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Tips for Maximizing the Time and Money you Spend on Marketing Your Ag Business

2020 Agriculture Direct Marketing Summit

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Creating a Basic Marketing Plan

Questions to Ask Yourself About Your Business

You probably already intuitively know these things, but they need to be down in black and white

- What do we do?
- What are our company values?
- What sets us apart from other businesses in the same space?
- What do we do better than anyone else?

Questions to Ask About Your Customer

- Who is my ideal customer?
- What is important to them?
- What motivates them to act?
- Where do they spend their time? Online and physically?

Consider Your Competitors


- What are my competitors in this space doing?
 - An hour's worth of research can give you a pretty decent picture of what's happening out there.

Language

- Develop your elevator speech
- What are the key points I want to express in every communication?
 - Could be your mission statement, an objective, a collection of phrases or paragraphs

Collect all of these these things over time in a Word document, in a notebook, post-it-notes on your wall – refer back often.



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Tips for Spending Less Time Making Content and Assets

Every time you engage in a marketing activity – make an asset, host an event, post on social media...

- Who is my target? (HINT – they should be that ideal customer)
- Where does this need to be so they are most likely are they to see this message? – THIS WILL DRIVE HOW YOU DECIDE WHAT YOU’RE MAKING
- How does this make it easier for them to take the action I want them to take?
- How will I measure how effective this is?
- What is my ROI? Cost per lead? Cost per conversion?
- How does this fit into my plan?
- How can I reuse this?
 - Laminate
 - Remove the date

Tools


Get organized


- Evernote
 - App for notetaking, organize into folders, can sync across devices
 - Free, with paid premium options
- LastPass
 - securely keeps passwords and other information.
 - Free, with paid premium options
- Pinterest boards
 - a good way to organize visual material – you can make secret boards and share with collaborators
 - Free
- Excel spreadsheet
 - use different tabs to keep track of different things
- Physical file

Pictures

- Set up your camera to take the best pictures possible
 - Grid
 - Touch to focus
 - Turn off flash
 - NOT USE ZOOM
- Keep Your Pictures Organized
 - Google Photos – automatically upload, intuitive search, organized by date



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- Free, unlimited storage
- Stock photos and graphics
 - Do not just Google and use any picture that comes up. On the Google Images tabs, click Tools, then look for photos with Creative Commons license
 - Pexels
 - UnSplash
 - Creative Commons
 - Flickr – set to “commercial use and mods allowed”

Social media

- Canva
 - create correctly sized graphics for social media, or print
 - lots of premade templates to make your work faster
 - Free, premium options available
- Adobe Spark Video maker
 - Make short videos – good for social media
 - Free, additional tools available for a fee
 - Free video editor at <https://spark.adobe.com/make/video-maker/>
- In-app scheduling tools
 - You can schedule your Facebook and Instagram Business account posts through Facebook Publishing Tools
 - Access from Publishing Tools link on your Facebook page (desktop)


Email marketing

- MailChimp – free up to 1,000 contacts
- Constant Contact – Minimum \$20/month, pricing based on number of contacts

Printing - Start with a high-quality file to get the best possible result

- Local Print Shop
 - Best option for repeat business
- Staples/FedEx
 - Fast, sometime the least expensive option
 - Use Staples blueprint printing for cheap oversized prints
- YouPrint, VistaPrint
 - Inexpensive, reliable, good quality
 - Wide variety of printed materials
 - Watch out for shipping costs
- Sticker Mule
 - Inexpensive, reliable, good quality
 - Fast
 - Sign up for their emails and watch for deal



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Direct Mail

- Local print shops often offer bulk mailing service
- Don't underestimate the power of a thank-you note

Websites

- Wordpress
 - Most complex to set up, but most options
- GoDaddy
 - Domain registration, email
 - Good because it's been around forever
 - Great customer service
 - Not great for hosting your website (can be slow)
- SiteGround
 - Great web hosting
 - Fairly inexpensive
 - Great customer service
- Squarespace, Weebly, Wix
 - Easy to get your website up and going
 - Easy to update


Physical things – banners, signs, merchandise

- Your local print shop/local vendors
 - Go local for merchandise – saves on shipping
- Uline
 - good for packaging – boxes, bags, tins
- Anything Display
 - inexpensive, good customer service

Data / Analytics

- Google analytics
 - In-depth analysis of your website
 - Free
 - Can be very complex and hard to understand
- Google alerts
 - A roundup of content on the web related to your chosen keywords
 - Can select how frequently you receive emails
 - Free
- Social media
 - For basic analysis, use in-app analytics
 - Must have a Facebook Page/Instagram business account



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- Access analytics in app
 - Analytics.twitter.com
- Surveys – customers, employees
 - Google Forms - Free
 - Survey Monkey, Alchemer – Free, paid premium options
 - Just ask!

How to Decide Whether to Hire a Pro (and some tips if you do)

Making the decision

- Cost of your time vs. cost of hiring a professional
- Is this a core part of my plan?
- Will this be an evergreen item?

Making the hire

- Get very clear on exactly what you want.
- Find someone who is a good fit for you and the job.
- Take the time to really talk before you commit
- Be clear and realistic about the timeline
 - Set firm dates for a first draft, final
 - Give a long lead-up
- Get a proposal in writing
 - Deliverables
 - Due Dates
 - Cost

Getting the Result you Want

- Be as detailed as possible about your project
 - Examples
- Gather anything you need to provide in advance or as quickly as possible
- Communicate regularly, clearly, and in writing
- Understand the revision process
- Be sure it's right before you give final approval

Getting Just a Little More

- Ask for their input
- Ask for a style guide – colors, fonts, etc. used
- Ask if it can be put into a format you can update