

# Selling to Everyone

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## Exploring your farmers' market's values

An exercise for market managers, board members, and steering committees

**MARCH 2020**

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## Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA)

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# Selling to Everyone

## EXPLORING YOUR FARMERS' MARKET'S VALUES

An exercise for managers, board members, and steering committees

In order to stay relevant, markets need to evolve to meet the needs of changing communities, whether that refers to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or anything else. The goal of this resource is to identify the individual core values of the market's managers, board, and steering committee, and to explore those in relationship to those of the market and the community. In doing so, this can help align market management staff as well as make the market be more welcoming, coordinated, and ultimately more successful.

The key question you will answer:

***How do your values reflect in the ways you engage your community?***

This is designed to be done as a group exercise, with all those who are involved in managing a market: the market manager(s), steering committee, board members, and so on. This exercise can also be done individually, if only one person is involved in the management of the market.

This exercise includes reading through information on farmers' markets, examining case studies, exploring the role of your market, and open conversation amongst the market board members and manager(s).

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Cover: photo credit to Elizabeth Solaka.

## Ground rules

Before starting the conversation amongst market managers and board members, it is helpful to lay out some ground rules. Oftentimes, people can be at different points of learning on the same topic, and so getting the groundwork of understanding down early can go a long way in creating a robust, productive conversation later.

We suggest these three ground rules when speaking with one another:

1. Speak honestly and from the heart
2. Assume that everyone has the best intent
3. Seek to understand first, then to be understood second

We also suggest you all take a moment to see if your group wants to establish additional ground rules for your conversation. Every group and group dynamic are different, and it may be that you have additional rules you want to set so everyone feels they can discuss freely and openly. If you come up with additional rules, take a moment to write them down so you can refer to them later.

## Introductions

Take a moment to introduce yourselves to one another. Even if everyone knows everyone else's name, introductions are helpful when settling into the same space.

Go around and have everyone say:

1. Their name
2. Their role at the farmers' market
3. A couple of words they think describe the market



*Above: one of Farm Fresh Rhode Island's farmers' markets.  
Photo courtesy of Farm Fresh Rhode Island.*

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# Section 1: Customers and markets: what's the connection?

## Customer needs & motivations

Successful markets are always asking: What are customers looking for?

A study done by Harvard Business Review in 2015 showed that the most effective way to boost your market's financial return and maximize customer value is to move beyond mere customer satisfaction and connect with customers at an emotional level. In other words, tapping into customers' emotional motivations.

### Examples of emotional motivations are:

- Standing out from the crowd
- Having confidence in the future
- Enjoying a sense of well-being
- Feeling a sense of freedom
- Feeling a sense of thrill
- Feeling a sense of belonging
- Protecting the environment
- Being the person I want to be
- Feeling secure

Take a moment now to write down your answers individually:

**How might your farmers' market be fulfilling these needs, and tapping into these motivations?**

Keep these in mind as we now move to the roles that a farmers' market plays.

## The roles of a farmers' market

Farmers' markets have three categories of roles: (1) mercantile (business, money-oriented side of the market), (2) social, and (3) civic.

Answer the following individually, then share out as a group.

How does your market uphold each of these roles?

**Mercantile:**

**Social:**

**Civic:**

*See appendix for history and some examples of each of the categories.*

## Section 2: Identify Your Market's Values

All kinds of businesses have mission statements that outline their specific values. In this next section, we identify your market's specific values.

Stating your market's specific values has two main benefits.

1. It helps explain to the world what your market respects/strives for and how you operate.
2. Having stated values serves as a guide for how employees, management, and vendors act and what they should be striving for.

This section will use the resource sheet below.

### Instructions:

First, you will do the exercise individually, then share out as a group. Remember that there is no pressure in answering. Allow yourself to flow and potentially surprise yourself. For those who are vendors at a market, you can think about both the market as a whole and also your business in the form it shows up in at the market.

