

Social Media to Enhance Competitiveness of Small Farmers in South Florida



SOUTHERN
EXTENSION
RISK MANAGEMENT
EDUCATION



United States Department of Agriculture
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The Core Writing Team:

Dr. Edward Evans, Tropical Research and Education Center, University of Florida

Ms. Grizelle De Los Reyes, Department of Advertising & Public Relations, Florida International University

Mr. Fredy Ballen, Tropical Research and Education Center, University of Florida

Mr. Roberto Gudino, Florida International University

Ms. Nicolle Lopez, Florida International University

Edited by:

Dr. Edward Evans, Tropical Research and Education Center, University of Florida

Ms. Grizelle De Los Reyes, Department of Advertising & Public Relations, Florida International University

Mr. Fredy Ballen, Tropical Research and Education Center, University of Florida

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Marketing Plan Notes

Introduction

What is marketing?

A simple definition of marketing is that it is finding out what your customers need/want and supplying it to them at a profit.

It is important to note that marketing is not just about selling!!

Marketing involves:

- Attracting new customers
- Persuading customers to buy
- Selling (close the deal)
- Retaining customers
- Anticipating changes in the market that can affect your net returns (bottom line)

Attracting new customers means promising and delivering better value than your competitors.

Retaining your customers means continuing to deliver satisfaction (so they keep coming back—lifetime value customers)

Simply put, marketing is all about “creating value” for your customers and “extracting value” from your customers.

You create value for, and extract value from, your customers by focusing on the following **4Ps**:

- Product
- Price
- Promotion
- Place (Distribution)

Tip: To be able to create value for, and extract value from, your customers, in other words to be successful in marketing, you need to know who your customers are and be able to satisfy their needs at a profit.

Tip: Preparing a marketing plan, regardless of how simple, can help you focus your efforts at creating value for your customers and extracting value from them.

What is the main purpose of a marketing plan?

The main purpose of a marketing plan is to help you focus your efforts at obtaining maximum revenue for your business. It helps you to clearly define the product and/or services you are offering, identify your customers and competitors, and outline a strategy (ies) for attracting new customers and keeping existing customers satisfied. It also allows you to identify and anticipate changes in the marketplace.

How do I go about preparing a marketing plan?

Preparing a marketing plan is not as difficult as it sounds even though for some large firms it becomes quite complicated and expensive. However, it does require that you do a minimum of what is called “market research” which involves collecting, analyzing, and organizing the information in a way that you can act upon.

What is the meaning of market research?

Keeping it simple, market research is getting the information you need so that you:

- Know your customers, their likes and dislikes and expectations
- Know your competition and their strength and weaknesses
- Anticipate changes in the market that can affect your net return (bottom line)

Tip: You do not have to spend an awful lot of resources conducting your market research if you do not have the means to do so; you can gain a lot by conducting a simple market research. No need to copy those big drink companies who determine the number of ice cubes customers put in their glass; remember KISS (keep it simply simple).

STEPS FOR CREATING A SIMPLE MARKETING PLAN

Step 1: State your marketing objectives

Perhaps you would like to increase awareness of the product or service you provide; increase sales and revenues by a certain percentage; and/or increase the number of customers.

A few examples of how to do this include I want to increase sales by 10 percent by the end of next year, sell 50 more boxes of guavas, sell 10 percent of what I produce directly to consumers, or participate in one trade show.

Tip: Be realistic about your marketing objectives and state them in a way in which success or achievement can be measured. It is a good practice to identify how you will measure success after you state each objective.

Tip: Your marketing objectives can be expressed in any of the following terms: sales dollars, sales units, market share, distribution levels/channel, and/or advertising awareness.

Tip: Try to limit the number of marketing objectives to less than four; two is ideal unless you are a very large company.

Step 2: Describe/identify your target market (by age, sex; profession or career; income level; education level; and/or residency, individual or business)

Simply jot down a description of your target audiences. Once you have done so, focus on only those customers who are more likely to purchase your product. As your business grows, you can, if you so desire and have the necessary resources, focus on a wider segment of the overall market.

Tip: The target market is a group of customers (people or firms/packing houses) for whom your marketing effort is intended. Your choice of target markets will determine your production and marketing practices, not vice versa.

Tip: A target market is not simply whoever is buying, or will buy, your products. Rather it consists of the individuals or businesses that you identify as your most desirable customers.

Step 3: Identify your competition

You can identify your competition by sales data, by demand for product, by your nearest direct and indirect competitors, by strengths and weaknesses of competitors, by an assessment of how competitors' businesses are doing, by the similarities and dissimilarities between your product and the competitors, and by a pricing strategy for and a comparison of yours and the competitors.

Tip: Identify a couple of competitors and identify their strength and weaknesses; that is, how do they promote their product; what is their pricing strategy, is there anything unique or special about their product?

Step 4: Describe your product and/or service

Note: a “product” may be a commodity or service, or both.

What are you offering and how is it different from your competitors? What are the benefits of the product and/or service you are providing from the perspective of the customer? What are some of the special features of your product/service, again from the customer’s point of view?

Other additional questions to keep in mind when defining your product/service are as follows: Can you appeal to the environmentally or health conscious customers? How are you going to harvest it and package it? Is there an increase in the supply of your product on the market? Do you have an early or late window of opportunity?

Tip: Remember that without customers, the business is out of business; it is important that you give your customers a reason to buy your product and remain loyal (lifetime customers).

Tip: Produce what you can sell, rather than try to sell what you can produce.

Step 5: Place (describe your distribution strategy)

When we talk about place, we are thinking wider than just the physical location of your business; place also includes how you plan to get the product into the hands of your customers (the place they need it).

Answer the following questions:

- How widely do you plan to geographically (e.g., locally, in-state, multi-state, nationally, internationally) distribute your product?
- Are you going to be selling directly (**direct marketing**) to any of the following: Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), Home Delivery, Farmers Markets, Mail Order and Internet Sales, Pick Your Own (U-Pick), and Roadside Stands.
- Are you going to be selling indirectly (**Intermediary marketing**) to packing houses or retailers?

Tip: Depending on how you plan to distribute your product, you will have to consider packaging.

Tip: Packaging serves two purposes, namely to protect and preserve your product and to advertise and differentiate your product.

Step 6: Decide on your promotion strategy (ies)

Promotion refers to the entire set of activities that make people aware of your product and/or operation, and induce them to buy the product in preference over others.

Promotion is simply how you are going to get people to know about your operation, and the product and or/service you provide. It deals with how and what you want to communicate to the customers/buyers.

Several tools can be used (e.g., radio, television, direct mail, personal contacts, trade association, newspaper, magazines, yellow pages, billboards and **SOCIAL MEDIA**).

Need to identify the amount of resources (human and capital) you can set aside for your promotional program.

Tip: Social media is one of the most cost-effective means of promoting your business.

Step 7: Develop a pricing strategy

(Note: There are several pricing strategies, such as competitive pricing, cost-oriented pricing*, flexible or variable pricing, penetration or promotional pricing, relative pricing, skimming or skim pricing, contract pricing)

A few things of which you should be aware include the following: What are the pricing strategies used by your competitors? What is your cost of production? How will you determine the price of your good(s)?

Typically, your price should be based on the prevailing market prices and your costs. It should cover your full cost of production and include a profit.

You can do simple market research to learn about what prices customers would be willing to pay and what prices your competitors are charging.

Tip: In order to get the maximum price, try to schedule production when there is limited competing supply.

Step 8: Marketing budget

Since you do not have unlimited resources, it is good to identify just how much time and money you want to allocate to marketing.

