

# Marketing Basics

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*From her book, on Marketing, "Beyond the Sidewalks"*

I thought I'd share with you what I think are the critical essentials for really making a difference in your marketing. Of course, I've talked at length about these things in my newsletters and in my books, but today is a reminder of how to stay on track.

**1.)** Recognize that marketing is one of three legs of a successful business. The others are to have a good product and the financial category (capital, record keeping and taxes). It takes time. It's easy to get bogged down in the day-to-day care of the animals and the creation of the products you sell. But your marketing needs your attention and time. How much time? Depends on how much income you want from your business. More income, more time on marketing.

**2.)** No one succeeds without some solid goal setting. A good idea is something like "I want more sales." A goal, on the other hand must be specific and have a time line. "I want to sell ten animals by June 2010." See "Growing Your Rural Business: From the Inside Out," the second of my marketing trilogy for a goal setting exercise that is easy, fun, and VERY effective!

**3.)** Learn the first principle of marketing which is that marketing is not about you! If you're talking about your stuff and yourself, you potential customers are saying, "What's in it for me?" If you are not telling him why his life gets better in some way with your product, you're not reaching his self interest. He's the most interesting thing in the world to him. You HAVE to reach him there or you never catch his attention. I tend to belabor this point because it's the most important "trick" to marketing and the hardest to learn!

**4.)** Learn how to write good ads. Copywriting is the art of writing about your business and what you are selling (using the above First Principle). Copywriting has been around for over a hundred years and it's a well-defined science with clear rules for writing ads that catch attention and get you customers. See any of my books and oodles of my past newsletters for the rules and ideas for writing better headlines and attracting more customers.

**5.)** If your farm business is a real business and you claim it as such on your taxes, the IRS may one day audit you and it will be your responsibility to convince them it's NOT a hobby, but a real business. One of the best ways to do that is to show them your Marketing Plan. What? You don't have a marketing plan? Oops.

Chapter Five in "Marketing Farm Products: And How to Thrive Beyond the Sidewalk" contains a template for the easiest marketing plan I ever came across. It is, however, just one idea for a marketing plan. Create your own. It needs to cover all the kinds of marketing you can possibly do, have info about the person in charge, deadlines and notes about its execution and effectiveness. That will help keep you square with the IRS.

**6)** When a potential customer comes to your farm, remember that the point is to serve his needs. Customer SERVICE!!!! How do you do that? Be friendly and visit so you get to know him. How can you serve him if you do not know what serves his needs? And you discover that through chit chat and asking questions that get him talking about himself, like:

"Tell me what you're looking for?"

"Would you mind telling me what you're looking for from goats (alpacas, emus, horses, organic produce, fiber art, goat milk soap, etc.)?"

"Tell me about some of the \_\_\_\_\_ you've already looked at."

If he feels that you care and you understand his hopes and dreams, he's FAR more likely to be your customer.

OK, there's a lot more to marketing effectively. But if you only did the above five steps you'd see a huge difference in your business bottom line!

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