

Making Your Marketing Plan

Now that you have collected and evaluated information about your market's performance, this chapter gives you a place to apply that information to create a strategic marketing plan.

This chapter will enable you to:

- ▶ **Be aware of a variety of marketing strategies.**
- ▶ **Fill in the elements of a strategic marketing plan.**
- ▶ **Define your marketing goals.**

An Overview of Marketing Strategies

Your evaluation of your market's strengths and weaknesses, and possibly of its competitive position, has probably led you to some ideas about what you need to change. As you read through the marketing strategies discussed here, think about how they can be used to build on your market's strengths and mitigate its weaknesses. After an overview of marketing strategies, there is another version of the same basic format we have been using throughout this guide—in this chapter, you are prompted to choose strategies to address priority issues for your market. This is a basic marketing plan.

Following is a brief overview of each strategy. Strategies are discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

Improving Your Product Mix and Developing New Products

Are your customers finding the variety of products they expect? Are you offering all the types of products customers seek from your market? Consider adding new products or product lines if they are in keeping with your mission—dairy products, meat, poultry, fish, eggs, honey, juices, jams and jellies, sauces, and other value-added products. Also consider whether to offer more organic or otherwise sustainably produced items.



Improving Market Features and Design

Is the market arranged conveniently and attractively? Look back at the market walk-through evaluation in Chapter Four and note whether improvements are needed. If so, making those changes can be part of your marketing strategy.

Location and Schedule

Is the market in the most attractive and convenient location possible? Have you made any improvements to the atmosphere and attractiveness of the site? Are the hours convenient for the customers you want to attract? If changes need to be made, then they are also part of your marketing strategies.



Customer Service and Relations

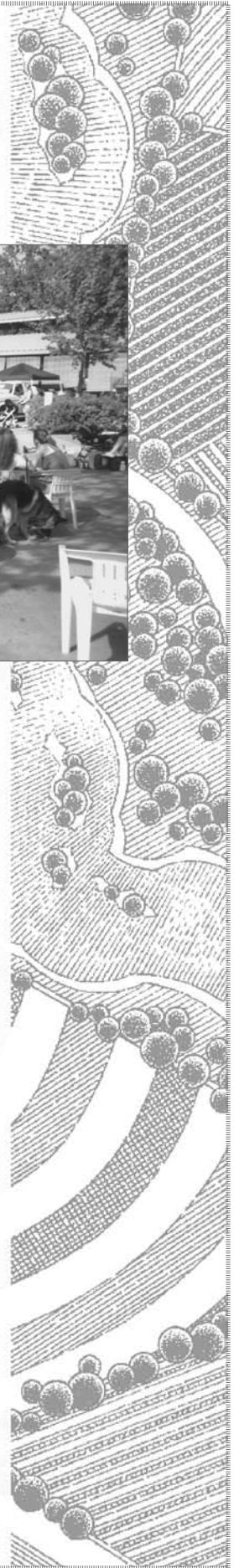
Customer service includes all the services provided by vendors and volunteers throughout the market. Can each vendor process credit or debit card sales or EBT cards or is there a central place in the market where customers can easily access such services? When there is a complaint, is there an established procedure for handling it so that the customer feels that the market is responsive to his or her needs?

Value

Value includes quality, convenience, and pricing. Quality assurance measures can include developing a common definition of quality, instituting procedures for sampling the quality of products offered at your market, and adhering to good food-safety practices. Pricing methods vary, but quality means products are priced at a level customers expect, can afford, and are willing to pay.

Promotions

Promotions can include a frequent shopper card or reward once the customer has spent a certain amount or coupons given when a purchase is made. Promotions can reward current customers for bringing a new customer to the market, build customers' awareness of the market, and bring in new customers.





Special Events

Special events can entice current customers to spend more, as well as attract new customers to the market. Tastings and contests can draw in customers and attract publicity to the market.

Advertising

From low-cost to expensive, from broadly appealing to narrowly targeted, paid advertising can increase the number of customers at the market. But advertising tends to be costly so your choice of advertising media must be based on a careful evaluation of their cost-effectiveness compared to other marketing strategies to grow your market.

Publicity

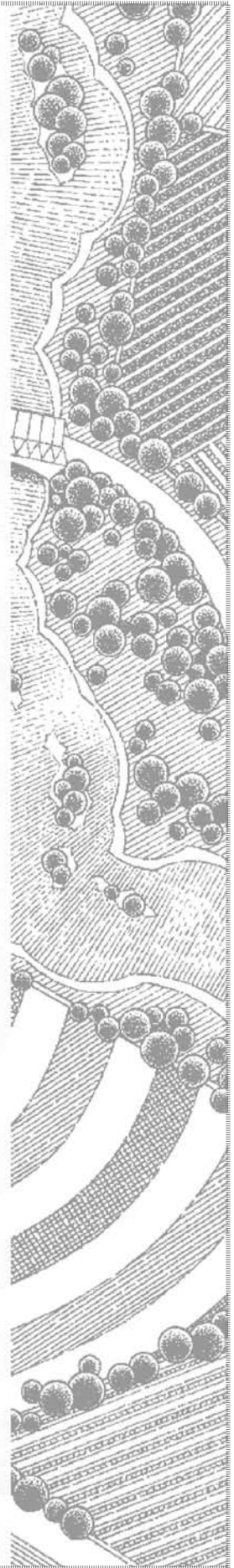
Promotions and special events often generate publicity, but obtaining the maximum effect requires some public relations and media work on the part of the farmers market's management before and after the event. Again, you need to assess your capacity in terms of cash outlay, volunteers, staff time, collaborative possibilities, and opportunity costs.

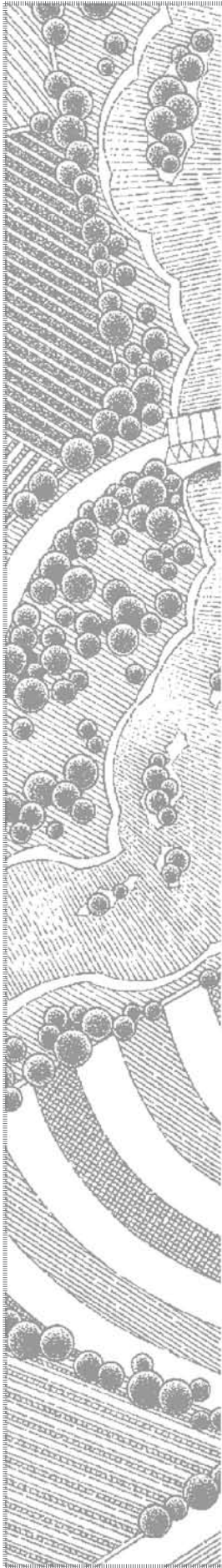
Develop Goals and Strategies for Your Market

With the preceding overview of marketing strategies in mind, complete the following table. Work with the board of directors to finalize the strategic marketing plan. As part of developing the marketing plan, create a *timeline* and *milestones*. **Assign responsibilities** to specific individuals or groups and decide how you will evaluate completion and success.

Indicator	What needs to change?	What strategies can bring about the needed changes?

Decide on priorities by choosing several strategies that you have the capacity to implement and that you expect to make a significant difference in the success of your market. Put an asterisk (*) next to the strategies you will implement first. This is the basic outline of your strategic marketing plan. Use the outline to develop a more complete marketing plan.





Goal/Activities	Person / People Responsible	Timeline / Milestones	How will you know you have succeeded?

Conclusion

The next chapters address marketing strategies in more detail so that you can effectively implement strategies that will attract your target customers and help you achieve your market's goals.

