand for options.

Identify Product Needs

In order to determine recruitment needs and opportunities, the manager must first identify product needs. Start by surveying the products already in the market. A simple list of all products in the market and the quantities available, along with the numbers of farmers carrying each product, will help you see what is missing and what may be in short supply.

The interests of customers who have or may shop at the market is very important. Collect opinions and interests at each event. Keep in mind the adage that one farmer carrying a product is a monopoly, two is collusion, and three is free

enterprise.

Next, review the customer base of the market (Single Parents, Families, Elderly...) You'll also need to know the numbers of customers who shop at the market to know if you have sufficient quantities to satisfy customer demand. Sharing the results of any customer surveys with existing vendors should help them to better understand customer needs and wants.

Finding Farmers for Your Market

Some managers simply visit flea markets, roadside vendors and other informal markets, talk to producers who are selling the products they need, and try to convince them to sell in their market as well.

There are other more constructive techniques to reach farmers. Your chapter farm boards, chapter houses and Cooperative Extension office works with local farmers. Seek their assistance in reaching out to the growers with the products you seek. While they may not be able to give you contact information due to confidentiality, they may make the initial contact for you, allow you to include an article in their next newsletter, or send an introduction letter to the farmers for you, providing you agree to pay the postage. Their introduction lends credibility to your letter, because they have the trust of the farmers you wish to speak with.

Another source for locating farmers is producer associations for example ToohBAA Farmers Cooperative in Shiprock, NM or Little Colorado River Agriculture Cooperative in the Western Navajo Region. By matching the product you are seeking with the appropriate association, you may find a laundry list of farmers that you can contact. A Google search will help you to locate the organizations in your state or region. Contact information for the association, if not the list of membership, will be found on their website. A call to the Executive Director will help to narrow down a list of possible farmers in your market area. Remember, this is only an introduction to

farmers; you will still need to do the legwork to show farmers that your market is a viable outlet for their products and worth their effort to participate.

The USDA Service Center and the Farm Service Agency may be helpful in sourcing farmers for your market. In addition, the Soil and Water Conservation District, and the USDA Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program work with local farmers in various capacities.

What about good old fashioned marketing? Send press releases to local newspapers, local chapters and extension service newsletters. Place signage in local stores, chapter houses and other community locations. Ask local farmers for leads. Attend local farmer workshops.

Don't overlook nontraditional sources either. For example, gardening programs can add vendors to your market and a connection to the community. Local Gardeners may be interested in participating in the farmers' market as an outlet for their excess produce. Local gardeners may find that farmers' markets are a great venue to test their skills at production and marketing before they venture into agriculture as a vocation. Whatever their reason for participation, encouraging local gardeners to participate in the market creates a tie to the community.

You can also use Social Media, ie, Facebook/Instagram to search for local gardeners, farmers, value added producers.

What Do Farmers Need to Know?

Before farmers can decide to participate at your farmers' market, they must evaluate whether it fits into their time schedule and marketing and financial plans.

1. Where is the market located? Highlight the farmer friendly aspects of your site such as adequate off loading space and parking.
2. What is the day, time, and season of the

market?

3. Who are the market's customers? What are the market's average customer counts?
4. What are the sales volumes of your current vendors?
5. What are the market rules and regulations?
6. Are there fees for participating in your market?
7. Who is already in the market?
8. What is required to be a vendor at the market? For example, will farmers be required to carry any special licenses or insurance?
9. What programs does the market participate in that farmers can take advantage of, such as WIC/Senior and SNAP?
10. What types of marketing efforts does the market do to attract customers? Share samples of advertisements, posters, banners, press releases, etc.

Outreach to Farmers

Once you have a list of potential farmers to contact and you have all your information that farmers will need to know about your market, how do you effectively reach farmers? Many market managers start their contact with an introductory letter/email. The letter will give the farmer basic information about the market and the opportunities it offers and invite the farmer to take advantage of the opportunities at the market. Be sure to include contact information for the market manager. However, the letter/email is only the first step and will rarely result in a new vendor for the market by itself. Follow up steps are critical to complete the recruitment process.