Once you have done the exercise, read on for more instructions on the group discussion.

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## Values Exploration

Spend five minutes looking at these words and circle the top 15 that describe your market's values. Then spend another minute narrowing that down to 10. Then narrow that down to five. Then narrow that down to three.

Abundance	Flexibility	Spirituality
Acceptance	Freedom	Stability
Accountability	Fun	Peace
Advocacy	Generosity	Perfection
Ambition	Grace	Playfulness
Appreciation	Growth	Popularity
Calmness	Flexibility	Preparedness
Caring	Happiness	Professionalism
Charity	Health	Punctuality
Cheerfulness	Honesty	Recognition
Collaboration	Humility	Relationships
Commitment	Humor	Reliability
Community	Inclusiveness	Resilience
Compassion	Innovation	Resourcefulness
Consistency	Joy	Responsibility
Cooperation	Kindness	Selflessness
Creativity	Leadership	Success
Credibility	Loyalty	Teamwork
Dedication	Making a Difference	Thankfulness
Dependability	Mindfulness	Thoughtfulness
Diversity	Motivation	Tradition
Empathy	Open-Minded	Trustworthiness
Encouragement	Optimism	Understanding
Enthusiasm	Professionalism	Uniqueness
Ethics	Quality	Versatility
Fairness	Recognition	Vision
Family	Risk Taking	Warmth
Friendships	Service	

**Your top three values:**

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*Think through how values can manifest through activities at your market.*

Next, discuss as a group. What are the three stated values of your market? The goal is to come to a consensus as a group.

Remember, this is not the time for judgement or comparison. However, if that emerges, be curious with yourself. Ask yourself: what are you valuing that might bring about these thoughts?

Later, be sure to share the stated values you came up with for your market with your vendors and other stakeholders. Seek their feedback: do they agree, do they have other suggestions? Will they uphold these values in their practices?

Market values should be shared amongst all involved with the market; it is important to get everyone's full support and acceptance, as values lay the groundwork for any business or market's operations.



*Left: A vendor at the Amherst Farmers' Market. Their booth is set up so that customers can flow through and see all of the farm's available produce.*

*Photo credits Elizabeth Solaka.*



*Right: A vendor at the Holyoke Farmers' Market. This vendor participates in the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP). HIP is a Massachusetts program in which SNAP recipients can earn at least \$40 worth of additional locally grown fruits and vegetables from farms.*

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## Section 3: Explore Your Market's Values

Now, let's dig in a little more. Same format as before—answer the questions individually, and then share out and discuss as a group.

Spend ten minutes answering the questions individually, and then share out as a group.

1. What do you value about your market?
2. What things energize you at market?
3. How does the market support your personal values?
4. What do you want your market to contribute to others (your community, the world)?
5. How do you want the community to view your market? What does a thriving market look like to you?
6. Who makes up the community your market serves, and who makes up the community around your market?
7. What might be lacking—who is missing from your market?

What came up in your discussions?

Take a moment to reflect individually:

*What were the things multiple people thought of?*

*What were the things only one person thought of?*

*Did different cultures come up? Do you know what cultures are represented in your community, but may not be fully represented at market?*

*Did race come up?*

**Remember, these conversations are difficult.** The point of this exercise is to figure this out together, to learn and struggle together. No farmers' market is perfect. Expecting everyone to hold and adopt the same stance is not only unrealistic, it's unhelpful. Remember that a commitment to learning together is more beneficial than expecting everyone to get on board with the same set of beliefs.

### Case study: How a farmers' market manifests its values

DC Greens is a food justice organization based in Washington, D.C. They work with the Department of Health and forty area farmers' markets to help make the markets more equitable in who they serve and how they serve them.

Historically, there have been farmers' markets that offer bonus programs, such as extra dollars for SNAP recipients who shopped at the market. These farmers' markets wanted to reach people who qualify for these bonus programs, and needed help doing so. To do this, they formed a farmers' market collaborative, DC Greens, to identify barriers to participation in the markets and what support they needed. DC Greens came in to provide support to make the farmers' markets more accessible to target populations.

