Ohio Farmers Market Association
Business Planning Training
November 11-12, 2019

Day One: Theme – Nuts & Bolts of Business Planning for Farmers Markets

8:30 a.m.  Registration & Light Refreshments

9 a.m.  Introductions & Setting the Stage

9:30 a.m.  Session 1 – Operations and Management
We will be providing an overview of the various types of management structures and then diving deeper into the operations of a market: the importance of robust market rules, bylaws, and how to create very clear expectations for both market management and vendors.

10:30 a.m.  Session 2 – Business Structures
In this session, we will lay out various business structures and go into the pros and cons of each. Do you want to be a non-profit or for-profit entity? What are the tax implications and financial reporting requirements of each?

11:30 a.m.  Hands-on
In this working session, we will break out into smaller groups of similarly sized or structured market operators to discuss, and start to work on or review, market rules and by-laws.

12:15 p.m.  Lunch & Networking

1 p.m.  Session 3 – Risk and Crisis Management
Let us take a deep dive into preparedness at market. We will give you the tools to assess risk at your farmers market from food safety, to extreme weather, to site-specific vulnerabilities. We will talk through ways to reduce these risks and how to develop a crisis management strategy so you can be prepared for when the unexpected occurs.

2 p.m.  Session 4 – Financial Planning for Farmers Markets
This session will cover basic accounting concepts for market operators. We will help you work through a budget of income and expenses and talk about how this budget can help you plan for the future.

3 p.m.  Hands-on
During this working period, we will take the lessons learned in the previous two sessions and begin to apply them to our individual markets. We will review the risk assessment checklist, start on a crisis management plan, and start to fill in a budget spreadsheet.

3:45 p.m.  Session 5 – Branding and the Local Foods Movement
What is branding and why is it important? What type of market are you? Who are you currently appealing to, and who do you want your customers to be?

4:45 p.m.  Hands-on
In this final working session of the day, you will answer some of these branding questions for yourself and your market. There will also be some time to revisit previous worksheets.

5:30 p.m:  End on Day One/Networking
Day Two: Theme - Working Towards a Successful, Sustainable Farmers Market

8:30 a.m. Welcome Back! Light Refreshments

9 a.m. Recap of Day One, Roadmap for Day Two

9:15 a.m. Session 6 – Who are Local Foods Customers, What is Important to Them, How to Reach Them
Let us look at the different types of local food customers. What do they care about and how do we get them to shop at our farmers markets?

10:15 a.m. Session 7 – How to Conduct Community Research and Create Outreach Strategies
How well do you know your community? What diet-related health issues are prevalent, and is income a barrier to shopping at the market? Who can you rely on as strong community partners who will spread the word and advocate for the success of the market? It is important to do your research. In this session, we will dive into the data and think about how we can use it to strengthen the market and the community.

11:15 a.m. Hands-on
We will create a robust spreadsheet of potential partners and learn how to use Google Maps as a tool to visualize assets and to more efficiently pound the pavement.

Noon Lunch and Networking

1 p.m. Session 8 - How to Evaluate Your Marketing Strategies and Make Changes
No one wants to waste time continuing outreach and marketing efforts that just are not working. But, how do you know? In this session we will discuss how to create campaigns that have measurable impacts and how to evaluate their effectiveness once implemented.

2 p.m. Session 9 - How to Support Your Farmers to Be Successful
What support can you provide your farmers to encourage their success in your markets? Display feedback, market buy-in, trainings, etc. This session will help you look at your market with a critical consumer eye and provide some best-practices to boost sales.

3 p.m. Hands-on
Let us think through a measurable marketing campaign together and brainstorm some ideas for boosting sales across the market.

3:45 p.m. Putting it All Together

4:30 p.m. End of Day Two/Go Home