Winter events are a great means to reach out to farmers. You can set up an exhibit in a resource fair or other community events of existing farmer workshops and conferences to showcase the opportunities at your market. You may also

consider hosting a workshop of your own. This can be a one day or half day event that centers on a topic that is of interest to the farmers in your area. Sessions could cover successful strategies for selling at farmers' markets, season extension strategies, food safety regulations, and postharvest handling, or any number of other topics that would be attractive to farmers. Be sure that your workshop has a session that focuses on your market: how to participate, why farmers should participate, and what your market is all about. Arm workshop attendants with all the information they will need to decide that participating in your market is the right decision for their farm and encourage them to complete the vendor applications onsite.

A final followup to your other attempts to reach out to farmers is to host a preseason vendor meeting/potluck. At this meeting the farmers and vendors at the market will learn all the details about the upcoming year, including the promotions and events schedule, any new rules and regulations, new programs and services, changes or additions to the market fees, etc. Invite all potential new farmers to this meeting. At the end of the season, hold a harvest potluck to thank the farmers, celebrate, and build community.

MARKET BUDGETS

By providing a picture of the market's anticipated revenue and expenses, a budget allows the market organization to make important financial plans and decisions. It will clearly show whether there is a need for additional fundraising, whether there is a need to adjust fee structures, or whether a need to "tighten the belt" on expenses.

Expenses

Be as realistic as possible about the expenses attached to each line item. You may also want to add a line item for "contingency" to cover any expenses that were not expected at the time the budget was developed.

Salaries

Most markets that compensate their managers choose to hire their manager as an independent contractor. The market does not have to pay the standard employment taxes: federal and state withholding, unemployment, workers compensation, etc. The manager is responsible for their own self employment tax filings. At year's end, the market (or sponsoring organization) files form 1099 with the market manager reporting the total amount of payments made during the year.

Insurance

Most markets choose to carry a minimum of Commercial General Liability insurance. This is a policy known as "slip and fall" insurance. Should someone be injured at the market, the insurance would provide protection for the market and the property owner against any claim made by an injured party. Some markets may choose to require food processors to carry product liability insurance as well.

Promotional Expenses

Whether doing formal advertising using local media, creating banners and flyers, or getting more creative with your promotions such as a social media campaign, you are going to incur expenses with promotional efforts. For example, for NM Markets, the NMFMA offers a base budget of \$300 plus \$5 per vendor for promotional expenses to all member markets. Contact NMFMA staff if you are unsure of what can be covered.

Facilities

Very few markets in Navajo pay rent for their site. However, other expenses that can arise include portapotty rental, or other supplies.

Office Expenses

Even an office as simple as a corner in a market

manager's kitchen will incur office expenses. Office supplies of paper, envelopes, and stamps are the bare minimum of expense.

Professional Development

Market managers should continually improve their skills as managers. This not only helps the market manager to do a better job, it also helps them to maintain interest in the work and have a sense that they are growing on the job. For example, for NM Markets manager training is available through the NMFMA every winter.

Income

The main income for most markets is vendor space rentals—the amount each market participant must pay for the use of space each market day. Most markets charge a standard day rate or a discounted seasonal fee. Some markets elect to charge a higher fee or a percentage of sales to food processors and crafters.

Contributory Income:

Market managers and organizations sometimes have sponsors that help with a portion of their budget. This might be an outlay of cash to the market to place in the general fund, or it could be an in kind sponsorship, where they provide a benefit that eliminates a budget category as an expense to the market. For example, a sponsor may feel that the market matches their organization's mission and can hire a manager, paid through their organization's funds. Grants can help support market operations, as well. Grants are typically short term funds that are tied to specific programs, events, or services.

Putting the Budget to Use

If the market is doing well, and the income outweighs the expenses, the market needs to decide how to handle the net income. The market can choose to make improvements such as purchasing equipment for cooking demonstrations, erecting permanent signage

expanding promotional efforts, or improving the market grounds. It may also decide to create new programs that will benefit its consumers and farmers. For example, some markets have developed home delivery programs that bring farmers' market foods to homebound community residents, giving access to more local residents and increasing sales opportunities for the

FUNDRAISING

Merchandise

Selling items that promote your market—bags, Tshirts, aprons, baskets, etc.— is a popular income generating practice. Shoppers who frequent farmers markets like to show that they support this community effort. For example, the NMFMA can provide your market with a customized logo for your market.

