Marketing for Farmers Markets in a digital age.

2021
Physical marketing and advertising your market remains largely unchanged. Strong branding and signage are a must for promoting your market days.

Marketing and promoting your farmers market is far more streamlined than it has ever been. With specialized tools designed to help you succeed and grow your market audience, minimal effort produces maximum results.
Printed Materials & Physical Advertisement

Does your market have printed collateral?
Signs?
Banners?
Fliers?

We want to see your market succeed. We have various templates and pre-formatted signs that we are happy to share with you at no cost. Send me an email with requests and I'll get them out as soon as possible. Make sure you have a print ready logo for your market.
Cost-effective ways to advertise

- Hang fliers in shop windows in the area
  - Printed flyers cost next to nothing to make and we’re happy to design yours for you
  - Most businesses are happy to support farmers markets, be sure to ask!
- Invest in yard signs and put them up around town
  - For a few dollars a piece, these are an easy way to advertise without breaking the bank.
- Host events & programming
  - Be sure to invite local media!

Ask about our pre-made fliers / yard signs or request one through marketing@massfarmersmarkets.org - please note there is a backlog of requests so it may take time.

If you have questions about programming, please reach out.
These are some of the signs you might recognize. Don't forget to advertise your social media!
Marketing and advertising your market has never been easier.

With a growing captive audience on social media and a growing demand for local and sustainably grown food, it has never been more important to harness the power of social media and digital outlets.

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Online checklist

People need to find you. Do you have the following:

1. Google Business profile
2. Social Media accounts
3. Farmspread Profile
4. Website

These should be your priorities for marketing your farmers market. Don’t forget that if you don’t have a farmspread profile yet, there is a form online https://www.massfarmersmarkets.org/farmspread-request-form
What happens if you search for your market online?

People want to find you online. They **need** to find you if they’re going to attend your market. How am I going to find your market if I google you and nothing pops up?
What happens if you search for your market online?

If you have not created a Google Business Profile, this should be a top priority

Folks can see your location, hours and more

To sign up for your free business profile, please visit:

google.com/business/business-profile

NOTE: there is a verification process required. Contact me (chappy@massfarmersmarkets.org) for more information on how to resolve this.

Verification process requires a physical mailing address where google sends a postcard. Many markets do not have a mailbox but there are workarounds - If you’re setting up a brand new profile, you can set the business location as a mailing address nearby that you do have access to and once you’re verified, you can change the address. Contact me chappy@massfarmersmarkets.org or marketing@massfarmersmarkets.org with any questions!
Social Media
Social Media Platforms - Which one is best for my market?

**Facebook**

Great for core market information and posting articles and lengthy updates. Useful for up-to-date posts like changing market times.

Facebook should be where you start. Chances are you already have a facebook account for your market. If not, make one as soon as possible! We’re happy to promote your social media accounts and posts. Just tag us and we will share it.

Instagram is fabulous for day-of content. Whether you’re taking pictures of the goodies vendors are bringing that day or just showing your followers that you’re open and there, it serves as a reminder to the community that you’re there. There’s really no shortage of things you can post. Make sure to tag your vendors in your posts and stories. Be sure to tag MFM as well so we can reshare your posts.

Twitter can be useful but its functionality is limited to short messages. It should be last on the list for your market social media.
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Social Media Platforms - Which one is best for my market?

Twitter

Useful for up-to-date information, seemingly small user base for farmers markets
Not great for sharing long form content or articles, media uploads are limited.

Twitter should be last on your list of priorities.

Twitter can be useful but its functionality is limited to short messages. It should be last on the list for your market social media.
Understanding Facebook

Keeping up with a Facebook account is largely seen as a chore to business owners and market managers but it can be the most powerful tool to grow your market attendance and visibility.

Make sure you have a Facebook page for your market and keep it up to date!

If your facebook page is up to date and you post regularly your position on search engines becomes higher. Instead of having to rely on a website for folks to find and the cost associated with hosting one, your facebook page is the perfect landing page for market shoppers. Make sure to have up to date market information like days and times. The number of facebook pages for markets that go months (or years) without posts is shocking! Many market pages also will have outdated information about hours or which days they’re open as they haven’t been updated since the previous market season.
Understanding Instagram

- Millennials and Gen Z dominate the platform
- The stories feature is key for visibility for shoppers
- Hashtags make it a snap for posts being seen outside your follower network

With the lionshare of users falling in the 18-34 year old age bracket, creating and using an Instagram account is a great way to grow a younger audience and bringing in younger shoppers. Studies have shown these younger demographics demand local food and considering they’re on Instagram, use it to your advantage!!

Post stories! Posting photos of the market, the vendors, reminders that you’re open in conjunction with regular posts (these can be identical) will increase visibility. Using hashtags relevant to farmers markets and local food, is crucial for your posts. The more you post, the
more the algorithm will put your posts and stories at the top of your followers’ feeds.

