

*Promoting today's farming innovations...
 Ensuring tomorrow's family farms.*

Survey results ready in June!

Those much-anticipated MSU/NAFDMA survey reports are just days away...

Do you remember filling out that survey last July and August? It was a major effort by NAFDMA to gain a better understanding of the farm direct marketing industry across the continent. Over a thousand farm direct marketing operators completed the Web-based survey. The results range from no brainers to intriguing, to staggering myth defying revelations.

The survey was made successful through a partnership between NAFDMA and Michigan State University. The personnel at NAFDMA's Management

Company and MSU's Recreation Industries Research Center teamed up to accomplish the first ever benchmark survey of its kind.

Many of the myths of farm direct marketing were discussed at the NAFDMA convention this past January in Texas. Ed Mahoney and Brent Warner held the attention of the crowd with numbers and interpretations. The duo gave an amazing review of the vast array of information gained from preliminary analysis with support from survey team members Charlie Touchette,

Carla Barbieri and Virginia Schwarzenbach. If the standing ovation in Texas was any indication, then the reports made available next month will be the talk of the agriculture world.

Farmers will use the information to speak more knowingly with town planners on the impact farm direct marketing and agritourism have on local economies and job creation. Urban planners will better understand the value of farmers' markets to bridge economic and cultural gaps between rural and urban communities. Policy makers will see for themselves that agritourism, on-farm retail, and farmers' markets provide far greater solutions for our agricultural policy challenges than ever imagined.

For all of us who are already involved in farm direct marketing, we'll clearly recognize how much every operator has in common with each

other, whether we are running an entertainment farm, pushing pick-your-own, retailing value added at the farm gate, or selling at farmers' markets. In fact, we are very diversified. An amazingly high percentage of us are engaged in two, three or even four direct marketing and agritourism venues simultaneously. And over half of us are still engaged in wholesale marketing activities as an element of the complex diversified marketing strategies used to manage our farming operations.

Executive summaries and all the results of the survey will be available exclusively on the NAFDMA Web site beginning in mid June. Go to www.nafdma.com to study them and share them. The information will be available to the public, and you'll want folks to see for themselves the benefits you provide to your rural, suburban and urban communities.

Here's an idea...



The safest way for kids to get up close to the wrong end of a horse. This ag education idea (a mural with a real tail) comes from the Bar U, an Alberta ranch that will be a stop on our upcoming 2007 Bus Tour.

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A "scandalous" marketing idea?

Lessons from Kellogg's Corn Flakes

In March, a newspaper article caught my eye. I find it interesting to read about the history of products like Kellogg's Corn Flakes, and this article gave plenty of history. It was promoting a new cookbook, *The Kellogg's Cookbook: 200 Classic Recipes for Today's Kitchen*. It turns out, Kellogg's Corn Flakes are now 100 years old.

Like so many products, the corn flake was the result of an accident. Helen Bryant Anders writes in her article:

"In the 1890s, John Harvey Kellogg was superintendent of a sanitarium in Battle Creek, Mich., where he and his brother, W. Keith Kellogg, were working to develop healthy cereal for the patients.

"One day, Keith accidentally left a pot of boiled wheat sitting around, and it got stale. The Kelloggs tried to roll it into sheets, but it would up drying into stiff little flakes. Hmm.

"They repeated the process with other grains, including corn. Corn worked out pretty well."

And so began the Battle Creek Toasted Corn Flake Co., now known as Kellogg Co. That was in 1906. Here's where their marketing strategy gets interesting.



In 1908, the company launched a somewhat risqué, somewhat scandalous marketing campaign. The slogan was "Give a Grocer a Wink! And See What You'll Get — K-T-C." So for a wink at the grocer, customers were given a free sample of Kellogg's Toasted Corn Flakes.

Can you imagine your customers coming in, winking and getting a free apple or product sample? How about humming or singing your radio jingle for 5 percent off their bill?

I'm sure you can think of lots of ways to have fun with your marketing program.

W.K. Kellogg did a lot of interesting things to promote his company. One way that he found to compete with the 42 other cereal companies in Battle Creek was to put "The Original" on his packaging.

Can you make such a claim in your neighborhood?

Visit www.kellogg100.com to read more.

Grow West
Alberta 2007

Awards and contests overhaul

NAFDMA's annual awards have been overhauled to make them easier to enter and more exciting, and we've added two new contests, too!