Sponsorships

Businesses and organizations are going to want to associate with your market, so remember that they need you just as much as you need them. Sponsors are cash or in-kind donors that help to defray the expenses of the market or a particular project or event of the market. By choosing to become a market sponsor, the company or organization will have a link to the market's customer base. The sponsorship involves negotiation between the market and the sponsor, until there is a consensus of mutual benefit.

When considering a company for a sponsorship opportunity with the market, you must consider a number of issues:

- What is the market's mission? Does the company you are considering for sponsorship fit this mission? If there is not a mesh of missions, it may send a confusing message to your customers about who the market is, what

farmers. Other markets choose to bank the extra income as a reserve fund for lean years or to save for a larger market project, such as a structure.

If, on the other hand, there is a budget shortfall, there are a number of ways a market can raise funds: seeking sponsors, holding fundraisers, selling market merchandise, and applying for grants. (See the Fundraising section)

you are trying to accomplish as a market, and thus result in bad publicity or resentment from your consumers.

- What are your customers' expectations of the market? Will the company be seen by your customers as supporting your local economy?
- What are the company's expectations as a sponsor? As an example of a successful sponsorship, the Crescent City Farmers Market in New Orleans worked with Tabasco to underwrite a market event. In exchange for promotion at the market, at a cost of \$5,000 to Tabasco, they got a banner (which Tabasco designed) to hang over a booth where their chefs do cooking demonstrations. So instead of the market's regular "Chef's Corner," it became the "Tabasco Chef's Corner." This can be a onetime event or even done on a weekly basis. As Tabasco was a Louisiana company, the market didn't feel a risk of alienating their customers and so were comfortable associating with Tabasco.

Donations

People and companies who donate money appreciate and enjoy having the farmers' market in their community. There are people in your market's surrounding neighborhoods who feel a kind of "ownership" of the market. Thus, they feel an intrinsic responsibility for it. This presents another fundraising opportunity for you. You can develop a "Friends of the Market" database, with which you can briefly explain what you're doing and what's coming up. Include opportunities for them to provide

direct support in the form of donations. This is a relatively simple way to increase market income with little added expense. In return for their donation you can offer these community minded local donors a gift—perhaps one of the merchandise items mentioned earlier, a promotion from one of your sponsors, or market bucks.

The Friends of the Market income stream may not be huge, but it does identify a core group that you can mobilize for support with future events. They can also provide a source of volunteers for help at the market.

Additionally, if your market participates in an SNAP and debit program, put out a sign at your info booth to suggest that debit customers add a dollar to their transaction amount to support the market's SNAP program.

Fundraising Events

Events such as cooking demonstrations, book signings, etc. elicit great popular and financial response. However, they require a tremendous amount of work that can last several weeks or more (promotions, forming a dedicated event committee, arranging event sites, selling tickets, etc.). The model is to bring in some high profile, well connected person to chair the event and utilize their network of connections and resources. So maybe holding it in a community center, place of business or a church hall would work best for you. And choose a day that will be good for attendees, but won't compete with your own market.

Grants

Grant writing can be laborious and time consuming. While grants are appealing as a source of revenue, there are many things to consider before beginning the process:

- Grants are highly competitive. The larger the foundation or government agency offering the opportunity and the larger the pot of money

available, the greater the number of applicants you will need to compete with.

- Most funders require a significant level of accountability, not just financially, but written reports of work done, evaluation techniques, measured results and accomplishments, lessons learned, etc. You will need to know whether your market has the capacity to fulfill these requirements before applying for and accepting grants.
- Many grant makers require applicants to be classified as an IRS 501 (c) 3, nonprofit corporation before applications will be accepted. This is a long, arduous and expensive process. The majority of markets do not have this nonprofit status, but it is possible to find a fiscal sponsor that will act as the reporting agent for the market with the grantor. In fact, by seeking out a local organization to act as a fiscal sponsor, the market has the added benefit of further imbedding itself as part of the local community.
- When considering all the potential grant funders available to you, do not overlook the smaller foundations, such as local churches or local businesses. Again, your chances with these groups are greatly improved if you've already cultivated a good relationship with them. You can also approach your local chapter house for a portion of the local Junk Food tax. Here is a link to contact your respective chapter to inquire about how to apply for Junk Food Tax funds: <https://navajochapters.org/>
- Finally, you want to be sure that you are applying for the right reasons and not just following the money.

