

DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER

Marketing strategies for the modern farm



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The Problem

Price-Taker versus Brand-Builder



PRICE-TAKER

*Competing on **cost***

BRAND-BUILDER

*Competing on **value***

PRICING MINDSET

"What is my neighbor charging?" Sets price based on competition, rarely covers true costs including labor.
This is STILL a factor in pricing...

"What is this worth to my buyer?" Sets price based on value delivered: story, quality, trust, and relationship.

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP

Transactional. Whoever shows up at the booth buys. Little to no effort to capture repeat buyers.

Relational. Knows who their best customers are, markets to them specifically, and earns loyalty.

MARKETING APPROACH

Minimal strategy. Relies on foot traffic, word of mouth, or a hand-lettered sign at the market. (these ARE important, too)

Intentional and consistent. Tells a story across a booth, a social post, a label, and a website.

PRICE-TAKER

*Competing on **cost***

BRAND-BUILDER

*Competing on **value***

RESPONSE TO A
SLOW WEEK

Drops the price. "Maybe \$2 less per pound will bring people in."

Reactivates buyers. Sends a text, posts a behind-the-scenes update, offers a pre-order.

PRODUCT
PRESENTATION

Bare-minimum. No logo for brand recognition, miss-matched packaging. The product has to speak for itself.

Prioritized. Labels, signage, and packaging create a premium feel before anyone takes a bite or makes a purchase.

MINDSET ABOUT
THEIR FARM

"I grow _____ and hope people buy it."

"I run a business that grows _____, and I market it like one."

BEFORE YOU CAN START MARKETING...

- 1 IDENTIFY YOUR IDEAL BUYER**
- 2 MASTER VALUE-BASED PRICING**
- 3 AUDIT THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY**



1

IDENTIFY YOUR IDEAL BUYER



- Not everyone is your customer, and that's OKAY.
- If you try to market to everyone, you're marketing to no one.
- Your marketing message, platforms, and tone should all flow from who this person is.

EXAMPLES →

THE HEALTH-CONSCIOUS PARENT

Core motivation: Feed her family well and know exactly where the food comes from.

Reads ingredient labels, shops and compares, has strong opinion about what she won't feed her children

Will drive out of her way and pay significantly more for a product she trusts

Responds to transparency: processing dates, farm practices, animal welfare, added ingredients

THE GIFT-SHOPPER

Core motivation: Find something beautiful, local, and special...for someone else.

Often an impulse buyer:
your booth display,
packaging, or a well-
placed Instagram post
makes the sale

Buying for a
birthday, a hostess
gift, teacher
appreciation or
“just because”

The story matters as
much as the product:
“Locally grown in
____, MO”

THE VALUES-ALIGNED LOCAL

Core motivation: Keep dollars in the local economy and support real people doing real work.

Knows your name, follows you on Facebook, and tells people about you without being asked for recommendations.

Less price-sensitive than you would expect. They are buying the relationship as much as the product.

They have confidence that you will show up and offer a consistent product every time.

THE BULK/WHOLESALE BUYER

Core motivation: Reliable supply at a price that works.

Could be a local restaurant, someone stocking their freezer, or a small grocer.

Less driven by story and emotion than the other three. They're more driven by consistency, communication, and fair terms.

Will pay a fair price for a dependable, predictable product, but will leave quickly if the source is unreliable.

Look at your best customers

Step 1

**Name your top 5
repeat buyers**

*Real people, even if just a first
name or face*

Step 2

**What do they
have in common?**

*Age range, lifestyle, what they
shared when they were buying*

Step 3

**Your ideal buyer
is in the overlap**

Write it down in one sentence

Photo captured at The Farmhouse in Brookfield, MO



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MASTER VALUE-BASED PRICING

What is this worth to the buyer? Price accordingly.

- 1. Transparency and trust:** they know where their food comes from.
- 2. Convenience and story:** no middleman, direct relationship.
- 3. Premium quality and ethics:** hand-grown, niche products, extra care.



CORNELL MEAT PRICE CALCULATOR



AUDIT THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

FIND YOU

How do customers discover your farm?

TRUST YOU

What builds confidence before they buy?

PAY YOU

Where and how does the transaction take place?

COME BACK

What turns them into a repeat customer?



WHERE CAN POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS **FIND YOU?**



IN PERSON

Farmers Market presence
Roadside signage
Farm events & open houses
Word of mouth



ONLINE

Google Business Profile (FREE tool)
Social Media
Facebook Marketplace / Local groups
Local food directories



PAID + COLLABORATIVE

Boosted social media posts/ads
Co-marketing with local brands
Local media and food writers
Chamber of commerce and agritourism networks

NOT ALL PLATFORMS OR LOCATIONS ARE A GOOD FIT FOR EVERY BUSINESS

Carefully consider where you invest your time, talents, and energy.

WHAT MAKES POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS **TRUST YOU?**



VISUAL CREDIBILITY

- Professional labels & packaging
- Booth & display design
- Product photography
- Consistent visual identity



SOCIAL PROOF

- Google reviews
- Facebook recommendations
- Testimonials at your booth or storefront
- User-generated content



STORY & TRANSPARENCY

- Your farm origin story
- Behind-the-scenes content
- Certifications & practices
- Consistent presence

HOW WILL POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS **PAY YOU?**



IN-PERSON

Cash
Square or Stripe card reader
Venmo & Paypal
Check



ONLINE

Google Order Button (with GBP)
Simple order form with invoice to follow
E-commerce store
DTC Platforms (Barn2Door, ChopLocal)

Whether you only sell online, or only in-person (or a combination of the two), it is critical to display your payment options prominently. This reduces friction and doesn't require a customer to ask how they can pay.