NAFDMA has overhauled its annual awards program to make it easier to enter and to provide more learning opportunities for everyone involved. The changes affect the Farm Direct Marketer of the Year and Farmers' Market Manager of the Year awards.

Nominations

The process begins with nominations. You can nominate a peer or yourself for the Farm Direct Marketer of the Year or Farmers' Market Manager of the Year award. Use the ballot in this issue, or go to www.nafdma.com to nominate.

If you've been nominated...

Nominees for both awards will be asked to answer some questions via an on-line form. Your answers to these questions will be used by the three judges to narrow down the field of nominees to the Final 3.

If you're one of the Final 3...

The Top 3 finalists for both awards will benefit from some autumn publicity.

The NAFDMA office will ask you for your media list and will issue a press release to your local and national media promoting this honor.

During the fall and winter, you'll have time to prepare for final judging.

Final judging requirements have changed...

The Final 3 will be asked to do three things:

- 1) Prepare a 3- to 5-page handout for inclusion in the Conference Digest.
- 2) Prepare some items for a small tabletop display at the conference (it will be fairly simple and will include copies of marketing materials, such as a press release and/or newsletter)

3) Deliver a 15- to 20-minute presentation during the Final 3 general session on Friday of the conference.

The Farm Direct Marketer of the Year and Farmers' Market Manager of the Year awards will be held during two concurrent general sessions on Friday during the conference. This is designed to showcase NAFDMA's best of the best.

The audience at these general sessions will help choose the winner. The audience vote will count for one-third of the total score. You must attend the session to vote, and you will only be able to vote in one category.

And the winners are...

All of us! We hope that by showcasing NAFDMA members via a fall-season publicity blitz and at the conference, everyone will benefit from an even greater level of sharing.

Two new contests!

The board has tweaked the Members' Choice Contests. We will continue to have an Outstanding Newsletter and Outstanding Web Site contest. We will have ONE brochure category for trifold brochures and rack cards. We have added a category we're calling (for now) Outstanding Marketing Literature Contest. This is for a printed materials that don't fall into the brochure category. It could include coloring books, door hangers, catalogs, etc. It's not for advertisements or press releases.

We're also adding an Outstanding Maize Design category. Stay tuned for details!

Don't forget to nominate

Ballots are included with this newsletter. Nominating is easy by fax or on the Web site. Nominate yourself or a peer today!

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Setting aside gut instinct

Debbie lets go of her “control freak tendencies” and reaps the rewards from a unified marketing plan that stays within budget



by Debbie Pifer, Director,
Midwest

Spring weather is coming to northeast Ohio in fits and starts. After kicking back a bit during winter, it's time to set the course at our market for the coming season. Like most of you, we struggle each year with new ideas for promotions, advertising, and ways to generate publicity. I had always handled my own advertising/promotions, relying on my gut instinct and how much money I had spent in past years. I never had a firm plan of attack, but relied on print ads, some radio, and some direct mail. Then in the midst of the busiest days some ad salesman would confront me with a deadline for copy and a deal “too good to pass up”! Help!

Last year we decided to enlist the skills of a small marketing agency to help us plan a year's worth of advertising and promotion. What a hard decision to make. My first thoughts were

- it's too expensive,
- they don't know my business,
- it's out of my comfort zone.

We explained to the firm that we needed a year around campaign but we couldn't spend

more money than previous years. I told them that I would follow their advice for one year without second guessing (and if you know my control freak tendencies it was hard). Here is what changed in our business:

- We cut our reliance on newspaper print ads by 90%
- We made a radio commercial complete with a classy jingle
- We used press releases for three major festival events per year
- We made three TV commercials for different seasons
- We courted the local morning shows for live spots
- We instituted a weekly “live” radio commercial on a popular talk station
- We did not deviate from the master plan (no more last minute ad salesman to deal with!)
- We updated our logo, tag line, brochures
- We were nominated for NAFDMA Farm Marketer of the Year and used lots of press releases to generate great media attention.

The results in 2005 were impressive. By fine tuning our marketing message and spending the same money, we brought many new customers to our market. Younger people do not read newspapers like the previous generation and rely much more on visual media. Our “live” radio call ins generated great response as I could pinpoint a timely specific message, such as “peaches are ripe and ready”. Our local TV stations were very responsive to us with

our agency go between.

