



# Mastering Marketing

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

SPRING 2008

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- New Ag Marketing Website
- Grass-fed Mentoring
- Ad Copy
- Why Blog

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Equal access programs

## New Ag Marketing Web Site

Looking for information about alternative agricultural and natural resources enterprises? Working on your marketing plan and need help with product pricing? There is a new web resource that provides timely information on such topics as value-added products, sustainable marketing opportunities, information for new and beginning farmers, and a host of links and resources for agricultural and natural resources entrepreneurs.

While many articles, publications, and links have already been posted, the site is still under development. Through an on-line survey on the site, you can contribute suggestions for additional materials and topics. Your input is valuable and appreciated.

Please visit <http://agmarketing.umd.edu>, browse the site, complete the brief survey, and bookmark this site for future reference.



# Ag MARKETING

## MD Grazer's Mentoring Network

The Maryland Grazers Network, is paying experienced cattle or dairy grazers to work as mentors with farmers wanting to improve their grazing systems or begin a grazing system (farmer partners). Project elements include:

Pilot project – This is an effort to develop a new and strong mentoring program for grazers

that includes marketing of grass based beef as a significant element.

Improving the bottom line \$\$\$ - A major element is to carefully track costs and sales to ensure that new or improved practices/systems/marketing benefit the farm financially.

Grazing and water quality – Improving pastures should not

only improve the bottom line \$, but also help improve water quality in nearby streams.

Marketing – Once a strong grazing system is in place, the project will provide expertise to help farmers market grass fed beef to enhance farm profitability.

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# Elements of a Good Advertisement

When it comes to your business, you may not want to "go with the flow!"



Going with the flow may take you where you don't want to go. A good business plan will help you navigate your business around the obstacles.

Assure your business' success by preparing a business plan. *NxLevel* will help by providing you with business planning classes.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn what you need to know about keeping your business afloat. Call today!



**Business Training Classes**  
1234 Main St., Downtown  
811-555-1234

← The **HEADLINE** grabs attention

← An **ILLUSTRATION** may pull more readers than the headline does. Make sure it works with your message.

← A little **TEXT** that sells the benefits or shows how to avoid problems

← **INTERACTION / ASK**

← **NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER** - Now they want to talk to you!

*Source: "Marketing Ohio Outback Economic Development Roundtable 8 April 2003," Julie M. Fox*

"To have the greatest impact from the money you invest in advertising, focus on your unique selling points."



## ...MD Grazers Mentoring Network

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Funding for the project is being provided by the Chesapeake Bay Funders' Network (CBFN) which includes several funders in the Bay region who are pooling a portion of their resources to collaboratively support projects that improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay..

For more information contact either:

Michael Heller, Chesapeake Bay Foundation at mheller@cbf.org or 301-627-2549

Elmer Dengler, NRCS, elmer.dengler@md.usda.gov or 800-384-8770 x333

# To Blog or Not to Blog

With 100 million blogs already online, you may feel the last thing the world needs is one from your farm. You're a farmer, not a writer. Is adding a blog to your webpage worth the time and effort? Yes.

First, Google, the great arbitrator of web success, has a particular love for blogs and its search engines favor websites that are updated frequently and linked to other webpages. Given these criteria, blogs have an outsized influence on the results.

Blogging is an effective and very cost effective marketing tool. Your farm should blog because it's an easy and time-effective way for you to get your story out to your customers.

Repeat customers come to you because of the relationship you've established with them and a blog is a perfect way for you to communicate real-world farming scenarios with them such as "farming challenges" or share "today on our farm" stories.

It takes some time and energy to produce effective



blog posts that tell a compelling farm story. But, consider it may be read 100s or even 1000s of times over the life of your blog.

One website where you can quickly and easily establish a blog is [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com). There are also many others available online.

*"A surprising 66 percent of North American consumers trust blogs as a source of product information"*

*2007 Nielsen Survey*

# "One-Step" Marketing Strategy

The "one-step" marketing strategy is the most common marketing strategy used by small business owners and it's a big money waster.

It consists of an ad, flyer, or other marketing vehicle that simply announces the business name, possibly a few features about the product, and ends with contact information.

Unless you are offering an extremely high-demand, hard-to-get product or service, this marketing strategy usually results in little or no response. This strategy totally disregards the

"psychological buying sequence" of consumers." It's very much like walking up to a stranger at a party and asking "Would you marry me?"<sup>1</sup>

Instead, decide what target audience you are trying to reach since these are the people who will make your marketing strategies most effective.

Armed with this knowledge, you can develop your product and marketing strategies in an organized manner rather than arbitrarily.

<sup>1</sup> "13 Costly Mistakes-Part 1" Joe Garcia, Give-to-Get Marketing



## The Inside Quote

***"Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work."***

*--Peter Drucker*

## FYI ...

### How Did that Business Get Started?

Bud Blackburn was a farmer when his Uncle Ray, a land surveyor, came to him with an idea. In the 1940's, surveyors used heavy lath sticks to mark their work. Ray thought a light weight flag would be more efficient. Bud spent almost four years developing, in his spare time, a machine to produce small plastic flags on a metal stake. In 1953, he opened Blackburn Manufacturing with his father and uncle on the family farm in Nebraska.

Blackburn capitalized on niche markets, first making flags for soil and water conservation districts to mark off terraces, and later adapting to the utility companies color codes, such as red flags for electrical lines and green flags for sewer pipes. Without leaving it's niche market, the company also offered accessory products, such as colored tape and marketing paint.

When you see small plastic flags at construction sites, by utilities, or in landscaping projects, chances are Blackburn Manufacturing made those flags.

The **Mastering Marketing** newsletter is produced and edited quarterly by **Ginger S. Myers**, Regional Extension Specialist - Ag Marketing, at the Western Maryland Research and Education Center (WMREC). Ginger can be contacted at [gsmyers@umd.edu](mailto:gsmyers@umd.edu) or 301-432-2767 x338.

Find more resources and tips on agriculture and natural resources marketing at <http://AgMarketing.umd.edu>

To find out more about WMREC or to subscribe to this newsletter, please contact Cindy Mason at:

University of Maryland  
Western Maryland Research and Education Center  
18330 Keedysville Road  
Keedysville, Maryland 21756-1104  
Phone: 301-432-2767  
Fax: 301-432-4089  
[cmason@umd.edu](mailto:cmason@umd.edu)



## Useful On-Line Marketing Resources

### Agricultural Marketing Services @ USDA – Farmers' Markets

This site is a one-stop source of information provided by the USDA about farmers' markets. Topic areas include: promotion programs, resource guides, funding for markets, new developments and trends, farmers' markets statistics, and direct-to-consumer market outlets.

For more information visit:

[www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/](http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/)

### Small Farm Central

The Small Farm Central web software system is an outgrowth of Simon Huntley's experience with his own CSA website that receives over 20,000 page views annually. The service uses advanced web programming and databases to allow farms to collectively share the cost of development and give each farmer a data-base driven website for their farm.

Small Farm Central designs and publishes inexpensive, professional websites for direct-marketing farmers.

For more information visit:

[www.smallfarmcentral.com](http://www.smallfarmcentral.com)