Tip: Try to estimate how much it will cost for any marketing strategy you proposed in your plan and stick to your budget. For example, if you plan to participate in a trade show, estimate the costs for traveling, marketing materials, and rental of booth.

Outline of a Marketing Plan

1. Executive Summary
2. Your Goals/Objectives
3. Your Business
4. Your Customers
5. Your Competitors
6. Your Product or Service
7. Your Distribution Strategy
8. Your Promotion Strategy
9. Your Pricing Strategy
10. Your Budget

Gilly’s Two-Page Marketing Plan Worksheet

What are your marketing objectives?

What market do you serve? Who are your customers?

Who are your competitors and what are the unique (special) features that distinguish your product/service from theirs?

What is your product/service?

What is the best way to get your product/service into the hands of the targeted consumers?

How do you plan to promote (make people aware of) your business, product/service?

How do you plan to price your product/service?

How much money and time can you set aside for your marketing activity?

How is the market you're targeting changing or is likely to change?

Social Media Marketing for Farmers

Why Social Media Now?

- For quick customer service replies
- For engaging in conversation with your customers
- For giving your business a personality
- To build trust and transparency with your customers
- To let your customers know about your products quickly and in “real time”
- To promote your business at no cost except your time and commitment
- Because promoting your business by being “social” leads to sales

Why is Social Media Marketing Important to your Farming business

Social Media has become an integral part of our lives and continues to evolve constantly. A few years ago, the business world was talking about the importance of being active in Social Media such as Facebook and Twitter, but with limited knowledge on how to develop and execute a Social Media plan of the same caliber as a business marketing plan. Now the conversation has shifted and is moving towards the idea that every marketing campaign must have a social component. *Social is strategy that should be present in your marketing plan.*

With an understanding of the power of social media, the questions to ask are: how do you leverage it? How do you attract and engage your audience to share your message so they become your brand ambassadors? As a grower interested in diversifying your marketing risk, you need to learn to leverage Social Media– for building relationships, listening to the market, promoting your content and products, and influencing buyers even before they are identified as potential leads.

The idea is to move beyond just having a presence in Social Media to integrating Social Media to market your farming business.

Whether you are just starting out or have a well-defined social marketing plan, this manual is intended to get you started, keep you focused and stay committed.

Practice makes perfect....

Overview: What is Marketing

- The definition of Marketing is as follows:
 - A simple definition of **MARKETING** is that it is finding out what your customers need/want and supplying it to them at a profit.
 - **PRODUCT**: (1) identification, selection and development of a product,
 - **PRICE**: (2) determination of its price,
 - **PLACE**: (3) selection of a distribution channel to reach the customer's place, and
 - **PROMOTION**: (4) development and implementation of a promotional strategy.



**This is where
Social Media Marketing fits**

Overview: What is Social Media Marketing?

- Social Media marketing refers to the process of **gaining website traffic** (if you have one) **or attention** to your farming business through popular Social Media sites.
- A good Social Media marketing program usually centers on efforts to create a profile that attracts attention and encourages your desired audience to **“like, follow, subscribe” to your profile** and **“comment, share” your content** with their “friends” in social networks. This “sharing” is what virality is all about.
- A good “post” or message spreads from **user to user** and resonates because it is perceived to come from a trusted, third-party source by **offering information of relevance and interest** to the target audience .
- This form of marketing is driven by **word-of-mouth** and it is **“viral” in nature**, meaning it results in **earned media rather than paid media**. Earned media means you do not pay for this promotion given that your target audience is willing to share your content with their network of friends.
- **Results build over time and require a commitment**: not monetary, but time and effort
- Social Media has become a platform that is easily accessible to anyone with internet access. This increased communication through Social Media to interested buyers of your produce **fosters awareness of your business, improves customer service and ultimately, increase sales**. Additionally, Social Media serves as a relatively inexpensive platform for you to implement your marketing campaigns.

From the “2014 Social Media Marketing Report”

Major findings:

- **Marketers place very high value on social media:** A significant 92% of marketers indicate that Social Media is important for their business, up from 86% in 2013.
- **Tactics and engagement are top areas marketers want to master:** At least 89% of marketers want to know the most effective social tactics and the best ways to engage their audience with social media.
- **Blogging holds the top spot for future plans:** A significant 68% of marketers plan on increasing their use of blogging, making it the top area marketers will invest in for 2014.
- **Marketers want to learn most about Google+:** While 54% of marketers are using Google+, 65% want to learn more about it and 61% plan on increasing Google+ activities in 2014.

The Basics

Social Media Marketing Basic Terms

Term	Description	What it means to you
Post	Content uploaded by account administrator and those authorized to comment on behalf of the account holder.	This is the information that is initiated by you and the authorized employee on your account profile
Like / follow / subscribe	Initial engagement desired from target audience.	When you post your business profile, depending on the platform used, people are going to “like” your page, “follow” you as your post, or subscribe
Comment / share	Desired outcome in terms of engagement by your target audience.	With good content, people will enter in a conversation with your business by commenting on your posts, or even better, sharing your content with their Social Media friends
Goals / Outcomes	What you expect from your Social Media marketing efforts.	You have to be very specific on what you desired goal / outcome is. Your goal can be just to exchange information with other growers, B2C (business to consumer) to sell your produce to consumers physically or virtually (website), B2B (business to business) to sell to brokers reselling your produce, or just to raise awareness to your business by sharing information, videos and/or images
Content	Information, images or videos that you post as messages to your account profile for your followers to see.	Content is the “hook” that engages your audience and allows you to expose your produce in order to fulfill your business goal.
Target audience	The group of people you want to engage with through social media.	By defining your Social Media business goal and your target audience, the content will also be defined. This decision will determine the information your share.
# or “hashtag”	A hashtag is a pound sign (#) used in Social Media to categorize messages. They have become one of the most commonly used symbols on Twitter and Social Media at large. People use them to organize conversations, tweet at events and engage in conversations online. See next slide for further explanation.	By creating a hashtag in your postings, you will be able to best manage your Social Media conversations. It can be easily created by just using the name desired with # in front of it. You can create more than one hashtag for different purposes. See next slide for further explanation.
@ or “at”	The @ is used as a mention and to address someone specifically in a post or commentary. By placing the @ in front of the user’s name, your commentary will appear in the user’s feed. See next slide for further explanation.	The use of the @ in front of the user’s name, allows you to implement customer service by addressing your followers directly, answer their questions, clarifying statements and/or giving them information. See next slide for further explanation.
Social Media Channels or platforms	The specific Social Media such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram.	You may use one or more than one, but understanding the channel, who is using it and its strengths, will allow you to decide what you will post. You can also cross-promote each platform or channel you are using within each one, example if you have a website, let people know your Twitter name, etc.

