

10 Easy Ways to Increase Farmers Market Sales

Marketing describes a range of activities that include deciding what to produce and how to price, distribute and promote a product. *Selling*, on the other hand, describes the techniques used to entice buyers to exchange their cash for the seller's products.

From "*Selling Strategies for Local Food Producers*", U. of Missouri Extension

Use Color Blocks

- The human eye can see blocks of color from far away.
 - Yellow can be seen from the furthest away
- Put your brightest product out in front.
- Use blocks of color to create contrast
- The color of your tent, table cloths, and signs should be a part of this.
 - Select colors that would be present in nature



Create Layers and Dimension



- Make the most of your space by using all three dimensions – height, width, and depth.
- The average customer will reach 2-3 ft into a display without feeling awkward or inconvenienced.
- Bringing products closer to eye level is more enticing to customers
- Use wooden boxes or bushel baskets to create depth and height.

Use Good Signage

- Good signage can act as a “silent salesman” and will save you valuable time.
- Make sure signs are clear, neat, and informative.
- Include your logo/brand on all signs to continually promote your business.
- The days of writing your prices on index cards are over! Many customers are reluctant to ask the cost of items so make sure they don't have to.
- Use signs to describe nutritional value



Keep it Clean

- Clean up food scraps and other garbage from the ground around your table
- Tidy up tables
- Consider your personal appearance. The way you look is often the way people perceive your farm.
- Consider having apparel with your farm logo or mission on it.



Create Abundance

- Heed the old saying “pile it high and watch it fly”
- Small portions give the impression of product being “picked over”
- Consolidate product throughout the day
- Think “over flowing baskets, boxes, crates, etc”.



Create Abundance

Remember, people are used to shopping at the grocery store. Recreate it!



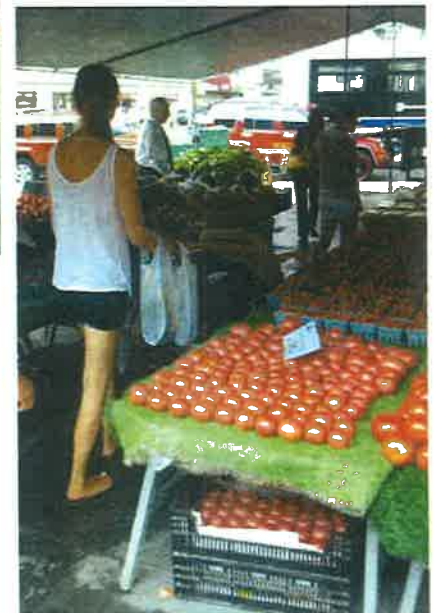
Engage Your Customers

- Ask questions:
 - Hi, how are you today?
 - Is there anything special you're looking for?
 - Are you aware of the specials we are offering today?
 - Make people feel welcome
- Share your knowledge
 - Explain how you like to prepare your favorite dish
 - Describe nutritional value
 - Talk about your growing practices or the difficulty of growing a particular product.
 - Tell your story!
- Create Relationships
 - People come to farmers markets to create a relationship with the people they are buying from. Building relationships will improve sales and give you free promotion through word of mouth.
 - Train employees to be well-informed, nice, and customer-oriented.



Create a flow

- Make sure there is a clear directional flow for clients to follow
- Place bags at the entry point of your stand, and your register/cash box at the end.
- Make your space is user-friendly; clutter and overcrowding will decrease sales.



Product Placement and Variety

- Try placing potatoes next to garlic, and include a recipe card for “garlic mashed potatoes”.
- Offer multiple varieties of one product and expand the taste (and purchase quantity) of your clientele.



Make Deals

- 2 for 1's
- Exchanges
- “New this week”
- Daily Specials
- Put things into containers with a pre-determined price.
- Create a “grab and go” section
 - Especially important in the city



Take Advantage of down Time

- Here's when you can cut up some samples, put up signage that hasn't made it off the truck, mist vegetables to keep them fresh, tally your sales, empty your cash box, consolidate product, clean up your market space,

What Sells...



Friendliness: greet customers, smile, say "hello" and "How are you today?", announce specials

Neat appearance: wear clean clothes, consider logo-embroided T's and hats

Reliability: start on time, keep regular hours, have plenty of product

Samples: offer tastes of new or in-season products

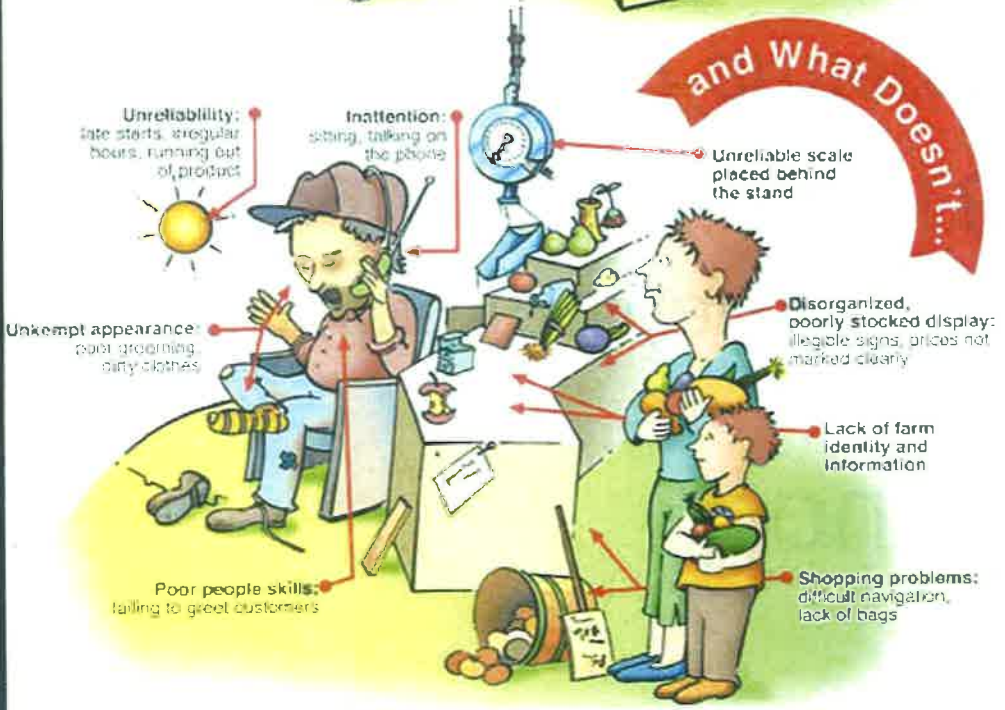
Special services: carry out purchases, give something extra to regular customers

Ready supply of bags

Organized, well-stocked display: use signs, set consistent prices

Information: pass out recipes, farm brochure, harvest calendar

and What Doesn't...



Unreliability: late starts, irregular hours, running out of product

Unkempt appearance: poor grooming, dirty clothes

Inattention: sitting, talking on the phone

Unreliable scale: placed behind the stand

Disorganized, poorly stocked display: illegible signs, prices not marked clearly

Lack of farm identity and information

Poor people skills: failing to greet customers

Shopping problems: difficult navigation, lack of bags

Top 5 Annoyances for Farmers Market Customers

1. Vendor takes or makes cell phone calls while serving customers
2. Vendor chats for too long while other customers are waiting in line to be pay
3. Long line at vendors stand
4. Vendor does not acknowledge waiting customer
5. Vendor cannot make change

* Courtesy of University of Missouri Extension