Money Saved Is Money Earned

In addition to those sources where actual cash streams in to fill your coffers, there are also ways to benefit your market by keeping money

from streaming *out*.

Space

When looking for a safe, reliable, and readily accessible site in your community to locate your market, try to secure the space from someone willing to donate it, such as a city park or landlord of a shopping center.

Volunteers

Farmers markets could not function without volunteers. The incredible, dedicated members of the volunteer staff are the ones who get up on cold mornings to serve coffee, help set up tables, transport supplies,

etc. You've got to be sure that your volunteers feel valued: meet regularly with them, keep track of their hours, note when they are supposed to get their free volunteer Tshirt or whatever perk you offer.

Promotions

Offer to write a monthly column about the market for your local newspaper as a source for free promotion. A local radio station may be interested in having you as a regular guest to talk about current products and events at your market.

BUILDING THE MARKET COMMUNITY

What Can Community Partnerships Mean to the Market?

Financial

Many farmers' markets operate on a shoestring budget. Whether looking for financial assistance to shore up a budget or assistance with funding for special projects, events, or outreach, key partnerships with community organizations, businesses, and the chapter may

provide the funding needed.

Outreach

Governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, and business associations can be key partners and help to introduce your market to their clientele. Inviting them to be a part of your market, whether by allowing them to set up an information table, sponsoring an event, or be part of your management team, can be an effective way to build both entities' constituencies.

Special events

When hosting a special event, including community partners will reap numerous benefits for your market. Any organization, business, or governmental agency that participates in your event will promote the event to their clientele, bringing additional customers to the market. It increases goodwill with the organizations, businesses, and agencies that participate, improving the market's stature in their eyes and opening doors to other ways to partner, such as volunteerism or providing current of future funding through sponsorships, donations, or grants.

General support

Chapters can provide no cost infrastructure needs for the market, such as a site, bathroom facilities, trash receptacles and pickup, street closures and barriers, police presence, and insurance coverage. Neighborhood organizations, such as community centers, could promote the market to their members, but also arrange for transportation to the market or arrange for the market manager to come to meetings to discuss the benefits of the market and the available nutrition programs. Local businesses can provide storage space for the market tent, tables, and supplies; open their restrooms for the market farmers and shoppers; and host special sales and events on market day to make market days a communitywide event.

What Can Your Market Offer a Partner?

Farmers' markets attract a group of regular, local customers. Share what you know about your customers when approaching potential partners. Farmers' markets allow partners to create public relations opportunities, build community support, and show community support. Here are a few examples of what you can offer a partnering organization:

- Allow organizations to set up an informational table at the market
- Allow businesses to distribute samples at the market (newspaper, coffee, flyers, etc.) Put businesses' logos on any promotional materials you create, including signs and banners at the market
- Recognize partners in radio and television ads
- Create and promote an event to thank your partners
- Give away a market basket filled with fresh foods that is sponsored by a partner and promote it

Developing Partnerships

Developing relationships and partnerships within the community is not as difficult as it may at first seem. Start with who you know.

- Look at who is already shopping at your market. Many organizational leaders, municipal leaders, and business owners already shop at the market and may want to be involved.
- Look at any current partners you may have. They often have contacts with others who have similar missions, interests and needs.
- Phone calls, letters of invitation to participate, and meeting and greeting people at community events are great ways to get to

know the people in your community. Once you've begun the conversation, invite community organizations, local businesses, and tribal agencies to become involved in your market. Here are some ways to begin:

- Develop committees where they may begin to get involved. These committees can advise on management issues, special events, specific programs, advertising and promotions, or fundraising, wherever each particular organization best fits.
- Bring them in as volunteers. Put them to work as volunteers to help run the market on-site, parking assistance and data collection.
- Host an event. Some organizations may want to host an event at the market. This gives the market the exposure of an event, but puts the financial and human resource burden on the organization rather than the market.

