

Promoting and Advertising Your New Market

The market manager and board of directors will need to develop a promotion strategy and logo that reflect the market's identity and mission. Building community awareness and commitment to the market involves such tasks as designing a logo, developing an advertising strategy, and undertaking a sequence of organized promotion activities. The new market will need to be publicized, especially for opening day.

This chapter will enable you to:

- ▶ **Create a logo for use throughout the market and in market materials.**
- ▶ **Design and implement a promotion strategy for a successful opening day and beyond.**

Creating the Logo

Developing an identity that people quickly and easily associate with the market will improve the effectiveness of both advertising and promotion efforts. An attractive logo is an effective tool for creating a positive, professional image and can be used throughout the market's publicity program. Through repeated association, the logo becomes a symbol that is easily recognizable.

The earlier the market is able to develop this symbol, the sooner it can use the logo on buttons, bumper stickers, letterhead, posters, t-shirts, and other publicity tools and the sooner people will become familiar with it. The following points are important to consider when developing the logo. They should be discussed at the early market organization meetings, but be aware of the pitfalls of art by consensus. It is a challenge to please everyone and still produce an effective logo in a timely manner. To save time and energy, assign this task to an ad hoc committee and suggest that they provide several options to choose from by some future meeting.

Logo Design: Professional Artist or Artistic Volunteer?

The subject matter depicted by the logo should be representative of the market and/or the host community. The logo should be clear and attractive and must be reproducible at various scales—from business cards to billboards. Consider use of agricultural imagery such as fruits, vegetables, farm animals, and farm equipment. Public-domain clip art can be useful, but original artwork may enhance

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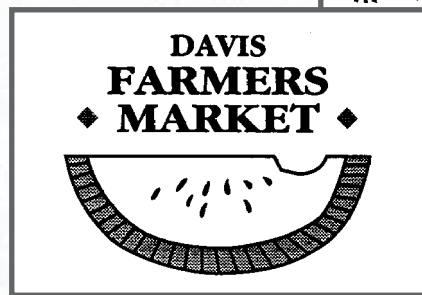
the chances of producing a logo that belongs unmistakably and uniquely to the market. Effective logos often use bold text and simple color schemes that provide sharp contrast to increase their visibility. The logo should certainly include the market's name and perhaps a very brief slogan or the name of the host community if it is not already part of the market's name.

Hiring a professional artist to design the logo may be somewhat costly but has several advantages. A professional graphic artist should be experienced in the technical requirements associated with developing an effective logo and have the creative ability to make it attractive. While there is some initial cost involved, it represents a one-time investment that will continue to pay dividends for many years. However, a hired artist may not have the same vision of the market as stakeholders do. Without clear guidance from market management or the committee the market has assigned to the task, the artist's logo may not appropriately reflect management or vendor sentiments.

Regardless of who does the work, that person will need supervision and input. If the market chooses to use a professional, be sure to shop around. Check with other area organizations whose logos you admire and ask them for artist recommendations. If the market has chosen a regional association or sponsor, consult with them for artist recommendations as well. They might even help cover the logo development costs. Be sure to obtain several bids and logo samples to compare and discuss with the organizing group before choosing the final design.

An alternative is to ask a volunteer or amateur artist to design the logo.

This obviously has the advantage of lower or no cost. There may be someone in the organizing group that has artistic talents. If not, consider approaching local high school or community college art and design programs and offer to set up a logo development contest. Sponsoring such a contest also generates publicity for the market and gives the community an opportunity to participate. Be sure to set clear guidelines regarding the themes in which the market is interested. While there are many advantages to this low or no cost approach, be aware that the market may end up with a logo that is technically inappropriate—too busy or too difficult to read at various scales.



Advertising versus Promotion

Different interpretations exist regarding the definitions and scope of advertising and promotion activities. There is room for a considerable amount of overlap between the two activities.

In this manual, we define an advertisement as a verbal or visual message delivered to the public through a variety of paid, commercial media. Examples of advertisements include paid ads on local radio stations and advertisements in local newspapers and magazines.

Promotions, on the other hand, cover a wider range of possibilities. In general, though, a promotion is an event or activity that highlights the image of the market, its vendors, and their products and services. Examples of promotion activities include special events, raffles, and public appearances at other community events. Public relations activities also involve promotion. Some managers have found promotions to be more cost effective than advertisements. Sponsoring a fun and colorful event such as a pumpkin-carving competition elicits customer interest and loyalty more than a thirty-second spot on television.

Promotions often require logistical planning but do not necessarily have to be costly. The market's budget and its needs will determine the extent to which the market invests in paid advertising and/or promotions. Careful research and planning will ensure that advertising and promotion activities are time- and cost-effective. Before proceeding with any advertising or promotion activities, be sure to identify and focus on the customers and their interests.

