

Branding Worksheet for Small Farms

Fill out this worksheet as completely as you can. Once you've completed it, ask a few trusted customers if it matches their perceptions of your business. Your final worksheet will contain words and messages to help you build a strong brand for your farm.

YOUR STORY

- WHO is farming or producing?
- WHERE are you farming, producing or selling?
- WHAT are you farming or producing?
- HOW are you farming (or producing) (methods, techniques, or approach)?
- WHY are you farming (or producing)?

Sum up your story. In 2-3 sentences, describe who you are, what you offer, and why you exist.

YOUR NICHE

Your Customers (If you serve more than one type of customer, answer questions for each type.)

- **Demographics:** Write down everything you know about your customers' age, sex, race, education level, marital status, children living at home, zip codes, etc.
- **Problems/needs:** Are they trying to eat healthy? Cook gourmet meals? Cook the foods they grew up eating? Make healthy meals their family will enjoy? Are they on a tight budget? Do they need advice about how to prepare your products? Do they want to spend time on a farm? Have a fun or educational experience? Meet new people?
- **Summary:** How do you solve their problems or meet their needs? Example: Cloverleaf Farm gives our CSA members the opportunity to support their local family farm, get a wide selection of fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables, and be part of our farm community.

Your Peers/Competitors (List the top 3-5.)

- **Competitor #1:** How are you similar? How are you different? What do you do better than them?
- **Competitor #2:** How are you similar? How are you different? What do you do better than them?
- **Competitor #3:** How are you similar? How are you different? What do you do better than them?
- **Summary:** How are you different/better than your competitors?

Sum up your niche. In 2-3 sentences, summarize your customers and how you meet their needs differently or better than the other farms in your area.

Brand Personality. If your farm was a person, which 3-5 adjectives would your customers use to describe you? (If you don't know what they'd say, ask them.) **Examples:** Red Rose Farm is youthful, innovative, and opinionate. XYZ Farm is fun, helpful, and energetic. Waterville Farm is structured, classic, and conservative.

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Descriptor. (Optional.) A short phrase (3-8 words) that you'll use with your name and logo to describe who you are or what you do. A descriptor is especially helpful if your name isn't self-explanatory. Can be used in addition to or instead of a tagline. **Examples:** Grass-fed meat from the Valley. Conscientiously grown produce. A third-generation family farm.

- **Longer Description.** You may want to add a few words to your descriptor to create a 25-word, a 50-word, and a 100-word description that you can use on your website, social media, etc.

Tagline. (Optional.) A short, catchy phrase that you'll use with your name and logo to inspire a positive association for your customers. A tagline should convey your farm's spirit or purpose. **Examples:** Apple: Think Different. Kashi: Seven whole grains on a mission. Campbell's Soup: Mmm good. Disney: Where Dreams Come True.

Key messages. List the 3 most important concepts, facts, or statistics that you most want people to know or think about your farm or products. Are you a fourth generation family farm? Certified organic? Producing heirloom tomatoes? An escapee from Wall Street? Seeking to create community?

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Once you've come up with the words you'll use to talk about your farm, you can use them on everything, including your website, signage, and social media. You can also give this worksheet to a graphic designer to help you develop a logo, a color palette, a typeface, and images that reflect your brand personality and values.

Everything that you and your employees do should consistently share the same attitude, look and feel. Your customer service and operations can also help you build a strong brand.

Here are some of the items that you should review to make sure that they consistently reflect your brand.

- Signage
- Product cards
- Postcards/Rack cards
- Website
- Social Media
- Emails
- Operations
- Employee outfits or accessories
- Customer service