

CHAPTER 2

What Does it Mean to be a Farmers Market Manager?

The market manager sets the tone and represents the market both internally to vendors and externally to shoppers and market stakeholders.





THE MARKET MANAGER'S ROLE

THE FACE OF THE MARKET AND SO MUCH MORE!

Market managers are responsible for all aspects of market operations during the season, and are the main contact for customers, vendors, volunteers, health inspectors, police, city transportation, sponsors, media and more! Responsibilities include managing vendor relationships, coordinating setup and tear-down, promoting the market, operating the SNAP program, answering customer/vendor questions, and assisting with the market's special events.



In rural communities, farmers markets are often the only place to access fresh produce. Market managers play a role in community health.

WHAT VENDORS SAY ABOUT THE MARKET MANAGER ROLE:

*"The success of the farmers market is due to the work of many people—**none more so** than the market manager."*

*"Having a manager with a wide range of skills and abilities **is a luxury.**"*

*"The market manager is the **face of the farmers** market in the community."*

*"A farmers market can be a place for **innovation and entrepreneurship**. The manager plays an exciting role in cultivating business development."*



RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MARKET MANAGER

For market managers employed by a city or chamber, the job description will likely be detailed and specific. Volunteer managers may have no job description. Regardless, the job responsibilities are similar.

Here's an example:

FARMERS MARKET MANAGER JOB DESCRIPTION

The market manager must be reliable, self-motivated, and have good communication and customer service skills. The ideal candidate will be an enthusiastic advocate of the local food movement. Specific responsibilities will be determined by the needs of the customers, market partners, and market vendors. Generally, the market manager is responsible for the following activities:

MARKET OPERATIONS

- Arrive at market 2 hours before opening to coordinate setup
- Stay at market until all vendors have left (usually no more than 1 hour after)
- Set up welcome booth tent, table, and display
- Place directional signs promoting the market around the community at key locations prior to opening on each market day; remove at the close of market
- Coordinate vendor parking/setup to ensure vendors are in the correct space
- Staff the welcome booth, provide information to customers and help run the EBT/Credit Card machine

GENERAL MARKET SUPPORT

- Develop and maintain good relationships with staff, interns, vendors, customers, and the community
- Assist vendors, community representatives, and customers by providing market-related information, conflict resolution, and general aid as appropriate
- Enforce market rules
- Vendor recruitment
- Occasionally assist vendors by providing limited setup help and brief personal breaks and by assisting vendors with sales during especially busy times

OUTREACH AND MARKETING

- Work with partners to promote the market through social media, e-newsletters, and community outreach
- Assist with development/coordination of special events

REQUIREMENTS

- Available during all market hours during the season
- Willing and able to work outside in all weather conditions
- Safely able to lift and carry at least 50 pounds

WHOSE MARKET IS IT, ANYWAY?

LET'S EXPLORE THE MANY TYPES OF MARKET MANAGER POSITIONS

Farmers market manager positions vary. Larger markets might employ a full-time, year-round director, while smaller markets rely on an unpaid, part-time, seasonal volunteer. For some managers, the market is the main focus of their job. For others, it's one of several responsibilities. Market managers may be employed by the market itself or contracted through a university program, chamber of commerce, city government or economic development agency. This handbook includes stories, insight, and advice from all types of manager positions.

Here are some of the managers you'll hear from:



CONTRACTED EMPLOYEE WITH A MAIN STREET PROGRAM

DaQuan Campbell
Waterloo Urban Farmers Market

"The market is part of Main Street Waterloo. I got connected through a program at the University of Northern Iowa. My role was funded by UNI my first year. This year, my second, I'm a contracted employee of Main Street Waterloo."



FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE OF A CITY'S PARKS & REC DEPT

Tammy Neumann
Iowa City Farmers Market

"As administrative secretary for the City of Iowa City's Parks & Recreation Department, market coordinator is part of my job. The market is a BIG portion of my job. I usually don't work the market itself since I have an assistant market manager and 3-4 day-of staff who cover market day responsibilities.



MANAGER/VENDOR TEAM AT A NONPROFIT MARKET

Nellie & Stephen Kaus
Waverly Farmers Market

"The manager before us had served in the role for three years and decided to step back. My husband and I were asked if we had interest in the role. A cooperative style of management was considered, but in the end it was the two of us. We receive a \$500 stipend for the market season."



