

Wolfville Farmers' Market



Vision and Mission

Vision:

To better the health and vibrancy of our communities!

Mission:

To provide a fair and direct market venue for locally-produced goods and services in an environment that inspires and nourishes community.

The Organization

- The Wolfville Farmers' Market is a Not-for-Profit Cooperative
 - Board made up of 7 Member Vendors
 - Membership made up of 49 Vendors (60% are Primary Producers)
 - Market Managed by Market Manager

Historical Highlights

1992 Started with three vendors

2001 Hired Market Coord

2004 Vendors went through strategic Planning exercise: identified vision, mission, values and that the greatest barrier to their growth as Vendors was the lack of a permanent structure to call home

2004 Extended season (May -Dec); developed 5 major committees including a Promotions Committee

2006 Extended season to Year-Round, started holding major events.

Historical Highlights

2006 Market Coord became Manager and Board became a Policy Board and committees dissolved.

2007 Started building a Market Team (event planner, info booth coordinator, graphic designer....

Started applying for grants (Dept of tourism, Dept of agriculture, Municipality, Town)

A new event: Seedy Saturday

2009 A new annual event: Valley Vineyards

2010 A 20-year lease negotiated at DeWolfe

2011 moving in in a month.

Strategy 1: Value Collective Wisdom

Get the long term vibe of your organization by doing Strategic Planning every few years and annual goal setting; taking the opportunity to discuss 5 year plan and goals for subsequent year with Board and Vendors. The benefit of this is of course you will benefit from the collective wisdom in your organization; and you will be able to move forward through the operational planning process with confidence and feeling the support of the organization.

Strategy 2: Choose to Grow

You have vendors, customers and an organization and perhaps staff and/or volunteers. I like to identify at least one thing that I can do to improve service to each group: the organization, the vendors, the customers and now the staff team. Do your policies need to be reviewed? do you want to offer one more event, is it in the services you deliver to the vendors, are you trying to fill a product gap, is it to build your facebook presence.

Strategy 3: Operational Planning:

Yearly, Monthly, Weekly

I start with a yearly plan. In addition to the basic operation, there is a season for brainstorming (with your vendors or staff or volunteers) a season for making decisions, budgeting and planning; a season for reporting and assessing in preparation for the AGM; grant writing season, and major events have their own planning cycle. Every month I have a task list on Google Docs which identifies who in our organization is responsible for what and when and when it is done. And every Sunday night, I plan my week often with a glass of local red wine.

Strategy 4: Leverage Word of Mouth

Music, Events, Activities, change every month and give you a good excuse to communicate with your customers and the media (and for them to communicate with their friends about you). Instead of once a season now you can do these things minimally, monthly: posters, e-news, website updates, facebook, twitter. Growing your e-subscribers through events...every event need have a raffle and the main purpose of the raffle is to get email addresses.

Strategy 5:

Lure

Events and activities are meant to lure new people to your market. While there you need to impress them and get their email address or get them signed on to your facebook page so you can keep communicating with them. Choose to do events based on your vendor strengths and where possible, to benefit from free promotion, make events part of larger annual festivals being promoted in your community...Town events, Fall Festivals, ...all of our major events are part of a larger festival/event....these festivals have their own promo budgets and staff.

Strategy 6: Convert

Our info booth coordinator has been tasked to turn coffee drinkers into shoppers by being welcoming and informative and engaging people in deeper conversations about their local eating, cooking and decision making habits and barriers to change. We have held a buy local challenge and developed educational info specific to our market which gives a little deeper appreciation for the value of our local products. Through research about changing peoples behaviours, we developed our demo series. Short bursts of person to person skill building.

Strategy 7: Be Opportunistic

Seek partner organizations like educational institutions (rec management, cooking, horticulture, nutrition), not-for-profits (slowfood), government (public health) ...people who can benefit from the positive exposure and education you can offer them. Ask them to deliver service to your customers while achievng their own goals (getting a shared message out about healthy eating for example)

Strategy 8: Taking good care of your Vendors

They matter and they are smart! We have an annual vendor day which includes brainstorming, training for them, updates, and a chance for them to build their own relationships. We have also started an annual Vendor Orientation to share policies and introduce them to our culture. For important matters like policy development involve them, keep them informed, be transparent. Receive and distill and do something with all feedback. If they are intimidated by you, be happy when they communicate directly with a Board member.

Strategy 9: Board and Manager

Make sure the Board isn't doing your work. And don't do theirs (a waste of your valuable time). If the Board doesn't know its job, figure out how they can get Board training. This seems to be something there are always grants around for.

Strategy 10: Build a Team on People's Passions

You cannot do all of this alone. People love the market, and I have found skilled people willing to work for 10hrs/month for a reduced fee as a side gig for them (Graphic Designer, Webmaster, Bookkeeper). I like this because ensures skills, and consistency and also means that you have a team and get to work with a group ...more people, more ideas. I hold monthly staff meetings which function as a brainstorming, feedback and task management tool.

Strategy 11: Love

Love your work, love the people you are working with, love yourself, love your community, love your organization, love the products they grow and make with their hands.

It all matters. What you are doing matters.

Love.