

GROWING YOUR BRAND

Extension Agent Guide for Marketing Local Foods

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
EXTENSION

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- Growing Your Brand: Marketing Tools for Mississippi Agritourism and Local Foods
- Virtual Tourism – Zac Ashmore
- Using Tourism Trend Sites – Jamie Varner
- Mississippi Agritourism Branding – Ben Muldrow
- Social Media Is Free and Other Myths – Karen Stanley
- MSU Extension Farmweek Local Foods Bus Tour



GROWING YOUR BRAND

The Local Foods Movement

Consumers are increasingly interested in knowing where their food comes from and how it is produced.

This local foods movement provides a wonderful opportunity for producers to connect on a personal level with consumers. It is an opportunity to create, maintain, and support profitable, sustainable, and affordable food production and distribution schemes with the ultimate outcome of healthier diets and healthier people.

The local foods movement encompasses farmers, food processors and distributors, community gardens, farmers' markets, community volunteers, economic development, food security, and better nutrition for children and adults—all areas in which Extension has deep expertise, dedicated and skilled professionals, and decades of documented success.



GROWING YOUR BRAND

Part 1 Understanding Your Business

OVERVIEW

This section is designed to help producers understand the unique aspects of their businesses that can give them an advantage in the marketplace. The information will help producers think about why they are in business, what they want to achieve, and what resources they have to be successful. On page 3 of the Developing a Marketing Plan workbook, students will find an exercise to help them determine exactly what they are trying to sell and whether it is an experience, a value-added product, or simply produce on their farm.

Plan for approximately 2–3 hours for this session. Students should each be given a copy of the workbook Developing a Marketing Plan and the supplemental guide Growing Your Brand: Marketing Tools for Mississippi Agritourism and Local Foods. The Developing a Marketing Plan workbook is designed for the producer to take notes and brainstorm ideas to create a written marketing plan. The Marketing Tools guide is a detailed description of marketing components, digital marketing tools, and ideas for promoting a local foods or agritourism business. Producers should read this guide on their own.

PART 1: Extension Agent Guide	
Objectives	• Participants will understand the importance of a vision statement and a mission statement. • Participants will understand why they need to determine a focus or purpose for their marketing efforts. • Participants will learn how to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats pertaining to their business.
Potential Outcomes	• Participants will be able to write a mission statement for their business. • Participants will identify what they are marketing and what results they expect. • Participants will develop a strategy to address a strength, weakness, opportunity, or threat.
Activity	Participants should complete pages 3–5 in the Developing a Marketing Plan workbook. Students should read Growing Your Brand: Marketing Tools for Mississippi Agritourism and Local Foods. During this section, it would be appropriate to have a guest speaker who has demonstrated marketing success with a local foods business or to show video footage of successful local foods events or businesses. Another option would be a tour of a local foods business to help generate ideas.
Summary	Part 1 is designed to begin the process of developing a marketing plan. Participants should have an understanding of what they want to accomplish from creating and implementing a marketing plan.



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Part 2 Understanding Your Market

OVERVIEW

This section is designed to help producers understand how to identify a potential market and how to assess what market is the best choice for them to target. There are many different audiences or market segments that a business can choose to sell its products to. These market segments are divided by the characteristics and values of the people within the market. The market segments can be classified by age, race, education, and income levels. Participants should assess the values of these market segments in order to determine if their product will appeal to the people in the market segment. They can gather information by asking key questions, such as, "What is important to the people in this market segment?" For example, nutrition and price might be important to a mother, while the uniqueness of the product might be more important to someone with a higher income level.