VOLUNTEER MANAGERS AT A MONTHLY NIGHT MARKET

Andie Donnan & Danielle Stowell
Millwork Night Market

"After working and vending at the Dubuque downtown farmers market, I wanted to start a night market. I teamed up with Danielle because she owns an event planning company. We run the night market together under her company's umbrella, but we're looking into it standing on its own, perhaps as a non-profit."



CONTRACTED EMPLOYEE WITH A NONPROFIT MARKET

Steve McCargar
Decorah Farmers Market

"I started as a vendor in 1986 when the market first opened. I sold raspberries. In 2009, I was hired as the market manager, so I've been serving in that role for ten years now."



FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE OF AN ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

Jenn Draper
Cedar Rapids Downtown Farmers Market

"As the events planner for the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance, the farmers market is one of several events that I plan and manage over the course of a year."



FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE OF AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Kelly Foss
Des Moines Downtown Farmers Market

"I'm employed by the Greater Des Moines Partnership as Director of the Des Moines Downtown Farmers Market. 100% of my job is working as the farmers market manager. This is my 20th year."



VOLUNTEER MANAGER OF AN INDEPENDENT MARKET

Alice Linhart
Swisher Farmers Market

"I already had a full-time job when I volunteered to help start the Swisher market, so it wasn't about being employed. It was about being involved. I wanted to see a farmers market in town. I volunteer about 10 hours per week during market season and less over the winter."



VOLUNTEER MANAGER /VENDOR OF AN INDEPENDENT MARKET

Julie Madden
Akron Farmers Market

"When Akron's market was in danger of going away, I volunteered to take over. I wanted to be even more involved, so I soon became a vendor, too. Now, I also vend at the Hawarden market and a market in Le Mars. On top of a full-time job, the markets keep me busy!"



FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Tami Schlamp
Uptown Marion Farmers Market

"My job is Director of Member Services for the Marion Chamber of Commerce. One of my responsibilities is managing the Marion farmers market that takes place uptown."



CONTRACTED EMPLOYEE WITH A CITY'S PARKS AND REC DEPT

Dawn Ewoldt
Hiawatha Farmers Market

"I have a full-time job at Wells Fargo, but took on the opportunity to work part-time for Hiawatha's Parks & Rec Department as the farmers market manager because I love the market and I'm a people person. I just completed my third year as manager."



VOLUNTEER MANAGER OF AN INDEPENDENT MARKET

Eileen Schmidt
Urbana Farmers Market

"As the volunteer manager of the Urbana Farmers Market, I spend a minimum of 4 and up to 10-15 hours per week on market responsibilities. We also have a committee of two volunteers and two vendors who help run the market."



FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE OF A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Lojean Peterson
Ames Main Street Farmers Market

"I'm employed full-time by the Ames Chamber of Commerce to run the Ames Main Street Farmers Market. I manage all aspects of the market. We also have a team of volunteers to assist with day-of market activities like setup, tear-down, and running the information booth."



CONTRACTED EMPLOYEE OF A HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION

Alexi Groumoutis
Creston Farmers Market

"I was a local food coordinator for seven years in Southwest Iowa. This year was my first year as manager for the Creston Farmers Market. The market used to be under the umbrella of the Elks Lodge. Now, it's led by the Greater Regional Healthcare Foundation, the non-profit connected to the Greater Regional Medical Center."



FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE OF A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Kendra Vincent
Grinnell Farmers Market

"I'm an employee of the Grinnell Area Chamber of Commerce, the managing organization for the market. We also have two vendor day-of managers who receive partial compensation by having reduced market fees. The market is 1 of 16 events I lead throughout the year in addition to doing marketing for the Chamber."



VOLUNTEER MANAGER OF AN INDEPENDENT MARKET

Bob Shepherd
Washington Farmers Market

"Thirty-two years ago, I tried to become a vendor at the Washington Farmers Market. I was one of two vendors. There was no official start time. There were no customers. It was frustrating. What I heard back was: If you can do better, then go ahead. I've been volunteering as the market manager ever since, though I'm no longer a vendor."