We are tweaking the plan in 2006 by adding a promotion with a local weather person to grow the biggest pumpkin. We can rerun the same commercials with new audio to hold costs. The best part of the whole deal is that the marketing direction for the entire year is set before the busy season.

I hope that sharing our experiences will help some of you in your marketing efforts. I'll let you know how the pumpkin growing challenge goes- if the weather guy grows bigger pumpkins than us... uh oh!



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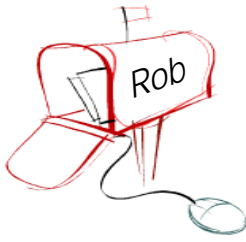


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Talk To You Later



by Rob Leeds
President

As you all know I am a real fan of bringing in outside resources to better our Direct Marketing industry. One such resource that I've found is the book titled *Good to Great* by Jim Collins.

Now we all know that there is an abundance of leadership and management literature, however, *Good to Great* gives us hints and insights at what can be effectively implemented to improve our businesses.

Collins' basic question was, "What causes some companies to make the leap from being a good company to being a great one?" He spent about 4 years comparing and contrasting companies to try to discover the characteristics that enabled companies to make the leap from good to great.

Collins' description of these companies is, "Taking a good organization and turning it into one that produces sustained great results, using whatever definition of results best applies to your organization." I think many of the characteristics he discovered can also apply to our farm market businesses.

The first concept that Collins

says is necessary to make the leap from good to great is "Level 5 Leadership." Hopefully, it's not surprising to any of us that leadership is right at the top of the list of concepts necessary to go from good to great. What is surprising is the description of the type of leadership needed, described by Collins as "Level 5 Leadership."

Traits of a Level 5 leader include: quiet, humble, modest, reserved, gracious, self-effacing, understated and mild mannered. A Level 5 Leader is Plow Horse versus a Show Horse, a paradoxical mix of personal humility and professional will. Oftentimes when we think of a leader we think of a showman, a Lee Iacocca-type personality. In fact, many companies mistakenly seek out this type of charismatic leader, thinking that this type of personality is needed to lead them to greatness.

Where do we find Level 5 leaders? Collins says, "There is not necessarily a dearth of Level 5 Leaders, they exist all around is, if we know what to look for and were to look for them."

The next concept a business has to tackle in order to move from good to great is "First Who, then What." Most businesses go about this backwards, Collins says. First a company writes a grand mission statement and develops a vision, then tries to find the people to implement the vision. Collins' research says that people come first. The first task is to "get the right people on the

bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats." This idea seems so straightforward that you're probably all nodding your heads, but in reality this is difficult to do, as all of you who have fired someone already know. But here's the payoff: Collins notes that if you have the right people on the bus, the problem of motivating and managing people largely goes away. "Create an environment where hardworking people thrive and lazy workers either jump or get thrown right off the bus," he says. "People are not your most important asset.... the right people are." Hmmm.

The next concept that Good to Great companies mastered is described by Collins as "Confronting the Brutal Facts." All good to great companies begin the process of finding a path to greatness by confronting the brutal facts of their current reality. Collins gives several insights

into how companies did this including: creating a culture of honesty, engaging in dialogue and debate without coercion, conducting autopsies without blame, and building in red flag mechanisms so important information cannot be ignored.

An interesting side note: Collins found that Good to Great companies faced just as much adversity as others, but responded differently. They dealt honestly with the facts of their situation. This removes the 'maybe some businesses just had it easier' excuse.

The next concept that Collins discovered and described I think also has great application to our businesses. Collins calls it the "Hedgehog Concept..." To go from good to great requires a deep understanding about the intersection of the following three circles: 1. What you can be the best in the world at 2. What drives your economic engine, and 3. What you are deeply passionate about.

The Hedgehog Concept is not a goal, not a want, not a strategy, not a plan or an intention, it is an understanding of what your business can be the best in the world at.

After reading this book, I think that figuring out a Hedgehog Concept is a challenging task that could improve many farm markets. Collins goes on later in the book to describe the

"All good to great companies begin the process of finding a path to greatness by confronting the brutal facts of their current reality."

Culture of Discipline needed to move from Good to Great, which includes "fanatical adherence to the Hedgehog concept and willingness to shun opportunities that fall outside the three circles."

Collins notes that "Stop Doing" list are more important than "To Do" lists. I think most of us can identify with this notion already.

