

**2017 ACORN Conference & Trade Show
Best Western Glengarry, Truro, NS**

Workshop Title: Social Media Marketing Part 1: Investing in Social Media

Speakers:

Margaret Congdon, Truro Farmers' Market - Manager

Sera Senakovicz, Truro Farmers' Market - Administrative Assistant

Executive Summary: Staff from the Truro Farmers' Market shared lessons and tips learned from their experience investing in increased social media presence for their market.

Detailed Notes:

Social media requires a time investment, although it's cheaper than traditional advertising. At the Truro Farmers' Market (TFM) social media is part of Sera's job description with a timeframe of roughly 2.5 to 3 hours per week.

Prior to 2016, the response on social media platforms was to town related news or events rather than TFM new and events, and the TFM wanted to shift that focus to mainly market related information.

TFM used analytics to try to understand whom they were reaching, when, and what resonated with them. Margaret recommended taking a course for a good foundation in social media. (She took a free course offered by Labour and Advanced Education for non-profit groups.)

Comparing their analytics from July 2015, July 2016, and July 2017, their average number of posts doubled from 2015 to 2016 (from 6 to 13), and more than doubled again from 2016 to 2017 (from 13 to 29). They noted that adding video content really seemed to boost the amount of reach they had.

TFM also looks at the demographics of market goers and determined they wanted more millennials (born approximately between 1980 – 2000) to attend the market. They evaluated the millennial demographic as being a good fit for several reasons:

- Millennials crave a true, authentic, personalized shopping experience
- They want shopping to be more an enjoyable process than just a transaction
- Search for exotic, adventuresome, memorable experiences
- Care about your (the vendor's) values
- Buy collaboratively, share enthusiastically about their experiences
- Want to co-create with you (the vendor)
- Want a unique, specific flavor that lends a sense of place

There are several trends that are good fits for this demographic, for instance craft beer, food trucks, and farmers' markets. But millennial knowledge of food production is often superficial, so there is a good opportunity for education. Millennials are also "digital natives" and tend to be busy and connected on social media, so to reach this desired demographic, the TFM invested in more social media presence.

The TFM social media plan includes different tools: Facebook, Instagram, and email newsletters.

Facebook:

- Weekly Facebook plan includes a variety of different types of posts (ex: Monday – humorous or thoughtful, Tuesday – tip of the week, Wednesday – recipe, Thursday – vendors, Friday – vendors, Saturday – market day, onsite activities/products). Margaret is responsible for the Facebook posts, and suggested it's helpful to schedule posts and share vendor posts to make it easier.

Instagram:

- Sera's responsibilities include the Instagram feed for the Truro Farmers' Market. She recommended it as a medium because of its appeal to visual learners and as a way to keep content light and fresh with "a good photo and a few words".
- With Instagram, you create and manage your narrative and branding and speak directly to your customer base. It's a powerful tool that allows a viewer to get a general feel from someone's Instagram "feed" or "grid" very quickly to decide if they want to follow them and learn more.
- Sera's Instagram tips:
 - Take close up photos in good light (outside if possible). Take time to practice using a phone camera for photos and you can get some pretty good quality images.
 - Share something that tells the consumer why it's important (ex: educate, what's in season, buying local, fun facts, truth)
 - The first 4 words (or first sentence) of a post are most important (ex: Giveaway!)
 - When to post is different for every type of social media
 - Hashtags are a searchable tool you can use in an Instagram post to help people find you (ex: #organicfarming, #womenwhofarm, etc.). There are databases online to help you look up what hashtags to use, and you can also look up what colleagues are doing for ideas. There are joke hashtags too!
 - Instagram Stories are another tool, suitable for if you have several things to say or share in a post. Stories are a Snapchat-like feature that let you create photo (and video) sequences that expire after a

day. Tip: You can also tag the location on a story to get more followers.

- o Instagram is good for people who don't have a lot of time to do social media. You can even just do it once a month. Just don't be a dead account!
- o It's important to just use the amount of social media tools that you can actually handle and keep up to date, so don't just jump into doing all of it.
- o Some final tips (from a slide of Dos and Don'ts):
 - Create a regular habit of posting
 - Don't be an inactive account
 - Be selective, don't overshare, edit
 - Practice positivity
 - Instagram is a good way to show some personality, have fun and be authentic. If it's for your business, don't get too personal though. Stay on brand and topic, without being cold and inhuman. You can be real and make jokes!
 - Follow other farmers markets, producers, and restaurants. Share content and interact with them...it's a great networking tool ex: if you want to sell to a restaurant, follow them on Instagram and interact.

Mailchimp:

- This is a great platform for including basic information (ex: date changes, community partnerships, vendor lists, events, promoting new things like customer appreciation cards, etc.)
- TFM uses mailchimp to deliver newsletters weekly via email to customers and vendors.

Questions:

Q: How much time is invested weekly on social media?

A: Depends on the season and events going on. Sera does 2 to 3 hours weekly.

Q: How much time is spent responding to social media?

A: Sera has Instagram notifications on all the time so she can respond quickly.

Q: When should you put up a social media post for a Saturday market if you don't have a lot of time?

A: Thursday morning.

Last thoughts:

- Linking Facebook and Instagram can be a benefit if strapped for time, but using different text and approach can be helpful too.
- You can set up a Facebook autoreply (for delays, time away, etc.)
- Instagram tends to be more positive and fresh than Facebook.

- You can turn off and screen/moderate comments from Facebook
- If you don't have time, hire someone with artistic talent and passion to help you with social media.
- Websites are still valuable for some contexts too.