

MODULE 6: How do you talk to consumers about your locally grown food?

Module 6: How do you talk to consumers about your locally grown food? - Part 2

*Understanding communication strategies

*Telling your own story and talking to consumers about your locally grown food

*Talking about local food

It seems like people are less connected to agriculture today; yet in recent years consumers have become more interested in learning about their food and farmers. Producers and consumers do not always speak the same language though and at times, the public and the agricultural industry have struggled to understand each other. This module will equip you to tell your story to improve producer and consumer relations.

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Understand methods of storytelling as a way to connect your products and farm to consumers and the media
2. Identify effective ways to share your story
3. Frame your story to match you audience
4. Incorporate into your draft story into your promotional plan

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Pertinent symbols and behaviors



Activity → This symbol denotes the start of an activity.

Italicized and indented text designates instructor material and does not need to be read as a script.

Materials you will need for this module:

- Easel pad or white board for you to record participant objectives for the day or any prevalent issues or questions
- Tape (for Easel pad pages to be posted visible to the class. If you use white boards, you will need to have enough space to keep information visible from previous exercises throughout session before erasing at the end.)
- Speakers for audio in presentation videos
- Markers for white board or easel
- Pencils or pens for participants
- Activity worksheets
- Evaluations

Time for module presentation with activities

- 1 hour and 15 minutes

Begin Module

Slide 1 – Title

Hello. My name is _____. I work with the _____ and will be your facilitator for this presentation. Today we will bring your communications one step closer to being a fully developed promotional plan. I believe that you'll find this information enlightening and useful as you conduct your business in the future.

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Slide 2 – Review

Today brings us to the end of our discussions on marketing local food and developing a promotional plan for your business. In our previous sessions we have discussed many things including the motivations, barriers, and markets for the purchase of local food. We've discussed using words and images to develop your brand and your message. Your brand prompts individuals to think of your company and its products. Once developed, this name, logo, or other mark should immediately cause viewers to think of you.

We also spoke of **framing** to use words and images to help your audience more easily understand your message, recall your business, and see your message in a desirable light.

Slide 3 – Review (continued)

Later we discussed the advantage of various methods of communicating your message. We also talked about how to create a personalized brand or use an existing brand and the traits of effective marketing plans. Finally, we talked about various types of communication you might utilize to get your message out to your audience, such as transparent communication, two-way communication, and risk communication.

Slide 4 – Agenda

Let's take a look at today's agenda and overview.

Review housekeeping notes, such as restroom location and other general information and instructions.

Today we will discuss developing your story. This takes your message to the next level. Your story is the story of your business. Your story can help you with various audiences. A well-developed story can assist you in helping your employees understand your goals and can improve your relationship with current and potential customers as well as improve community engagement. After fulfilling these objectives, we will summarize our activities and complete our evaluation.

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Slide 5 – Objectives

1. Understand methods of storytelling as a way to connect your products and farm to consumers and the media
2. Identify effective ways to share your story
3. Frame your story to match you audience
4. Incorporate into your draft story into your promotional plan

Slide 6 – Video 1

To start thinking about telling your story, we are going to watch a short video of a farmer telling his story.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbPKHb1SOfM>

Source: <http://www.whyifarm.com/>

Slide 7 – Crafting Your Story

Telling your story and being able to share it successfully is important because it will help people make an emotional connection with you and your business. If you can elicit a positive emotional response from individuals, they will be more likely to remember you, your business, and how you made them feel.

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Slide 8 – Three Elements to Develop your Story

Let's talk about some tips that you can use to develop your story. There are three core elements that you need to pinpoint to help you develop your story.

First, who is your **leading character**, the **protagonist**?

Second, what is the **goal of your story**? What is the leading character trying to do?

Finally, what **barrier** is standing in the way of the leading character accomplishing the objective?

Your protagonist can be you, your business, a partner or family member, or any of a number of individuals associated with your business. Your goal, of course, is what you are trying to accomplish with your business. This might be short- or long-term, or a step for your entire business or a single product line.

Slide 9 – Video 2

Here's another example of a core story using these three elements. As you watch the video, make note of the leading character, the goal of the lead character, and the barriers the lead character had to overcome.

Show video to provide example. Tell participants to try to identify the three elements of a story as the video is playing. You will go over those elements after the video in slides 10-13.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSJgxrFKG0I>

Source: <http://www.whyifarm.com/>

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Slide 10-13 – Identifying the Elements

As you were watching the video, who did you identify as the leading character? What goal or goals was the lead character trying to reach? What barriers/challenges did the lead character face?

Allow the participants to volunteer to share what they think are the story elements from the video. Reveal one slide at a time. Participants may think of other story elements that are not listed here.

