



## Front Porch Event – Fast Facts

### Lavender Marketing Plan

**Held on:** August 10, 8pm EST Supporting slides and Fast Facts Summary can be found [here](#).

**Featured Panelists:** **Trish Dennis, Owner Indigo Lavender Farms and Danielle Lee, Marketing/Event Coordinator Indigo Lavender Farms** Click [here](#) for panelist bios.

**Facilitators:** USLGA Education & Research Committee, Barbara Cesiro & Mary Pilotte

**Tech Lead:** Jenny Connors

**Event Goal:** Marketing a business is a necessary and steady process for any business to succeed. A well-planned and consistent Marketing Plan is vital. The panel of Trish and Danielle, moderated by USLGA Education & Research Committee Co-Chair Barbara Cesiro share beneficial marketing frameworks and practical on the farm best practices in lavender marketing.

#### Terms used during the event:

- **Content Calendar** – A planning calendar outlines what marketing content will be created and released in a given time frame (month/week/day), through what modality (i.e. social media platforms, website, “push notices”, etc.). Content calendars are a planning and organizing tool for your marketing roll out.
- **Customer Avatar** – A customer avatar is a detailed profile of your ideal customer. ([www.einsteinmarketer.com](http://www.einsteinmarketer.com))
- **Demographics** – Aspects of a person’s personal identity, such as age, gender, occupation, etc.
- **Psychographics** – Aspects of a person’s lifestyle, interests, modes of recreation, etc.
- **Statista.com** – A webservice hosting statistics on a wide range of topics, who offers free accounts. Can be a good source to conduct market research for your location, products, etc..

#### Key Points Summary:

- **Effective marketing of your products is a key element of successful lavender farming.** Elements of a professional marketing plan include: developing a strong brand, conducting market research (on the industry, target customers, and competition). This becomes the foundation of your business.

**Brand/Style/Image** – using a consistent color and style pallet is critical for creating an impactful brand.

- **\*Pro-tip\*** – The use of the **online tool/website CANVA** can be a low cost tool to develop a consistent and compelling brand image used on products, signage, media, etc..

- Indigo Farms reported that getting the “just right” packaging at the right price points was one of their greatest challenges. Starting with home printing, evolving over time, with help from local professionals/suppliers. People notice the style and feel, color pallet and a cohesive look.

**Research** – a range of low/no cost options exist to gain customer research, including asking customers for feedback, or utilizing a tool like statista.com, which can provide detailed data on product preferences, etc..

- **\*Pro-tip\* Indigo Farms** – While encouraging the use of professional marketing frameworks and approaches for market research, they found that **going through Etsy sites** looking for similar products helps them keep in touch with pricing, novel packaging and consumer appeal.

**Target Markets** (and products that serve them) can be identified from data gathered through experience and data resources such as Statista.com.. **Indigo Farms** started small, and figured out quickly their primary customer was women.

**Competition** - understanding what others are selling and what price points helps you focus on your target market.

- **\*Pro-tip\* Indigo Farms** – takes “day trips” to retailers with samples to help promote wholesale sales opportunities and relationship. Indigo Farms shared that they do not consider other local lavender farms as competition, but rather collaborators within a cohesive group to help elevate the appeal of lavender in their region. They attempt to set apart from the “big box” retailers, by telling their story, and creating a personal connection.

- **The 4- P’s is a framework that can be helpful planning activity/worksheet** in establishing an effective marketing plan.

This framework examines product, price, place, promotion aspirations, by EACH target market segment, keeping in mind that a decision in one area has a direct impact in all of the other “p”s.

- **\*Pro-tip\* - Indigo Farms** was not originally open to the public, but now is a vital agritourism location. They suggest doing all you can to encourage visits to your farm. Once there, visitors begin to consider farm products for gift giving, the value of future visits/events, etc.
- Indigo Farms is in a remote and lower SES area, so setting pricing was tricky, and based on promoting the small batch, unique, all-natural approaches found on their farm (vs. large corporate options).

- **SWOT Analysis is a reflective activity that examines current attributes of your business**, specifically analyzing the unique strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with your existing operation.

- **Social/Email marketing plans must utilize a range of marketing options/outlets**, include careful planning/execution with the use of a content calendar.