DC Greens has stated values of collaboration, integrity, creativity, sustainability, and equity. These values drive how all work is done in the organization.

*Right: one of the farmers' markets that DC Greens is involved with.  
Photo courtesy of DC Greens.  
Photo credit Samory Henry.*



## Section 4: Know your community

You've delved into your market's values, and seen an example of how one farmers' market organization uses their values to guide their actions. Remember, the key question this exercise is designed to have you answer is: ***How do your values reflect in the ways you engage your community?***

We've explored your values. Next, let's explore your community. In the last section, we'll tie the two together.

As we've covered, markets play several roles in their communities (mercantile, social, and civic). Spend five minutes answering the questions individually, and then share out as a group.

1. Who is in your community?
2. How do you get to know the various groups in your community?
3. Who might you know, and who might you not know?
4. Think about the emotional desires of customers in section 1. (See below for reference). Consider, what might it take for a customer with an identity different than yours to have one of those emotional desires fulfilled? For example, what might it take for a customer with a different identity than yours to enjoy a sense of well-being at the market? Or, to feel a sense of belonging?
5. How might you find out the answer to #4?

Emotional motivations are:

- Have confidence in the future
- Enjoy a sense of well-being
- Feel a sense of freedom
- Feel a sense of thrill
- Feel a sense of belonging
- Protect the environment
- Be the person I want to be
- Feel secure
- Stand out from the crowd

## Resources on how we can learn more about our communities

Everyone is a part of sub-community within our own community. Oftentimes, we don't have visibility into, knowledge of, or understanding of other sub-communities that also exist in our communities. This resource gives three ways you can learn more about all that reside within your community:

### 1. Community Statistics

Looking into data on the languages spoken, races/ethnicities, ages, and more of people in your community is a great place to begin learning. Some good sources are in the box to the right.



*Photo courtesy of Farm Fresh Rhode Island.*

### 2. Partnerships

Another way to learn more about your community is by building partnerships with other organizations that represent constituencies different than your own. Through other organizations, you can do outreach for your market to different groups within your community.

Partnerships with other organizations should be mutually beneficial for all parties. When approaching another organization to form a partnership, it is helpful to brainstorm with them about how your two organization's missions overlap. See the **Partnership Exploration Document** in the Appendix for a worksheet containing some questions you can work through to build a relationship with other organizations.

### Sources for researching community demographics:

1. **Ethnicity, age, wages, housing, and income by county:**  
<https://datausa.io/>  
Demography mapper by county.
2. **Language by neighborhood:**  
[https://www.census.gov/hhes/soc/demo/language/data/language\\_map.html?#](https://www.census.gov/hhes/soc/demo/language/data/language_map.html?#)  
Language mapper by neighborhood (top 10 languages). Data from 2011.
3. **Language by county:**  
[https://apps.mla.org/map\\_data](https://apps.mla.org/map_data)  
Language mapper, 2000 by zip code and 2010 by county. Can see numbers of speakers of top 30 languages in your area.
4. **Census Business Builder:**  
<https://cbb.census.gov/sbe/#>  
Community fact finder targeted toward small businesses who want to research their communities. Can put "Retail Sales > Direct Market" as the business type when doing research for your farmers' market. Can view results on a map or in a report by zip code.