1. *The leading character: Narrator/Farmer*
2. *The goal: Preserve farm, provide for children*
3. *The barrier: Husband's death, skeptics*

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Slide 14 – Exercise A



Refer to Exercise A worksheets found after the module portion of this document for instructions and materials.

The purpose of this exercise and those that follow is to allow participants an opportunity to begin working on a message for consumers of their product. These exercises are designed to build on the information from previous sessions. Additionally, each of today's exercises are a step toward a first draft of a message for the participant's promotional plan. Although each exercise should prove helpful to participants attempting to complete their promotional plan, the exercises become increasingly vital. Should time constraints require that an exercise be limited or eliminated, consider adjusting Exercise A first, then Exercise B. Exercise C is the final step for this series and should be fully conducted if at all possible.

Let's try an exercise to help you get started on your story. Please look at your Exercise A worksheet. To start developing your story, you'll need to first develop the core elements that you see on the screen. I would like for you to take a few minutes to write your core elements in the blanks provided. This should be a short sentence or phrase like the example on your worksheet.

After you finish your elements, you'll be asked to share your draft and get feedback from one other participant. Please remember that this is a first draft and no one expects perfection. The purpose of this exercise is for you to draft your idea and get feedback from session participants. This is an opportunity to get ideas from others that may have an understanding of your concerns and goals.

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Slide 15 – A well-developed story general includes

The three elements we just discussed is the core of your story. Naturally details must be added to help your audience understand the rest of the story.

A well-developed story generally includes:

- Expressive details
- Multiple obstacles
- Logical progression or action
- A worthy goal

Descriptive details help your audience understand your story. They see the heart of your efforts through the details you include.

Having multiple obstacles, rather than a single barrier in your story, helps you draw your audience into your story and builds tension those hearing your story can feel.

The progression of your story should be logical. This will help the audience follow your story easily and understand it.

As we mentioned a few minutes ago, you must have a goal. But realistically, this goal must be one that is worthy in the eyes of the audience. Remember you are trying to elicit a positive emotional response from those hearing your story. If your goal is not worthy, your audience may fail to establish the connection you are hoping for.

Telg, B., Jones, J., & Telg, R. (2015). Story Development. EDIS (WC215). Retrieved from <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/wc215>

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Slide 16 – AABT

A simple way you can deliver your story is to use the AABT method of organizing it.

AABT: Means And, And, But, Therefore.

This method will help you add the details of your story in a way that is understandable to your audience.

The first “And” helps you connect points of your story in a way that helps the audience picture you and your business and your goal.

The second “And” prompts you to add more details to your story so your audience has a clear understanding.

The “But” leads you to convey your challenge or roadblock you are trying to overcome.

Finally, the “Therefore” tells how you plan to overcome your problem and the result you hope for.

In some cases you may even want to develop a story about how you actually overcame a major challenge in your business. These same steps can be used for any subject matter or time frame.

Slide 17 – Example story version 1

Let’s look at an example of a story that is written using the AABT method. If you were a nursery owner wanting to tell potential customers about your nursery’s history, your story might go something like this.

Read the example.

I am a small farmer who runs a 4th generation strawberry farm **and** I am trying to save my business. My small farm is facing increasing costs, competition, and labor challenges **and** finding a way for the our farm to be more profitable is essential, **but** I have been unable to find solutions that improve the income of the farm. If I do not find significant cost reductions our family farm will have to close. My family enjoys our strawberry farm and wants to maintain our business. **Therefore**, I am seeking to expand our operation to a u-pick for the last few weeks of our strawberry season.

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Slide 18 – Exercise B



Refer to Exercise B worksheets found after the module portion of this document for instructions and materials.

This exercise is designed to build on Exercise A to bring the participant closer to the fully developed story for potential customers.

Let's take a few minutes to work on a story for your business. Please look at your Exercise B worksheet. For this exercise, you'll want create your story details while incorporating your core elements from Exercise A. You can make changes based on feedback if you like.

I would like for you to take a few minutes and use the AABT method of adding detail to your story to insure that your new draft has the additions needed to help it become a well-developed story.

Use the space provided on your worksheet to draft your details. After you finish, you'll be asked to share your draft and get feedback from one other participant. Again, remember that this is a first draft and no one expects perfection.

The purpose of this exercise is for you to draft your idea and get feedback from session participants. This is an opportunity to get ideas from others who may have an understanding of your concerns and goals.

Slide 19 – Sharing your story

Finding an effective way to share your story is essential for your promotional plan. Sharing your story can be difficult for many people. Having a well-developed story prepares you to share your story and enables you to tailor your story to share with your audience.

Remember that you are attempting to get your audience to connect with you and your business. This means that your story must include a primary thought that people in your audience can relate to.

