



Topics

- Marketing
- Community Engagement
- Customer Service and Experience
- Customer Loyalty Programs
- Events
- Partnerships and Sponsorships
- Start With Why – Implications for FM's



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Follow-Up Resources

- Provide email and I'll send:
 - Copy of all presentation slides (2 days)
 - Copy of survey result documents
 - Three planning templates
 - Several worksheets
 - Collection of relevant FM documents
 - Materials for markets and vendors
 - Etc.
- Please also check the box (✓) to be on my email list if you wish to be



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Marketing Overview

- Perception
- Research results
- Define terms
- Why branding and marketing should be so easy in the farmers' market and direct marketing sectors
- The power of "Why"
- Exercise to start your own marketing work



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Perception

- People don't believe what they believe because it is necessarily 'true'
- People don't see the world 'as it is' but rather 'as they are'
- Mostly, people are experiencing the world through their own perceptions
- "Organics are too expensive"; "Farmers' markets are just for hippies", "...or the well-off"; "Cilantro tastes awful", etc.



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Perception & Marketing

- Trying to change peoples' perceptions is the most fundamental marketing mistake you can make
- Telling people how they are wrong is not an effective strategy for engagement or education
- Marketing is about benefits, values, results
- Marketing can be about sharing stories that matter to people, and building relationships together around those things that matter
- Think of marketing as a "Yes" exercise
- Positive feelings, real values and emotions, fulfillment of needs and wants, aligning "what people want" with what you offer or are



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Questions to Consider

1. What do you love about farmers' markets?
2. Why do you shop at farmers' markets?
3. What draws you to specific booths at a farmers' market?



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Things People Love

- The atmosphere
- The delicious, fresh food
- The camaraderie
- The sense of adventure and fun
- Supporting local people
- Finding your favourites... and the unexpected
- The sense of community
- Fair pricing
- The feeling of it being a special occasion
- Environmentally sustainable shopping option
- A place for the whole family
- Others?



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Question - Why FM's?

- Why do consumers/people go to farmers' markets?
- What is their motivation?
- What matters to them?
- What are they getting that they can't get elsewhere?
- What's in it for them? (WIIFT)
- Etc...



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Results

- Local product, not commercially produced (8)
- Something to look forward to, weekly routine, tradition, routine of market day (7)
- Social interaction, community, experience (6)
- Choice, variety, selection, one-stop shopping, range of products, diversity of products, well-rounded experience (5)
- Quality product (4)
- Atmosphere (3)
- Alternative economics, money kept local (2)
- Education and knowledge (from vendors) (2)
- Place for families (2)
- ☐ Important b/c marketing is about knowing what people want and then speaking to them about that



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Question - Why Certain Booths?

- To those of you who shop at farmers' markets:
 - What attracts you or draws you to specific booths within a farmers' market?
 - Why do you shop at certain booths and not others?



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Results - Finding #1

- **34** comments overall were **PEOPLE**-related
- **25** remarks focused on the power of a positive personality to influence a person's decision to go to, or buy from, a specific booth
- This included:
 - Easy to talk to; Knowledgeable; Smiling; Feeling connected to them; Engagement; Friendly; Answers questions; Gives advice on product usage
- **4** comments were specifically made to say that aggressive vendors were a turn-off
- **5** comments were made that said that vendors who are sitting, looking at their phone, talking to other vendors, and not standing up were a turn-off to customers



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Results - Finding #2

- A total of **26** comments related to **SIGNAGE & DISPLAYS**
- **10** remarks were made that clear signage and information was a key consideration in terms of which booths to approach
 - This included informative signage, clear signage, naming items clearly, helping customers know what things are through signage, including photos and history, giving information on farm practices, and using good labels
- **9** comments were made that "interesting" displays, "artistic" displays, "colourful" displays, and "nice presentation" were a draw to specific booths - colour was specifically mentioned by 4 of people
- **7** comments were made that cleanliness mattered - people liked booths that were clean, neat, tidy, and clutter-free



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Results - Finding #3

- The third most important factor was **PRICING**
- This was mostly related to clear pricing signage, related to finding #2 – 10 comments total
- **8** comments were made that stated people would only shop at booths with clear price signs - people did not like having to ask for price information
- **2** people mentioned volume and discount pricing being important



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Results - Finding #4

- Here, we finally get to **PRODUCT** itself
- **9** comments were made about high product quality, authenticity, having harder-to-find items, and having "interesting" products



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Results - Miscellaneous

- Few miscellaneous findings
- Curious what vendors said versus what shoppers said
- The take-away: Clearly, FM shoppers are much more likely to choose booths to approach and/or patronize because of the people and the signage (including price information), rather than because of the product itself – hugely important for us to understand this, so many implications!