## Examples of community organization partnerships for market outreach:

1. Resident groups, public housing, and neighborhood councils
2. Food policy councils
3. Local Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) and WIC offices
4. Food banks and community kitchens
5. Health centers
6. Mass in Motion groups
7. Senior centers
8. Faith-based organizations
  - Comprehensive guide for connecting with these:  
[http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media\\_items/faith-in-food-farmers-fact-sheet.original.pdf](http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/faith-in-food-farmers-fact-sheet.original.pdf)
9. Preschools, daycares, family centers
10. Area schools (elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and colleges)
11. Libraries
12. Social service agencies
13. Transportation providers (bus system, vans)
14. Economic councils and chambers of commerce
15. University extension groups
16. Agricultural or ecological groups
17. Other farmers' markets

Answer these individually, then share out as a group:

1. Are there hubs that I can connect with to know my community more?
2. What partnerships could our farmers' market make with other organizations that represent different constituencies?
3. If you have access to a computer, use the sources on the previous page to look up the area the market is in. What are the non-English languages spoken? What is the income bracket of people? The distribution of ages?

### 3. Market ambassadors

Market ambassadors are people who show and explain the farmers' market to people within their community. Market ambassadors are typically people who have been loyal customers in the past, and become employees of the market. They serve as a bridge between the market and a new community that the market is trying to welcome.

DC Greens runs a great example of a market ambassador program:

#### Case study: Bringing and welcoming a new community to the market

##### DC Greens: Market Champions Program

DC Greens' "Market Champions" are dedicated market customers who become employees at the markets. They are community members that have working relationships with farmers' market managers and are bridges between the market and the community. These folks come to the market, and not only shop for themselves, but also bring people from their community along who have not been to the market before.

The Market Champions are brought on to the team, trained on how the market works, and paid. The Market Champion coordinates with the market manager to ensure things go smoothly; for example, how line management should work, how to use the market's wooden coins if a purchase doesn't fall in a \$1 increment, and so on, depending on the market.

Through this program, folks from communities not usually represented at the farmers' market are introduced to the market by someone they know. This makes them feel more comfortable, and makes the space more welcoming to people of that community than would normally be the case. The Market Champions program changes the way customers can get involved in the running of the market. Most of all, by bringing the community in to the market, it makes the market better equipped to serve the community.



*One of DC Greens' Market Champions, Patrick.  
Photo courtesy of DC Greens.*

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## Equity at your market

Now, let's focus on equity, and the potential gains that could come from making your market more equitable.

1. What might come out of a greater focus on inclusiveness at your market?
2. What does thinking about this topic feel like for you as a person? (Be curious about anything that comes up for you!)

### ***Flip side ...***

3. What are the challenges to making changes at a market towards inclusiveness?
4. And, what opportunities might be missed if a market doesn't make changes?

Discuss as a group.

## Cultural Understanding

### Consider: what does cultural understanding mean to you?

Different cultures come to farmers' markets, and all need to be valued equally. In a video interview that CISA did with Maisha Atrice of DC Greens in 2018, Maisha outlined two contradictory perspectives that can happen at a market and how cultural understanding can arise from them.

In the example, the first person's perspective of a farmers' market is what farmers' markets in other countries can be like: there are full stalls teeming with colorful produce, customers are reaching over each other, the space is lively and loud. The second person's perspective of a farmers' market is that the farmers' market is a relatively quiet space (perhaps someone playing music in the background), where one can go to get fresh cut flowers and kale, wait in line, and chat with a few other people.

If someone with the second understanding of the market is not familiar with the perspective of the first person, that second person is not going to see value in the other person's version of a market. To have cultural understanding, the second person needs to be open and willing to turn to the first person, and have some kind of communication, even if there is a language barrier. It doesn't have to just be about the market, either—if both customers have four-year-olds, they could communicate about how tough it can be to go to the market with a young child. Knowing that their perspective of the market is no more "right" than the other person's is the base of cultural understanding.



*Some of the farmers from World Farmers vending at a farmers' market.  
Photo courtesy of World Farmers.*

### Case study: Limited product and customers arriving early: an opportunity to get to know the community

World Farmers is a Massachusetts organization that enables small-scale immigrant and refugee farmers to grow culturally relevant crops and sell at nearby markets. One of the farmers' sales venues is a farmers' market. The crops they grow and sell are not found in mainstream U.S. markets, and as a result lots of customers are interested in limited quantities of product. At one point in the farmers' market's history, people would worry that there wasn't enough product to go around, and consequentially customers would show up very early, before the start of the market to ensure they didn't miss out. Specifically, folks from the Hmong community would arrive early, and purchase all of the product right as the market opened.

