

# **MARKETING AGRITOURISM WHILE PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICE**

**– Module 2 –  
Extension Training to Support Agritourism  
Development in the Northeast**

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# MARKETING BASICS

For many farmers, agritourism is a new business model that requires very different marketing strategies.

# **TRANSLATING GOOD IDEAS INTO GOOD BUSINESS!**

**The world is full of good ideas.**

**Good marketing helps turn your good ideas  
into business volume and drives  
entrepreneurial success.**

**Your business success will be predicated upon  
presenting your ideas to the right audience, in the right  
manner, at the right time and place.**

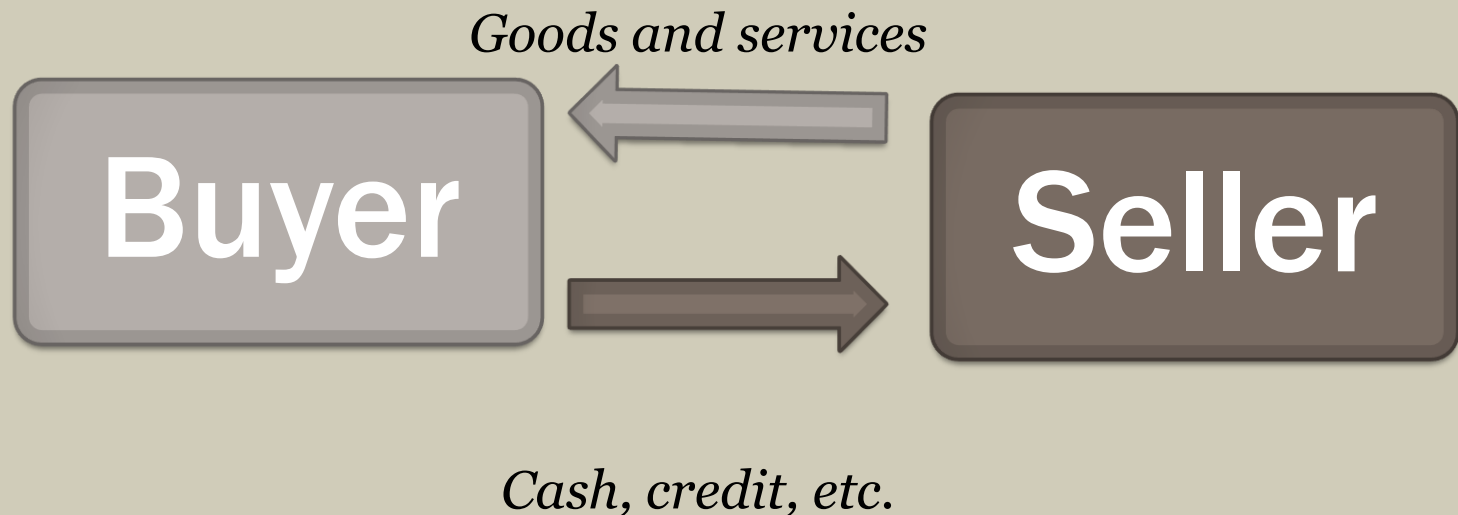
# WHAT IS MARKETING?

***The process of ensuring that customers' needs are identified and met in order to generate value for the business.***

***Successful marketing is more than advertising and promotion!***

# MARKETING

Marketing is a series of activities to facilitate the exchange of something of value between a seller and a buyer.



# WHERE DO I BEGIN?

## THE 4 P'S OF MARKETING

- **Product** (or service): What is being offered to the target market?
- **Price**: How much will be charged for the product?
- **Placement**: What distribution channels will be used to reach the target market?
- **Promotion**: How will awareness of the product be raised within the target markets?



# THE FIRST P – *PRODUCT*



- **Points to remember about selling:**
  - View the “product” from the eyes of your customer
  - It’s not just sweet corn and hayrides
  - It’s the entire experience!
- **Don’t forget about the other “products” experienced by visitors, including:**
  - Employee courtesy
  - Visual appeal and cleanliness of the farm
  - Convenience and availability of parking
  - Recipes or information on how to cook/prepare fresh farm products
  - Ancillary services (e.g., acceptance of credit cards, bathroom facilities, and accommodation of individuals with special needs – the elderly, persons with disabilities, parents with baby strollers)

***The point to remember about selling things is that, as well as creating atmosphere and excitement around your products, you've got to know what you're selling. - Stuart Wilde (author)***