Telling your story to those within your industry or community may be easier as these people are more likely to share your values and understand your ideas. You may have to alter your story for audiences from outside these groups who do not have this understanding or who possess different interests.

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Telg, B., Jones, J., & Telg, R. (2015) Letting them in: Sharing your story with people outside of your industry. EDIS (WC216). Retrieved from <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/wc216>

Slide 20 – Sharing your story (continued)

Tailoring your story means you must analyze your audience.

We have discussed methods of doing this previously. You may want to review Module 4 for information on ways to analyze your audience. You should learn as much as you can about your audience and their interests so you can tailor your story to show how your business relates to their concerns. Try to match the various points of your story to the audience you want to reach with your message.

Slide 21 – Sharing your story (continued)

Remember that people will be unlikely to remember all the details of your story. Picking a special point that you want people to remember will help you focus. This is the message that should create the emotional connection with your audience, and is the primary message you are conveying.

You'll need to emphasize that message strongly. People will remember the feeling you create more than the details of your story. All the details of your story should point to this core message.

Telg, B., Jones, J., Telg, R., & Raulerson, B. (2015). Storytelling through social media. EDIS (WC218). Retrieved from <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/wc218>

Telg, B., Jones, J., & Telg, R. (2015). Face-to-face storytelling. EDIS (WC217). Retrieved from <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/wc217>

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Slide 22 – Example story version 2

Here is an example of a story that does not target the message to the audience. We will use a version of the strawberry story we discussed before.

Read the story.

I am a small farmer who runs a 4th generation strawberry farm **and** I am trying to save my business. Running a profitable farming business has gotten more challenging in the last 5 years. My small farm is facing increasing costs, competition, and labor challenges **and** finding a way for the our farm to be more profitable is essential, **but** I have been unable to find solutions that improve the income of the farm. If I do not find significant cost reductions our family farm will have to close. My family enjoys our strawberry farm, it's who we are, and it's important that we maintain our business. **Therefore**, I am seeking to expand our operation to a u-pick for the last few weeks of our strawberry season.

What is wrong with this story?

The story has all the elements of development. There is a lead character, a goal (keeping the business open), and a couple of challenges (roadblocks to the main character fulfilling the goal). What is the message the owner wants to tell?

In this version of the story, the owner seems to provide more detail about the challenges faced by his farm. While this is good information, it is not likely to connect to the story in its current form.

How could the story be revised to connect with the audience?

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Slide 23 – Find the audience’s interests

What would the general public be interested in as it relates to this farm?

You will find interests as you analyze your audience. You may uncover problems they may be experiencing, services they need or concerns they have related to your business. In the case of this story, the owner might appeal to the community. If the story is aimed at the people in the community that purchase strawberries, the story could be retold to emphasize the community.

Slide 24 – Example story version 3

Read the story.

My family and I own Charlie’s Strawberry Farm. Farming, the smell of fresh strawberries, and spending time outside with family has always been our way of life. But our way of life has faced uncertainty in recent years, as it has become more challenging for small farmers to stay in business. We are fighting to save our business so that we can continue to share our fresh Florida strawberries with you and your family. We take great pride in our community and enjoy greeting visitors with a friendly smile, a sweet treat, and fun-filled day of adventures on the farm. Many of our customers leave with their pick of fresh Florida strawberries, smiles, pictures, and memories to last a lifetime. We want you and your family to experience the beauty and taste of farm fresh strawberries. Come spend a day with us and make memories on the farm.

In this version of the story, we see it has been re-written to appeal to the audience. However, it still has the 3 elements of a good story: the lead character, the goal, and the barrier. It also has good organization which was built from the A.A.B.T. method.

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Slide 25 – Exercise C



Refer to Exercise C worksheet found after the module portion of this document for instructions and materials.

This exercise is designed to build on Exercises A and B to bring the participant closer to the fully developed story for potential customers.

Let's take a few minutes to work on a story for your business. Please look at your Exercise C worksheet. For this exercise, you'll need to incorporate your input from exercises A and B. You can make changes based on feedback. This exercise will let you continue developing your story.

I would like for you to take a few minutes to put together a cohesive story using all the points we talked about today. Your major point should match the audience interests. Use your details to support your key point and create a feeling of connection between your business and the audience.

Please remember that this should not be a very long paragraph, as we want people to remember and comprehend each of your elements. You can use the space provided on your worksheet to draft your story. After you finish, you'll be asked to share your draft and get feedback from the group.

Again, remember that this is a first draft and no one expects perfection. The purpose of this exercise is for you to draft your idea and get feedback from session participants. This is an opportunity to get ideas from others that may have an understanding of your concerns and goals.