PART 2: Extension Agent Guide	
Objectives	• Participants will understand how to identify a market segment. • Participants will learn how to identify a target market. • Participants will understand how to assess price sensitivity. • Participants will learn what a brand is and why it is important.
Potential outcomes	• Participants will identify at least two market segments that they can try to capture. • Participants will identify a target market and begin creating a plan to promote their product to this group of consumers. • Participants will identify key characteristics they can use to create a brand for their product.
Activity	Participants should watch the video "Mississippi Agritourism Branding" by Ben Muldrow. Participants should complete pages 6–8 in the Developing a Marketing Plan workbook. Students should have read Growing Your Brand: Marketing Tools for Mississippi Agritourism and Local Foods. During this section, it would be appropriate to have a guest speaker who has created a local foods product brand or who has experience creating branding and marketing campaigns.
Summary	Part 2 is designed to help students refine their marketing ideas, determine who they will be marketing their products to, and generate ideas for developing a brand for their product. It is recommended that participants consider hiring a graphic designer or branding expert to develop a logo and marketing materials that will appeal to their selected audience.



GROWING YOUR BRAND

Part 3 Developing a Marketing Plan

OVERVIEW

This section is designed to help producers use targeted marketing, relationship marketing, and digital marketing knowledge to create strategies to promote their product to buyers. It will help them determine how to spend their marketing dollars. They will create a plan that can be put into action. Plan for approximately 2–3 hours for this session. The producers should work through pages 9–14 in Developing a Marketing Plan and use the supplemental guide Growing Your Brand: Marketing Tools for Mississippi Agritourism and Local Foods to answer technical questions about developing their plan. Producers should also read Social Media Is Free and Other Advertising Myths by Karen Stanley.

It is recommended that the Extension agent consider scheduling time for the producers who complete the marketing plan to attend an interactive session on digital marketing. Laptops and Internet access should be provided for this session. This would allow the producers to apply any of the more technical marketing strategies, if needed. Some producers have difficulty, even after instruction, feeling confident in setting up their own social media or digital marketing accounts. It is also recommended that the producer spend time with a graphic designer for logo development and website color selection before creating an online presence.

PART 3: Extension Agent Guide

Objectives	• Participants will learn about the importance of digital marketing and relationship marketing. • Participants will understand the various ways to use technology to market their products. • Participants will identify a technology strategy to market their products. • Participants will understand relationship marketing and identify two relationships they can build to strengthen their business.
Potential outcomes	• Participants will choose a technology marketing strategy and implement this strategy to market their product. • Participants will create a plan to use relationship building to promote their business. • Participants will use the information learned in the workshop to create a marketing plan for their business. • Participants will use the marketing plan guide to set goals for marketing their business. • Participants will implement their marketing plan strategies to reach their marketing goals.
Activity	Participants should complete pages 9–14 in the Developing a Marketing Plan workbook. Participants should use the "Building Partnerships" worksheet to identify relationship marketing strategies. During this section, producers should complete any remaining worksheets, including the worksheet on page 14. At the end of the workshop, each producer should present their marketing plan to the group using the guide on workbook page 14. It is recommended that producers create PowerPoint presentations of their marketing plans and use this as an opportunity to share ideas and get feedback from the group. The presentations should be limited to 5 minutes each. It would be appropriate to invite a marketing specialist to view the presentation in person or via distance education to offer ideas to the producers.
Summary	Part 3 is designed to allow producers to apply what they have learned in the workshop to make marketing decisions about their businesses. Part 3 should be very interactive and allow producers time to work on their plans. The presentation at the end is intended to allow producers to become comfortable with their marketing plan and to gain feedback on their ideas.

Resources

Lamie, D., Ernst, M., Woods, T., Bullen, G., Lanford, B. *Choosing Wholesale Markets for Local Food Products*. Retrieved from eXtension.org, April 5, 2016.

What's Hot 2017 Culinary Forecast. National Restaurant Association. Retrieved from restaurant.org/FoodTrends, April 3, 2016.

Leadership Plenty. Pew Partnership for Civic Change.

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Lambert, D., Cooper, M. *Issues in Supply Chain Management*. Industrial Marketing Management, Vol. 29 (1), January 2000, p 65–83.

Hinrichs, C. *Embeddedness and Local Food Systems: Notes on Two Types of Direct Agricultural Market*. Journal of Rural Studies, Vol. 16, (3) p 295–303.

Building Partnerships

WHO	WHAT	WHY

Publication 3075 (07-26)

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Produced by Agricultural Communications.

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Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. ANGUS L. CATCHOT JR., Director