I am taking suggestions for my "Stop Doing" list. So far I have:

- ⊙ Stop riding mechanical bulls
 - ⊙ Stop competing with Kay, she always wins
 - ⊙ Stop trying to convince everyone an OSU T-shirt is formal attire
 - ⊙ Stop writing news columns TTYL
- Rob

Off the book shelf: *Positively Outrageous Service*

One NAFDMA member is putting this book by T. Scott Gross to work!

How many times have you read a book, got excited about it, and then never did anything as a result of reading it?

One book that has at least a couple of NAFDMA members taking action is *Positively Outrageous Service* by T. Scott Gross.

Laurie Graff of South Texas Maize, Hondo, Texas, brought the book and author to my attention. She recommended Scott as a possible keynote speaker. As part of the research process, I called his office for more information. A few days later, I got a firsthand taste of POS. The autographed book was sent along with a CD and a Nutrageous candy bar. Here's a case of POS and delivering more than you expect.

Many NAFDMA members already do some form of POS. The book might help you hone your technique and give you new inspiration. The author uses example after example to illustrate and inspire. Gross has plenty of experience with POS through his different restaurants.

Gross also recognizes what the public loves about farm direct marketing: the experience. He writes, "We've said it elsewhere: Offering the customer an experience along with the product will be a significant competitive advantage. Why? Because technology and stiff competition have made quality the rule rather than the exception.

"Other than innovation, which will provide only the most fleeting of advantages, service will be the last frontier. Fortunately for the small business, the service advantage belongs to those who will think creatively and quickly."

Gross relates POS to customers as well as employees. He recognizes that not everyone is a natural showman, but there are things that everyone can do to create POS and the buzz that goes along with it.

Laurie Graff says that she loved the book, and she even encouraged her staff to read it.

"It was voluntary. They were compensated for their reading time with \$30 worth of maze food credits. We also asked them to give us one idea of how they could give Positively Outrageous Service. We had a great response from our staff and will make the same offer this year to staff members who have not read the book.

"Ideas I implemented are as follows:

"We hand out wristbands with our admissions. On every 50th band I hand wrote a FREE item (with a Sharpie



marker). Whoever received this band (with a maze admission purchase) saw that they also were receiving something FREE!! It went over with our public very well. So well that I will implement the same program this

year. I chose from 10 items we carry (lemonade, kettle corn, t-shirt, corn cannon shots, chips, candy, nachos, maze pen, corn lollipop) and wrote one of these items on every 50th band. I worked with a total of 15,000 bands, thereby writing a FREE item on 300 bands. My cost in the FREE items was \$375. Our purpose in doing this was to create a WOW at the ticket booth, to create positive word of mouth and of course to give POS!!

"Another idea we implemented was to empower our staff to give POS. If they saw an opportunity to give POS, we encouraged and gave them our authority to act upon their feelings. For instance: We carried Apple Blossoms this year: a wedged apple covered with caramel, pecans and whipped

topping. Our banner advertising this new food item sometimes confused the public. They didn't know if we were selling trees with apple blossoms, or apples that were blossoming?!?! So some of my staff recognized this quickly and immediately saw the need to GIVE AWAY some Apple Blossoms so we could explain to the public what the heck we were selling! I was thrilled with their observations and said YES, let's give away 10 Apple Blossoms. Wham, the Apple Blossoms started flying out of the booth! With great senses on behalf of our staff we were able to give POS!!

"Another instance was at our corn cannon. If someone had spent several dollars and not been successful at hitting a target, my staff working at the cannon would give them 4 shots on the house. This went over very well with the public and usually resulted in a successful hit!!

"The thing we are trying to do in giving POS is to give the public something they are not expecting. This always creates a WOW and a positive buzz. Hope my ideas help and I hope your book review will generate more folks reading this book!"

The countdown begins.
Grow West, friends.
Grow West.

New option in the Back Forty

Post your classifieds, browse or ask questions. Check it out!

Many of you have been asking the NAFDMA office about the Front Porch. Unfortunately, because it was receiving an overwhelming amount of spam, we had to close it down. The member forum was a great place to ask and answer questions as well as post classified ads.

The good news is that we now have another option for you to post classified ads and ask questions of each other. We're calling the new page in the Back Forty Classifieds & Questions.

Look for the button along the left side of www.nadma.com.

