



# CULTIVATING A STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL MEDIA SUCCESS

PCFMA was awarded a 2017 Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) grant from the USDA for a project entitled "Multi-Channel and Multi-Generational Marketing Strategies to Engage Farmers' Market Shoppers." The goal of the project is to develop best practices for using email, social media and text messaging to inform and motivate farmers' market shoppers. Ten months into the project, PCFMA has developed recommended best practices for engaging farmers' market shopper via social media. These eight steps have allowed PCFMA to increase its reach on Facebook by 82% over the past four years.

PCFMA.ORG fb.com/PCFMA

**1 GET TO KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS**  
Surveying your farmers' market customers - online via email or social media or in person at the market - is essential to knowing how best to reach those customers. PCFMA's customer survey in Fall 2017 received over 2,700 responses: 49.2% of customers are on Facebook, 38.0% use Nextdoor, 10.7% are on Instagram, and 6.3% use Twitter, while 25.6% do not use social media.

### TOP 3 UTILIZED SOCIAL MEDIA OUTLETS BY PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS



**2 CRAFT A CONTENT CALENDAR**  
Surveys can also tell you what topics are of the greatest interest to your customers. PCFMA's customers said they were most interested in learning about farmers' markets and food events in their community, recipes using seasonal produce, and food and nutrition information. This information informs the monthly content that we create and share with our customers.

### TOP 3 TOPICS BY PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS WHO WERE INTERESTED OR VERY INTERESTED



**3 DEVELOP AND SHARE YOUR CONTENT**  
Once you know what your audience says it wants, generate content in those areas and track its impact. We found our highest engagement with posts about farmers' markets, just as our customers said. But we also found more views on Facebook posts about sustainable agriculture and farmer profiles than on posts with seasonal recipes. This was a surprise as in our survey more customers said they were interested in recipes

### TOP 3 POST CONTENT TYPE BY AVERAGE AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT



**4 TRY DIFFERENT MEDIA**  
Facebook, and other social media, allow you multiple ways of delivering your message. PCFMA has found that Facebook video posts generate the most visibility and interaction, followed by text updates, photos, and then links to online content. But we also found this varies by topic: customers are more likely to respond to recipes when delivered by video, but responded more to farmer profiles when those are delivered as photos. This information allows us to prioritize our content development budget.

### TOP 3 MEDIA BY AVERAGE REACH AND ENGAGEMENT



**5 BUILD YOUR AUDIENCE**  
Marketing has a dual purpose: to motivate current customers and recruit new customers. Social media, when not paying for advertising, requires engagement by your current audience in order to reach a broader audience of potential customers. Photos and videos have proven to be the most effective at generating engagement by our current audience, which exposes our posts to our potential audience. On average 15% of our photo and video post views are by persons who don't yet like our farmers' market Facebook page.

### TOP 3 MEDIA BY PERCENT OF TOTAL REACH OF NON-PAGE FOLLOWERS



**6 AUDIENCE VS. CUSTOMERS**  
According to PCFMA's survey data, across all our farmers' markets, 76% of the customers are 45 years of age or older and are 4 times more likely to be women. Across PCFMA's 35 farmers' market Facebook pages, 58% of the audience are younger than 45 years of age and 54% of the audience are women. Recognizing differences between our customer and our audience helps us identify gaps in our outreach.



**7 TRACK AND ASSESS IMPACT**  
While Facebook provides useful insights for its pages, you can export data on your posts to do a deeper dive using simple tools in Excel or Google Sheets. PCFMA analyzed 12 months of posts - nearly 7,500 of them - from 35 farmers' market Facebook pages. Among our useful findings is which recipe sites generate the most engagement, and that posts from a farmers' market garnered 7 times more engagement than posts done at any other time. This led us to develop a training program for our market managers to help them get comfortable posting live from their farmers' market.



**8 CROSS PROMOTE ACROSS CHANNELS**  
No single outlet will reach all of your potential customers. PCFMA regularly uses social media, email and text messaging to engage directly with customers. Cross-promoting across these channels has proven effective in building our audience. To build subscriptions for our text messaging service, we recently posted about it on Facebook for two farmers' markets. The post was seen by over 500 people and within 24 hours of the post, we had more than 50 new text message subscribers. And, as part of the sign-up process for text messaging, new subscribers are asked for their email address to receive the monthly email newsletter for their farmers' market.



The Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association (PCFMA), non-profit organization founded in 1988, that operates more than 50 weekly farmers' markets in more than 35 communities of the San Francisco Bay Area. Our mission is to empower California farmers to be enormously successful in San Francisco Bay Area communities. Each of PCFMA's farmers' markets is certified by the state of California, which ensures that all of the fresh produce in each market is grown and sold by California farmers.

