Your Market Stand

Within the first few times of coming to the Market, you’ll notice that some booths have a style all their own--they are consistent from week to week. A recognizable, consistent style allows repeat customers to find you easily at the next market. It allows you to brand yourself, and send off the message that you want.

Most vendors have a pop-up tent. It helps maintain product quality, while providing comfort on the dog days of summer. When looking at pop-up tents, keep in mind that white tents are best. This is because colored tents have a tendency to make produce look discolored. You get what you pay for with tents. The very inexpensive ones don’t hold up well in our experience. We like the $200 EZ-Up tents.

Display of your products

There are two main components to a good display: neatness and abundance. Attractive displays attract more customers. With that in mind, ensure that old boxes, bad produce, and other trash are kept out of sight from the customer. Customers buy more when displays are bountiful, so make sure that no matter how you set up the display in your stand, that the focus is on the products.

Customers like a stand that looks natural. Using old-fashioned containers and other “country” items can give your stand a farm-like atmosphere. Simple, but effective, colors can dress up your display in a big way! Green, earth colors, and checked fabrics look great under produce. But keep in mind that the most colorful thing on your stand should be your products!

One of the most important things that you can do is to improve your stand throughout the year. If you see some things working more than others, adjust accordingly. The more attractive and effective your displays are, the more customers you’ll have.

Signs in your stand

There are three basic types of signs that you can find in a stand: price signs, information signs, and brand signs. Each of these types of signs have their own place in a stand, and each should be thought out carefully.

A price sign should be clearly marked and near products. These days, people aren’t used to having to ask about prices. If they have to ask, they might not shop at your stand. If you don’t have too many products, a large chalkboard (or whiteboard) can be used in place of individual signs. You can also create individual signs on cardboard or small chalkboards. Remember to keep pricing signs near the product!

Product information signs are useful in drawing in customers with information. They can feature phrases such as “organic” or “picked today.” These signs also may include storage or cooking tips. Not every stand needs product information signs, but they definitely have a benefit.

Brand signs help with recognition of your farm’s name and brand. If a customer remembers your name or what your sign looks like, they’ll be more likely to return again. Make sure that your brand sign flows with your style and clearly conveys your farm name!

Dressing the Part

You, and the people that help you sell your product, are all part of the display in your booth. If you have aprons or shirts or hats with your farm’s name on them, that’s great! If you don’t have these, consider getting some, or aprons with the market’s name on them. In addition, a nametag allows a customer to greet you by name, which adds to the customer/vendor relationship.

Staffing the Stand

We all know that familiar faces increase comfort levels, and this also applies to farmers market stands. Because of this, try to have the same crew to sell your products at each market. Shoppers expect to be able to speak directly to the farmer, or at least someone that works at the farm. (That’s part of the draw of a farmers market!) Therefore, you being there is an important part of the staff. Make sure that the rest of the staff of your stand know how you expect them to greet and interact with customers. If everyone is aware of expectations, the staff of your stand will be more consistent, and draw more customers back each week.

Welcoming Customers

A greeting is the beginning of the customer/vendor relationship. Eye contact and a friendly greeting are the best way to start off this relationship. You can continue to build this relationship by taking the time to visit, offering a sample or a suggestion of a product, and even asking them to come back and tell you how they prepared your product.

Fostering a relationship with the customer is an important aspect of the market. As such, you should ensure that your staff knows your rules on texting, reading, visiting with neighbors, etc. when the market is busy. You should also ensure that the people at your booth are dressed appropriately.

Offering Samples

Samples are another good way to build a relationship with the customer. It’s a great way to familiarize the customers with your products, while demonstrating the quality of them. Having a clearly marked sample container near the product is a good way to draw people in. Be sure that the samples are fresh and the containers are clean. Don’t cut up too much product at one time, so that customers get the freshest sample possible. Make sure to also follow any health guidelines so that customers are kept safe.

Handouts/Social Media

Fliers are a great way to help further reinforce your name with customers, while offering tips and recipes to help sell more products. Customers like simple recipes and are always looking for new ideas on how to use your products.

A website, Twitter, or Facebook page are inexpensive and effective ways to spread the word about your farm. If you tag the West Lafayette Farmers Market in the post, we’ll almost always repost/share/retweet! That way, more people learn about not only the Market, but your farm as well!

Thanks to the Davis Farmers Market Association for many of these tips!