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*Serving VT, NH & Beyond Since 2000*

**FULL SERVICE FOOD, FARM, LODGING,  
AGRITOURISM & SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING**

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# **MARKETING TOOLS, BEST PRACTICES & GUIDELINES FOR BETTER ORGANIZING & PROMOTING FARMERS' MARKETS**

**2013 NOFA-VT DIRECT MARKETING CONFERENCE  
January 12, 2014 – Vermont Law School**

## The landscape is changing for local food markets of all types.

- Increased competition for the “already-converted” customer base due to increases in farmers’ markets (8100 nationwide/84+/- VT) CSAs, farmstands, local food buying clubs, coops, grocery stores, and home gardening.
- Need to grow customer base through enhanced shopping experiences, community connections, partnerships and involvement, education, food/ag related activities, and creative marketing.
- Markets need to define their unique selling points, incorporate them into their branding and messaging, tell their stories, put a face on the food and the farmers at their markets, and be seen as an important community resource.
- Farmer’s Markets are the **ONLY** place where shoppers have access to a multiple farmers in one location and the opportunity to interact with those responsible for producing the various foods they are purchasing.



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# Success starts with a well organized market.

## ORGANIZATIONAL NUTS & BOLTS- Behind the Scenes

- Clear mission or purpose statement
- Written policies and procedures that reinforce the mission/purpose
- Market criteria and product requirements
- Vendor guidelines, requirements, applications, fees and deadlines
- Record keeping, bookkeeping, and market data collection
- Market operation dates and hours
- Forms of payment- EBT (**handout**), debit, square mobile
- Permanent records- database and files (back ups), & hardcopies in binder



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## Optimizing the Shopping Experience

- Signage- to and at the market
- Adequate parking, handicap parking
- Restrooms/portolets
- Greeter/information table
- Methods of payment
- The space and layout
- Attractive booths and tidy vendors
- Supervised activities for children- outdoor sandbox, coloring, face painting etc while parents shop
- Adult activities– cooking & craft demos
- Educational handouts & recipes
- Sales-shopping bags, cookbooks, t-s
- Music- live or piped in
- Raffles
- Donation jar – help finance pet project



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## Define Your Target Market

Shopper radius

Competition within that radius- other food markets, concurrent activities

Demographic- spot survey customers

Community partners

Farmer base

## Unique Selling Points

Determine markets strengths and weaknesses (SWOT analysis)

Tangible and emotional attributes

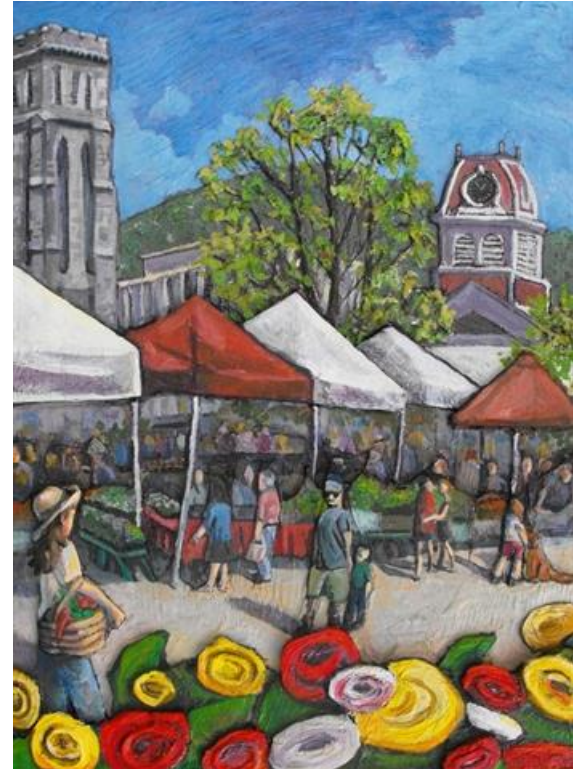
Story behind the market

Location

Farmers & crafters

Product selection

Number years in operation, etc



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## Brand Development

- Logo
- Color palette
- Font
- Taglines
- Messaging

Consistency  
across all  
platforms



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## MESSAGING

- Identify key attributes/USP specific to your market.
- Narrow down to 4-6 bullet points, succinctly describing what you offer, that align with what your target audiences need and want.
- Use these key points in developing your messaging across all of your marketing communications platforms.
- Develop boiler plate descriptions (of varying lengths) for use on Facebook- About, online directories, and print materials.
- Display website or FB address on everything!