Bluff Strokes Paint Out Event
Dubuque Farmers Market

IT'S MORE THAN JUST A MARKET

HOW TO BUILD COMMUNITY AROUND YOUR FARMERS MARKET

At its heart, the farmers market is a place to buy and sell fresh, healthy, local foods. But in many communities, it's much more than that. Markets provide opportunities for collaboration between residents, vendors, volunteers, and local businesses and organizations. Markets began as a way to do business, but have evolved into a way to connect people with their communities, food producers, and the land that surrounds them.

We've gathered some of the ways that Iowa markets are collaborating and connecting within their communities.

Market Connects with Businesses to Create a Rewards Card Program

COLLEGE HILL FARMERS MARKET

CEDAR FALLS, IOWA

When College Hill Farmers Market vendors brought up that they were not seeing many return customers, market manager Jodie Huegerich came up with a collaborative, affordable solution to encourage market visitors to come back.

She connected with local businesses on College Hill to implement a rewards card program at the market that helped everyone—vendors, businesses, and customers—without reducing vendor income.

Here's how it works:

Customers pick up a free punch card at the market. Every vendor has a stack of cards and puncher. For each \$3 spent at the market, the card gets a punch. When \$21 is spent (filling up the card's seven punches), the card can be redeemed at a participating business for a special offer. Some of the deals included 50% off one dozen donuts, a free appetizer, or a \$1 beverage discount.

Takeaway Ideas:

Give participating businesses something in return. College Hill businesses receive a window cling and advertising through the farmers market's newsletter, social media, and word of mouth.

Consider your visitors. By keeping each punch at just \$3, College Hill Farmers Market's rewards are both achievable for and appealing to university students living in the College Hill area.



Kids Discover the “Power of Produce” at the Rock Rapids Farmers Market

ROCK RAPIDS FARMERS MARKET

ROCK RAPIDS, IOWA

Today's kids are tomorrow's farmers market shoppers, vendors, and managers. And through Power of Produce (PoP) Club, the children in Rock Rapids have a head start on learning what a farmers market is all about.

Power of Produce (PoP) Club is a farmers market-based program that encourages children aged 4-12 to try new vegetables, learn about growing and eating vegetables, meet their local farmers market vendors, and have fun at the market.

Lyon County ISU Extension in Rock Rapids has been implementing PoP Club at the Rock Rapids Farmers Market for three years. Dawn Henderson, Horticulture Program Coordinator, says that the program **“has had phenomenal response with the kids, parents, and vendors.”** Through the Rising Star program, Henderson has college interns in the summer who help run the program.

Each week, children can come to the market to do an activity with the PoP Club volunteer or staff member. After being introduced to a new vegetable, the kids



answer a few questions, and receive a \$2 token to spend on fresh fruits and vegetables at the market. Participating vendors then return the token to the PoP Club staff to be reimbursed.

Henderson says that it doesn't just benefit produce vendors. **“One vendor wrote in our annual survey that—even though she sells baked goods—she saw an increase in sales because more people were there buying her baked goods in addition to produce.”**

Want PoP Club At Your Market?

Budget for it. Minnesota Extension suggests that markets budget \$500-\$3,000 to run the PoP Club program, depending on participation levels, number of weeks the club is operated, and amount of paid staff and/or unpaid volunteer time needed to operate the program.

Find a partner. The Rock Rapids Farmers Market is operated by the local chamber, but the PoP Club is entirely facilitated by Lyon County ISU Extension. As a market manager, consider who you could partner with in your community to operate the PoP Club program.

Get the toolkit:

It is available for free on Minnesota Extension's website:

