



Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable & Farm Market EXPO

Michigan Greenhouse Growers EXPO

December 9 - 11, 2014

DeVos Place Convention Center, Grand Rapids, MI



Farmers Markets: Who is Your Customer and How Can You Better Interact with Them?

Thursday afternoon 1:00 pm

Where: Grand Gallery (main level) Room A & B

This session will help you understand your customers and connect with that customer base. How can you better interact with them both at market and away from market? How can you use market surveys to create a better picture of your customer base? How can you collaborate with market management to help you identify customer wants and desires? Methods of data gathering will be explored as well as ways to communicate effectively with your potential customer.

Moderator: Emily Beutel, Michigan Farmers Market Association, Design and Branding Specialist, Market Manager, Texas Township Farmers Market

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 1:00 pm | Who is Your Customer and How Can You Better Interact with Them? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kristin Krokowski, Commercial Horticulture Educator, Univ. of Wisconsin, Waukesha County, WI |
| 2:00 pm | Farmer Panel Focused on Connecting with Your Consumer <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vincent Sanna, Give and Grow Mushrooms, Clinton Township, MI• Hether Frayer, Fresh Food Fairy, Kalamazoo, MI• Kristin Krokowski, Commercial Horticulture Educator, Univ. of Wisconsin, Waukesha County, WI |
| 3:00 pm | Session Ends |

1 **Who are Your Customers?**

How can you Better Interact with Them?

2 **Farmers' Market & Local Foods Shoppers**

- Older
- Female
- Married
- Employed
- Live in urban areas
- Higher levels of income and education

3 **Michigan Farmers' Market Shoppers**

53% Female

Age 46

Adults in household = 2.39

Number of children in household = 0.91

61% Married

57% working, 17% retired

4 **Who is your customer?**

What percent of American's shop at farmers' markets?

5 **Why do people shop local?**

"The relationship between producer and consumer was not formal or contractual, but rather the fruit of familiarity, habit and sentiment, seasoned by the perception of value on both sides."

6 **Why are they buying local?**

- Quality
- Freshness
- Safety (food)
- Local connection
- Shared Values

7 **Whole Foods shoppers (\$13 billion)**

Shared Values = Customers

- Conscionables (primary): supporter of social and environmental initiatives.
- Organics buyers of organically grown food as a way to maintain their personal health and for food safety reasons.
- Foodies equate food with love and are frequent shoppers who shop our stores for selection, value and convenience.
- Experientials are driven to Whole Foods Market for unique products and special occasion items.

8 **Watch your customer not your bottom line**

- Look up!
- Write it down.
- Be a good listener.
- Ask questions.

- Enlist your employees.

9 **What do you want to know?**

- Economics of the area
- Age of your customers
- Ethnic make-up
- Why are they buying from you?
- What could they be buying from you?

10 **Be somebody!**

- Mission Statement
- Farm logo/identity
- Tell your story
- Use promotional materials that reflect who you are

11 **Stand for something! (and tell them)**

- Growing practices/GMO free
- Location
- History
- Grow your own stuff

12 **You might think they know BUT....**

13 **Better customer interaction**

- Sell people what they want NOT what you want to sell them!
- Ask them what they want
- Ask them how they want it
- Decide how or if you can fulfill their needs
- Follow through

14 **Invest in good employees**

- Employees are the face and mouthpiece of your business
- Have enough staff: customers should not be rushed or ignored
- They should know your products and their uses
- Presentation is important

15 **The customer is (almost) always right**

- An upset customer tells an average of 9-10 people about a bad experience.
- Your primary form of marketing is word of mouth
- Social media compounds bad press exponentially

16 **Resolve disagreements amicably**

- Focus on one issue

- Be specific
- Be descriptive not judgmental
- Focus on the problem (not the person)
- Seek a common goal
- Learn from you mistakes

17 **Promotions: feeling the value**

- Good customer discount
- Something for free!
- % off coupon
- Return customer incentives

18 **Review: Customers**

- There are a lot more potential customers out there
- Compete on quality, freshness and shared values – not price
- Share your mission statement, story and farming method to established shared values

19 **Better Interactions**

- Get to know your customer
- Invest in good employees
- Handle complaints successfully
- Promotions

20 **In conclusion**

"Cultivators of the earth are most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous and they are tied to their country and wedded to it's liberty and interests by the most lasting bonds."

-Thomas Jefferson