When approaching community partners, educate them about the many ways that markets enrich their communities:

- Support local agriculture
- Provide a source of fresh, locally grown food
- Encourage new small business enterprises
- Support local economic development
- Educate the public about buying local, preparing fresh foods, and nutrition
- Provide jobs
- Provide local food security
- Provide a venue for social gathering and community building
- Provide top quality and selection of products
- Become a tourist attraction
- Serve as a resource for community health

Who Are Potential Community Partners?

The list of potential community partners is endless. Here's a partial list of partners that some markets have identified:

Nonprofit organizations

- Faith based organizations
- Health related organization, including hospitals, clinics, Navajo Nation Diabetes Wellness Program
- Nutrition agencies
- Agricultural organizations, Youth organizations Civic organizations
- Food organizations, including food banks, antihunger agencies, food policy councils, etc Senior citizen organizations
- People with disabilities organizations Veterans groups
- Community Foundations
- United Way
- Animal rescues and shelters
- Economic development agency

Businesses

- Local businesses
- National chains
- Media (radio, newspapers, magazines)

Government

- Chapter
- Navajo WIC agency
- Social Services and Income Support offices
- Local branches of USDA and ag extension

- Local police departments

Schools and other Educational Institutions

- Public and private schools
- Tribal Colleges/Community Colleges

DEVELOPING A MARKETING PLAN

Market Brand

Effective communication revolves around a strong, recognizable, consistent brand. A brand is your organization's identity. It spells out who you are and establishes recognition among consumers when they see or hear your brand, and elicits a positive response.

Your brand consists of your brand name (i.e., your market name), logo, tagline, typography (the type size, font, and spacing), colors, and attitude or voice. Branding your farmers' market can have far reaching effects when you use your brand consistently, create a positive image for the brand and maintain its integrity.

Your market may choose to develop its own logo.

Developing Your Marketing Plan

Your marketing plan gives you the opportunity to get your brand out in front of potential customers and raise their perception of your market. To make your marketing work to its full potential, create a marketing plan. Creating a plan will compel you to identify your target audience, create a targeted message, and find the most effective means to deliver your message.

PrePlanning

To begin, you need to understand the makeup of

your community. What are the ages, ethnicities, education levels, employment, income levels, family sizes, etc? What are their motivations for shopping at a farmers' market? Knowing this will help you to develop a marketing plan that will reach your audience with a message that is meaningful to them, and will result in their taking action on your message.

When creating your message, think about the **strengths** of your market. What benefits does your market offer? What value does the market bring to consumers and the community? These may be marketing points that will help you to build a targeted message. For example:

- high traffic
- weekly music events
- strong chapter support
- growers with unique selection of foods

Next, identify your market's **weaknesses**. What would a customer want from your market that you lack? What would prevent a customer from shopping at your market? For example:

- limited days and hours
- perception of high cost
- limited parking
- limited product line

Marketing Message

Now you can begin to shape your marketing message. First, you need to develop a marketing objective. What is it that you want your marketing to accomplish? The task is to develop one message that will resonate with the target customer and meet your objective. Keeping a consumer focused increases your chances of being heard, being remembered, and most important, being acted upon. Anything else should be a supporting message that backs up your primary. For example:

a. Feature: The freshest produce is available at your local farmers' market.

b. Benefit: Savor the flavor of just picked produce; the freshest fruits and vegetables are only at your local farmers' market. Benefits show how the product or the market relates to the customer. Make your message speak in their language and get personal.

c. Supporting Benefit: Put your family's health first by giving them nutrition rich fresh produce.

Marketing Materials

These allow you to educate your customers about who you are, build awareness of your farmers market, and create opportunities to expose consumers to your market brand.

Website

Many consumers are not just computer savvy, but use their computers as a resource for news and information. A website may be your customers' first introduction to your market. The site does not need to be fancy. Your page should include four main pages. A simple site, blog, or even a Facebook page will do.

1. The home page (the first page they see)
2. About Us is a page that tells browsers who you are, what your mission is, etc.
3. Another page should list all of your farmers or at least what products are available when.
4. Finally, make it easy for people to find you by including directions to the market, along with your market's days, hours, and season. Complete this section with contact information for further questions.