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Pumpkin Moon Farm

- A few thoughts from my own farmers' market business
 - It starts with us
- It's really important for vendors to understand this!



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Define Terms

1. Marketing

- “The action or business of promoting and selling products or services, including advertising.”
- “An aggregate of functions involved in moving goods from producer to consumer.”
- All the things we do – from signage to labelling to displays to communications to pricing to photos – to get our product into the minds and hands of our customers
- It's about being meaningful and memorable



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Define Terms

2. Relationship Marketing

- “Marketing activities that are aimed at developing and managing trusting and long-term relationships with customers”
- A fancy way of saying that the very act of developing relationships with customers helps you promote and build your business
- The phenomenon whereby your customers become your friends
- How can you market to your vendors and shoppers through your relationships with them?



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Relationship Marketing

- Relationship marketing takes your brand and shared values, and makes them the currency that you exchange with people, over time, to build relationships
- You keep in touch, you share stories about stuff that matters to them, you form a real relationship
- Examples: Email list, sharing articles and photos on social media, market info booth, staff who take time to talk to vendors on market day, sending birthday cards to vendors, customer loyalty programs, seasonal cards or free tickets to partners and sponsors, etc.



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Define Terms

3. Branding

- “The process involved in creating a unique name and image for a product in the consumers' mind. Branding aims to establish a significant and differentiated presence that attracts and retains loyal customers.”
- A fancy way of describing the way that you become memorable and likeable to your customers



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What Branding ISN'T

- Branding isn't gimmicks, tricks, fancy graphic design, corporate slogans, expensive advertising
- Branding isn't your packaging, your logo, your colour, or your tag line (externals)
- Branding isn't an external to your business or market – it comes from inside, from the way your biz or market is memorable and likeable
- The externals just put a frame around the feelings and experiences you are cultivating



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Branding is Based on Stories

- Farmers' markets, local production, and direct marketing are about authenticity – of place, of experience, of people, of product, of community
- Direct marketing is where we can successfully compete with commodity markets – not on price, selection or convenience (these are barriers actually) but on authenticity, community, and the stories of our producers
- Canada's farmers' market, and agriculture, artisan and production sectors, are filled with values and stories and compelling human interest
- Telling them is where our "brands" come from



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Branding

- Branding is about telling a story that connects with values and benefits
- Values matter in the marketplace
- Think about Apple, Whole Foods, MEC, or your favourite store or farmers' market
- The product matters, but the stuff you buy from them (a computer, an orange, a backpack, a radish) you could get elsewhere
- You purchase those products from those particular retailers because those companies/organizations have something you want or want to be aligned with -- a story, set of values, 'vibe', social currency, quality level, customer service, or [other factor]



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For Farmers' Markets

- Is your farmers' market mission based on:
 - The preservation of agricultural land?
 - The revitalization of a town or city or heritage building?
 - The empowerment of youth or immigrant entrepreneurs?
 - About bringing fresh food into a dense urban core?
 - Food advocacy?
 - Supporting local craftspeople & market gardeners?



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For Farmers' Markets

- Whatever your mission is, your brand is about communicating that mission by choosing words, images, symbols, and marketing materials that bring the mission to life in the minds and hearts of your community
- Telling your mission explains why your market exists, not what your market does
- Create a brand around your mission and values, not around your market logistics



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**PEOPLE DON'T BUY
WHAT YOU DO.**

**THEY BUY
WHY YOU DO IT.**

SIMON SINEK

People Don't Buy WHAT You Do

- Think about an Ontario-grown apple
- It's not the apple *per se* that a person buys
- What a consumer pays for is the taste, the texture, the sight, the cooking properties, the history they have with apples, the vitamins, the anti-oxidants, a relationship with the seller, or whatever combination of those things that are meaningful to that person
- But if something else did that, they'd buy that too
- The apple is just the 'package' for that set of results