Social Media Marketing Basic Terms

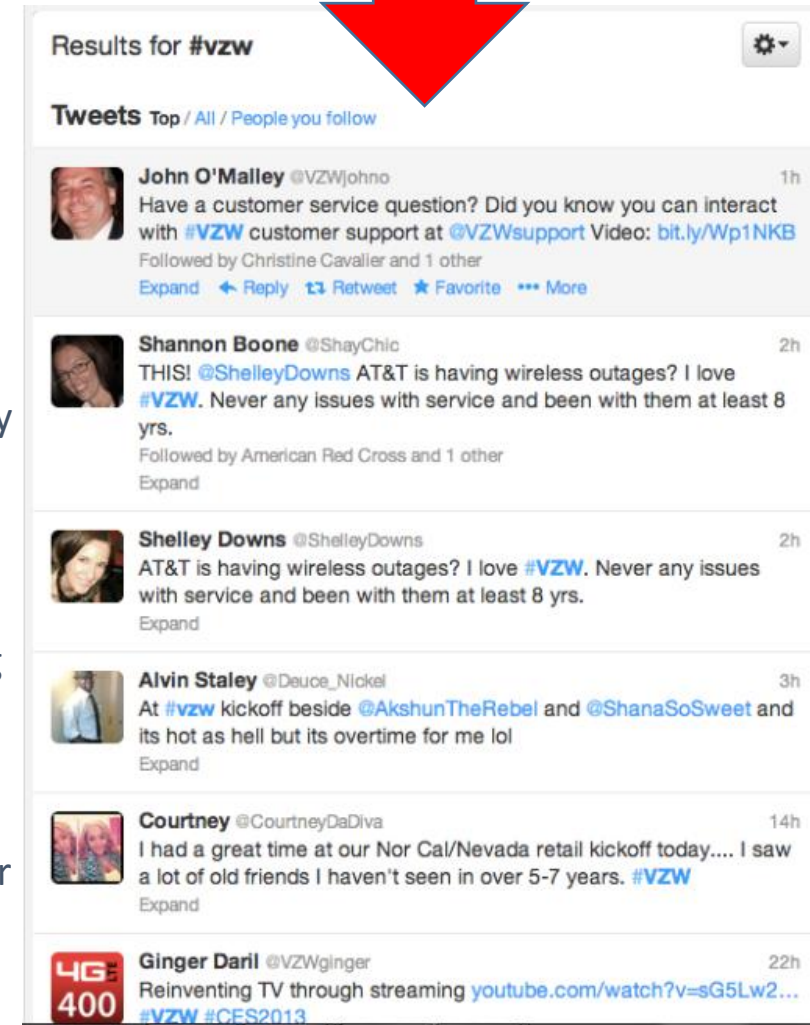
Term	Description	What it means to you
Geo-tagging	The process of adding geographical identification to a photograph, or video, and/or websites, to help users find a wide variety of location-specific information from a mobile device or computer. Geotagging can tell users the location of the content of a given picture or other media or the point of view, and conversely on some media platforms show media relevant to a given location.	When you geo-tag an image or video as part of a post, your customers can map and find the location where you are located. It will enable your consumers to physically come to you or identify where you have been.
Real time	This is when posted messages are received by the audience at the exact time when events are happening.	Since the farming business is a business of immediacy and shelf life sensitive, the real time nature of Social Media is a perfect fit to communicate with audiences with a high degree of urgency.
Viral, virality	When an image, video, or piece of information is circulated rapidly and widely from one Internet user to another.	When the content your post is shared from one Social Media user to another, your exposure grows exponentially bringing awareness to your business and products. Posting content worth sharing is understood through trial and seeing what works for you: beautiful photos of your produce, plants, field, the harvesting process, the people that make it happen, relevant and interesting information, etc.
Username	The name you use to open your account profile.	When you open the account, the platform will let you know if the name you selected is taken. It is best if you use the same name across all platform, including the hashtags you will create.

How this works ➡

- A hashtag is a pound sign (#) used in Social Media marketing to categorize messages
- It is one of the most commonly used symbols on Twitter and Social Media platforms at large
- People use them to organize conversations, tweet at events and engage in conversations online
- You can make up your own hashtag to include in your Social Media conversations, and you can create and use more than one to fit different purposes
 - Example: #jonesfarms used in all generic conversations or #jonesfarmstrawberries or #jonesfarmsorchids for specific conversations about strawberries or orchids
- Some tips:
 - **#1: Choose Something Unique:** As a marketer, you want to be able to reach your community with the use of hashtags, especially during specific events, or Twitter / Social Media conversations and to include in other social media.
 - **#2: Choose Something Easy to Remember:** With thousands of hashtags in the Social Media universe, the last thing a business wants to do is create a hashtag that is hard to spell or difficult. Users will end up spelling it wrong and this defeats the purpose of having a hashtag in the first place.
 - **#3: Use the Hashtag on Multiple Social Media channels:** Use your hashtag in all channels you are using: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram.
 - **#4: Search for the Hashtag Before You Use It:** Make sure that the hashtag is available and/or not been used for something negative. The worst thing that can happen when using a hashtag is to realize after you've used it that the same hashtag is used for an entirely different topic or for something negative. Before using a hashtag, always search to see if other people are using it and what they are saying. Simply go to "search", and type the intended hashtag with the # included.

EXAMPLE

Verizon using #VZW for their consumers to find conversation and specifically #VZWsupport for customer service



How this works → @

- The @ is used as a mention to someone specifically in a post or commentary
- When you manually include the username of another Twitter user in a tweet (or any other social media), you type "[username]" *without the enclosing brackets [] and quotes* to add his/her identity to your message. Just as the username that begins a reply turns into a profile link, so do the mentions you include in your tweets and Social Media messages. You can use mentions to thank customers for compliments, refer one user to another or include other Twitter users (or any other social media), in your communications in any way that's relevant to you.
- Using @ allows the conversation to be personalized and directed specifically at the user you want to communicate with.

EXAMPLE

Verizon using @ to address a specific consumer about their question or comment or users to chat with each other. Using @VZWsupport, a Verizon consumer can address the question to the right Verizon department



What you should know before developing your social plan

Social Media Marketing Top Five Questions

These are the five questions that Social Media marketers ask most often:

- **#1 Tactics:** What Social Media marketing Tactics are most effective
- **#2 Engagement:** What are the best ways to engage your audience using social media
- **#3 Measurement:** How do you measure the return of your Social Media marketing efforts
- **#4 Tools:** What are the best Social Media marketing tools to simplify your efforts
- **#5 Audience:** how do you find and grow your audience

End-to-End Social Media Campaign

- **Step #1 Set your Goals:** see next slide for examples
- **Step #2 Provide a Reason to Engage:** It is all about content. Give your audience a reason to engage with you, for example, sales, discounts, first peeks, interesting content such as information, recipes, photos
- **Step #3 Create a viral element:** create a reason for your audience to share your content, example, “if 50 people “like” this post, XXX will be available at XXXX price” or Knaus Berry Farm “KBF Great Shots” (see example)
- **Step #4 Schedule a series of posts:** a successful Social Media marketing plan is consistent, and depending on the nature of the campaign, is repetitious and urgent. Below is a sample campaign for selling time-sensitive produce:

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Post Pic of harvest	Post Special!	Post Great deal!	Post 1 day left!	Post last day!	Post picture of customers and your produce with “be on the lookout for out next deal”	Post a reminder to share the page with friends for updated on great deals and first access...or if the offer is still good, keep posting