Newsletter

It is cheaper to retain a customer than it is to gain new ones. A newsletter can be a powerful tool in retaining your current customers,

especially when you have to retrain customers to come back to the market after a long winter break. Your market's newsletter doesn't have to be a professionally designed, mailed piece. A simple electronic newsletter emailed to your current customer database is just as powerful and much more cost effective. Use your newsletter to let your customers know when new products are coming into season, whenever a new farmer or vendor has joined the market, reward repeat customers with market bucks or coupons, and to announce an upcoming special event. The newsletter should be inviting, informative, and short.

Signage

Any banners, posters, or flyers are all part of your marketing strategy and should incorporate your brand. As customers become used to seeing your brand, they will instantly recognize your marketing pieces as part of your market.

The Media

Press releases

These will help you reach editors and begin building your relationships. To increase your chances of being covered in the media, you need to think like a reporter. They are interested in getting a story that their readers/viewers will find interesting. So ask yourself three key questions:

1. Is it newsworthy? For example:
 - a. There is a new product or farmer in the market
 - b. There's an upcoming event in the market
 - c. A weather event impacts local agriculture
 - d. New services are available in the market
2. Is it timely? Press releases are immediate and should alert the media to what is

happening now or be a call to action.

3. Is it relevant? Does your press release relate to the readers/viewers?

If you can answer yes to the above questions, then put this information together into a one page press release. Be sure to include:

- Contact information.
- Date for release to be issued. Most are set for immediate release.
- Headline. The headline should be concise, but must answer the three key questions.
- Subheading. This is an opportunity to flesh out the headline and further hook the readers.
- Contents. This is the body of the press release and should answer the journalistic questions: who, what, where, when, how? Include a specific time and description of a photo opportunity. Finally, the last couple of sentences can be basic information about your market.
- ### This series of symbols is used to close out your press release.

Keep in mind that reporters are inundated with press releases every day. To be sure yours stands out, follow up with a courteous phone call. Keep the call simple, short, and respectful.

Calendar Sections

Getting a free listing in your newspaper's calendar section is one of the easiest ways to get coverage for your market. Contact your newspaper to find out about deadlines and how they prefer information to be submitted. Know the deadlines.

Features

Editorial advertising is generally more powerful than paid advertising. But getting this type of coverage can be a challenge. It requires

developing a relationship with reporters, letting them get to know you as a market manager, and having them get familiar with your market and farmers. Reporters need to know that you are a reliable source of information, are available when they need a story or comment, and will return their calls promptly so that they can meet their publishing deadlines. When reporters feel comfortable with you, then you will become their source for information on agriculture, weather, and food.

One way to catch the attention of local media by hosting an event such as an event that celebrates seasonal produce, a cross promotional event with a local organization such as a health or safety fair, or a cooking event. It can also be helpful to create friendships with local media by inviting radio hosts, magazine and newspaper editors, reporters, TV station managers, and local celebrities to your market.

Social media

While there is no cost involved, there is an investment of time to update your site pages or blogs. Social media offers customers the opportunity to interact with you and your market, as well as share your market with their friends.

- Blogs are online journals. Your journal will include talks about your market, your farmers, local foods, etc. It keeps the readers informed from your personal point of view.
- Facebook does not have the character, allowing for videos, and lengthier posts.

Getting started with social media:

1. Do some research to learn what social media can do for your market by checking out blogs and successful social media campaigns.
2. Find out if people are already talking about your market and join the conversation.

3. Engage with your audience. A thank you for answering a question promptly goes a long way. Remember, social media is a conversation for all to see, not a one way message. Amplify your message by recruiting farmers and customers to help.
4. Talk about topics that will interest your customers. Use tools such as Facebook, and YouTube to connect and interact with them. Think about what you want to get out of your efforts – more sales? Better awareness of your market? Customer loyalty?
5. Measure your impact in meaningful ways. The goal of social media is to create behaviors, not just “likes” on Facebook. Get creative and have fun.

Paid advertising

Paid advertising allows you to put your brand in front of thousands of people and deliver a strong message and call to action. But it requires that your budget allows for an ad campaign with enough frequency for consumers to hear your message enough times to recognize and respond. There are a few key elements that are common to all paid media advertising. First, keep in mind that the best way to stand out in media is to focus on “what’s in it for me.” Potential customers want to know what their benefits will be by shopping in your market. Each advertisement needs a strong call to action. Be sure your brand is prominently featured in every advertisement. Customers must recognize your brand and know who you are by your image, your logo, and your message.