### sample bulleted info

- Summer Open Air & Indoor Winter Markets
- Serving the Northfield, Norwich Univ. & Roxbury Communities
- Up to 35 Vendors
- Local Produce, Crafts & Prepared Foods
- Kid's Activities & Entertainment
- EBT & Debit Cards Accepted



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# Marketing Communications Tools

## Signage

- Sandwich boards
- Banners
- Directionals

## Print- Branded

- 2-sided business card
- 2-sided “postcard” or rack card
- Ads - template
- Flyers
- Recipe cards
- T-shirts, totes

## Photography

## Email Marketing

- Email Management System
- Branded template

## Website

- Domain names
- Platform, design, content, CMS
- News box
- Email opt-in
- Events calendar (link to others)
- Blog
- Social media suite- synchronized with blog
- Donate – PayPal
- Responsive Design for Mobile devices
- SEO & Google Analytics
- Internet Yellow Pages
- Hosting, security updates and back ups



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## Social Media

### Facebook

- Regular posting
- Photos
- Post sharing by vendors
- Feature vendors & Vermont Harvest of the Month

### Twitter

Market updates and reminders

### Pinterest

Create food and craft boards

### You Tube

Videos –market and farmers

VFMA Best Practices handout

## Online Directories

VT Farmers Market Association

membership = listings on

-NOFA-VT <http://nofavt.org/find-organic-food/farmers-market-directory>

-VT Agency of Agriculture

<http://agriculture.vermont.gov/>

-Digin Vermont <http://www.diginvt.com>

-National Farmers Market Assoc.

<http://nfmaonline.org/>

-Farmers Market Coalition

-Vermont Food System Atlas

<http://www.vtfoodatlas.com>

### Others:

Local Harvest <http://www.localharvest.org>

Local-Farmers-Markets.com

<http://www.local-farmers-markets.com/directory/Vermont>



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## Strategic Planning

- Based on time, priorities and budget create marketing tools of choice
- Design a marketing plan that meets market's seasonal goals and budget utilizing those tools.
- Develop a chore list and timeline. Create a perpetual calendar. Follow it! (calendar handout)

## Measure Results

- Implement and review analytics on website, Facebook and email management program.
- Track differences in attendance and gross sales in relation to outreach and promotions. Compare to previous year.



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## Works In Wood at the



Saturday February 23rd

From 10:00am to 2:00pm

Live music from 11-1

At the Robert H. Gibson River  
Garden on Main St

Local produce, maple syrup, meat,  
wine, artisans, baked goods and  
yummy lunches

Local Woodworking Artisans will be planing, burning and carving at the Winter Farmers' Market on February 23rd. Come see a the beauty and function an artist's eye can find in a piece of wood. Learn about different kinds of wood and different techniques for carving, turning and building.

Winter Farmers' Market and Works in Wood sponsored by Post Oil Solutions  
Open every Saturday through March 30, 2013



## Public Relations/Publicity

Press releases (print quality photos)- media list, local papers and newsletters, promote start dates, special events, follow up calls

## Calendar Listings

To local papers, radio, public-access TV, listservs, Front Porch Forum, online calendars

## Promotions & Events

- Create to draw people to markets
- Source of fresh content for PR, email outreach and social media posting.
- Opps to collaborate with community orgs.
- Friend-raising & Fund-raising events

**BREAK- 10 minutes**



**Focus on  
Fiber**



**WINTER  
FARMERS  
MARKET**  
  
**BRATTLEBORO**

**Saturday, Feb 16, 10-2  
At the River Garden**



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## MARKETING RESOURCES & PROMOTIONS – INTERACTIVE SESSION

**Vermont Harvest of the Month**  
**Green Mountain Farm-to-School, Food Connects & Upper Valley Farm to School**  
<http://www.greenmountainfarmtoschool.org/programs/harvest-of-the-month/>

- Free Monthly harvest posters
- Educator Sheet- history, health benefits, fun facts, varieties, art projects etc
- Home Sheet- recipes, cooking and storage tips, recipes

**HOM Monthly Market Promotions**



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## RESOURCES & PROMOTIONS

### FREE RECIPES & COOKBOOKS

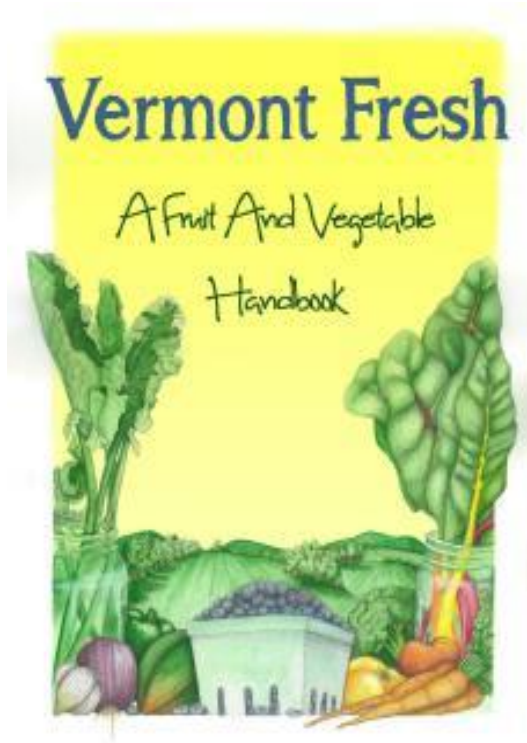
#### *Vermont Fresh: A Food & Vegetable Handbook*

Produced by Salvation Farms & Sterling College for the Vermont Foodbank

<http://www.vtfoodbank.org/ForNetworkPartners/VermontFresh.aspx>

Free download for 40 fruits and vegetables, their nutritional value, storage advice, preparation tips and many recipes.