When participants complete their draft, ask everybody to share their work one at a time. Constructive feedback should be solicited after each draft is shared.

Slide 26 – Summary

Today we have accomplished a great deal. You have worked on creating a well-developed story for your business. You have made your story more meaningful to your audience. Combined with the work you have done in other modules, you should have a basic understanding of how to create a promotional plan for your business.



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Slide 27 – End

I hope you have learned something that may help you get your piece of the multi-billion dollar local food pie.

Next pass out the promotional plan worksheet found in overview document and instruct participants to fill out the section corresponding to Module 6.

Please distribute your evaluation at this point and designate a collection point. If you wish for your participants to complete an electronic evaluation they can complete the evaluation at this link https://ufl.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cViFg2Yb9aXkjqZ. In the electronic evaluation, the participants will be required to enter the name of their instructor as well as the date that they completed the workshop. You can obtain the results of the electronic evaluation by emailing piecenter@ifas.ufl.edu or calling 352-273-2598. For questions contact Dr. Joy Rumble at jnrumble@ufl.edu or calling 352-273-1663.

END MODULE

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Exercise A – Instructor Worksheet

Overview: The purpose of this exercise is for participants to begin working on a message for consumers of their product. The exercises in this module are designed to build on the information from previous sessions. Additionally, each of today's exercises is a step toward a first draft of a message for the participant's promotional plan. Although each exercise should prove helpful to participants attempting to complete their promotional plan, the exercises become increasingly vital. Should time constraints require that an exercise be limited or eliminated, consider adjusting Exercise A first, then Exercise B. Exercise C is the final step for this series and should be fully conducted if possible.

Materials:

- A copy of participant worksheet for Exercise A for each participant
- A pen or pencil for each participant

Time:

- 5 – 7 minutes for participants to complete worksheet.
- Approximately 5 minutes for individuals to share their answers with another person.

Instructions: To start developing your story, you'll need to first develop the core elements (listed below). Please take a few moments and use the space provided to write a short description of your three elements. Following the completion of your elements, share your input with one other person and give/receive feedback. An example is provided.

Elements

1. Who is the lead character (the protagonist)?
2. What is the goal of your story? What is the lead character trying to accomplish?
3. What roadblocks or barriers must the lead character overcome?

Example:

Lead character: Alberta Gator, a 5th generation farmer who grows citrus and strawberries to sell at a local farmers market.

Goal: To show my customers how I grow my crops and the passion and hard work I put in to getting them a great product.

Roadblocks: Many challenges come with agriculture- pests, weather, etc.

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Exercise B – Instructor Worksheet

Overview: This exercise is designed to build on Exercise A to bring the participant closer to the fully developed story for potential customers.

Materials:

- A copy of participant worksheet for Exercise B for each participant
- A pen or pencil for each participant

Time:

- 5 – 10 minutes for participants to complete the worksheet.
- Approximately 5 minutes for individuals to share their answers with another person.

Instructions: This exercise will allow you to continue to develop your story for your potential customers. Using the components of a well-developed story and the AABT method to add details, write these components of your story that you would like your customers to hear. Following the completion of your components, share your input with one other person and give/receive feedback.

A well-developed story generally includes:

1. Expressive details
2. Multiple obstacles
3. Logical progression or action
4. A worthy goal

And is organized using the AABT method:

1. And
2. And
3. But
4. Therefore

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Exercise C – Instructor Worksheet

Overview: This exercise gives participants the opportunity to complete their story using all of the components from Exercises A and B.

Materials:

- A copy of participant worksheet for Exercise C for each participant
- A pen or pencil for each participant

Time:

- 15 minutes for participants to write a short paragraph
- Approximately 3 minutes per participant for individuals to share their paragraph with the audience and give/receive feedback.

Instructions to participants: This exercise will allow you to continue to develop your story for your potential customers. Put all of the elements together from Exercises A and B to create a cohesive story, and tailor the message to potential customers. Your primary concept should match your audiences interests as well as what you want them to remember about your business. Remember that this is your first draft and the ensuing feedback will be helpful when you finalize your story. Following the completion of your story, you will be asked to share your draft and have the opportunity for feedback from other participants.

My story:



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Evaluation for Module 6

For the following statements, please answer by circling a number where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, and 5=strongly agree.

	Before Workshop					After Workshop						
a. I understand the concept of storytelling.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
b. I can identify the 3 elements of a good story.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
c. I understand what makes a good story.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
d. I can apply storytelling techniques to promote my products.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

What are the three most important things you feel you have learned in this module?

What have you learned from this module that you plan to implement in the next year?

The amount of time spent on this module was: Too Short Just Right Too Long
 (Please circle one)

The amount of material covered in this module was: Too Little Just Right Too Much
 (Please circle one)