<https://extension.umn.edu/local-foods/power-produce-pop-club>

Local School Kids Design Posters for the Grinnell Farmers Market

GRINNELL FARMERS MARKET

GRINNELL, IOWA

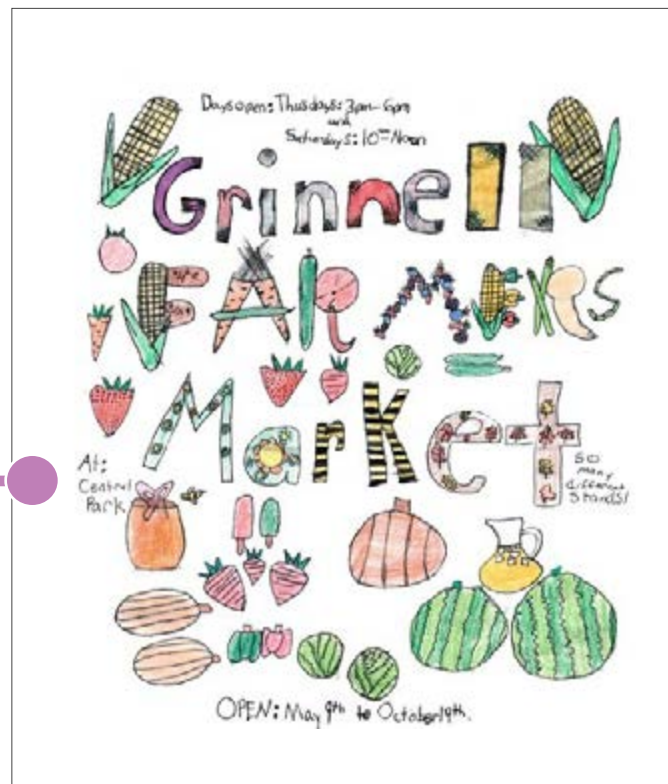
In 2018, Kendra Vincent (manager of the Grinnell Farmers Market) and her team had been brainstorming ways to get more involved in the community and with kids. Inspired by the National Farmers Market Coalition's poster contest, they decided to hold their own poster contest—and invite the local elementary schools to help.

"The first year, we set up meetings with principals and art teachers to talk about what we were trying to do. It was received really well," says Kendra. "Next, our market staff visited the schools to read to classes, talk to students about what a farmers market is, and hand out the poster sheets for students to draw on."

That year, Kendra picked up 75 entries. One winner was chosen from each grade level from each of the three elementary schools. Each winner received a \$10 gift card to the farmers market. Kendra also turned the winning artwork into posters by doing a hi-res scan and placing the image onto a template that included the student's first name only, grade, school, and farmers market details, dates, and times. She made ten copies of each of the posters, which were then hung around town to promote the market season.

In 2019, the poster contest received a whopping 175 entries. Once again, the artwork was narrowed down to winners who received two \$5 tokens for the farmers market. And with so much creative work from local students, Kendra arranged to have all the entries displayed in one school's community room for people to stop and see all summer long.

Both years, Kendra also submitted all the poster entries to the National Farmers Market Coalition poster contest.



How the contest inspired mini farmers markets at a local elementary. "The first year of our poster contest went so well and everyone loved it so much that it inspired additional collaboration opportunities with our local schools," says Kendra, "Each fall, several of our farmers get together and work with the local ISU extension to host a mini farmers market at one of the schools. The students love it."

Recognizing vendors on poster designs. "It was cool to see the change in posters between year one and year two as kids became more familiar with the farmers market," Kendra says. "The first year, there were some posters with pineapples and oranges—things we don't sell at the Iowa markets. The next year, kids drew the man that sells lemonade and the truck that brings the apples. It was fun for specific vendors to be identified in some of the posters."



The kids were drawing their posters six months after the market season. They remembered what they saw at the market and drew that when they created their artwork.

BUILD COMMUNITY AROUND YOUR FARMERS MARKET

FAMILY-FRIENDLY FUN EVERY MONTH

CORALVILLE FARMERS MARKET - CORALVILLE, IOWA

Once a month, the Coralville Farmers Market puts up a bouncy house and puts on Kids' Day at the Market by partnering with local businesses and organizations including balloon artists, the children's museum, storytellers and puppets, and kid-friendly musicians.

A TAIL WAGGIN' GOOD TIME

MUSCATINE FARMERS MARKET - MUSCATINE, IOWA

The Muscatine Farmers Market often partners with local organizations and non-profits to host their special events at the market as it increases attendance for both parties. The market hosted a "Dog Flash Mob" for people to bring their furry friends and show support for animal welfare.

WATERLOO CENTER FOR THE ARTS BRINGS KID-FRIENDLY ART ACTIVITIES AND "MIMOSAS & MASTERPIECES"

WATERLOO URBAN FARMERS MARKET - WATERLOO, IOWA

Being family-friendly and supporting local arts and culture is a top priority for the Waterloo Urban Farmers Market, making for a great partnership with the Waterloo Center for the Arts. Each week, the arts center has a space dedicated to connecting with market-goers and facilitating art activities with kids and families.

Once a month, adults can register for "Mimosas & Masterpieces," a \$15 outdoor painting workshop that includes an instructor-led painting project, all supplies, and a refreshing champagne and orange juice cocktail.