To address this, World Farmers' developed a ticket system. And, they hired staff from the Hmong community as market ambassadors. The market ambassador served as a translator for the market, and helped both parties become familiar with each other's perspectives and systems. As a result, the market learned how it could better serve their community's needs.

## Racial equity at the market

People (that includes you) are all at different places of realizing how history and current systems negatively impact people of color and other disenfranchised groups.

A good place to start in engaging with and learning about equity is understanding that there is a dominant group of people in the United States (white men and women) and there is prejudice. In realizing those things, you don't have to hold any guilt about them, any shame, or take responsibility for it. After all, you personally did not put racism and prejudice into play. However, it is a part of your responsibility as a person in power (as a market manager, a staff person involved with running an organization like a farmers' market, a board member, an owner, a vendor, or a farmer) to make the market more equitable for all.

### Best practice: Ways to make your market more welcoming

Farm Fresh Rhode Island is a non-profit organization that operates several farmers' markets primarily in areas with limited access to fresh food. Their mantra is, "Include everyone in the local food system, because everyone local is participating in the food system."

To make the market welcoming for everyone in their community, they do several things:

1. **Vendors:** recruit vendors who are people of color and/or immigrant farmers
2. **Outreach:** do outreach in all languages represented in the community; messaging is around how local food helps keep money in the community
3. **Trainings:** staff trainings held by market customers who use SNAP/EBT
4. **Signage:** prices of all products are posted for customer ease and accessibility
5. **PA System:** with music and announcements from the community

In order for a market to focus on racial and other forms of equity, a market must make conscious choices. Vendors choose what to pack and bring to the market each day; farmers choose how to speak to someone using SNAP or a bonus program at the market. Managers can choose the vendors they have at the market; they can choose what their messaging and promotion looks like and who it reaches; they can choose how they train vendors to welcome customers.

Throughout this section are some examples of how farmers' markets with commitments to racial equity and being welcoming to everyone practice those values. Some are general practices the organizations enact all the time. Some are examples of issues or tensions that arose, and how the markets chose to address the situation in an equitable way that made the market feel welcoming for all.

*Right: one of Farm Fresh Rhode Island's summer farmers' markets. Signage is clear and shows all the accepted payment methods. Photo courtesy of Farm Fresh Rhode Island.*



## Case study: Shifting vendor attitudes to make the community feel more welcome

Following the implementation of Massachusetts' Healthy Incentives Program (a program which provides an instant rebate when shoppers use SNAP to buy produce from participating local farms) in 2017, farmers' markets in the state have seen an influx of new customers that are more culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse. At the Brockton Farmers' Market, SNAP/EBT customer traffic increased 30 times. At this already-crowded market, the influx of customers led to two-hour long lines at times. Some vendors made it known that they resented SNAP/EBT customers and perceived the influx of new customers as alienating to existing customers, thus making SNAP customers feel unwelcome.

To address this, the market management did a few things. Rather than limit the number of SNAP/EBT customers or restrict the amount of purchases a SNAP/EBT customer could make, they took an approach that welcomed these customers to the market. The market's management took the time to speak with vendors, reminding them to be welcoming to all no matter the payment method and that "any sale is a good sale." They worked with local organizations so that Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole translators could be on-site to assist customers that spoke those languages. They contacted partner agencies that were busing in SNAP customers from multiple different areas and worked with them to spread out their arrival times. They also stepped up and made some logistical changes to make the market feel less crowded, including rearranging booths so that transactions could be processed more efficiently, and setting up designated places for people to wait in line. The market management's deliberate work and actions taken were done in a way that addressed the problem and made the market welcoming for the new SNAP/EBT customers.