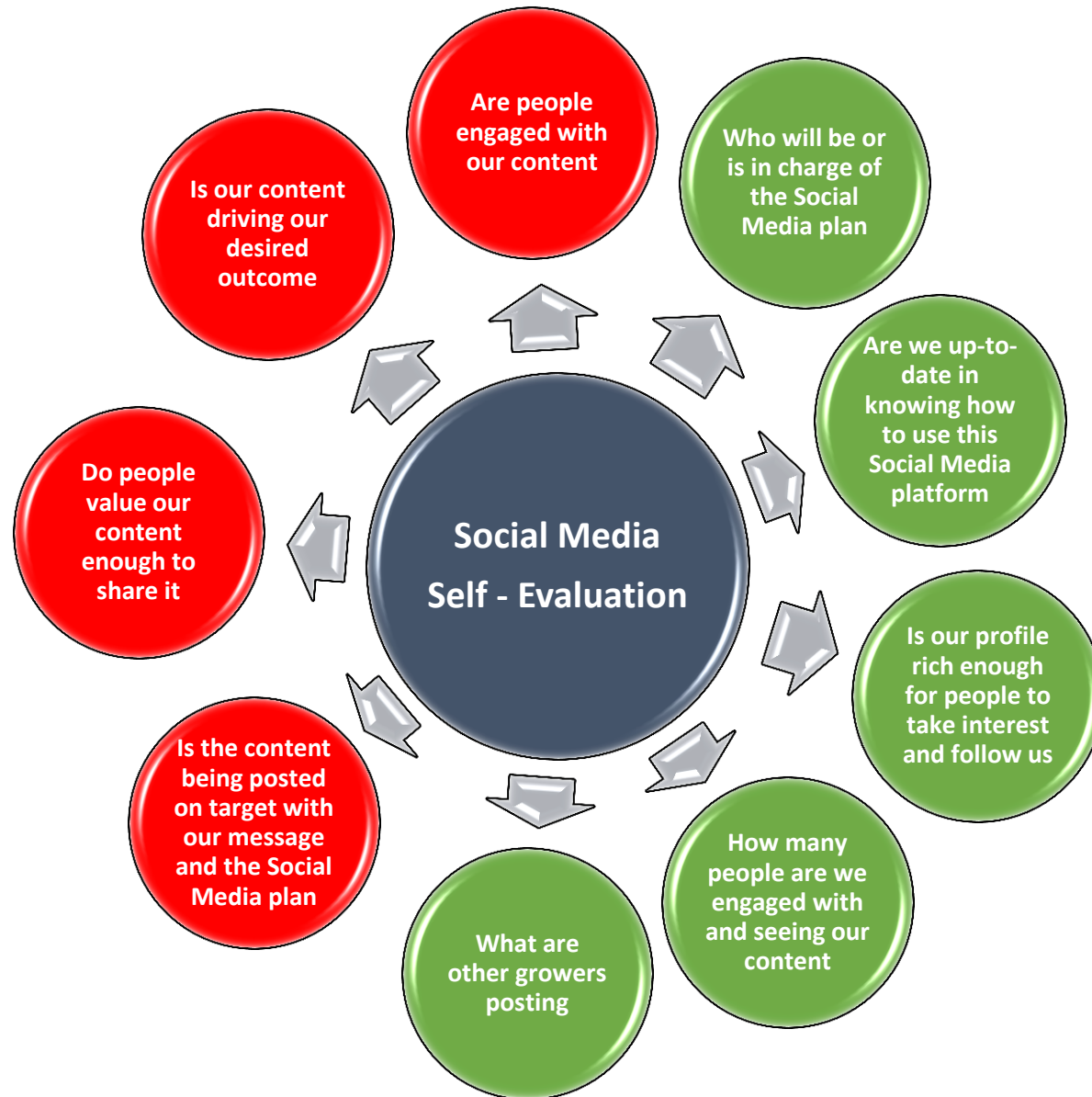
- **Step #5 Manage Responses:** you have to address the questions and engage in conversation with your audience. Remind them to share your page with their friends
- **Step #6 Assess what worked and what you can improve upon:** Analyze what photos or posts your audience “liked” most, commented on, asked about, was shared, so you can refine your messages

Developing Social Media Strategy: Goals

This Social Media manual and workshops will help you create a clear plan to follow and the basic know-how to execute it. A good Social Media plan starts with clear goals:

- **Answer each Key Question to develop SPECIFIC Social Media goals.** See next slide.
- **Create MEASURABLE Social Media goals:** Example: By March 1, we will increase our company's messaging and content sharing, commenting and clicking by X to help us reach an incremental audience with our news and products.
- **Create ACHIEVABLE Social Media goals:** Example: By May 1, we will create a weekly content stream of X Facebook posts, X tweets, X Pins and X pictures posted on Instagram to help increase the awareness of our farm through social media.
- **Create RESULT-FOCUSED Social Media goals:** Example: By April 15th, we will create a process that ties Social Media activity to lead collection by providing a reason to take followers to the website (if you have one), sign up for a contest or for exclusive email newsletter to deliver early-bird deals.
- **Assign TIME-BASED Constraint On Your Social Media goals:** Example: By March 1, we will be testing and understanding the use of hashtags to get customer services and product questions answered more quickly.

Things To Ask Yourself Constantly



Developing a Social Media Plan

Social Media Plan

Part 1: Setting Immediate Goals

Task	What is involved	Timetable By When?	Question to ask yourself at this point	Resource – Where to find it
Open accounts on the Social Media channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open a profile in each channel presented: Facebook Pages, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram Even if you do not start posting content right away, secure the name and “hold the place” with your business profile 	Date: _____	Who is or will be in charge of the Social Media plan? It can be more than one person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YouTube tutorials found in XXXXXXXX
Learn how to use each platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get familiar with how each platform works to the point where content is your only concern Be aware of updates: all platforms offer virtual tours and also send email alerts when something is changed When in doubt, check out our tutorials in YouTube (see resource page) 	Date: _____	Are we up-to-date in knowing how to use this Social Media platform?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YouTube tutorials found in XXXXXXXX Each Social Media channel has information and updates
Build a foundation of posted content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you open up an account, start posting immediately, even if you have no followers No one is going to follow an empty profile 	Date: _____	Is our profile rich enough for people to take interest and follow us?	
Grow your initial followers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Now that you have a strong profile and are familiar with the platform, you need people to see your work Ask friends, family, employees, customers to follow you Ask people to post about your new profile on their personal accounts 	Date: _____	How many people are we engaged with and seeing our content?	
Look at what other growers are doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are Social Media accounts for any business you can think of, including agriculture Find the Social Media accounts of other local businesses, farmer’s markets and farm to table restaurants; analyze what they post and how consumers react Search trends via Google Study the case studies presented in this manual and visit their Social Media profiles, engage in conversation to see their responses. Make it a habit to check on their activity, if you like their content 	Date: _____	What are other growers posting?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brian Scott case study Knaus Berry Farm case study #FELFIE See other case studies and resource page

Social Media Plan

Part 2: Setting Individual Channel Goals

Task	What is involved	Decision Made	Question to ask yourself at this point
Determine Content Guidelines	<p>Tips and Guidelines for what to post about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic information about business: who owns it, history, awards, recognition, profile on workers• Make decisions with team on content to post and tone: serious, funny, personal, authentic, all of the above• Sales/Promotions: announce deals, where your products are available for purchase, pricing• Product Information: fun facts, how it is harvested, the growth process (fruit/vegetables in growth), harvest, recipes using the produce• Farm culture: celebrations at the farm, traditions, more lifestyle than business - show the consumer who you are• In-real-time posts: live tweets from farmers markets, updates on inventory especially when time sensitive• Customer appreciation: say thank you to customers via Social Media- ask for their Social Media username and tag them in a post• Promote vendors: for example, your produce or plants are used or displayed in a local restaurant, promote the restaurant on Social Media, tag them and mention that they use your products• Geotag your location, depending on post. For example, if you are at a specific market with your produce, geotag your posts for that day• Check the slide on trending Messaging Ideas for additional topics of high consumer interest and specific case studies	<p>Use this guideline and inform all who will be posting on behalf of your business</p> <p>WHO:</p> <hr/> <p>HOW OFTEN:</p> <hr/>	<p>Is the content being posted on target with our message and the Social Media plan?</p> <p>Is our content driving your desired outcome?</p>
Determine Rich Media Posts	<p>Get familiar on how to upload video, audio and pictures and what they will contain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pictures• Video• Audio	<p>WHO:</p> <hr/> <p>HOW OFTEN:</p> <hr/>	<p>Is the content being posted on target with our message and the Social Media plan?</p>
Determine creation and use of Hashtags #	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• # NAME OF YOUR FARM• # NAME OF PRODUCT• # NAME OF AFFILIATION OR GROUP• # NAME OF FARMERS MARKET• Others: #farm #FarmToTable #agriculture #farming #felfie #farmlife #ranching #organic #green #CrueltyFree #NoPerservatives #SupportLocal #LocalBusiness #Miami #SouthFlorida	<p>Hashtags to use:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Is your content driving our desired outcome?</p>