Recipe Promotions, Foodbank & EPT Awareness, Social media fodder



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## EVENTS & PROMOTIONS

### Oregon City Farmers Market – Power of Produce (POP) Club

<http://orcifyfarmersmarket.com/pop-club/>

- Kids ages 5-12
- Sign “Passport To Health”
- Reusable shopping bag & POP Button.
- Receive \$2 in wooden tokens EVERY time kids come to market, for fresh fruits, veggies and food plants.
- Value-creating activities based around food, nutrition and food growing.

While cultivating next generation of farmers’ market shoppers also hook kids’ parents into shopping at the market!



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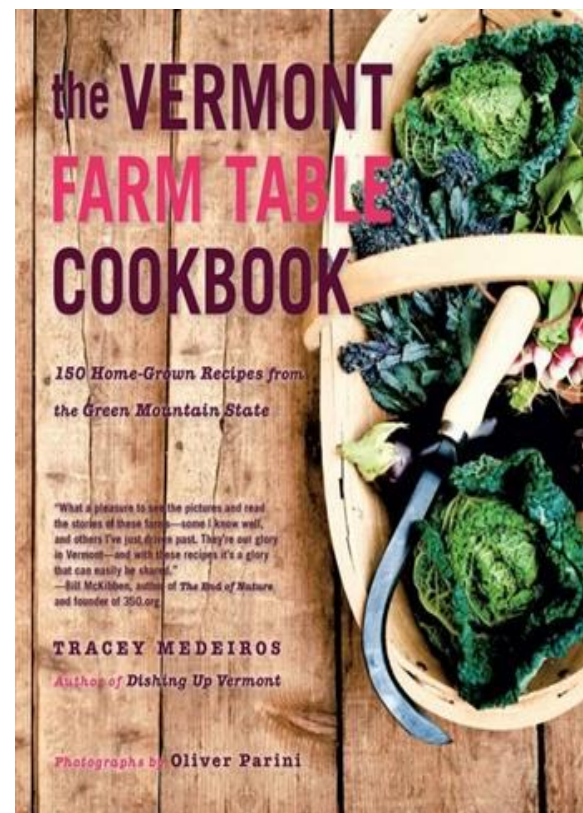
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## EVENTS & PROMOTIONS

- National Farmers' Market Week – (1<sup>st</sup> full week in August)- Aug 3-9, 2014
- VT Cookbooks & Author Promos
  - The Vermont Table Cookbook* by Tracey Medeiros author of *Dishing Up Vermont*
  - The Animal Farm Buttermilk Cookbook: Recipes and Reflections from a Small Vermont Dairy* by Diane St. Clair, Orwell

**Brainstorm others!**



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# KINDRED ORGANIZATIONS/COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Opportunities to share resources, expand community relations,  
source technical assistance and volunteers

## Schools

- Technical programs – culinary, carpentry, graphic design
- Elementary schools- coloring contest what is a farmers market, who are the farmers, what does it mean to my community (post in library or bank)
- Farm to School Programs – resources and recipes
- High Schools – volunteers, facepainters, children's activities

**Libraries & Bookstores** – talks on farmers markets, focus on food and cookbooks

**Gardening Clubs/Master Gardeners** – talks, demos, volunteers

**4-H** – bring live animals

**Brainstorm more!**



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## ACTIVITIES & ENTERTAINMENT

- Supervised Kids' crafts & activities
- Craft demonstrations
- Cooking demos, recipes and tastings
- Raffles
- Live music
- Live farm animals

**Brainstorm others!**



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## ENGAGING VENDORS IN MARKETING

Farmers & crafters are the biggest asset a market has!

- Provide clear vendor requirements. Tips on how to sell at Market (NOFA & VTFMA). Square mobile payment
- Encourage attractive displays, farm branded attire. Engage with customers
- Promote your farmers & craftspersons- feature individually in outreach
- Encourage to create collaborative promos, recipes, tastings and specials
- Create Facebook posts they can share to their friends
- Tweets they can retweeted to followers



**Brainstorm others!**

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## FRIEND & FUND RAISING

### Build Customer & Supporter Base for Healthy Markets & Communities

Most markets would benefit from fundraising for

- Operating capital
- Specific equipment or projects
- Enable donations on website
- Donation jar at market with project info

Build community through customer involvement and opportunities.

- Volunteers: greeters, supervised craft activities, music
- Skills: artists, writers, photographers, graphic designers, carpenters etc

**Brainstorm others!**



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# WRAP UP – TAKE AWAYS & NEXT STEPS & QUESTIONS

*Photo: Capital City Market by Jeb Wallace Brodeur*

Presentation and pdfs are available at <http://pamknights.com/workshops>



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