**NOW WE CAN
START MARKETING**





SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook — business page, local community groups, Facebook Marketplace

Instagram — product photos, behind-the-scenes reels, stories

TikTok — farm life content, growing audience of food-conscious buyers

Pinterest — strong for flowers, plants, recipes using your products



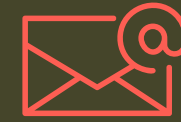
SEARCH & LOCAL DISCOVERY

Google Business Profile (free) — local search, Google Maps, customer reviews

LocalHarvest.org — free farm directory, motivated buyers searching for local food

Missouri Grown - Department of Ag listings

County extension & agritourism listings — often free and highly targeted



EMAIL & TEXT

Mailchimp / Mailerlite — free email newsletter platforms, easy to start

SimpleTexting / Klaviyo — text list for availability updates and pre-orders

Your own list is the only audience you truly own — not subject to algorithm changes



IN-PERSON & COMMUNITY

Farmers markets — booth presence, signage, sampling

Farm stands & on-farm sales — roadside visibility, loyal local traffic

Farm events & U-pick — turns visitors into long-term buyers

Chamber of commerce — community business directory, networking

Co-marketing with other local farms or food businesses

Reminder: you don't have to use all of these. Pick the ones that fit your buyer and your bandwidth, and do those well.



DIY *versus* **OUTSOURCE**

Direct-to-Consumer Marketing

90 DAY SPRINT

Month 1 | Foundations

- Write a one-paragraph origin story for your farm
- Define your top 2 ideal buyer profiles
- Claim and complete your Google Business Profile: add hours, photos, and products (free at business.google.com)
- Audit your social media bio: does it say what you sell and where?

Month 2 | Build & Show Up

- Post 3x per week on your highest-traffic platform
- Ask your 5 best customers for a written or video testimonial
- Create or refresh your product signage and booth setup
- Launch a simple pre-order or waitlist for peak-season products

Month 3 | Convert & Retain

- Start a simple email or text list to capture repeat buyers
- Introduce a loyalty incentive (10th box free, referral discount)
- Review your pricing: are you leaving money on the table?
- Identify your star product and put it front and center

Create a Google Business Profile | Free Tool

- Shows your farm in local search and Google Maps
- Add hours, products, photos, and your farm story
- Collect and respond to reviews: builds trust fast
- Post seasonal updates and availability directly in search
- Set up at: business.google.com

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Direct-to-Consumer Marketing

12-MONTH MARATHON

Quarter 1 | Build Your Foundation

- Write or refresh your farm origin story: who you are, why you farm, what you stand for
- Define your top 2 buyer profiles and write them down
- Audit every place a customer can find you: Google, social media, market booth, signage
- Make sure your contact info, hours, and products are accurate and up to date everywhere
- Choose 1–2 marketing channels to focus on: and commit to showing up there consistently

Quarter 2 | Show Up & Build Trust

- Post consistently on your chosen platforms: aim for 2-4x per week
- Collect at least 5 customer reviews (Google, Facebook, or written testimonials)
- Send your first email or text to your list (even a simple product update counts)
- Check in on your pricing: are your rates still covering your true costs including time?
- Follow up with past buyers: a quick message goes a long way toward repeat business

Quarter 3 | Evaluate & Adjust

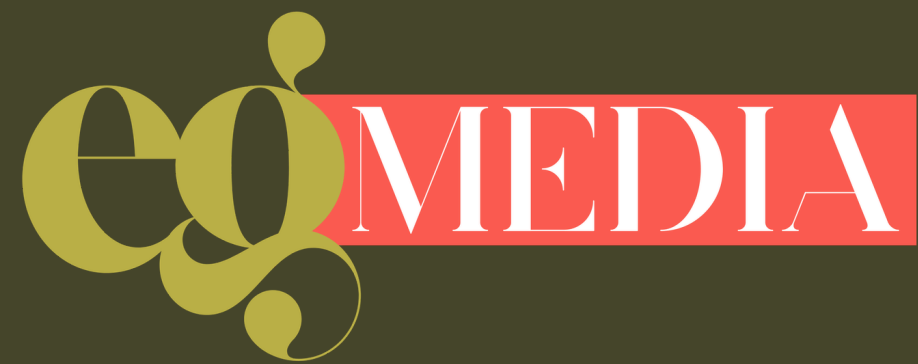
- Self-audit: which channel is driving the most discovery? Double down there.
- Self-audit: where are you losing customers — Find, Trust, Pay, or Come Back?
- Review your top 3 selling products: are they priced and promoted as your stars?
- Ask your best customers: "What made you come back?" Use their words in your marketing.
- Identify one thing that isn't working and cut it: simplify to focus your energy

Quarter 4 | Retain, Reflect & Plan Ahead

- Reach out to lapsed customers with a reason to return: new product, seasonal item, personal note
- Introduce or promote a subscription, pre-order, or loyalty incentive
- Document what worked this year: best-selling products, most effective channels, highest-value buyers
- Review your Google Business Profile and social bios: update anything that's stale
- Set 3 specific marketing goals for next year and write them down
- Plan your next 90-Day Sprint before the season starts

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QUESTIONS?



 elise@eg.media

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