

SATURDAY MORNING MARKET VENDOR SUCCESS GUIDELINES (August 2008)

INTRODUCTION

The Saturday Morning Market is the result of the grassroots efforts of individuals committed to developing a creative community spirit in downtown St. Petersburg. The Market has achieved remarkable success in fulfilling its mission, becoming the largest fresh market in the southeast United States. But more importantly, it's brought a vibrant energy to our city that is transformational.

The Saturday Morning Market is held weekly on Saturday mornings in downtown St. Petersburg.

- It is located in the parking lot of Al Lang Stadium, at the corner of 1st Ave S and 1st Street.
- The market is open to customers from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

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INTRO

The purpose of this section is to share guidelines for successfully vending that we've learned from experience, and from studying other markets. Our intention is to help you continuously grow, and enhance your success.

- The key principle is that booth setup and appearance and customer interaction is as important to success as the product being sold.
- These guidelines describe our recommendation about how products can most effectively be displayed, and how to build effective relationships with customers.
 - They describe the factors that are used to evaluate new vendor candidates.
 - In addition, they are intended to help existing vendors improve their displays.

PERSONAL SERVICE

A primary reason for the popularity of markets is that they represent a friendly and personal way of shopping. A successful market represents a community setting that is like what one might find in a village – you know the shopkeeper by name, you get personalized service, and you enjoy running into your friends and neighbors. We want to nurture this vision of community.

- Greetings – Initiate interactions with customers with a big smile, direct eye contact, and a warm hello.
- Cheerful Attitude – One way to create a positive atmosphere for customers is to have a playful and relaxed attitude yourself.
- Business Cards – Having a business card helps communicate a professional image.
 - It also enables satisfied customer to tell their friends about you, as well as remember your name.
 - They're available at office supply stores for a nominal cost. (\$13 – 25)
- Learn customer's names - It's often easier to ask a customer their name, if you are wearing a nametag. You may want to keep a simple log to help you remember them over time. You can also note any personal details or preferences about them.
- Appearance - Depending on the type of product you have, it pays to 'look the part'. Think about how you can use your personal appearance to complement your products.

BOOTH APPEARANCE

Creating your booth setup can be a challenging but creative process.

- Turning a good display into a great one is often a process of making continuous small improvements. Be committed to experimenting and discovering little enhancements on a regular basis.
- If you're a first time vendor, practice setting up your booth before coming to market.
- If you are a veteran vendor, it's important to constantly explore any improvements you can make.
- We'd be glad to offer suggestions about ways to enhance a booth appearance or how to design signs that are effective.

Product Display

- Product Setup - Products should be displayed in an organized and attractive manner.
 - Use color and accessories (such as flowers or plants) to give your display visual appeal.
 - Explore how to use boxes, pedestals or shelves to create a tiered effect on a tabletop.
 - Plan out how to cluster and display products so the effect doesn't appear cluttered.
- Table Cloth - Your tables should have an attractive colorful table cloth. This helps with both the overall appearance of the booth, and enhances your product display.
 - An inexpensive and attractive option is a solid color twin bed sheet.
 - The cloth should hang down several feet off the front of the table. This is both more attractive and helps to hide anything that may be stored underneath.
 - The table cloth should be in good condition, clean and unwrinkled.

Signs

- Product Signs - Consider having a fairly large sign that provides describes what is unique about your products e.g. vegetarian or low fat food, or personal care products made with all natural ingredients.
 - Possibilities include a standing table top sign, or a sign on an easel stand or hanging from your tent.
 - Sign lettering should be large enough to read from a distance.
 - Consider using an attractive erasable sign to list featured products or price specials.
- Price Signs - All products should be labeled with a price. This might seem obvious, but it's a common problem at markets.
 - It's frustrating for customers to have to ask about products or prices as they move from table to table.
 - If you have a product, where the price changes weekly, an erasable sign will save work.
- Business Sign - We recommend putting up the name of your business (if you have a name). It helps people to remember you more clearly (even if they never learn your name).

Weather Protection:

- Sun Protection - A large umbrella or tent can dramatically affect your comfort.
 - Your tent or umbrellas should be clean and in good repair.
 - Sunscreen and a hat are also valuable sun protection.
- Bad Weather - Be prepared for bad weather, even if it's brief.
 - If it rains, you will want to have appropriate covers for your merchandise close at hand.
 - If it's windy, stabilize your tent or umbrella with gallon jugs of sand or water.

Pricing

- Pricing Strategy - Research shows you'll sell more using multiple unit pricings (like 3 for \$1.00). Oddly enough, people will buy more of something at 2 for \$1.00 than they will at 45 cents each!
- Something for Free - People like the idea of getting something for free. A technique for selling slow-moving items is to offer "*Buy two, get one free*".
- Late Day Discounts - Food vendors with perishable items are welcome to offer discount prices to vendors or customers at the end of the market day.