# DEFINING YOUR PRODUCT: THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEES



**All employees contribute to the quality of visitors' experience.**

**Agritourism is a hospitality business - the importance of customer satisfaction cannot be overstated.**

- **Are employees readily visible and identifiable?**
  - Consider apparel with a farm name or logo and name badges.
- **Are employees instructed to approach and welcome customers in a friendly and sincerely helpful manner?**
- **Are employees knowledgeable about all aspects of the farm and its products?**
- **Are employees well-versed in a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)?**

***An informed, knowledgeable employee enhances the visitor experience.***

# DEFINING YOUR PRODUCT: THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEES



**All employees contribute to the quality of visitors' experience.**

**Agritourism is a hospitality business - the importance of customer satisfaction cannot be overstated.**

## **Consider likely questions from visitors:**

- Are there any other attractions I should visit while in this area?
- What accommodations are available nearby?
- Are there any good places to eat?
- Where is the nearest gas station?
- What is it like living in this community?
- Are there any special events happening in town?
- Are there any retail stores near here?
- What is the farm's history?
- Do you use pesticides/antibiotics?
- Are your crops genetically modified?

# PROVIDING QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Measured by how well *customer expectations are met!*
- Key = *exceeding* customers' expectations
- Promise only what can be delivered and deliver more than promised
- Customer expectations based on:
  - Past experiences
  - Word-of-Mouth
  - Your marketing
- Complaints can improve business, it's all in the response!
- Listen to customers & be willing to change
- Cultivate community awareness, image, & partnerships



**At your service:  
What customers say matters most**

Knowledgeable staff	47%
Friendly staff	14.7%
Service after the sale	12.5%
Readily available staff	12.4%
Flexible policies for returns/exchanges	8%
None-Product is all that matters	2.8%
Not Sure/Other	2.6%

MSN Money- Zogby International poll

***Knowing customers and their expectations is a requirement  
for delivering quality service!***

# QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE HABITS



## Employee Perspective

- Make a good first and last impression
- Communicate clearly
- Mind your manners
- Know your job/community
- Handle problems effectively
- Be sincere and honest
- Be accessible

## Owner/Business Perspective

- Give employees proper training - Do NOT assume they know your expectations
- Treat employees the way you want customers treated
- Happy employees = happy customers
- Evaluate & reward employee performance

**Each guest can influence 100 other potential customers**

# THE SECOND P - *PRICE*



**Setting an appropriate price point for each product or service is critical.**

- Don't be afraid to charge!
- Analyze competitors' pricing
- Examine trade publications
- Conduct research on target customers' willingness to pay for the products/services
- Know your full costs!
- Conduct a break-even analysis

***Pricing & budgeting are discussed in more detail in the next presentation***

# THE THIRD P - *PLACEMENT*



**Placement refers to distribution. How will visitors access your products/services?**

The goal of agritourism is to bring customers onto the farm. The farm is your primary distribution channel. It must be safe, clean, and inviting to the public.

- **Ensure that risks of injury to farm visitors are minimized**
- **Maintain a high level of aesthetic appeal**
- **Make it easy for visitors to identify:**
  - Driving directions to the farm
  - Days and hours of operation
  - Product availability for seasonal items
  - Rest room facilities
- **Visitors may not be familiar with all farm products offered.**
  - Clearly mark items in retail displays
  - Offer preparation tips and recipes
  - Clearly identify and direct visitors to areas in fields open for pick-your-own
  - Provide signage identifying each crop
- **Provide areas for resting or children's play**
  - Consider accessibility issues and the needs of parents with baby strollers, elderly visitors, and persons with limited mobility

# THE FOURTH P - *PROMOTION*



## Advertising and Promotion Examples

- Print media (newspapers, magazines, visitor guides)
- Press releases
- Farm website
- State or county promotional websites
- Farm visits directories
- State departments of agriculture
- State Farm Bureaus
- Chambers of Commerce
- Tourist Bureaus/Destination Marketing Organizations
- Travel and tourism writers
- Road signage and billboards
- Direct-to-consumer mailings
- Social networking tools
- Brochures
- Travel & tourism websites
- Customer E-mail list serves
- Networking
- Cross promotions with other local businesses
- Host community events
- Radio or television

**Factors to consider:** Cost  
Geographic coverage  
Accessibility to/use by target audiences

# WHAT DO AGRITOURISTS USE?

Based on findings from various agritourism-related studies, visitors to agritourism farms typically learn of them via:

- Traditional Word-of-Mouth
- Social Media - The New Word-of-Mouth
- Internet – Search Engine & Farm/Business Website
- Road Signage
- Discovered ‘by chance’ while en route to another destination
  - Highlights the importance of having proper road signage

# A FIFTH “P”?



**Positioning.** This refers to the process of creating a unique impression for the operation within the minds of the customers.

