



THE **FARM**  
**FARM MARKETING**  
**SECRETS**  
YOU NEED TO KNOW



# THE THREE FARM MARKETING SECRETS YOU NEED TO KNOW

To effectively market your product, you must know the answers to these questions.

1. What makes your product unique in the eyes of the customer?
2. Who is your customer?
3. Where can you reach them?

The goal of marketing isn't to convince people to do something. Everyone has problems or issues they consider important.

The goal is to show them how you can solve that problem for them.

If you can do this at a price they consider to be fair, then they will buy your product.

## STEP 1: DEFINE WHAT MAKES YOUR PRODUCT UNIQUE IN THE EYES OF THE CUSTOMER

When you sell a commodity (as vegetables are), you have to find a way to make your product stand out from all the others.

*If everything looks the same, how do you differentiate your product? Another way of saying that is what makes your product unique in the eyes of the customer?*

Low prices are one way, but they are a slippery slope. Price wars are a race to the bottom, and no one ever wins. Avoid this strategy at all costs. Sell your product at the price you NEED to sell it to make a sustainable profit. If the customer thinks this price is too high, then that person is not your customer.

Another way is to differentiate the product by category. There is organic and conventional lettuce. The customer can't see the difference, but labeling the product can make a discerning shopper

lean towards the product that resonates with their values. Now we have something to build on. We can differentiate based on category because we are organic!

But, what about the other three organic farms at our market? How do we stand apart from them? We are all organic.

If you can create a new category for your product, you can differentiate your product from the other similar products. A different category from organic might

be no-spray organic. If enough people care about no-spray practices, you can differentiate based on that.

No-spray might be unique to our farm. Therefore, it is our **unique selling proposition** (USP).

To be successful, you MUST find a USP for your business.

Advertising pioneer, Rosser Reeves, defined USP very precisely, requiring three parts:

1. “Each advertisement must make a proposition to the consumer. Each advertisement must say to each reader: ‘Buy this product, and you will get this specific benefit.’
2. The proposition must be one that the competition either cannot or does not offer. It must be unique—either a uniqueness of the brand or a claim not otherwise made in that particular field of advertising.
3. The proposition must be so strong that it can move the mass millions—[meaning] pull over new customers to your product.”

**You must offer a benefit to the customer that is truly unique to your product, and that difference must be significant to the customer.**

For example, you might have certified organic lettuce that is grown hydroponically. You might think that hydroponics is your USP—and it might be—but not in the way you might expect. The customer might not

care at all how you grow your product—in a field or a greenhouse or on a raft system. It’s organic, and it’s lettuce, and that’s good enough for them.

But the customer might be concerned about the cleanliness of the product. Since your product is grown hydroponically, they don’t have to rinse off the soil when they bring it home. Hence, your USP might be that you have “rinse-free” organic lettuce.

You have to find a difference that is important to the customer.

## STEP 2: DEFINE WHO YOUR CUSTOMER IS

The second key is to know your customers. You want to market to attract those who will value the product you are selling.

This will help you visualize who you are selling to and make marketing decisions that will attract this customer.

**Who will value your product enough to pay what you will charge for it?**

You want to create customer avatars. We go through this in more detail in Chapter 8.

**Everyone is NOT Your Customer**

Remember, not everyone is your customer, and that's okay. Some people will scoff at your prices; they are not your customer. You know what you need to charge to be a profitable business. Don't let a few customers tell you otherwise. It is powerful to say no.

## STEP 3: FIGURE OUT WHERE CAN YOU REACH YOUR CUSTOMERS

This sounds great and all, but where can you find these ideal customers? The truth: *it might not be at the farmers market.*

**Identifying your customer avatars will give you a better understanding of your ideal customer's shopping habits.**

For example, do they shop at the farmers market? What other businesses or services do they use? Where do they hang out online? Do they read some sort of local print publication? Are they located in a specific part of town?

All of these bits of information will help point you in the right direction. You are lucky if your customers come to you; in reality, you have to go to them—either in-person or online.

In-person means door knocking and public speaking.

## Do what you can to get in front of your target audience.

It could be posting flyers or creating partnerships with other local businesses.

Targeted online ads could be one way to reach your ideal customer. You could point ads to people in your geographic area with very specific interests or qualities in your geographic area. For example, females 35–50 in zip code 12345 who make more than \$50,000 per year.

You could also try to bring the customer to you. Offer free farm tours and host school field trips. Having an on-farm stand gets

people stopping by and noticing your farm. After some casual purchases, they might take the next step and become regular customers. Some farms have had excellent success hosting an “invitation-only” dinner night serving, of course, their own produce.

Your ideal customer might not be a person, either.

**Selling products wholesale to other businesses (food hubs, restaurants, grocery stores) could be a better fit for your business.**

### **Want to learn more about farm marketing, selling online, and going digital?**

The farmer’s guide to online sales, Ready Farmer One, prepares farmers with the tools they need to start selling online and continue selling online profitably. From creating your online store to marketing strategies, Ready Farmer One is filled with practical tools to help make you sell more product.

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