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People Don't Buy WHAT You Do

- People buy results and benefits, not products
- 3 levels of benefit:
 - A. The benefits of individual products (apple) - "product results"
 - B. The benefits of purchasing it in the way that you package and present it (branding) - "presentation results"
 - C. The benefits of purchasing from you rather than from another apple producer (relationship) - "people results"



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Connecting This to FM's

- Product = Your Farmers' Market
- Presentation = Your location, logistics, amenities, how your market is 'packaged'
- People = The vendors you have, the staff you have, all the ways your market people connect with the public



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Exclusive Sales

- "I won't come because there is already another orchard vendor at your market"
- "I will only come if you can guarantee I'll be the only greenhouse vendor at the market"
- The literature clearly overturns the idea that exclusive sales benefits vendors or markets
- Choice of both vendor and product is key
- Relates to marketing and competition and the survey findings about how much PEOPLE matter



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The Myth of Competition

- Two people can be given the same recipe and the same ingredients... and they'll make two different loaves of bread
- They can stand at the same market selling their bread for the same price, and certain people will buy from person A and other people will buy from person B
- Same is true for meat, produce, value-added commodities, body care, coffee, jam, flowers, potted plants, smoothies, etc.



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You Aren't Selling "Just" A Product

- "Identical" products don't exist in direct marketing
- Example: lamb
- I like lamb, but I don't love it
- My purchasing relates to a deeper desire: sustainable, humanely-raised, small-scale meat
- Lamb is a 'take it or leave it' item for me
- I would buy lamb if I really liked and trusted a certain producer (them, their practices, and how they merchandise) but otherwise not
- You can't put me in front of 'any' lamb vendor and assume I'll buy it - choice of seller highly impacts my decision to buy the product itself



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Choice of Vendor (not product)

- You need to provide choice of both product and vendors to buy that product from
- Protecting lamb vendor A from competition doesn't make me buy from lamb vendor A. All it does is send me elsewhere to buy grass-fed lamb. If your market had lamb vendor B, your market would have a more satisfied customer in me (I'm getting more of my products, from people I connect with, at your market)
- Customers of both vendors make the market busier, which draws more vendors and customers
- Limit vendors and you limit customers



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Sales = My “3P Principle”

- Our energy, our personality, our ‘vibe’, it speaks to people
- So do things like our displays, our presentation, our communication styles, etc.
- Whether we are trust-worthy or likeable varies according to who you ask
- You can’t manipulate who will like you
- No one can sell to everyone
- How we present, brand, and merchandise our product also influences who likes your product
- **Sales = Product + Personality + Presentation**



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Being an Outlier

- A story from my own farmers’ market career



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Two Maple Butters

- Recent trip to Ottawa
- Came home with 2 containers of maple butter
- I didn’t want maple butter per se – I just wanted a souvenir from my trip, something to share with my family when I got home
- A \$18.49 jar
- A \$11.00 tub
- These purchases were all about 1) the packaging and label, and 2) the person, not at all about the product (or the price)



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Features Tell, Benefits Sell

- People buy a product because of what it does, not because of what it is
- Example: **Bunch of beet greens**
- Features Tell: freshly harvested, baby greens, heirloom beet variety
- Benefits Sell:
 - Fresh: higher vitamin/mineral/antioxidant profile (more nutritious), keep longer (better value)
 - Baby size: more tender, easier to cook
 - Heirloom: novelty, different flavours, ‘heritage’ is hot



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Benefits Sell

- Vendors say things like, “My product is local, my product is organic, my product is homegrown, my product is homemade, my product is natural, my product is handcrafted”
- There are values and benefits and results hidden behind these words – what are they?
- Don’t make customers guess the meaning – sometimes they don’t know, and worse, they can get it totally wrong



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“Which means...”

- *Which means...* “My beet greens are freshly-picked late yesterday afternoon, which means... [higher nutrition, keeps longer, better value and less waste, nicer texture, etc]”
- “Freshly-picked” is the feature, but it’s the benefits of something being “freshly-picked” that represent the results for the consumers
- Make sure you are talking in the language of benefits, not just features



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Features Tell, Benefits Sell

- When asked about their farmers' market, staff and leaders often quickly tell the features
 - "We are located downtown in the Heritage Hall parking lot... we are open Saturdays 8am – 1pm... we have over 50 vendors selling there... there's lots of free parking, you should come check us out!"
- Ask yourself, What 'benefits language' can we use to take that vendor lesson and apply it to our farmers' markets? How can we ensure we are talking about benefits at the market level too?