Social Media Plan

Part 2: Setting Individual Channel Goals

Task	What is involved	Decision Made	Question to ask yourself at this point
<div>OUTBOUND: Messaging</div> <div>Determine Campaigns and Post Frequency</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Determine your campaigns of the week/month and plan your posts depending on farm produce and activity. See the slide titled “End-to-End Social Media Campaign” for sample week postingsA minimum of three times a week if no sales activityIf sales activity, no more than 10 posts a week per platformAll posts must be posted at optimal time. Ask yourself: when are people usually online on Social Media: Lunch? Evening?Post strategically and when it makes sense. Do not crowd a person's timeline. Yes, we advise that you post three times a week, but that doesn’t mean one post after another.	<div>Use this guideline and inform all who will be posting on behalf of the business</div> <div>WHO: <div></div></div> <div>HOW OFTEN: <div></div></div>	<div>Are people engaged with our content?</div> <div>Is our content driving your desired outcome?</div>
<div>INBOUND: Customer Service and engagement with followers / subscribers</div> <div>Determine Engagement and Client/Consumer interactions protocol and checking on feed</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Determine who will be responsible to check on the Social Media feed to look for opportunities to interact with your audience (followers, subscribers)Reminder that customer service rules do not change just because interactions are virtual<ul style="list-style-type: none">Social Media is a global stage for others to see how you treat clienteleAlways be polite: People can be vicious on the internet, but you have to remain professional and positiveRespond to all clients in a timely manner. Just like in real life, customers are impatient. Have your notifications turned on so you never miss a mention.Liking/favorite posts is a quick and easy way to show followers you are engaged. Like/favorite posts that:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Applaud your workPertain to your industryPromote local businessesPertain to your communityPosts that mention you in a good light. Example, bakery down the street mentions on Social Media that they are using your produceSharing/retweeting/repins are a great way to show the public what others say about your business. It adds credibility. Can also promote partners for B2B purpose.	<div>Use this guideline and inform all who will be posting on behalf of the business</div> <div>WHO: <div></div></div> <div>HOW OFTEN: <div></div></div>	<div>Do people value our content enough to share it?</div> <div>Is our content driving your desired outcome?</div> <div>45</div>

Tips To Build Followers

General Tips:

- **#1: Just get started:** Social Media is practice and patience, sometimes trial and error to see what works and what does not.
- **#2 Let people know:** Tell your friends, families and employees to add you on Social Media. Also ask them to post about you in order to gain more followers.
- **#3: Use Hashtags:** The more you hashtag, the more followers see you, the more follows you'll get.
- **#4 Find ways to cross promote with other businesses:** Tagging customers or partners may lead them to like/favorite, or even share your posts. This means their followers will see you.
- **#5: Develop ways to engage your followers:** for example, with promotions, sell your products offering discount to customers if they like/follow you on Social Media. Also, engage your followers in fun ways that feels natural with your business. Ask consumers to post a pic/video of your product, tag you and use your hashtag. You choose one participant to win a giveaway. Review the case studies.
- **#6: Integration is key:** Link website to Social Media, in email signatures, website (if you have one), business cards, promotional materials and link all platforms you use.
- **#7: Post about trends:** See the messaging slide for ideas. Be in tune with your audience to know what is important. For example, everyone went pumpkin crazy in October, and you could've made a post about it. Get creative! See case studies for examples.
- **#8: Whenever you are with clients, ask them to follow you on Social Media:** Pitch it as a way to find out more information about your products in real-time. Example: "Strawberries are not ready yet, but follow me on FB. I always post when Strawberries are ready to be picked".
- **#9: Share Original Content:** This tip is true for any social media. Content is still king and when people share your content, your page name travels with it. Think of new ways you can add original photos as part of your content. Ideas are photos from something happening behind the scenes at your farm that you ask people to caption, an inspirational or thought-provoking quote to a photo, a beautiful sunset caught from your farm, etc. Review the slide with messaging ideas, case studies and study articles on people's interest in fresh, organic, farm to table. Post compelling content that people would like to comment and share with others.
- **#10: Content is king:** Social Media is about interesting and relevant content that people are interested in. Just get started as mentioned in #1, and start posting. Another source of inspiration is others within agriculture are doing.

Facebook

- **#1: Acquaint yourself with how to use Facebook for business**
- **#2 Connect With Other Page Managers:** This is a powerful tactic to make a live connection with other Page admins who have a similar demographic to yours and cross-promote each other. Connect with other growers in your area, the stores or stands / flea markets that carry your produce, any other business that draws the same clientele, then approach them about doing some Facebook cross-promotion and share each others posts with your audiences every once in a while.
- **#3: Tag Your Page From Your Personal Profile:** If you have a personal Facebook profile, make sure it's easy for your friends to like your Page. Pages (Business) are not being seen as much in the news feed, so it is advisable that you post about your business occasionally on your Personal Profile. If you tag your Business Page (type "@" and then start typing your Page name until you can select it from the drop-down menu that appears) rather than share the status, people who mouse over your Page name in your post can easily like the Page right from your update.
- **#4: Link Your Personal Profile to Your Business Page:** This is a very simple thing to do. If users are searching and finding your Personal Profile on Facebook, you want to make it as easy as possible for users to find your Business Page as well. In the "About" area, add your Business Facebook Page.
- **#5: Comment (Thoughtfully) on Other Pages as Your Page:** This is a great way to get more exposure for your Business Page with a target audience. Participate on other Pages where your audience is already having conversations. Find complementary Facebook Pages and like them as your "Facebook Business Page" (in other words, do not follow them as your personal profile), then watch your Page home feed and comment on the posts. Use Facebook as your business the same way you use it personally: by interacting and having conversations as your Page. Remember to add to the conversation and authentically build relationships. That will lead to those meaningful connections mentioned in point #1. This activity takes time and you may find that you only have 10 minutes a week to do this, but it's a good habit to get into to get more visibility for your Page.

