

Building a Web-Based Farmer Network: Is It As Easy As They Say?



Marketing and Food Systems
Initiative and Value Chain
Partnerships Workshop
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Our Objective

- ▣ To build a dynamic statewide farmer business network with 150 members whose major business is to produce specialty farm and food products.

Assumptions We Made

- ❑ Utilizing a committee will help think through what should be a part of a web-based network site.
- ❑ We should be able to set up the web site with little or no money and a little bit of time.
- ❑ Web sites are easy to set up and easy to learn.
- ❑ Maintenance of site can fit into the Director's regular job.
- ❑ Members are our priority to help generate income for the web site.

Reality Check

- Utilizing a committee will help think through what should be a part of a web-based network site.
 - Assisted in identifying elements of a successful web site
 - Identified possible web designers
 - Reviewed proposals/quotes for designing site
 - Developed a mission/vision for network
 - Approved a new logo
 - Assisted in developing a two-year strategic plan

Hard work, not easy but very helpful!

Reality Check

- We should be able to set up the web site with little or no money and a little bit of time.
 - Costs for design and maintenance for one year ranged from \$4,500 to \$15,000
 - **We had \$1,800!**

EASY??



Reality Check

- Easy to set up/easy to learn – who say's?
 - Do you go with the lowest priced web hosting company? We chose *InMotion Hosting*
 - <http://www.inmotionhosting.com/>
 - How do you choose one?
 - Different benefits and features
 - Business Class
 - Security
 - Plug-Ins

Reality Check

- How do you get a domain name?
 - Do you own it or does the company who registers it actually own it?
 - Registering name so no one else can take it
 - Used Network Solutions
 - <http://www.networksolutions.com/>
- Using a web template, will it work for your design?
 - Tried and moved on

Details-details-details!!!!

Reality Check

- Maintenance of site can fit into the Director's regular job.
 - Pictures
 - Content
 - Programming
 - Promotion
 - Value
 - Update, update, update



No, not easy to fit into an already busy Director's job!!!

Reality Check

- Members: mission and money!!!
 - Who will be responsible for the members?
 - Is the content enough to bring value to your members?
 - Is the cart-system working to collect dues or sell items?
 - Technical support for the members

Conclusion

- ❑ The Network is on the web
 - www.growmarketfarm.com
- ❑ We are in a scary time
- ❑ Two years of grant/startup support are absolutely needed and \$20,000 was more realistic



Contact

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