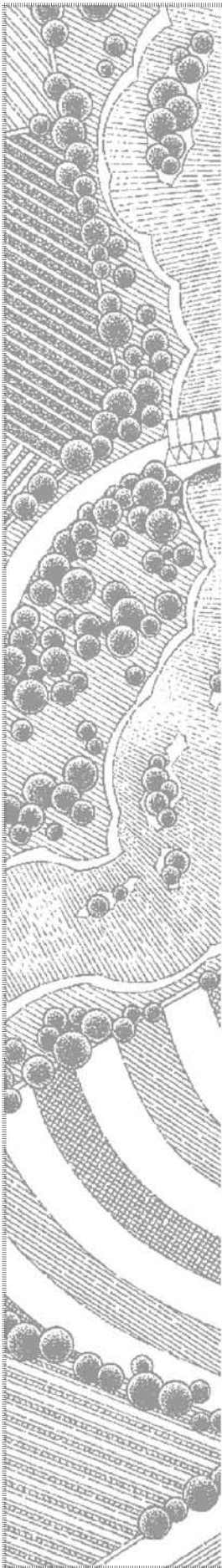
Beginning the Promotion Campaign

Even though the market has not yet opened, it is important to begin building awareness so that the opening day is a success. The earlier a market begins to cultivate this awareness, the sooner it will spread by word of mouth. At the same time, the market must bring the publicity campaign to a crescendo around opening day rather than spending all of its advertising and promotion budget in the early months.

Planning promotions and advertisements for a year in advance will help set this pace and estimate the cost.

First Announcement

The first step in publicizing the market should be an informational announcement letter or postcard that is distributed to community organizations and businesses that might provide support. This letter should provide as much information as



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possible about the upcoming market opening, including when and where it is scheduled to take place. Different versions can be tailored to suit particular goals in reaching out to community groups and businesses. Mail-merge word processing functions allow each letter to be personalized.

For example, a letter to a community service club might include an invitation to volunteers to assist with some aspect of the market in exchange for space at the market where the group can, in turn, promote its activities. A letter to a local printer might include an opportunity to trade advertisement space at the market for a discount on printing services. Consider inviting a gardening or cooking club to set up a display or demonstration on opening day. Be sure to communicate with these groups precisely the conditions that apply and how long the arrangement will last. This is a good time to begin using the new logo, which can be printed on the market's letterhead.

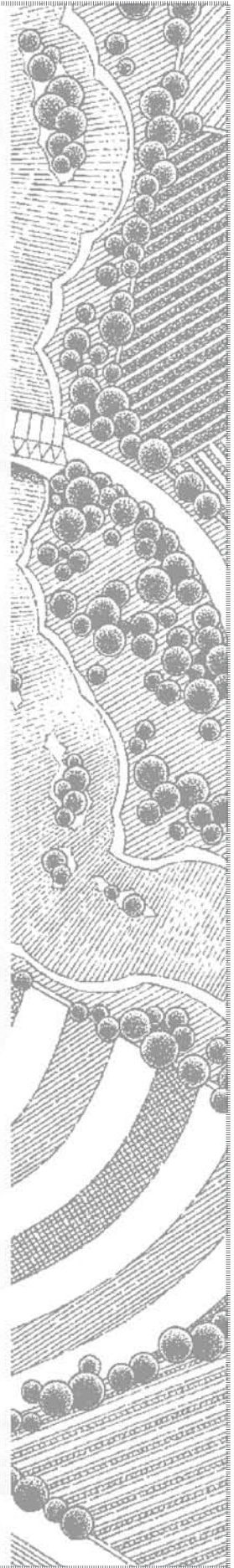
Signs and Banners

Placing a sign or banner on streets approaching the market's site will help customers locate the market and also draw street traffic. The market should have durable, weatherproof signs or banners made before opening day. They should include notification that the market is now operational and, if possible, the hours and dates of operation. Include the logo but keep banners and signs clear and sufficiently simple so that they can be easily read by someone driving past. Temporary, moveable sandwich boards and cloth banners also work well, but obtain permission to put up permanent signs if possible, at least at the market location, thus saving the time required to set up each day as well as gaining publicity even when the market is closed.

Posters and Fliers

For several weeks to a month before the market opens, be sure to have posters, fliers, and postcards distributed to strategic places around the community. Place posters in well-trafficked public places and in the store windows of businesses that permit such activities. Fliers and postcards can be distributed door to door by volunteers, through local businesses, and through direct mail. Drop some off at hotels, visitor centers, and city offices as well.

Check with local organizations and city and public utilities to see if they are willing to include a flier with their mailings. A bookmark is a useful format for distributing market information at the local public library. All these materials should include the market's logo and name, dates and times of operation, the market's location, and a small map.



Events: Raffles, Music, Food Demonstrations

One of the more important elements of farmers market success is creation of a fun and festive atmosphere. Even a gravel parking lot can be transformed into a richly exciting place on market day when customers are surrounded by an abundance of colors, flavors, smells, and sounds. Plan in advance to have decorations, including balloons and colorful banners, placed throughout the market. Musicians, school and choir groups, and entertainment specifically geared towards children also can be scheduled in advance.

Organize raffles or drawings for baskets of produce and other market products. Cooking demonstrations that feature local chefs and tantalizing smells and tastes also are popular events that draw people's attention to vendors' products. A pleasant, cheerful atmosphere will keep people coming back and generate invaluable word-of-mouth publicity.

Press Releases

Several press releases should be sent during the course of organizing the market. The most important release is sent several weeks to a month prior to opening day. For added effect, deliver the release and a basket of produce in person to local media outlets, including newspapers and radio and television stations. Tourist information centers and community groups that publish newsletters also should receive press releases.

Public Events

Use any opportunity available to promote the market's opening day. Attend other community events and meetings where the market manager has an opportunity to talk about the market or at least be seen wearing a button, t-shirt, or hat with the market's logo. This type of publicity should be ongoing, but it is especially important when the market is first getting started.