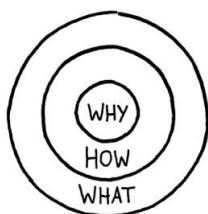
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Marketing - Questions, Comments?



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The Golden Circle



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What

Every organization on the planet knows WHAT they do. These are products they sell or the services they offer.

How

Some organizations know HOW they do it. These are the things that make them special or set them apart from their competition.

Why

Very few organizations know WHY they do what they do. WHY is not about making money. That's a result. It's a purpose, cause or belief. It's the very reason your organization exists.

The Golden Circle

- "Our farmers' market takes place on Saturdays, downtown, from May to Thanksgiving. We have 30 vendors and several programs for people to participate in." (What and How, no mention of Why)
- "Community is stronger when we support local. Our farmers' market has 30 vendors and several programs for people. We're downtown on Saturdays from May to Thanksgiving." (start with Why, then What and How)



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My Introduction

- What do you do?
- "I have loved nature my entire life, and was introduced to entrepreneurship early in my childhood. Those passions stayed with me and I have had a long career in the farmers' market movement. Now I run a training and speaking company specializing in business and personal development, and I'm helping build successful markets around North America."
- How can YOU respond to the same question?



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Community Engagement

- Starts with Why messaging
- It connects with people's values and hearts and motivations and desires
- Speak in the language of Benefits
- Tell people why you do what you do, and why that matters
- Shopping at farmers' markets is about fostering a customer experience



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FMNS Document

- FMNS does have a great guide to 20 farmers' market event ideas that we've seen successfully implemented at markets across North American
- Section on planning and evaluation
- \$4 at www.farmersmarketsnvascotia.com/shop



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Community Engagement - Questions & Comments?



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Customer Service

- We all have many stories inside of us about positive and negative customer service we have received from other people and/or companies
- People are far more likely to talk about negative experiences than positive ones (so poor customer service is 'sticky')
- It goes beyond being 'nice' or 'friendly', it is about keeping a set of promises and using those to guide your interactions



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Customer Service

- Reliability and consistency are key
- Occasional spurts of 'over the top' service don't make up for not being reliable and consistent in terms of what people expect
- Markets, be thinking vendors (1st), shoppers (2nd)
- Welcoming/orienting and retaining vendors is largely about customer service
- Same concepts apply to shoppers – "How are we as a market making sure we welcome and retain shoppers through our own market-level commitment to community customer service?"



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Customer Service Worksheet

- What is your customer service commitment:
 1. To your vendors?
 2. To the shoppers at your farmers' market?
 3. To your co-workers -- fellow staff, organizers and/or board members (depending on your role)?
 4. To volunteers at your farmers' market?
 5. To your market sponsors and partners?
 6. To your community?



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Customer Service

- Tips for successful vendors
 - Be warm, courteous, engaged
 - Good vendor qualities
 - Survey results tell us what people look for
- How to grow your business without relying on your market to bring new customers
 1. Converting more shoppers, professionalizing yourself
 2. Switch the focus to loyalty and existing customers



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The Importance of Regulars

- Customer service is all about how you make people feel – and it is based on their perception
- Each interaction you have with someone builds an emotional bank account between you
- Reliable, positive, consistent interactions build that bank account
- Let's say someone doesn't feel amazing after an experience with you
 - You: Perhaps you were tired, focused on something else, just had an odd interaction with someone yourself, etc.
 - Them: Perhaps it is their perception that is off (something impacting them affects the experience)
 - A negative perception of customer service from time to time is inevitable in our interactions with people



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The Importance of Regulars

- So you have had a 'less than ideal' interaction with a customer
- To use the bank account analogy, you have made a withdrawal
- With a regular customer, the healthy bank account balance you have built up from previous interactions means you are still in the positive
- With new customers, there is nothing in your bank account so a negative experience immediately puts you in the red, in overdraft
- This is why it's so critical to build your business and farmers' market by keeping a core group of dedicated customers happy – there is no wiggle room for a perceived negative experience if you are always trying to find new customers (costs more too)



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Incentives

- Free market \$, free coffee cards, discount loyalty cards, \$2 to fill in surveys, chances to win, name put into a draw, others
- Incentives drive behaviour – come to market, bring a friend, spend a certain amount of \$, participate in an event, etc
- Incentives don't maintain behaviour – shared values, and great customer service and experiences do



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Customer Service - Questions & Comments?



