

Workshop Title:

Farmers' Market Fundamentals

Speakers:

Michelle Wolf, Keltie Butler

Executive Summary:

The session covered the fundamentals of organising a farmers' market. Michelle Wolf led the discussion talking about the structure of a farmers' market and recruiting vendors. Keltie Butler also offered input on her daily schedule and advice.

Main Notes:

Topics: Boards, Organizers, Organizers and Vendors, Vendors 3 Duties of Directors:

1. Duty of Loyalty: avoid putting themselves in a situation of a conflict of interest, meetings and business are all confidential
2. Duty of Diligence
3. Duty of Obedience

The number one customers are the vendors. You need to be thinking about customer service for vendors as part of your management strategy. Customer service builds vendor retention.

She talks about three strategies:

1. Vendor recruitment
2. Welcoming and supporting them
3. Vendor retention (how do we keep them long term)

Customer Service for Vendors:

Many vendors themselves need to do a better job providing great customer service to their own customers. She thinks markets need to grow in this way also. She addresses the question, "What do vendors need in order to stay?" She says one way to answer this is to think about what is important to vendors, and think about ways to meet their needs.

What Vendors Want:

Profit and sales, customer traffic, relationships that feel good, sense of communities, belonging, vendorship, transparency around rules, competition, etc., sense of fairness, good location, good location, logistics, time of day, etc., being part of something special, policies they can understand and agree with, having the "right" manager and/or staff, parking solutions, right fee to sales ratio, sense that the market is doing a good job promoting the market/getting people to come, fits their lifestyle, ownership in decision- making, happy, friendly, cooperative market vibe, market rules that are fairly and consistently enforced, help with compliance (food safety)

Understanding Why Markets Close...And How Your Market can Thrive by Keltie Butler

The Research:

1. Market age
2. Market size
3. Finances
4. HR turnover (and burn out)
5. Unpaid labor

The recipe:

1. Vendors (the right vendors)
2. Layout
3. Product and vendor mix
4. Mission
5. Location
6. Connections
7. Economics
8. Promotions
9. Values
10. Management

The Right Vendors: What makes a great vendor?

- ◆ Arrives on time, stays until the end
- ◆ Offers a good selection of product and enough of it to last throughout the market day
- ◆ Has their price and quality match
- ◆ Professional display and presentation
- ◆ Stands at their booth, smiles and initiates conversation with customers
- ◆ Focus on customer service
- ◆ Aligned with market vision/mission
- ◆ Understands the success of the market as a whole as the key to their success
- ◆ Follows the rules (parking)
- ◆ Works collaboratively

- ◆ Takes advantage of training and networking opportunities
- ◆ Are market shoppers themselves
- ◆ Is community-minded
- ◆ Invests in the market by giving their time/expertise, etc.

Management:

Michelle Wolf created this formula: for every vendor, a market manager should aim to invest 1.25-1.5 hours/week. As market increases in size, management complexity also increases.

Running a Great Farmers' Market by Ashley

- ◆ Vendors
- ◆ Customers-public
- ◆ Board
- ◆ Yourself
- ◆ Weekly community event

Her Regular Week:

- ◆ Emails
- ◆ Customer newsletter
- ◆ Social media posts
- ◆ Website updates
- ◆ Market paces filled music booked
- ◆ Community room booked
- ◆ Responding to vendor inquiries

- ◆ Tracking/updating

Some Manager Tips:

- ◆ Set a routine
- ◆ Plan your week/month
 - Emails
 - Social media
 - Newsletters
 - Vendor inquiries