The local food market in the US grew from $5 billion in 2008 to $12BN in 2014 with growth accelerating past an estimated $20bn in 2019. When asked, 84% of survey respondents reported that they had locally-produced food on their shopping list. Demographics are helping to fuel this shift as consumers, especially Millennials and Generation Z, are more interested than prior generations in where their food comes from.
Understanding how to leverage social media

Post, constantly (really.)

Organic growth of social media comes from posting consistently.

What do I post?

Anything!
- Vendor highlights
- Current offerings
- Recipes
- Market hauls
- Shoppers

Should I spend money?

If you can, yes, but only if you’re keeping active social media account(s)

Advertising is an addition and not a replacement for your web channels.

Social media growth comes from posting consistently, whether to stories on Facebook & Instagram to posting daily to your feed. Facebook and Instagram algorithms feed off of consistency through posting often.

Mfm has been experimenting with what we post and when we post it. We’ve been pushing vendor spotlights as part of our 2021 strategy of “humanizing farmers markets”. As we look ahead to the world allegedly getting back to normal, we want to highlight the people who make these markets possible. We love talking about our vendors, what they sell, their story and how it ties into the identity of our markets.

Should you spend money? If you’re a brand new market, it might be in your best interest to spend a few dollars. Social media advertising works by guaranteeing a certain amount of views on a post or page. You can spend as much or as little as
you’d like. Things to consider are who is most likely to attend your market and what their age range looks like because you’re able to select the specific type of person you want the ad to be seen by. Advertising is

Post updates, products to be found at that day’s market, photos of the market itself, share articles and content you find interesting! Quality isn’t always the name of the game but the more informative something is, the more likely it is folks will respond to it.
Is your market on Farmspread?

We’ve been investing heavily in creating the framework to make finding farmers markets a snap for customers across the state.

Visit massfarmersmarkets.org/farmspread-request-form to get started

Over the past year we’ve been building Farmspread to be the go-to source for information on the many farmers markets across the state and New England. Creating a Farmspread page for your market is easy and allows customers to find you quickly and easily. With an easy, user friendly interface, you can add all the necessary details about your market in minutes. As a service to our member markets, if you don’t have a Farmspread profile, we will create one for you! Our find a market page has twice the traffic as our home page. Customers are consistently looking for markets so make sure you have a p
Do I need a website?
A website serves as a great place for folks to find information about your market but given the time it takes to create one and the costs associated with hosting, it is cost prohibitive for many. Instead of creating a website, consider spending the money on other promotional tools like signage or advertising. While a website is more likely to get you to the top of a search engine result, having active social media accounts will provide the same visibility boost. Make sure you also have your google profile set up too!
What’s next?

Build your audience organically. Posting consistently is your best friend.

Identify future growth
Only you know what your market needs.

Programming
Turn your market day into a market event

Patience
Since the start of the 2021 market season, MFM’s social media growth has exploded

Post about the market, what is happening, updates, changes about your products, hours of operation or anything someone might want / need to know. Is it raining? Tell people if you’re open or if vendors are changing as a result. People will be flocking to your page for information so the more you give them the more they’ll stay!

Identify what YOU need and don’t be afraid to get creative.

Programming is a really easy way to boost attendance and get new repeat customers. Past successful programs have included, childrens story time, wine/beer/spirits tasting events, community cooking classes and live music. Understanding your audience and the area you’re located in is crucial in determining what kind of programming is best for your market.

MFM’s marketing strategy has shifted radically between 2020 and 2021. With a new strategy of aggressive social media posting and other web based content, we have watched our social media numbers grow eclipsing growth in the past. This growth took time and consistent posting.
Questions?

Don’t hesitate to reach out with questions or assistance in extending your reach.

marketing@massfarmersmarkets.org
Okay.

What are my demographics and why do they matter?
Understanding the market

These are the demographics for the main Mass Farmers Market Facebook page.

*These are metrics for the Mass Farmers Markets Facebook page and not fully indicative of the consumer market as a whole.
Leveraging your current audience vs Growing a new audience

Advertising to people in your demographic is generally a good place to start.

Your market is clearly attracting a certain type of shopper and reaching new customers in that age / income bracket is a good idea. Pay attention to the area you’re in.
Growing a new audience is difficult. Consider programming for a new bracket. Is your market dominated by the 55+ age group? Why not create programming catered to a different group? Looking to expand the 30-40 group? Why not host programming for children like a story time or a kids cooking class. Check to see what kind of organizations are in your area Promote these events heavily through social media.
Track your market attendance.

Have you noticed a certain age group dominating your market?

Write it down! All of the digital demographics don’t mean anything if they don’t align with your actual shoppers.

Generally digital tracking is thrown off when your audience is made up of older attendees. Because the elderly don’t generally have social media, your full metrics will generally be skewed.
Cross pollinate

Are you capitalizing on your visibility? MFM has been using Farmspread to wild success.

People are visiting the "Find a Market" page on massfarmersmarkets.org twice as much as any other page.

Do you have your page?

People are actively looking to find you. With thousands of unique visitors to our website, we’re seeing people most interested in finding markets. The proof is in the pudding folks. If you’re not online, people aren’t going to know you’re there.