Pinterest

- **#1: Acquaint yourself with how to use Pinterest for business**
- **#2 Use Original Pictures to Drive Traffic:** If you visit the Popular Section of Pinterest, you'll see that most of the popular pictures and images in this section are original and unique. The popular images are “repinned,” “liked” and commented on the most number of times.
- **#3: Pin Other People's Content to Build a Wider Following:** Pinterest isn't all about pinning your own pictures on your boards. Just like on any other social medium, you need to share other people's content too. A recommendation is to look for others' pictures and content relating to agriculture, farming, organic food, foodies, farm to table etc. and pin them onto your boards.
- **#4: Create Catalogs to Bring in Sales:** Another fantastic way to display your products on Pinterest is to create “catalogs”. You can create a pinboard and pin pictures based on one of your harvests, now or expected. You can also add a price to these pictures. When you want the price to be displayed on the pinboard, all you have to do is add the \$ sign followed by the price to the description and the price will be displayed. Adding the price will make sure you only attract people to your website (if you have one) who are really interested in buying the pinned product.
- **#5: Host Competitions:** You can create picture competitions on Pinterest. Let your fans know what the prize is and ask them to take a picture and share it to win the competition. Ask your fans to pin that picture onto their pinboards. They can then either send you the link to their picture, or you could ask them to use a unique hashtag to enter the competition. Then you'll have to search the hashtag on Pinterest and come up with a means of deciding the best picture.
- **#6: Get Fans Involved to Help Spread the Word:** Pinterest gives you the option to allow other contributors to your pinboards. The pinboards you create don't have to contain only your pins—you can select other people and let them pin pictures onto your pinboards too. Take advantage of this feature. Select some of your favorite or most active fans and ask them to pin pictures onto your pinboards. You could even run a competition where the prize is to be a regular contributor to the pinboard. Get fans involved to help spread the word about your products.
- **#7: Pin Offers:** Create a unique image about your latest offer and pin it onto one of your pinboards on Pinterest. Create an exclusive pinboard to pin the latest offers for Pinterest users only. These offers could be exclusively uploaded to your Pinterest pinboards, or they could be pinned from a website page. With compelling offers, your followers will definitely repin them and share them with their friends.

Instagram

- **#1: Acquaint Yourself With How to Use Instagram for Business:** Businesses are using Instagram more and more. In response, Instagram started the Instagram for Business blog, which offers tips, brand spotlights, examples and news from Instagram HQ. Go to <http://blog.business.instagram.com/>
- **#2: Balance Fun Images With Pictures From Your Business:** Remember that Instagram is all about the images. Take advantage of the opportunity you have with the Instagram web page to tell your story with the images. Have a healthy balance of fun images and business pictures. Also, Use Instagram to give your followers a sneak preview of an event, a product or news feature.
- **#3: Cultivate a Following:** Connect with your Facebook Business account, use relevant, popular hashtags, Engage by following others and liking their photos. Cross-post selected images to your Facebook page with a hashtag that aligns with your “image”, content and farming business to help people who don’t know you’re on Instagram to find you there.
- **#4: Post Videos:** Instagram has a 15-second, filter-enabled, editable video functionality that is very user-friendly.
- **#5: Follow Your Followers Back:** This is also very true for other Social Mediaplatforms you will be using. The people you follow on social networking platforms make all the difference in the world. To create strategic relationships on Instagram, find the people/businesses you enjoy and can learn from in your followers and follow them back.
- **#6: Generate a Flexible Posting Plan:** You don’t need to post on Instagram every day. If you start posting a lot, you might saturate your followers’ feeds. Decide what you have ready to post and create a schedule to help you remember what to post when and to track what is working once you get going.
- **#7: Treat your Followers to a Visual Experience:** Remember that Instagram is a visual social medium and your followers want to see where their food is coming from. Post beautiful pictures of outdoors, healthy living, and the farmers that make it happen.
- **#8: Use Industry-Related Hashtags:** Example, If you’re at an event or location that’s designated by a hashtag, add it to your photos so that people can find them. As explained before, you can also use your created hashtag.

Twitter

- **#1 Acquaint yourself with how to use Twitter for business**
- **#2 Set Up Your Twitter Bio For Success:** Your Twitter Bio and Profile Picture give an important first impression. Ensure that your Twitter Bio is interesting and informative, so that other Twitter Users can decide if you are worth following. Use a photo of a real person. People want to connect with “People” on Twitter. Use a clear, professional headshot. Avoid using a logo. A photo humanizes your business.
- **#3 Use a timesaving tool to schedule your tweets:** But also interact in real time Free and low-cost tools like Hootsuite allow you to schedule your tweets in advance so that you maintain a consistent flow of content, while saving time. People who post content on a regular basis tend to see more engagement and followers.
- **#4 Multitask and think in real-time:** Tweet when you are out in the field, but also when you are thinking about improving your business, inspirational thoughts, anywhere and anytime. The power of Twitter is the immediacy and real time speed.
- **#5 Respond to people who are interested in similar content.** When you comment on, retweet, or favorite a Twitter post, consider following users who also engaged with the post. The users will notice that you share similar interests in content and therefore be more inclined to follow you.
- **#6 Follow users who follow your followers:** Also, follow the accounts recommended by Twitter. In the #Discover section of your dashboard, Twitter recommends “Who to follow” for your account.

Messaging Ideas: Some Food Trends

Trending In	The Who, What & Why
Breakfast is back	Healthy consumers are understanding the importance of not skipping breakfast
Ethics in food production	Example, Supermarkets that pledge to sell only certified humane “cage-free” eggs
Connecting through community	Place your business within the community’s highest interest such as community supported agriculture (see case study)
Sugar as the next “tobacco”	Excessive sugar intake linked to inflammation & disease, good opportunity to position the good sugar from fruit and vegetable
Flour omission	Taking gluten-free to the next level
Whole grain rye	Insoluble fiber better for blood sugar than wheat’s soluble fiber
Cultured foods & beverages	Improved digestion & immunity from fermented foods
Vegetables take center plate	Not about eliminating meat, but letting plant-based foods shine
Botanicals trumping OTCs	Believed to have fewer side effects than pharmaceuticals
“Cold-Pressed” or HPP	The next best thing to “raw” and “unprocessed”
Premium private label	Even 7-Eleven is getting fresher by 2015
Marketing to men	Research indicates men are doing a greater share of the grocery shopping and meal preparation
Upgraded convenience	Walgreens’ UPMARKET: FRESH produce
Nutrient-dense snacking with delivery	NatureBox physically delivers nourishing snacks to your door on a monthly subscription basis
Humanely raised meat for consumption	Big on flavor, humanely raised animals are being favored by top chefs
Cleaner candy	Less additives, UNREAL candy putting better ingredients such as cacao, real caramel, and peanuts and adding more protein and fiber from real food, so that each candy has a low glycemic index
Organic, Farm-to-table, green	People wanting to live healthier, cleaner lives, war on obesity

Quick References

Facebook At-a-Glance

- **Basic Description:** Facebook is the most popular social networking site, with around 1 billion users worldwide. This platform offers more than just a way to stay connected to friends and family but essential tool in marketing. Facebook allows your business to be available to people on a trusted, popular platform, where prospects can see “real” people (their friends, family or colleagues) interacting with you and your business. This sets the stage for you to build stronger, more immediate relationships with them.
- **Use:** You can post content, video, audio, photos relevant to your target audience. Good universal platform.
- **Engagement Metrics:** # of Friends, Posts, Comments, Likes, Shares
- **How to be seen:**
 - To show up in as many users’ top newsfeeds as possible, your content must be fresh, engaging, current and compelling.
 - Your post content that gets “Likes” and comments appears in the newsfeeds of those that “Liked” and commented on earlier content, and thus exposed to their network of friends.
 - Don’t forget: as prospects interact with you through “Likes,” comments, or shares, you should be tracking engagement.
 - Visual Content is critical to sharing. People love sharing visual content, so you want to make sure that you are leveraging something that is visually stimulating.
- **Facebook Insights:**
 - **Fan Reach:** Fan (Likes to your page) reach simply corresponds to the number of fans of your Page who have seen any given post.
 - **Organic Reach:** Organic reach corresponds with the number of people, fans and non-fans, who have seen a given post. As with fan reach, organic reach only records views that are not the result of a friend of a fan’s action (which is counted in the viral reach).
 - **Engagement:** According to Facebook, with regards to post level metrics, engagement is “the number of people who clicked anywhere in your post”. This includes liking, commenting and sharing and people who’ve viewed your video or clicked on your links and photos. And it also includes people who’ve clicked on a commenter’s name, liked a comment, clicked on your Page name and even gave negative feedback by reporting your post.
 - **People Talking About This (or Storytellers):** The “People Talking About This” data in Facebook Insights is sometimes referred to as “Storytellers.” This metric is part of the engagement metric. So the number of “people talking about” a post is included in the number of people who “engaged” with that post.
 - **Click-Through Rate:** The CTR, or click-through rate, is used to measure the effectiveness of email marketing, banner advertising, search engine ads such as Adwords campaigns or landing page quality. Click-through rates tell you the number of people who have clicked on a link in your content, watched your video or viewed a larger version of your photo.
 - **Negative Feedback:** Negative feedback is a “negative” action taken by a fan on your piece of content. It can be hiding a specific post, hiding all future posts from your Page, unliking your Page or even worse, reporting it as spam. Simply put, the negative feedback metric counts the number of users who really did not like your content or the fact that it appeared in their newsfeed.
 - Go to your Facebook Insights section on your Facebook Page available after at least 30 people like your page.