*Below: The booth and line of a vendor at Brockton Farmers' Market in 2015. Both photos courtesy of the Brockton Farmers' Market.*



*Below: Same vendor booth, with a much longer line in 2017. They set up a clear line system that wrapped around the tent and allowed customers to view all the produce before they got to checkout.*

## Best practice: Ways to increase customer participation

At one point, DC Greens needed to increase customer participation in markets. To do so, they engaged with people in the community in various ways and implemented a number of practices at their markets. Suggestions for what you can do at your market include:

1. **Speak with the community** – request their input, and use it
2. **Hire community members** – make sure the community is represented at the market
3. **Offer culturally relevant foods** – make sure the food that people of the community eat is available at the market
4. **Respect all people and payments** – make this clear to all staff, vendors, and shoppers
5. **Encourage connection across difference**

Now, think about how your market could be a case study.

Answer these questions individually, and then share out as a group:

1. How does your market welcome a diversity of customers?
2. What are the ways that you have succeeded making the market a welcoming space for different groups?
3. How have you reached out to different groups to invite them to the market?

# Section 5: Turn your values into practice

Practices are the expressions of our values. In this final section, you'll come up with an action plan and guidance on the next steps you can take to bring this all to fruition.

There are many ways in which your market values manifest. This resource will help you explore seven areas and your market practices within each:

1. Customer Service
2. Hiring and Market Staff
3. Vendor Selection
4. Marketing / Outreach Materials
5. Logistical Space
6. Music and Events Celebrated
7. Community Input

## Instructions:

If working with a group:

1. Take five minutes to answer the prompts for each section individually.
2. As a group, share and discuss what you wrote for the "Establish next steps" part.
3. Come to a consensus on three action items that your farmers' market management can do to improve.
4. Assign individuals to oversee each action item.

If working individually, write down your answers in each section to form next steps in your action plan.



*All photos: Scenes from the Amherst Farmers' Market. Photos courtesy of Elizabeth Solaka.*



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## ***How do your values reflect in ...***

### **Customer Service**

Quality customer service helps your customer build trust and a sense of partnership. Creating this feel at market is a group effort: one vendor or staffer can positively or negatively impact a customer's experience with the entire market.

#### **Identify opportunities**

**To consider:**

- What are the attitudes you want portrayed at your market?
- How do you want your customers to feel while shopping at your market?
- What tools do you use to support good customer service?
- Do all vendors treat people equally regardless of payment options, language, and race?

Where do you have room to grow, in order to align with your values?

#### **Establish next steps**

**Some ideas to get you started:**

- Does your market have any standards or training relating to customer service for vendors, staff, and market volunteers?
- Are your market staff easily identified for new customers to ask questions?
- Is everyone at your market able to answer questions about benefit programs (WIC, SNAP Nutrition Incentive, Senior Coupons, matching programs)
- Are all vendors/staff empowered to speak up if a customer is being treated poorly by another customer because of their payment option?

List three things that you can do to improve your market's customer service this coming season.

## ***How do your values reflect in ...***

### **Hiring and Market Staff (both employees and volunteers)**

People who see their community reflected in your staff and volunteers will find it easier to feel a partnership with the market. They may also feel more secure. Think about who you have working at the market and what that tells customers about your market.

#### **Identify opportunities**

##### **To consider:**

- Are your staff from the community where your market is located? Are they representative of the community's cultural and racial heritage?
- Do your staff speak any languages besides English?
- How are you recruiting for paid and unpaid positions?
- Do you provide any training to staff/volunteers on cultural competency, customer service, and market rules and regulations?

Where do you have room to grow, in order to align with your values?