- **\*Pro-tip\* – Utilize known holidays and seasonal activities** that connect to your farm operation to begin to inspire your content calendar well in advance of needing it. Keep it simple to start, then build upon and alter the calendar year over year, to adjust to resource availability, shifts in market trends, profitability and budget.
- **\*Pro-tip\* Indigo Farms** suggests that a key to strategic marketing is choosing the right audience, then **carefully selecting the best media outlet for reaching that audience at their “best time of day”** to consume the media. Ex. To reach busy moms and professionals, they launch media at 7am or 7pm; before the busy day starts, or at a time in the evening when there is a moment to unwind and catch up.

**Social media** is a huge area to master, creates significant value but also requires a time and attention. These options can help avoid other costlier approaches like newspaper or Facebook ads, unless deemed appropriate.

- **\*pro-tip\* a high quality video can be achieved at a low cost** by utilizing tools you may already have on your computer, such as Microsoft video editor, or online at Vimeo to name a few.

- **\*Pro-tip\* - Indigo Farms** utilizes Facebook Meta to schedule social posts during downtime/slower times. It generates sample posts, and even reports engagement stats as well to help with learning customer viewing habits. Remember, it is also ok to repeat messages – not every post is read. They also suggest that **taking pretty pictures from around the farm “sells” the brand**, and really speak to their target audience and help them connect *and act*. Taking LOTS of photos daily just using a cell phone camera, allows images to be available for quick social outreach, without having to create a lot of text content. In addition, consider the use of tools within your website or point of sale ap (Ex. Square) to automate as many contact lists, communication campaigns, promotions, reservations, etc. without having to handle each individually.
- **Revenue streams & Return on Investment**
  - Indigo Farms offers a wide range of products, services and events to meet a variety of customer needs. Their approach is **price transparency, and their customers appreciate that.**
  - **\*Pro-tip\* - Indigo Farms** suggests really understanding the labor inputs/demands for each type of revenue stream, which may cause you to consider more professional tools to assist – or altering how your event or services are offered. (Ex. Offering weddings as a venue, but not including catering, etc..)

#### **Pulse Poll questions and corresponding results from the attending audience**

Question#1: How many platforms do you sell your products/services on currently?

*Audience response: 1 59% 2 24% 3 17%*

Question#2: Do you currently have a Marketing Plan, or set of written strategies to position your business, products, services in the marketplace?

*Audience response: No 76% Yes 24%*

Question#3: Whether you currently have a marketing plan now or not, what portion of your marketing plan do or would you find most challenging to write down on paper?

*Audience response: Social Media 24% Branding 12% Market Research 20% AP's 20% Return on Investment 24%*

Question#4: What do you think is the top social media site for agritourism?

*Audience response: Instagram 48% Facebook 45% Pinterest 7%*

#### Q&A Summary:

- No easy way to deal with annoying pop-up comments or solicitations in Instagram, other than to monitor and remove/block. **\*Pro-tip\* - Indigo Farms** has pre-empted fraudulent event ticket sales/resales by posting to their audience that only tickets sold through their site would be honored.
- Indigo Farms **migrated from a self-managed website to a professional premium web service**, in part to manage their content, forms, and event bookings. This has offered them both operational efficiencies, as well as accuracy. This website along with Point of Sale Square, has also been their tool for email capture and follower lists, while also embedding regulatory elements for unsubscribing, etc.
  - To date, they have not found a need for a tool such as Constant Contact or such enterprise client resource mgmt.. software, as Square continues to roll out value-added tools in their platform.
- Indigo Farms has found that **Radio/Newsprint can have a small/local place for annual target audiences/events** (Ex: Girl Scout; Hometown summer supplements; etc.) however they utilize it sparingly (include a coupon?) and strategically – taking care to stick to their marketing budget and plan. **\*Pro-tip\* - Indigo Farms DO tell the newspaper** [info@uslavender.org](mailto:info@uslavender.org) • [www.uslavender.org](http://www.uslavender.org) • [www.facebook.com/uslavender](https://www.facebook.com/uslavender) • 317-678-7542 pg.3

editor that you want to **stay on their notification of special supplements**, even if you can't participate in the year they reach out to you. You may want to participate NEXT year!

- Coming up with content for social media can get tiring/daunting. **\*Pro-tip\* - Indigo Farms** draws upon their cache of impromptu photos on those days. Sometimes a single picture is worth 1000 words alone.

Other Event Notes:

Max Attendance during event – 74