The fine print

Here's the fine print for classified postings. Each member farm is entitled to two free classified listings per membership year (Oct. 1 to Sept. 30). NAFDMA reserves the right to reject or edit submissions. Keep your submissions brief, and please alert us when your item has sold. Items will be removed two months after posting.

Questions will be posted for

two months also. It will be a good way to ask about insurance or zoning resources, sources for items and whatever else you'd like to ask.

E-mail your submissions to Kelly Fuerstenberg, NAFDMA's communications director, at Kelly@WhiteLoafRidge.com.

Have fun, and we hope that you'll take advantage of this opportunity!

We already have our first posting, so be sure to check it out.

Back Forty refresher

Accessing the Back Forty is easy. Really, it is! Follow these easy steps.

1. Click on the Back Forty button.
2. If you don't know your username or password, click on "Click here for Log In Help." This link is located toward the



bottom of the page.

3. Go to Step 1 and click on "Click here" to begin retrieving your password.

4. Enter your e-mail address.

5. Wait for your temporary password to be e-mailed to you.

6. Return to the Back Forty.

7. Enter your username, which is your e-mail address until you change it.

8. Enter your password, which was just e-mailed to you.

That's it. Easy, right?

Please note that the #1 reason that *this process doesn't work* is because we either don't have your e-mail address on file or we have an outdated e-mail address. Be sure to let us know if your e-mail address changes.

After you are logged into the Back Forty, you can change your username and password to something that you can remember. Just go to the bottom of the page and click on "Manage Your Profile."

Speaking of e-mail...

You may have noticed that you've been receiving an occasional e-mail from the NAFDMA office. These e-mails are powered by Constant Contact. All members have been added to our members-only e-mail list. All members are also added to the FMC e-newsletter option unless you have opted out.

You can control what other e-mail we send you. At the bottom of the e-mail, click on "Update Profile/E-mail Address." You can choose what other lists you want to be on.

Please note that if you click on "Safe Unsubscribe," you will be permanently removed from all NAFDMA Constant Contact mailings. We hope that you don't choose this option, because then you'll be missing out on important association news. We never share our e-mail list, so you'll only receive e-mail from us. We look forward to hearing from you!



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Calendar

June 11-17, Mexico

International Fruit Tree Association Summer Orchard Tour to Mexico. Two tour options; all tours depart from El Paso, Texas. Visit www.ifruit-tree.org for details.

June 12 - 13, Tennessee

National Value-Added Agriculture Conference, Music City Sheraton, Nashville, Tenn.

For details, visit cpa.utk.edu/Value-AddConf.

July 10-11, Ottawa

NAFDMA's Advanced Learning Summer Retreat, Saunders Farm, Ottawa, ON Canada. Registration is \$385 and includes breakfasts, lunches and dinners on both days, as well as all print materials and evening bonfires.

Register by June 1.

For details, visit www.nafdma.com/Advanced.

July 14-16, Ohio

Midwest Haunters Convention, Hyatt Regency, Columbus, Ohio. Visit www.midwest-hauntersconvention.com or call 614-361-1466.

Aug. 16-19, Oregon

National Christmas Tree Association Convention & Trade Show, Portland, Ore. Visit www.christmastree.org/24th.cfm for more info or contact 636-449-5070.

Sept. 10-13, Vermont

2006 National Extension Tourism Conference, Wyndham Hotel, Burlington, Vt.

Early registration discount

ends June 15.

Contact: Diane Kuehn (dmkuehn@esf.edu) or Lisa Chase (lisa.chase@uvm.edu), or visit www.esf.edu/NET2006.

December 5-7, Michigan

Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market EXPO, DeVos Place, Grand Rapids, Mich. For details, visit www.glexpo.com.

Feb. 16-17, 2007, Alberta

North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference and Trade Show, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. In addition to educational sessions, outstanding speakers and a diverse trade show, the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association's annual convention

offers a three-day bus tour and a day of intensive workshops. The entire convention runs from Feb. 12 to Feb. 17.

Registration begins Nov. 1. Early registration discount ends Jan. 6, 2007.

For details, visit www.nafdma.com, e-mail info@nafdma.com, or call 413-529-0386.

Visit our on-line Calendar at www.nafdma.com/Public/Happenings. You can also get there by clicking on Resources and then Event Calendar at the bottom of the page.