FIT FOR THE MARKET

FREIGHT HOUSE FARMERS MARKET - DAVENPORT, IOWA

Freight House partners with local yoga studios and running clubs to host yoga sessions and begin/end runs at the farmers market.

QUAD CITIES CHEFS DEMONSTRATE HOW TO "COOK WHAT OUR FARMERS GROW"

FREIGHT HOUSE FARMERS MARKET - DAVENPORT, IOWA

Through its new "Chef in the Market" program, Freight House invites local chefs to share their culinary skills with the farmers market. Each Saturday, a different Quad Cities chef takes over the Chef's Tent. All the chefs shop for fresh, seasonal, local produce from the farmers market vendors, then do cooking demonstrations and tastings for market-goers. Recipes are posted to the farmers market's website for market-goers to recreate at home.

Made possible thanks to a sponsorship from the Regional Development Authority, the program connects local chefs to farmers, vendors, and market shoppers.





LIVE MUSIC + LOTS OF SEATING

AMES MAIN STREET FARMERS MARKET - AMES, IOWA

For many market-goers, the farmers market isn't just a place to shop. It's a space to socialize and connect within their community. While there are already benches throughout downtown Ames, market manager Lojean Peterson adds tables and chairs all down the street where the market is held—giving people a spot to sit down with their coffee and prepared foods, chat with each other, and enjoy the performances of local musicians who play at each market.

MARKET-FRESH PIZZA TO-GO

WATERLOO URBAN FARMERS MARKET - WATERLOO, IOWA

The Waterloo Urban Farmers Market partnered with local restaurant Basal to deliver freshly made pizzas. Market-goers order pizzas at the restaurant's stall, then the pizzas are delivered to the stall via bike.

MORE IDEAS FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:

1. Give a booth to a local nonprofit that can contribute something to your market—like an animal shelter bringing a few adoptable dogs or another organization selling merchandise to raise funds.
2. Partner with a group focused on food or environment. After each Iowa City Farmers Market, local non-profit Table to Table walks through and vendors can donate any produce that they would otherwise compost. Other markets work with local schools' environmental groups so that they can collect compost materials.
3. Develop an ambassador group made up of your most supportive community members. They can help build connections, give feedback, organize events and fundraisers, and promote the market.
4. Invite a community theatre to perform a teaser of their summer play, a local author to do a short reading, or museum to facilitate an activity related to a new exhibit.
5. Collaborate with county conservation on a campfire skillet-cooking demo using locally grown produce.
6. Stay active during the off-season. Hold a pre- and post-season meeting with vendors, then organize an off-season potluck or training. If you have ambassadors or a committee, check in with them face-to-face, too. The connections you nurture in the off-season will help build your market community for the busy season.

SPECIAL EVENTS ARE A GREAT WAY TO BUILD COMMUNITY, TOO! CHECK OUT OUR "SPECIAL EVENTS" SECTION ON PAGES 72 -77 FOR IDEAS AND TIPS.

NEW MANAGER AT A NEW MARKET

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCH A NEW MARKET

As a new manager starting a new market, it can be hard to know where to begin. This sample timeline lays out a suggested order for the many tasks required to launch a market. Certain to-dos need to be completed before others can happen. For example: you'll want to set your market schedule before you lock in vendors—to ensure the vendors will be available during your days and times. Keep in mind that this timeline is based on a 9-12 month period. If you have less time to plan and prepare, the tasks will need to be condensed into a tighter timeframe.



9-12 MONTHS OUT

- Research other nearby markets (online and in-person)
- Talk to vendors and other market managers in the area
- Identify local community partners
- Talk with future customers about what they want
- Research the history of your farmers market



6-9 MONTHS OUT

- Select and reserve the location
- Set the schedule (season/months, days, times)
- Decide on your market business structure
- Secure local partnerships
- Recruit vendors
- Form a market committee



3-6 MONTHS OUT

- Finalize all your permits, insurance, and legal documents
- Start promoting your farmers market
- Create your branding and marketing materials
- Register with IDALS
- Develop your market rules and guidelines
- Create an emergency plan and weather policy
- Start fundraising and secure sponsors
- Plan special events for your market