#### **Establish next steps**

##### **Some ideas to get you started:**

- Have you posted for positions at local community centers, neighborhood associations, or on neighborhood websites?
- Do you recruit staff and volunteers at market from your existing customer base and their networks or from new groups of people that are not a part of your existing customer base?
- When you screen for staff and volunteers, do you ask questions about language skills?
- Are all of the staff and volunteers at your market familiar with your rules, and do they have an understanding of customer service best practices?
  - Resources available:
    - [https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/SNAP\\_SpecPop\\_ComWithClients.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/SNAP_SpecPop_ComWithClients.pdf)
    - <http://www.zingtrain.com/articles>

List three things that you can do to improve your hiring and staffing systems this coming season.

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## ***How do your values reflect in ...***

### **Vendor Selection**

Vendors both provide products to the market and act as the market's face. To expand your customer base, consider the relevance of your vendors and their offerings to different groups in the community. You may find an opportunity to offer a sense of pride and personalization to a new set of dedicated returning customers.

### **Identify opportunities**

#### **To consider:**

- What types of vendors do you let into your market?
- Are your vendors and their products reflective of your communities? Is anyone missing?
- What types of products are vendors selling? Are farmers growing culturally appropriate vegetables?
- Are any racial or cultural groups under-represented at your market?

Where do you have room to grow, in order to align with your values?

### **Establish next steps**

#### **Some ideas:**

- Would you consider letting in new vendors that offer different culturally appropriate foods?
- Can you recruit new prepared food vendors at your market by inviting existing cafés and restaurants to apply? Can you work with them to source local ingredients from other farmers at the market?
- Would your market be able to accommodate smaller urban community growers on a rotating basis or selling as a coop?

List three ways you can diversify the products that you offer at your market this coming season.

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## ***How do your values reflect in ...***

### **Marketing / Outreach Materials**

Who is your audience? When expanding your customer base, it will be important to think beyond stereotypes and think about who might have a shared purpose with your market. Consider who might be missing from your market.

#### **Identify opportunities**

##### **To consider:**

- Are you partnering with local community organizations with a shared mission?
- Where are you buying ad-space, what publications, radio stations, etc?
- Where are you hanging posters? What languages are you using? What fonts, colors, and images are you using?
- Who do you most often work with to help distribute outreach materials?
- Is your market near a stop on public transit? Do you promote that on materials?

Where do you have room to grow, in order to align with your values?

#### **Establish next steps**

##### **Some ideas to get the conversation started:**

- Have you made a list of community organizations in your area? What would it take to contact a senior center, school, residents' association, or medical clinic?
- Can you work with a university language department or find a volunteer to translate some of your marketing materials into one or two other languages?
- Do you have time to expand your outreach efforts to places where people congregate, like local laundromats, barbershops, faith centers, and liquor stores?
- Could you begin a community ambassador program?

List three new outreach and marketing strategies you can implement this season.

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## ***How do your values reflect in ...***

### **Logistical Space**

Tailoring your market to people's logistical needs reinforces customer connection through a sense of personalization and pride in their community space. Make sure the layout and market space is easy to navigate for all customers.

### **Identify opportunities**

#### **To consider:**

- Is the information booth easy to find?
- Does your market have greeters?
- How effective is your signage in helping a new customer know where to go/ what to do?
- Does the layout of your market make it easy for customers to casually shop?
- Does your market offer seating, shade areas, and bathrooms?
- Is your market handicap accessible, does it have curb access?

Where do you have room to grow, in order to align with your values?

### **Establish next steps**

#### **Some ideas to get you started:**

- Do you make sure vendors have clear signage that prominently display the names of products and their prices?
- Do you have good signage throughout the market on how to get to the market info table?
- Do you have enough room in your layout for elderly and disabled customers to shop?

List three things you can work on to improve the logistical space of your market this season

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## ***How do your values reflect in ...***

### **Music and Events Celebrated**

Build a sense of pride and excitement for customers to come to the market regularly. Customers like it when they feel like there is a sense of partnership between themselves and their market. Consider: which customers are you relating to? Do you have a customer in mind? What happens if you switch up the picture in your head?