Ask the farmer/owner:

*“How will your customers describe your agritourism operation to their friends?”*

Or, more importantly,

*“How do you want them to describe your farm?”*

**Positioning is the opportunity to create this unique identity in a customer’s mind.**

# A FIFTH “P”?



**Exercise:** How would you want your customers to complete the following statements?

Loyal Customer 1: “*Oh! Farmer Brown? His farm is wonderful! They are really great at [fill in the blank].*”

or...

Loyal Customer 2: “*The Brown Farm is famous around here for its [fill in the blank].*”

**ESTIMATES VARY, BUT  
MARKETING SHOULD  
ACCOUNT FOR  
10%-30% OF THE TOTAL  
OPERATING BUDGET**

# MARKETING PLAN



[illegible]

- **Defines the product/service**
- **Helps define, understand, & reach target markets**
- **Should be a guide for the future, but is not cast in stone!**
- **Should be evaluated regularly & updated as needed.**

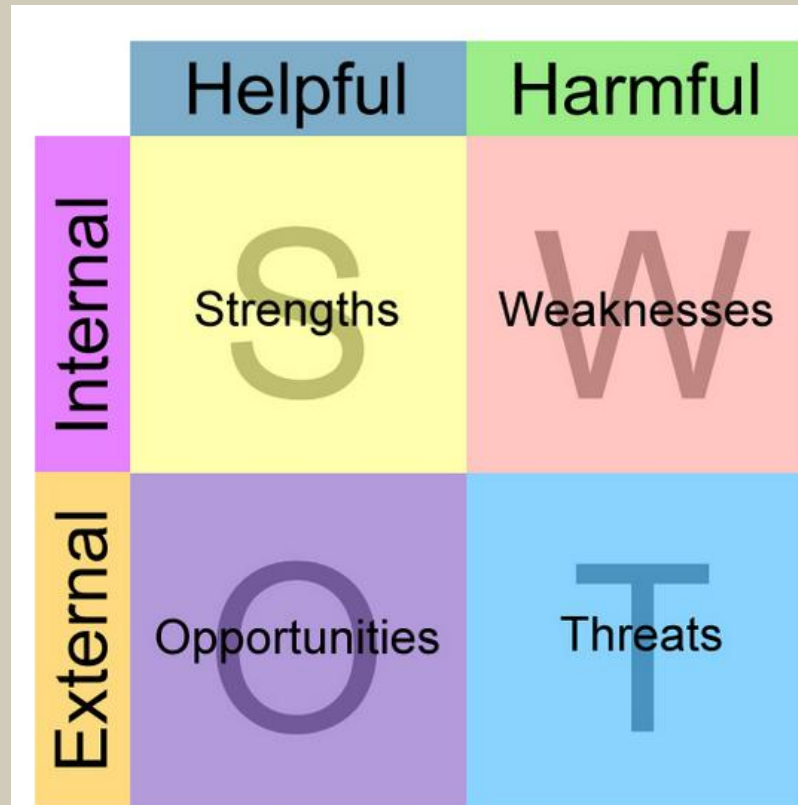
# WHAT DOES A MARKETING PLAN COVER?

- Mission statement
- Description of target or niche markets
- Description of service/products
- Detailed plan of promotion strategies
- Description of the competition
- SWOT analysis
- Marketing budget
- Quantifiable marketing goals



# SWOT ANALYSIS

- Evaluate **internal** capabilities and limitations of the business:
  - **Strengths:** What is being done well? What are the advantages?
  - **Weaknesses:** What is being done poorly? What can be improved or avoided?
- Evaluate **external** factors that influence the business:
  - **Opportunities:** What are the current trends? Expected changes that can be taken advantage of?
  - **Threats:** What obstacles exist? What is the competition doing?