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Loyalty Programs

- Companies spend 2+ billion annually
- Main goal – protect the customer relationship
- 82% of people more likely to shop at a store that has a customer loyalty program
- 57% join for perceived financial savings
- 37% join for rewards
- Costs businesses 5-10 X more to get a new customer than to keep an existing one



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Loyalty Programs

- "A repeat customer gives and gives"
- A regular shoppers spends 67% more per purchase than a new customer
- They are also more likely to shop more often and bring new customers to you
- Loyal customers are the key to business success



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Our Mistaken Belief

- Farmers' markets focus a huge effort on always finding new customers to come to their markets
- What if the research is telling us that this myth doesn't hold up?
- Loyalty matters so much in the farmers' market sector because loyal, regular customers are the anchors for our vendors' businesses



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The Pareto Principle

- Based on the work of Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto
- Also known as the '80-20 Principle'
- In a business context, approximately 80% of sales are generated by 20% of customers
- Businesses and organizations that focus on keeping and serving their dedicated customers and clients, rather than continuing to focus on finding new customers, are ones who inherently know the value of loyalty to their success



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Reframing Our Approach

- If we shift our thinking away from a fixation on finding new customers, and focus it instead on keeping our existing customers loyal, we could grow our markets more cost effectively
- Higher sales volume for our vendors isn't a purely numbers game – more people at market doesn't necessarily translate into higher sales



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Summary So Far

- Loyal customers account for the overwhelming majority of a business's sales
- More customers overall doesn't always translate into better financial success for our vendors, but having more regular customers certainly does
- Customers who are more loyal will spend more at your farmers' market than a constant flow of new customers ever will



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What we know in Canada

- Shoppers at farmers' markets who are "weekly or regular"
- 2008 National survey – 48%
- 2012 BC survey – ~50%
- 2013 NS survey - ~45%
- 2011 and 2012 KFM surveys – 47%



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Reframing Our Approach

- So why are we so focused on finding new customers for farmers' markets?
- What would happen if we switched our approach and found ways to get our "farmers' market ready" occasional shoppers to come more often?
- How can we nudge that particular group to come more regularly?
- We need to concern ourselves with ensuring our regular customers remain loyal



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Top Trends in Loyalty

- Loyalty isn't just for the 'big guys'
 - There is no market or business that is "too small" to benefit from a customer loyalty program
 - In fact, building small and newer markets and businesses strategically by focusing on a loyal following of key shoppers, and not over-emphasizing the need to find new customers all the time, is a solid strategy
 - A small group of committed regular customers can be more sustaining than a large group of people who only come infrequently



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Designing a Market CLP

- Two common goals
 - Reward existing customers
 - **Change customer behaviour**
- Q1: How do we reward our best customers and keep them engaged?
- Q2: How do we incentivize occasional customers to become regular or weekly customers?



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Market Loyalty Programs

- Suggest: **incentivize occasional customers to become regular or weekly customers**
- Ask yourself: Could this be impactful enough to change consumer behaviour, and incentivize enough of our occasional customers to come regularly that it could build a more loyal customer culture at our market/business?
- Very weak incentives won't nudge behaviour so the cost/effort won't bring benefits



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Additional Points

- Loyalty can never be built when the basics are missing:
 - ☐ Good, reliable customer service
 - ☐ A range of products and vendors
 - ☐ Selection and availability
 - ☐ Pleasant shopping experiences
 - ☐ Good communication with your customers
- This is true for markets and for business owners and vendors themselves



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Re-Thinking "New" Shoppers

- Vendor level: How to grow your business without relying on your market to bring new customers
- Market level: How to grow your farmers' market without focusing at all on finding new shoppers to come through your gate/entrance/doors/market
- Engage deeply with trying to figure out how to build loyalty amongst your existing shoppers



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Staying Connected

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Time for Questions?



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