### **Identify opportunities**

#### **To consider:**

- What holidays/events are you celebrating through programming?
- Are there neighborhood block parties or town events to collaborate with?
- What kind of music are you playing? How are you recruiting musicians? What audiences are going to know you're seeking musicians?
- What kinds of demonstrations are you doing?
- What kind of activities are you running? Who are they targeted toward (interest, age, culture and race, language, disability status, farmers' market experience)?

Where do you have room to grow, in order to align with your values?

### **Establish next steps**

#### **Some ideas to get you started:**

- Are there customers who are interested in helping you expand your offerings?
- Do you work with any cultural advocacy related nonprofits, community centers, or residents' associations to host events at your market?
- Do you seek out information about what's happening in your market's neighborhood?

List three ways you can mix up the activities that you run at your market this season.

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## ***How do your values reflect in ...***

### **Community Input**

Once the market values have been defined, you need to know what's working and what's not for your customers, so you can find out where your practices align or don't align.

#### **Identify opportunities**

##### **To consider:**

- How are you collecting feedback from shoppers? In person? Through email? Through social media?
- How are you collecting feedback from market neighbors? Do they shop regularly?
- How are you collecting feedback from other community stakeholders (agencies and businesses)?

Where do you have room to grow, in order to align with your values?

#### **Establish next steps**

##### **Some ideas to get you started:**

- Do you send out satisfaction surveys to vendors and customers? Are your surveys available in paper and online to make them more accessible?
- Are you collecting verbal feedback regularly and responding to it?
- Are you able to knock on doors to get feedback from your neighbors about the market?
- Are you subscribed to neighborhood newsletters to get information about neighborhood association meetings to get feedback on your market?
- Could you hold a customer focus group, with snacks and incentives?
- Could you add an anonymous suggestion box?

List three new ways you can collect and implement feedback about your market.

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# Appendix

## The roles of farmers' markets: history and examples

### **Mercantile Role:**

- First known farmers' market happened in Africa along the Nile River, 5,000 years ago
- Farmers' markets thrived for hundreds of years in the United States (first market was in 1634 in Boston)
- In the United States, grocery store expansion, refrigeration technology, and urbanization led to fewer markets and increased regulations on farmers' markets over time
- 1970's: farmers' market resurgence
- Today there are over 8,000 farmers' markets nationwide – almost 300 in Massachusetts. They continue to thrive worldwide as well.
- Massachusetts is 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation for direct-farm sales (\$136 million in 2015, according to the USDA's Local Food Marketing Practices Survey)
- Americans spend 10% of income on food purchases

### **Social Role:**

- Historically, farmers' markets helped drive the development of communities
- On average, a customer has 15-20 social interactions at farmers' market, versus just 1-2 at a grocery store
- Farmers' markets are places where neighbors can gather and meet; build friendships and community

### **Civic Role:**

- Shopping and vending at farmers' markets are both communal activities
- Volunteer involvement – the volunteer opportunities markets provide can be the beginning of work in food policy and supporting the local food system for individuals
- Farmers' markets promote healthy eating opportunities, which contribute to better educational and work outcomes
- Farmers' markets present opportunities to connect with community partners and activists

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## Partnership Exploration document

Use this as a guide when building a partnership with another organization. Change the highlighted parts as needed to fit the document to your market.

### Partner with the Farmers' Market?

We at the [redacted] Farmers' Market want to make sure our fresh, healthy food reaches the whole community. We also want our market to feel welcoming for shoppers of any backgrounds and income.\*

We are looking to partner with [town name] organizations that share our goals of food access and community.

Can you help us brainstorm how we can work together?

Questions for you:

1. What is your organization's mission/goal?
2. How does the farmers' market meet your organization's goals?  
*(Examples: healthy food access, tabling and socializing, kids' activities)*
3. How could you help the farmers' market meet our goals?  
*(Examples: clients looking for healthy food, board to hang farmers' market flyers on ...)*
4. Any other ways could we work together?  
*(Example: hosting a SNAP educational session that directs people toward the market ....)*