Pinterest At-a-Glance

- **Basic Description:** Pinterest has over 70 million pinners, 80% are women. It is a virtual scrapbook or pinboard that allows users to share and organize visual images (photos). A user can pin anything from around the web, original photos and repins from other users' images. Users organize their Pinterest pages by categorizing content on boards. For businesses, Pinterest can be a way to posting visual content like videos, photos, and even blog posts. The boards provide a unique way of organizing content to be visually appealing to your prospect. Make sure you are including a good content mix in your Pinterest boards. Followers will want to see a combination of business and culture content. Over 80% of the pins, are repins and the #1 category of content is food related, with 57% of Pinterest users interacting with this type of content.
- **Use:** This platform is very visual as it resembles a bulletin board of pictures. The beauty of farming is ideal for this type of platform.
- **Engagement Metrics:** Pins, Repins, # of followers, comments
- **How to be seen:** Pinterest is a very visual Social Media platform
 - Create an eye-catching profile
 - Create a range of boards that showcase your business personality and taste, and make sure each board has enough Pins to make it feel substantial. Remember that people can choose which boards they want to follow, so not every board has to appeal to everyone.
 - Pin at least once a day so your followers get fresh content in their home feeds. You can tell a richer story by adding Pins from others. You could partner with, for example, bloggers and other websites to Pin their content. Your followers will appreciate the Pins, and bloggers will appreciate the referral traffic. Make sure your Pins link back to somewhere helpful, so that Pinners can have a better experience and so that you can get more referral traffic to the right places.
 - Thoughtful descriptions will make your Pins more inspiring and searchable.
 - Engage with other Pinners by follow other people's boards and repin, like and comment
- **Pinterest Analytics:** Pinterest Analytics helps you understand how Pinners are engaging with content from your site and Pins from your profile. To get Pinterest Analytics, you'll need a business account first. If you're already using a personal Pinterest account for your business, you can easily convert it to a business account. Once you have a business account, you can find Pinterest Analytics by going to your profile, clicking the gear menu then Analytics.
 - See what people love most from your Pinterest profile and website, and how much traffic your site gets when you add the "Pin It" button.
 - Profile analytics show how Pins from your profile are doing.
 - Audience analytics shows you where your audience is from, what languages they speak and gender to help you target your content better. It can also help you figure out new opportunities for your marketing.
 - Interests analytics is a visual look at what your followers are into. These subjects can give you ideas for your content strategy, helping you connect with your customers and stay relevant to more people.
 - Get the Pinterest for Business guide in the Pinterest website for more information.

Instagram At-a-Glance

- **Basic Description:** Instagram is a photo sharing app with a very active user base of approximately 100 million monthly active users and used by 67% of the top brands in the world, which merely drives home the point that this network cannot be ignored. Unlike Facebook and Pinterest, Instagram doesn't distinguish between businesses and individual users. All accounts are the same. Instagram has always been an almost exclusively mobile platform, you must have an iPhone or Android and download the app to your device in order to register an Instagram account. What makes Instagram so attractive are the seamless integration with Facebook, their specialty for posting photos making it a very visual channel, and the photo filters that enhance the colors in a photo and other effects.
- **Use:** This strength of this channel is the ability to simply upload and share beautiful images. The beauty of farming is ideal for this type of platform.
- **Engagement Metrics:** # of Followers, mentions, views, likes, comments, shares
- **How to be seen:** Consider the following objectives as you create your visual content:
 - Make it exclusive: Post images that can only be seen on Instagram.
 - Make it visually engaging: Instagram users are savvy and creative. Don't post a photo unless it has visual appeal.
 - Make it personal: Post photos of your employees at work to give viewers and potential customers' personal insight into the inner workings of your company. Viewers want to feel like they are part of something, and this inside glimpse works wonders.
 - Use the hashtag: The Instagram hashtag is a powerful feature to engage your viewers. Hashtags act as keywords providing a way for people to find photos through a simple search. Hashtags are especially useful as you seek to establish your business as a farming / grower leader and get more followers. Implement hashtags that are unique to your business (see hashtag slide) and industry, as well as hashtags that are popular keywords. And remember to use hashtags on all of your posts.
 - Engagement your audience and sharing are the primary reasons to utilize a platform such as Instagram. A few ideas are to post photos of events you are part of or are holding, use the geolocation/geotagging feature to provide yet another point of engagement with your audience, and gamification or holding a contest for your audience. Have your audience submit photos, provide captions, or solve a puzzle about your photos.

Twitter At-a-Glance

- **Basic Description:** Twitter is the first of the microblogging platforms. Twitter users are limited to 140 characters in each post they make and its strength is easy-to-use and a nearly instantaneous way to communicate. More than a half-billion people worldwide are on Twitter and is one of the 10 most popular sites on the Internet. Companies that lack a strategic, lead-generating plan of attack for their Twitter accounts are losing out on access to a huge potential customer base and the opportunity to showcase themselves as social savvy, relevant businesses. Being followed on Twitter is an incredibly strong signal of online affinity for your business. Twitter specializes in providing a platform that can disseminate good content in an easily digestible and timely format. Tweet posts are easy and quick to compose and aimed at those interested in your products.
- **Use:** News stories and breaking information, status updates from your farm, and instantly share photos of recently picked harvests available for immediate sale.
- **Engagement Metrics:** Followers, Mentions, Retweets, Retweet/reply
- **How to be seen:**
 - Make Your Tweets Engaging and Easy for a Follower to Retweet.
 - Keep tweets below 140 characters, ideally under 100 characters. It makes retweeting easier to do.
 - Use hashtags to affiliate a tweet with a certain topic and also can be useful for your campaigns and connecting with customers. Develop your own hashtags to promote a viral following for a specific topic or campaign.
 - Engage Twitter followers and influencers by including an @mention in your tweets. An easy format to follow is tweeting with a link to relevant content and then including the @mention at the end of the tweet.
 - Use Twitter during events and to promote things like contests. A great way to engage your Twitter followers is to create a contest that asks followers to contribute in some way. You want your Twitter feed to be a mix of Tweets you've created, as well as replies and retweets.
 - Follow the 4-1-1 rule for Twitter posting: for every one self-serving tweet, you should re-tweet one relevant tweet and most importantly share four pieces of relevant content written by others.
 - Follow someone relevant to your business in Twitter and more than likely, they will follow you back. It could be someone in farming, agriculture, or a customer. Be sure to also follow people that your competitors are following.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- Metrics and Effectiveness
- The Time Commitment
- Benefits of using Social Media
- How to Implement this Plan
- Is Social Media Marketing for me

Frequently Asked Questions:

How do you measure the effectiveness of Social Media?