OPENING DAY - 3 MONTHS OUT

- Create the market layout
- Enlist volunteers and identify tasks
- Ramp up marketing efforts
- Schedule and carry out vendor meetings
- Design market signage and maps
- Create a master contact list
- Get on every local events calendar



DAY/WEEK OF THE MARKET

- Communicate with vendors, volunteers, and partners
- Confirm attendance of vendors and volunteers
- Make sure you're available for all questions
- CELEBRATE OPENING DAY!
- Start collecting vendor payments/dues



ONGOING THINGS TO DO AFTER LAUNCH

- Continue implementing your marketing plan
- Be ready for troubleshooting
- Keep track of market metrics
- Communicate with vendors, volunteers, and partners.
- Ensure market safety and market rules are enforced.
- Attend every market (be the first there, and last to leave)

ADVICE FROM MANAGERS WHO HAVE HELPED LAUNCH NEW MARKETS



01 FIGURE OUT IF STARTING A NEW MARKET IS FEASIBLE

"Do your research. Somehow, you need to ask or figure out if the community wants a farmers market. Is there going to be customer support? Find out what those customers want. Then find your vendors to provide it. It does no good to have vendors selling cupcakes if the customers want carrots. It's an ongoing thing. One of the coolest things I've seen at a market is a weekly question, like 'What did you come here looking for this week?' The answers change week to week and give you feedback to share with vendors as to what they can produce."

Julie Grunklee, Former Manager of Grundy County Farmers Market (2004) and Cedar Falls Main Street Farmers Market (2006)



02 THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX WHEN LOOKING FOR A LOCATION

"When we got started, there hadn't been a market in Le Mars for ten years. We spent a lot of time researching where to locate the market. Kathy, owner of the Cork It liquor store offered us the field behind her shop for free. She has a heart for the Le Mars community and wants to help small businesses because she has one. Vendors can pull in and have their vehicle next to their stand. There's lots of parking. At first, we were concerned about it not being very visible from the main highway. But in our experience, it hasn't hurt us to be off the beaten path. Putting the market in her field was the best thing we could have done. Since starting, we've tripled in size both in vendors and customers."

Nikki Decker, Manager of Le Mars Farmers Market



03 BALANCE INVESTMENT WITH GOALS

"There are always pros and cons to volunteering your time. Some people may not put as much effort into it if they're not making money at it. But when I volunteered to help, I was already working a full-time job so it wasn't about making the money. I wanted to see something like a farmers market or community garden in Swisher. That's why I wanted to be involved. I think because it's a smaller market—and we knew it was never going to be a Cedar Rapids-sized market—we didn't really feel like we needed to pay anybody to do it. Because it's a smaller market, it takes less time to run. We're happy with our market's current size, so we don't feel like we need to dedicate more time to it."

Alice Linhart, Manager of Swisher Farmers Market



04 FIND THE RIGHT PLACE AND STICK WITH IT

"It's critical to identify the best place for your farmers market and then have continuity. Our first year was in a cute little park, but there was no parking. Then we moved to a field for a few years, but that parcel of land was eventually sold. So finally we moved to downtown Beaverdale, which is where we'd always wanted to be. I wish we'd moved to the downtown location sooner. I still have people think we're at our old location."

Jane Gasperi, Manager of Beaverdale Farmers Market

NEW MANAGER AT AN OLD MARKET

HOW TO TAKE THE LEAD AT AN EXISTING MARKET

HIGH PRIORITY

Talking and Listening

- Meet with the previous farmers market manager
- Get a full description of your job duties
- Understand your role at the market
- Visit other nearby farmers markets
- Get to know other market managers in the area
- Hold a meeting with previous/existing vendors
- Reach out individually to customers

Analyzing Your Resources

- Locate marketing materials
- Learn how to use the payment system
- Get social media and email login information
- Check on permits, insurance, and licenses
- Find the market map or existing vendor layout
- Read through and update your rules/regulations
- Repair and replace market supplies, if needed
- Make sure information on website is up-to-date

MEDIUM PRIORITY

Arranging for Extra Help

- Find volunteers to help with day-of tasks
- Form a support team (vendors, partners, friends)

Sending Surveys

- Send a year-end survey to vendors to collect feedback from the past year for future events and other market improvements for next season.

