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**Fresh Focus: Public Relations Plan for Chapel Hill Farmers Market**

**October 3, 2024**

**Submitted To:**

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| **I: Executive Summary** |

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The Chapel Hill Farmers Market is an important part of our community that offers fresh, locally sourced products. It provides local farmers and small businesses a place to connect with residents, placing a strong emphasis on sustainability. The wide range of local vendors has earned the market a loyal customer base, and there is significant room for growth through upcoming opportunities, such as the completion of nearby construction projects, the building of new apartments, and expanded outreach efforts.

Despite all the market has to offer, it faces several challenges in its efforts to be the best it can be. Ongoing construction at University Place Mall has led to parking issues and misconceptions about access, potentially turning away customers. The lack of a permanent structure adds logistical challenges for the market and vendors, especially in inclement weather. Additionally, confusion between the Carrboro Farmers Market and the Chapel Hill Farmers Market affects its branding.

To address these challenges, we recommend a solid communication strategy that boosts the market's visibility and strengthens community engagement. The following pages detail our plan to help the Chapel Hill Farmers Market achieve its goals. This plan includes a structured social media approach with regular posts highlighting vendors, events, and seasonal produce, along with an updated newsletter to keep subscribers informed and engaged. We also plan to revamp the media list to reach new audiences. By focusing on high-quality content and improving media outreach, the Chapel Hill Farmers Market can build strong brand loyalty with a wider consumer base.

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| **II: Business Goals** |

The Chapel Hill Farmers Market continues to be a vibrant part of the city, offering fresh, locally sourced goods to its customers, but the organization needs a strategy for increasing customers and profit. Due to construction and space constraints, the market is facing logistical obstacles but is dedicated to offering an inviting environment for both vendors and the local community. The primary business goal for the market is to draw in more customers in order to maintain the market’s growing reputation and to guarantee that the sellers are making more consistent profits by selling out consistently on market days.

A major challenge affecting the market is the ongoing construction at its location in University Place Mall —both about parking and misconceptions about access to the market. Logistical challenges are also added as the market does not have a permanent building, which forces vendors and staff to set up and break down every day the market is open. Building a unique and individual identity is also a challenge due to persistent confusion between the Chapel Hill Farmers Market and the Carrboro Farmers Market. Differentiating is essential in long-term development and public visibility.

The market is facing funding concerns, especially regarding their “Double bucks” program. There is inconsistent promotion and awareness for this initiative, which helps low-income community members by doubling the purchasing power of customers using EBT cards. The market is actively searching for new donors, grants, or any other resources that can help keep this program up and running.

The market also understands how critical it is to improve communication within the community. Potential means to achieve this goal are social media and media list updates, vendor spotlights, expanding the volunteer program, updating the newsletter, and doing a general increase in community outreach.

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| **III: Communications Audit** |

Public information about the Chapel Hill Farmers Market, spanning social media, the website, and media coverage, generally left consistent tones and messages, which were mostly informational.

* **Website**: The Chapel Hill Farmers Market website includes basic information such as location, hours of operation, participating vendors, and upcoming events. It emphasizes local and sustainable produce and community engagement.
* **Social Media**: The market is active on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, sharing vendor highlights, seasonal produce updates, and event information. Posts are generally informative and community-oriented.
* **Media Coverage**: Media coverage, while minimal, is mostly positive, focusing on the market’s role in supporting local farmers and fostering community connections. Articles often highlight special events or feature stories about individual vendors.

* **Press Release:** The Chapel Hill Farmers Market occasionally issues press releases, usually focused on special events or new initiatives. Expanding the frequency of these releases to feature key vendors, products, and community programs could help increase the market’s visibility and reinforce its role in promoting local agriculture.

Social media seems to be their main way of connecting with people, and it’s working well, with plenty of likes, comments, and shares. The market also has some positive media coverage, but they could always benefit from more, as it would get the word out further about the market. Highlighting this coverage in newsletters or social media posts could help strengthen their community ties even more.

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| **IV: Recommendations** |

Based on insights gained from discussions with the Market’s leadership team and reviewing the organization’s current communication strategies, we recommend enhancing the consistency and engagement of the market’s messaging. Our recommendations focus on developing clear and captivating content across platforms to drive community engagement and increase market visibility. Key components that we are prepared to create include:

* **Social Media Content:** We plan to create a structured social media template and plan a consistent posting schedule to increase the market’s online presence and community engagement. This plan will include:
  + Three Posts per Week: Aim for a mix of content featuring vendor highlights, upcoming events, and fresh produce availability to keep the audience informed and engaged.
  + Twelve Posts per Month: Ensuring consistent activity on social platforms like Instagram and Facebook, focusing on seasonal themes, sustainability tips, and customer stories.
  + B-Roll/Graphics and Picture: Utilize high-quality images and graphics to showcase the variety and community of the market visually.
  + Captions and Hashtags: Carefully crafted captions and the strategic use of trending and localized hashtags will help improve visibility and reach.
* **Updated Newsletter Template:** To increase subscriber engagement and make communications more visually appealing and effective by adding an engaging header and modernizing the tone of the newsletter.
* **Media List Update:** We will review and update the media contact list to ensure that more relevant outlets are included, enhancing the effectiveness of future press outreach.

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| **V: Timetable & Hours Allocation** |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | October | | | | November | | | |
| 9/30-  10/5 | 10/7-  10/11 | 10/14-  10/18 | 10/21-  10/25 | 10/28-  11/1 | 11/4-  11/8 | 11/11-  11/15 | 11/18-  11/21 |
| Social Media |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Newsletter |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Media List |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Hours Allocation:**

Social Media Planning/researching for content creation 6 Hours

Content creation 10 Hours

Captioning (including hashtags and 2 Hours

relevant information)

Newsletter Designing a newer more modern template 2 Hours

Updating the header 1 Hours

Updating language 5 Hours

Media List Researching contacts 8 Hours

Updating the list 2 Hours

**Total 36 hours**