Your results are going to depend on two key decisions made early on: the audience you are targeting and the goals you set. We covered setting Social Media goals that are MEASURABLE, ACHIEVABLE, RESULT-FOCUSED and TIME-BASED. Your success will be measured against these goals. When you feel comfortable with using the platforms, explore the analytics each offers beyond the likes, followers and interactions:

- Facebook's Insights metrics are great for showing you how successful your Social Media activity is, audience make-up, peak traffic etc. Page likes, shares and comments on your posts are also metrics to keep track of. To see your Page Insights, click Insights at the top of your Page. From here, you can view metrics about your Page by clicking the sections at the top (ex: Likes, Reach). Also, how many likes to your page, shared content, comments to your posts are a good measure of engagement.
- Twitter search your company name, this allows you to monitor your Twitter reputation by bringing up potential news, pictures and tweets that your brand has been mentioned in. When you develop a following, adding the # before your name will allow you to see all tweets that directly reference you. Followers, retweets and mentions are metrics to keep track of.
- Pinterest has an analytics dashboard is broken up into four main tabs: Site Metrics, Most Recent, Most Repinned and Most Clicked with deeper analytics for business applications. When you get familiar with the platform, the site offers a tutorial on these free tools.
- For Instagram, how many followers and likes to your posted photos are an important engagement metric.

Frequently Asked Questions:

How much Time Commitment is involved?

The time commitment is up to you. It is important to understand and identify a person or persons within your company, that will be able to post content to the business Social Media account. With timely and relevant content, a good week of Social Media contribution can take as little as 30 minutes / day or even less. The time that can be time-consuming is responding to your customers and answering in a timely manner. Be clear on your goals and engage the support of your employees. Social Media can be fun and very enlightening. Just make sure that the message, branding, and guidelines as outlined in this manual, are discussed with each collaborator.

What are the benefits of using Social Media?

Social Media is definitely a commitment but you can reap huge rewards. Among the benefits of Social Media marketing are the following:

- a) increased company recognition that over time can lead to loyalty
- b) more opportunities to interact with new customers, recent customers, and old customers
- c) free and user-friendly platforms resulting in little to no marketing costs
- d) higher conversion rates in a few distinct ways, but perhaps the most significant is its humanization element, and people like doing business with other people and not just companies
- e) Increased company reputation when consumer post positive commentaries about a company on Social Media
- f) With minimal time commitment as mentioned, it is enough to generate increased traffic and elevate your company's visibility
- g) being active in Social Media marketing elevates your company's Search Engine Rankings on the internet
- h) richer customer experiences activating customer service with every customer interaction
- i) The opportunity to understand your customers resulting in Improved customer insights

Frequently Asked Questions:

How to Implement this Plan?

Like Nike's slogan, "just do it", it is as simple as that. Do not be overwhelmed by the information and the amount of work you think is going to take. You will realize it will become second nature once you understand how to use each platform. With the use of smartphones and apps, it becomes even easier. Come to the workshops, watch the tutorials, open your Social Media accounts and start practicing, even if you feel you do not know what you are doing. Follow the guidelines outlined in this plan:

- 1) Determine your goals for using Social Media as clear as possible
- 2) Create metrics and measure how well you are doing on a regular basis
- 3) Create a daily or weekly workflow with clear objectives and strategy

Is Social Media Marketing for me?

Social Media has leveled the playing field for small businesses, by allowing access to the same resources that big companies and big brands have. The main problem is that many small business owners, perhaps like yourself, do not see the potential ROI (return on investment) for being active in social media, or simply do not invest enough resources in order to be effective and truly maximize a strong Social Media presence. On the other hand, for those small businesses who shifted more of their marketing budget from traditional marketing to Social Media and have had success, they have found Social Media marketing to be a natural way to develop leads, find marketing partners, establish thought leadership, and engage their customers. There are farming case studies that have proven that it can be done effectively. It does take the commitment to engage in a Social Media plan for a long term, given that results can be seen over time, and not immediately.

The upside to Social Media marketing is better than not doing it, even if you start with small steps. Commit to regularly taking a step back (on a monthly or quarterly basis) to see the results of your work, and regularly tweak your daily workflow so as to maximize your effectiveness. Take a strategic approach, and not just do Social Media without the plan outlined in this document. Develop specific business objectives, measuring the right things, so you can derive the maximum business value by nurturing your Social Media presence.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Why is it important for growers to learn how to market themselves, especially in social media?

If you are selling directly to the public, you need to build awareness for what you offer. What makes you different and why should customers choose you? Social media can help farmers develop a relationship with their customer base by allowing them to tell their farm's story, share experiences and communicate their value proposition. On a very practical level, social media is an affordable way to reach consumers. The margins in farming are tight, so paid media is not always an option.

What can you share in social media?

The first step is to communicate what's for sale and where people can buy it. This seems basic, but if potential customers don't know what you have to offer, and where they can get their hands on it, you won't see any lift from social media. Beyond that, every farm has a story. If customers wanted anonymous food, they'd go to the supermarket. Talk about what makes your products special, to share information about how you grow and to allow your farm's personality to shine through.

You may be brand new to social media, so your first task is to understand and set up the basic channels, like Facebook and Twitter. Identify your "voice" for your business, create a basic "editorial calendar" for posts, and understand the ways in which you can use these channels to create customer loyalty, grow awareness for their business and drive sales. The most important is to start and learn as you go.

The Golden Rules of Social Marketing

1. **Don't take yourself too seriously.** It should be obvious, but social marketing is about being social, and that means you need a good personality to make your brand likable.
2. **You must have good content and solid offers.** Without well-produced, engaging content, any and all tactics you employ will not be as effective.
3. **You need a strong call to action.** The tried-and-true, strong call to action is just as important in Social Media as it is anywhere else. Be clear about what you want your audience to do after consuming your content or engaging with your company.
4. **Always add value.** At the end of the day, if you are not providing some sort of value to your prospects and customers, you are not doing your job and Social Media will never work for you.
5. **Never forget that social is a two-way street.** When contacted, always respond quickly and sincerely. Be sure to mix up your messaging and use a combination of content and offers.
6. **Peer-to-peer sharing is the best way to get your message heard.** A good satisfied customer is your best advertising.
7. **Social Media is a commitment but can also be fun.** Each of the tactics described in this manual can work on their own, but the key is in being committed long term and to have a Social Media plan to follow.



Resources:

The workshop videos and electronic version of this manual will be hosted at:

- <http://agecon.centers.ufl.edu/Workshops.html>
- Videos can be additionally found in YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzqPdd-ZHNIMcOcrGWNl-dQ> UF/IFAS TREC Agricultural Economics
- 2014 Social Media Marketing SocialMediaExaminer.com Industry Report © 2014 Social Media

Case studies and examples will be hosted at:

- <http://agecon.centers.ufl.edu/socialmediaeng.html>
 - Massey Creek Farms in Madison, N.C
 - Clagett Farm CSA Upper Marlboro, Maryland
 - Brian Scott - The Farmer's Life
 - Knaus Berry Farm
 - Robert is Here Fruit Stand
 - Kai-Kai
 - Erickson Farm