

Farmers Market Marketing
How to Sell More at Farmers Markets
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Last year, Rowena visited and sold at 20 different Farmers Markets across Canada.

Photo Comparison between 2 produce stands at a Farmers Market in Edmonton, Alberta. Both have the same amount of space (3 tables), white canopy umbrellas.

Stand #1 Observations

- don't know who they are
- don't know what they're selling
- nothing about their stand draws you in
- table cloths uneven
- the most noticeable aspect is the street behind the stall

Stand #2 Observations

- 2 farm signs/banner
- see the vegetables clearly, stacked up
- tried to hide the street behind with a screen
- attractive tablecloth
- pricing signs very visible
- stand looks classy, attracting high-end customers

Work with all three dimensions

- where do people look? eye level
- most of the purchasing customers are women, more petite so eye level is lower
- people don't want to be looking down at the table all the time
- show off your product, the item you're selling should be at eye level

Pile 'em High (and watch 'em fly)

- no one ever wants the last of something, people want choice
- keep baskets looking full: use inserts, tip basket on side, switch items to smaller baskets

Less is More

- don't overwhelm with too many samples, reading materials, signage
- have things on your table organized
- don't scatter your product all over stand, keep carrots together in the same place
- make things as simple for the customer as possible
- people find it stressful to make choices
- a good idea to have a large sign with all the products you sell at eye level
- people should pay in one spot of your stand
- lineups shouldn't cause blockages in other customers seeing your product
- example: Bean Boy Hummus. Have 3 kinds (not 20), don't want to overwhelm customers with too much selection
- A study was done on 2 stands selling jams. Stand #1 had 20 jams for people to sample. Stand #2 had 6 jams for people to sample. Study found that the stand with less choice sold more.
- Customers want guidance. Tell them what to buy. Example: signs that say "New this Week!" or "Exciting this Week!"

Mix it up

- People who live in the city don't have a lot of storage space but still want a variety of foods.
- Mix packs. Example: 2 different kinds of cherries in same pint container.
- Greek Salad Pack. Everything you need to make a Greek Salad. Cucumber, Tomatoes, Hot peppers. Put instructions in the bag as well.
- Anything you can do to make life easier for your customers

Keep it Simple

- people are overstimulated in general and farmers markets are overstimulating
- try to create a calm space
- People don't like going inside a stand (horseshoes or U-shapes), feel trapped into a sale
- If people are provided with baskets, they'll want to fill it up
- Provide people with a place to set down their bags, purse, or food they're buying

Think about your Lighting

- Canopy colour: white or dark is best. No gross yellow or green-tinged canopy. Imparts a strange hue to the food underneath.

Use Colour for Impact

Frame it Softly

- break things up, especially things that look similar with a box or basket
- frame in a way that doesn't detract from your product (neutral, natural look)
- or use negative space to frame. Ex: Royal Herbs made stacks of their different types of soaps with a space in between each type.

Tablecloths Matter

- colour. Blue? We don't normally associate blue with food (except fish). Associate blue with hospitals.
- ideally tablecloths will extend lower to ground

Signs for listing products

- group items together (greens, roots)
- should be easy to read
- whiteboard vs chalkboard? Black is easier to read off and looks classier. White looks more clinical, might get glare.
- most important that sign is clear, clean, and legible
- if you write an item in a different colour, people will buy more of it

Product Signs

- location is important. People often glance sideways as they're walking by. What's the direction of your flow of traffic? Maybe tilt signs slightly to make them easier to read.
- Shouldn't be too low
- Selling by variety is trendy
- May want to think about making it erasable for changing prices or unit sold (bunches or pound)
- cute signs appeal to kids. Anything that appeals to kids will help you sell more.

Who Are You?

- try to stand out, be easily describable
- to get repeat customers, people need to be able to remember you
- make your sign easily recognizable (with name of farm, name of farmer, location of farm)

It's All About You!

- people want to buy from people
- don't sit down while at market, look like you care and want to sell
- if can't physically stand, use a high stool
- don't do other things while at market (no reading, knitting)
- smile
- people want to know more about the vendor
- when people are in lineups, they'll read anything you put in front of them so laminate and bring any newspaper articles about you
- be “educators” not “salespeople.” educate about cooking, health eating.
- it's nice to hug your customer
- people will connect with you on a personal level
- consistent face behind the food
- don't wear sunglasses. It's rude. Need to offer eye contact.