Radio

Being only audio, radio gives a 30 or 60 second time frame to tell your story and sell your brand. You can maximize your advertising dollar by placing your ads during high listener time slots (the station will have this information). However, ad rates are also based

on this, so higher numbers of listeners also means higher ad rates.

Print advertising

There are several ways to help make your print ad more effective:

- Feature your market's brand: logo, message, and tagline. The best logo placement is the bottom right or bottom center of the ad.
- Be generous with white space. Ads that are cluttered do not focus a reader's attention on your key message. But careful use of white space makes the rest of your ad stand out.
- Include a headline. This grabs the reader's attention and draws them in.
- Make graphics compelling and be sure they support your headline and message.
- Include a call to action.

A Few Final Thoughts

- Do not put all your plans (and your budget) in one media outlet.
- Get your marketing materials out in creative ways, such as ads in local bulletins, signs at the ball field, talks to local organizations, etc.
- Commit your marketing plan to paper; don't just keep it in your head.

Measuring Farmers' Market Performance

A key ingredient for farmers' market success is a mission to benefit the vendors. If vendors are not benefiting from the market, the market will not flourish. For vendors to flourish, the market must also attract and serve customer needs and desires. It is key that market organizers devote time to monitoring and evaluating market activity. They must keep good records and stay in communication with vendors and customers.

At minimum, records to keep at each market include customer counts and vendor sales. In addition, customer surveys are useful: ask customers about why they stopped, what they would like to buy, and how they heard about the market. If you are advertising, be sure to ask if customers have seen the ads.

Customer data

Traffic counts are critical. You need to have some idea of how many customers are coming on a weekly basis and during the season. This can be done by placing volunteers with clicker counters at key locations where customers enter the market. If there are too many entrances to make this feasible, send out volunteers every hour (or more frequently) minutes to count the number of customers to calculate an average.

For detailed information about customer habits, you may want to conduct a survey that could be done in writing, by personal interviews. The following is a list of questions that you might consider asking:

- Where they come from (city/zip code) Why they come, what they like about the market
- What they don't like about the market, suggestions for improvements
- How they heard about the market
- How often they come to market— weekly, monthly
- How much they spend per visit
- Do they consider prices to be high, acceptable, or low
- What products are a draw
- Their overall shopping experience
- Impediments to shopping (parking challenges, cash only, variety, etc)
- How the market has impacted their household

diet

- If they come to market as their primary destination
- If they shop at other stores before/after their market visit and how much they spend

Market records are vital to be able to document the collective overall impact of the market. Measuring market performance helps a farmers' market organization know if they are achieving the mission and vision they established for the market.

Checklist-Countdown to Opening Day!

12-9 MONTHS OUT

- Continue to research nearby markets (online and in-person)
- Talk to vendors and other market managers in the area
- Identify local community partners
- Talk with future customers about what they want
- Research the history of farmers markets in your area and reach out to those who have been involved
- Contact local chapters to learn about requirements for markets and vendors

9-6 MONTHS OUT

- Select and reserve the location
- Set the schedule (season/months, days, times)
- Secure local partnerships
- Recruit vendors
- Form a market committee

6-3 MONTHS OUT

- Finalize all your permits, insurance, and legal documents
- Start promoting your farmers market
- Create your branding and marketing materials
- Develop your market rules and guidelines
- Create an emergency plan and weather policy
- Start fundraising and secure sponsors
- Plan special events for your market

3 MONTHS OUT-OPENING DAY

- Create the market layout
- Enlist volunteers and identify tasks
- Ramp up marketing efforts
- Schedule and carry out vendor meetings
- Design market signage and maps
- Create a master contact list
- Get on every local events calendar

OPENING DAY AND BEYOND!

- Communicate with vendors, volunteers, and partners
- Confirm attendance of vendors and volunteers
- Make sure you're available for all questions
- Start collecting vendor payments/dues
- Continue implementing your marketing plan
- Be ready for troubleshooting
- Keep track of market metrics
- Communicate with vendors, volunteers, and partners
- Ensure market safety and market rules are enforced
- Attend every market (be the first there, and last to leave)

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