

Sagamore Farmers' Market "Green and Lean" Branding Campaign

To increase customer awareness and the economic viability of the Sagamore West Farmers' Market by initiating a proactive "Green and Lean" branding program that encompasses vendor outreach, customer activities, and advertising efforts. The objectives include implementing innovative approaches to market operations and management by attracting and retaining producers and farmers through increased communication and a renewed sense of partnership; improving access to relevant marketing and financial information; and expanding consumer-based education and market access by implementing and aggressive "Green and Lean" advertising campaign and outreach effort that promotes healthy eating, physical fitness and personal safety.

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Final Report FMPP Sagamore West Farmers Market

1. Project Summary. The goal of the Sagamore West Farmers Market grant was to expand the market's customer base, increase its economic vitality and ensure its long-term success by initiating a "Green and lean" branding program which encompassed vendor outreach, customer activities, and advertising efforts.

During the 2008 and 2009 market season the Sagamore West Farmers Market participated in an aggressive advertising campaign including the purchase of large banners, street pole banners, Burma shave signs, postcards, market bags, radio, and newspaper ads.

Shopper demographics information was collected as part of the customer reward program. A reusable market tote bag was given to each customer that visited the information booth three times during the market season. This promotion strengthened customer loyalty while promoting the "green and lean" brand.

2. Project Approach. Sagamore West Area Business Alliance Market Advisory Committee (SWABAMAC) was formed in 2008 and included market volunteers, city representatives and vendors. Several meetings were conducted to discuss the requirements of the grant including the "lean and green" campaign logo, placement of signage, vendor outreach, customer activities and advertising. It was determined that a vendor representative be chosen and voted on by vendors during the annual call-out. Having a vendor representative ensured that vendors participated in decisions regarding the week-to-week operations at the market. Market bag designs, vendor rewards and customer incentives were discussed at each meeting with input provided from all involved.
3. Goals and Outcomes Achieved. Sagamore West Area Business Alliance (SWABA) has been involved with the market since 2005 selling sodas to raise funds to purchase balloons for children who visit the market. In 2009 SWABA members purchased the grill used for grilling demonstrations (see below) with produce donated by the vendors. SWABA also purchased pop-up tents for market volunteers to use during market operations while signing up guests for their market bags. SWABA members routinely volunteer at the market to assist in the data collection for the market bag promotion.

Grilling demonstrations were conducted once each month during the 2008 season and are scheduled on the third Wednesday of each month for 2009. Amy French, the market culinary expert, prepared different healthy entrees each month to compliment available produce while also providing copies of each recipe prepared.

The Go Greener Commission of West Lafayette has partnered with the market volunteers to have a drop-off sight for florescent light bulbs, rechargeable batteries, used prescription hearing aids, eye glasses and sunglasses. By taking advantage of this convenient drop off location, market guests can keep these items out of landfills and into the hands of those who will benefit from their donation.

Go Greener also sponsored a "ride your bike to the market" day in May 2009 with representatives from Hodson Bay Bike Shop to cover bike safety, equipment and maintenance. With market growth and the addition of vendors, the West Lafayette School Corporation was receptive to the market's growth and allowed us to conduct market operations on school land and also use their parking lot for vendor and shopper parking.

INShape Indiana, Governor Mitch Daniels' web-based health initiative program, participated in the market and gave away pedometers during the 2008 season.

Wabash River Runners club conducted two 5K walk/runs during the 2008 market and has a 5K scheduled the third Wednesday of each month during the 2009 season.

Tri County Trap Neuter & Return (TNR), whose mission is to reduce the feral and stray cat populations through a low cost community program of trap-neuter-return, is scheduled to attend in July and August to collect food for the pet food pantry.

Each week, two market spaces are provided free for various non-profit organizations to raise funds or awareness for their group. Members of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension and Tippecanoe County Family Nutrition attended the market to provide information regarding the Food Pyramid and healthy eating for all ages.

Tippecanoe County Women Infant Children (WIC) will be attending the market in July 2009 to discuss the WIC program as well as provide nutrition information.

Tippecanoe County Bloodmobile collected blood donations three times in 2008 and is scheduled for 3 events in 2009. The Coalition for Living Well After 50 utilizes a booth to provide information for our senior guests at the market regarding healthy eating and exercise programs available in the area.

Both the West Lafayette Police and Fire departments visited the market to discuss personal safety. Also, each organization provided information and demonstrated equipment each department uses routinely.

West Lafayette Public library is scheduled to attend the market three times during the 2009 season for children's story time.

4. Beneficiaries. Advertising through different venues has provided for increased attendance and increased sales for vendors. Over 70% of the vendors returned from the 2007 season for the 2008 market, and 80% of the vendors returned from 2008 to the 2009 season. Over 55 spaces are rented for the 2009 market with a waiting list of 4 potential vendors.
5. Lessons Learned. A reward system for vendors was established for those that participate at the market on a consistent basis. Permanent spaces were given to those vendors who attended the market 75% of the time during the 26 week season. A number of vendors qualified for a permanent position based on their attendance for each of the two years studied. Not only did vendor attendance improve, but market sales improved with each year. Activities geared for the "green and lean" campaign significantly improved market attendance. Grilling demonstration were some of the most widely popular among the consumers, as were those relating to healthy eating and fitness.
6. Additional information available (publications, websites). The Sagamore West Farmers Market can be located on the city of West Lafayette's website at <http://www.westlafayette.in.gov/departments/division.php?fDD=8-164>. Throughout 2008 and 2009 we wrote, published and distributed by email a "market newsletter" highlighting a different vendor each time. We also included recipes directly relating to produce currently available. Copies of the market newsletter and photographs of the market during various stages

of operation are included. In addition, a Facebook page was created for the "friends of the Farmers Market." At the time of this writing, the Facebook account had 136 "friends."

7. Description of the people, organization, marketing entities and/or communities that have benefited from the projects accomplishments. The community as a whole has benefited from having a market which brings a variety of fresh, locally grown produce from spring through fall. Residents of HUD, senior and assisted living facilities such as Friendship House, Westminster Village, Green Tree and George Davis have access thanks to the proximity of the market to the trails which connect various housing demographics. Each of the non-profit organizations that are given space at the market benefit from distributing information regarding their group and using the market space to generate funds. The vendors have the most direct benefit from the farmers market in revenue gained from consistent sales.
8. Contact person for the project. Kathleen Mills 765-464-1953 kathleen.mills@comcast.net

















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