LOW PRIORITY

Making Big Changes

Take the first year to figure out how the market works. Avoid knee jerk reactions and changes based on feeling pressured. Be strategic about the changes you do make. In many cases, it will be wise to wait until you have a year of experience under your belt before making adjustments to the market.

Branding and Logos

For the first year, your time and energy should be focused on having conversations, building relationships, and figuring out how to run the market. Even if you don't love the existing logo or branding, you can still work with it. Save these types of changes for the off-season or next year when you have a better grasp on your role and the market as a whole.



I wanted it to be perfect my first year, and then came to the realization that it wasn't going to be perfect and that's okay. There will be learning curves. DaQuan Campbell, Waterloo Urban Farmers Market

ADVICE FROM MANAGERS WHO HAVE TAKEN THE REINS OF OLD MARKETS



01 THERE'S A LEARNING CURVE AND THAT'S OKAY

"The most helpful thing for me was building relationships with vendors—especially those long-term vendors who know the market in and out. Get their feedback. Then, make sure they feel like their input is valued and that they are on-board with the direction of the market. We hosted two vendor meetings in the off-season for vendors to voice their opinions, ask questions, share concerns, and say anything they need to get off their chest. Once you create that open dialogue, make sure you are maintaining that communication."

DaQuan Campbell, Manager of Waterloo Urban Farmers Market



02 SCALE THINGS TO FIT YOUR MARKET AND BUDGET

"The Akron Farmers Market has probably been in existence since the 1960s or so, and it had always been a Chamber-sponsored event. But the chamber was going to stop operating it four years ago when I was Chamber president so I took it over with two other Chamber members. One of the first things I did was go to larger markets like the Sioux City Farmers Market. I copied what bigger markets were doing, but on a smaller scale. Sioux City has entertainment they probably pay for. We now have entertainment at the Akron Market, too, but we don't pay for it. If there's a local band that wants to get started, we'll let them play. Sometimes the high school choir performs."

Julie Madden, Manager of Akron Farmers Market



03 YOU IMPACT MORE THAN JUST THE MARKET

"The hardest part was that I was the one driving change. There was a way things had always been done. It took time, but I finally let myself realize: I am here and I am working for the people. And 98% of those people understood and wanted to see change. There will always be a few who don't understand or who are just okay with mediocrity. But the goal for me was getting people to understand that we're bigger than just the farmers market. We're an integral part of the city and we have a responsibility to think about businesses and the community and make changes that benefit everyone. And when you do that, good things come your way."

Lorrie Beaman, Manager of Freight House Farmers Market



04 SHOW GRATITUDE

"There are so many people who contribute to a successful market. Identify and show gratitude to your supporters, your vendors, your volunteers, and your sponsors. The women who started the Atlantic market have already accomplished a lot and have extensive networks in the community. I'm able to be a good manager because a lot of hard work happened before me. My first year has been learning, relationship building, and providing consistency and continuity for the good strategies already in place."

Brigham Hoegh, Manager of Atlantic Farmers Market

WHAT YOUR VENDORS WISH YOU KNEW...

WE ASKED, VENDORS ANSWERED

...ABOUT WHAT A FARMERS MARKET TRULY IS

"Don't forget the 'farm' in 'farmers market.' If you're going to call it a farmers market, make sure that farm-fresh products and seasonal produce are a priority. When a customer goes to a farmers market, it's expected that they'll get to buy from local growers."

...ABOUT PRODUCTS

"Certain products need shade for different reasons. Some need it because it's a food safety issue. Others need it because the quality of their product is directly impacted by the sun. Chocolates and candles melt. The quality of greens and delicate produce is quickly affected. Everyone wants to be in the shade, but the priority needs to be on the product."

"I appreciate when market managers get to know vendors and the products we sell so they are better informed when customers ask about products sold at the market."

...ABOUT COMMUNICATION

"The best managers make sure to listen to vendor and customer feedback. Being able to make someone feel like they're heard is important. It is equally important to keep your response to feedback in line with market goals. Keep it professional!"

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While the market itself may last only a few hours, farmers have spent days harvesting, cleaning, and packing. On market day, more time is spent loading, driving, and setting up. When all of that is taken into consideration, it's hard to turn a profit if the market isn't well-attended. It's so important to have a market manager that pulls out all the stops to make sure the market is a well-advertised, fun atmosphere that people don't want to miss! The more customers that show up, the more vendors that will be able to commit to attending consistently.

