



## **Promoting Your Farmers' Market: Improving PR and Advertising**

**Public Relations:** Your effort to get word of your market into the media for FREE.

**Advertising:** The same effort, but usually PAID (Exceptions: Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are free; or you can sometimes purchase left-over or "remnant" space at a discount.

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

#### **\* Use Events to Create Interest, Draw Customers, Get Press**

- Events are natural news pegs: most newspapers (and some community radio stations) have a calendar section where they list events FREE.
- Know the deadlines. Call ahead.
- Ask how they prefer to receive information: e-mail, fax, snail mail.
- Find out the appropriate editor to send it to.
- Keep your press release or media advisory short and sweet. See attached samples.
- Don't be afraid to follow up with phone calls. Editors are swamped.
- Use the Disney promotional method: Always have music, food, overlapping activities, something for kids, and something that is free.

#### **Event Ideas:**

- Plan your events with seasonal produce: i.e., "Tornado of Tomatoes," "Sassy Salsa Saturday," "Melon Madness," "Apple-ooza," etc. Use the opportunity to educate consumers. Do a tasting of the featured produce, linking vendors with colored plates/balloons.
- Sponsor an event that has cross-promotional power; i.e., sponsoring bike safety day at the market with a local bike club or sports store. Have a bike parade with kids. Bike partner will promote it to their customers, too.
- Cooking Demonstrations (with or without guest chefs): When good smells permeate the air, customers are motivated to buy. Try grilling or stir frying. Offer recipes.
- Promote healthy programs such as Five-A-Day fruit and vegetables and school lunches and snacks. These kinds of events draw interest from press.
- Promote awareness programs such as Family Farm Day, Earth Day or Bike Safety Day

#### **\* Establish Friends in the Community: Invite them to your market**

- Join a group with newspaper editors, food writers, or gardening writers
- Radio hosts
- Magazine editors
- TV Station Manager
- Government officials (Send them VIP invitations inviting them to the market)
- Hotel Concierges (leave brochures with them)
- Become friends with local store owners

(over)

(Public Relations cont.)

**\* Community Service**

- Become involved with local charities
- Community service groups: Let them set up a table (Ask them to send out e-mails to their constituents, too)
- “Compassionate publicity”: If you raise money for an organization like Katrina or a Food Bank, don't be shy about letting the press know what your market did.

**\* The Power of Anecdotal Data (Ideas for press releases)**

- Farmers names on menus
- Friends of the market (an elite core who support you)
- Volunteers (shows support)
- The retooling of a vendors' business (how vendors went from wholesale to retail)

Use all of this for PR and your own promotional material

**ADVERTISING AND OTHER PROMOTIONS**

Look at how long your season is (how many weeks of advertising). Create a marketing plan and a media schedule.

**\* Know Why Consumers Attend a Farmers' Market. Use it in your ads & promotions.**

1) Freshness 2) Flavor 3) Friendly 4) Things they can't get elsewhere

**\*Direct marketing is all about repeat business.**

Always:

- Have a clear message
- Present it clearly
- Say “direct from” or “local” or region grown
- Say who, what, where, when
- Say “Every Saturday” not “Saturdays”
- Method to get further info.
- Proofread. Read backwards.

**\* Brand Your Name**

- Repeating graphic elements (borders, logos, etc.) on your flyers and ads
- Smart placement of advertising (the back page of a local “free” newspaper)
- Use signage at your market to reinforce your identity

**\* Be Seen Locally**

- Flyers: put up around town
- Internet (consider bartering with someone for a website)
- Depending on your market, encourage vendors to send out e-mails to customers (or use local charities, i.e., if you will be donating food to a food bank, have them send out e-mails to their lists)
- Newspapers
- Magazines (Let a farmer write their own article)
- Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to promote community events
- Word of mouth
- Radio
- Speaking with local groups