# EXAMPLE SWOT ANALYSIS

	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	<b>S</b> Strengths	<b>W</b> Weaknesses
External	<b>O</b> Opportunities	<b>T</b> Threats

## Strengths (Internal)

- Prior business experience
- Good connection with the community

## Weaknesses (Internal)

- Young employees w/ little to no experience – need training
- Repairs needed on farm to ready for visitors

## Opportunities (External)

- Increasing interest in local food
- Little competition currently exists

## Threats (External)

- Uncertain regulations
- Slow economy

# UNDERSTAND THAT WHICH CANNOT BE CONTROLLED!

- General economic conditions
- Competition
- Substitute or complementary products and activities
- Federal, State, local laws and regulations
- Trends in target market characteristics
  - Age
  - Income
  - Cultural and ethnic composition
  - Evolving consumer preferences
  - Social trends

***But...look for opportunities even in the areas outside of your control!***

# **Agritourism ONLINE Advertising & Promotion Resources**

*Much of choosing the correct  
advertising & promotion strategies  
comes down to knowing the audience!*

# INTERNET & SOCIAL MEDIA

- The Internet is the most important marketing tool today!
- An agritourism business must have a web presence!
  - Not having a web presence gives the impression (to certain audiences) that you/the business does not exist
  - Instant access to information & resources 24/7
- Internet sites/social media also allow you to research what others (your competitors) are doing

***78% of Americans use the internet regularly***

***As of December 2012, 67% of online adults use social networking sites***

***Nearly 40 million US consumers accessed travel sites or apps from their smartphone in July 2012***

# WEBSITE TIPS

- **Business needs to be found!**
    - Search engines can't find pictures
    - Ask customers what they searched to find your business
    - Use key terms throughout text
  - **Make contact information readily available/easy to find**
    - Provide physical address and GPS coordinates
    - Write out state name
  - **Keep website updated**
    - Use good quality photos & keep them current
    - Pricing
    - Current events
  - **Use the “3-clicks in” Rule**
  - **Link to other things to see and do in the area**
- *Hire a professional*
  - *Create your own*
  - *Use a blog*
  - *List in an online agritourism database*

# WEBSITE TIPS

- Provide information for the media
- Make sure employees know information posted & know farm history!
- Use spell check
- If music is used, provide an option to turn on/off
- Users do not read – they scan using an F-Pattern
  - Use short sentences, bullets, pictures



Webmaster Guidelines for a Google-friendly site  
<http://support.google.com/webmasters/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=40349>

# SOCIAL MEDIA

facebook®

twitter

GROUPON®

 SurveyMonkey®

flickr®  
from YAHOO!

  
www.scvngrhunt.com

 Blogger™

livingsocial

You Tube  
Broadcast Yourself

 foursquare

Pinterest

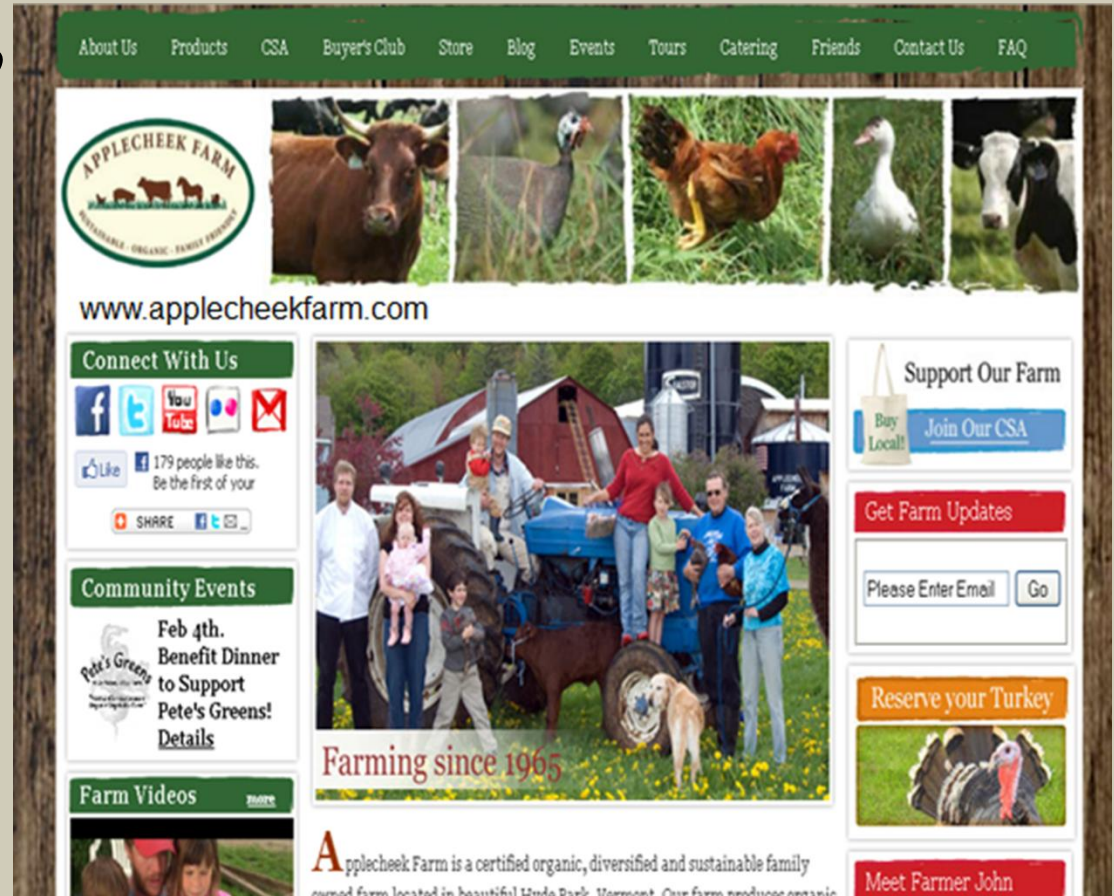
 Picasa™

DEAL\$TER

 WORDPRESS

# GROUND RULES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

■ Link everything!  
■ Integrate applications



# GROUND RULES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

## ■ Be Active and Interactive

- *Update often – At least once a week*
- *Monitor pages/accounts daily*
- *Don't only listen, participate and engage others!*
- *Allow visitors to post*
- *Create interaction – ask questions, photo contest, polls, share unique news/information related to the product/service, etc.*

## ■ Research - See what others are doing

- *Use Google search to answer questions – get tips*

## ■ Be personal – but not TOO personal!

## ■ Create a rulebook & assign responsibility

## ■ Educate employees – get them involved

## ■ Respond no matter what – turn a negative into a positive



**Remember: It's called SOCIAL media for a reason!**

# Online Marketing &

## Social Media mistakes



1. Setting up a social media account and then not using it
2. Not linking – not having follow/share buttons
3. Not separating business & personal accounts
4. Not including a picture
5. Not including links in Tweets
6. Not posting updates with context – include commentary
7. Not seeing social media as PR - respond no matter what
8. Not knowing what others are saying about your business

# KNOW WHAT FOLKS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE FARM!

- Talk to your customers!
- Collect data from your customers
- Periodically Google your farm name (or use another search engine)
  - Helps to ID other review sites your farm is listed on – Yelp, TripAdvisor, etc.
  - Helps to ensure information posted is accurate
  - Helps to know what others think about your business
- Use Google Alerts
  - Alerts each time your farm name is mentioned



The screenshot shows the Google Alerts website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the Google logo, 'Google Alerts (Beta)', and links for 'Settings', 'FAQ', and 'Sign out'. The main heading is 'Welcome to Google Alerts'. Below this, a paragraph explains that Google Alerts are email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) based on the user's choice of query or topic. A section titled 'Some handy uses of Google Alerts include:' lists four bullet points: monitoring a developing news story, keeping current on a competitor or industry, getting the latest on a celebrity or event, and keeping tabs on favorite sports teams. To the right, the 'Create a Google Alert' form is displayed. It includes a text input for 'Search terms', a dropdown for 'Type' (set to 'Comprehensive'), a dropdown for 'How often' (set to 'once a day'), and a text input for 'Deliver to:'. A 'Create Alert' button is at the bottom of the form. A footer note states 'Google will not sell or share your email address.' At the very bottom, a copyright notice reads '© 2007 Google - Google Home - Google Alerts Help - Terms of Use - Privacy Policy'.

Google Alerts (Beta) | Settings | FAQ | Sign out

[www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts)

**Welcome to Google Alerts**

Google Alerts are email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) based on your choice of query or topic.

Some handy uses of Google Alerts include:

- monitoring a developing news story
- keeping current on a competitor or industry
- getting the latest on a celebrity or event
- keeping tabs on your favorite sports teams

Create an alert with the form on the right.

You can also [click here to manage your alerts](#).

**Create a Google Alert**

Enter the topic you wish to monitor.

Search terms:

Type:

How often:

Deliver to:

Google will not sell or share your email address.

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# **MAKE SURE ALL MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS ARE CONSISTENT!**

## **For example:**

**Signage on the farm**

**Advertising & promotional materials (print & online)**

**Employee apparel**

**Contact information – email, voicemail, etc.**

# REMEMBER....IT'S ALL ABOUT THE FARM **EXPERIENCE!**



**VS.**



## **PROVIDE & PROMOTE A UNIQUE, HIGH QUALITY EXPERIENCE!**

# MARKETING AGRITOURISM WHILE PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICE

## QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?



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