

**Umbrella Marketing  
Campaign for Washington,  
D.C. Farmers Markets:  
Strategic Implementation  
and Key Considerations**

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# Primary Issue

The **lack of unity** among D.C. local vendors is leading to underperformance and inefficiency, and a marketing plan that encourages unity and coordination will be the most effective solution to this.

# Analysis of Market Factors

## Internal Factors

1. Market fragmentation
2. Lack of coordination
3. Missed opportunity to expand customer base

## External Factors

1. One-stop retail stores (like Kroger and Walmart) advertising their products as “local”
2. Mainstream and online marketplaces providing “local” items, competing with local farmers and vendors

## Goal:

To increase the customer base, and shift from internal competition among farmers markets to a united front that competes with other food retailers (like grocery stores) for customers who might have previously not considered shopping at a farmers market.

# Building the foundation



## Become competitive with other food retailers

3 Once a foundation has been laid, and a strong brand image created, consumers will see this coalition of farmers markets as a viable alternative for their food and home needs.

## Marketing campaign

2 Enact token campaign, restaurant week, and other similar events to build a united brand and drive sales and bring in new customers.

## Coalition-building

1 Create infrastructure that supports collaboration between vendors

# Strategic Alternatives

How can we address the lack of unity among vendors, and address the lack of coordination and market fragmentation?

## Three potential strategies

### Online Platform and Umbrella Branding

Unify vendors and create an online platform for easy access and communication

Est. costs: website and database development, app development, data analytics

### Token Program

Create a “token program” to be used to purchase items from all participating vendors

Est. cost: volume based (purchasing tokens)\*

\*This program will be paid for with a fee applied on a percentage basis to all vendors.

### Restaurant and Vendor Networks

Organize a local restaurant partnership initiative to encourage collaboration among local producers, restaurants, and consumers.

Est. cost: promotional materials and advertising costs

## Which strategy will be most effective?

In order to create a foundation for the other two initiatives, it is **most critical to create unity between all vendors in the form of a GWFMA online platform.**

- Introduce positive incentives for cooperation
- Encourage collaboration among vendors
- Feature easily accessible online platform to communicate dates, times, and locations. Simple and convenient.
- Provide support for smaller vendors with less resources
- Implement umbrella marketing campaign

We must attempt to **combat competition between farmers markets** and instead focus on **capturing consumers** who are deciding between farmers markets and one-stop stores.

## **Additional branding and messaging recommendations**

- Partnerships with other vendors (collaborating on recipes. etc)
- Passport program
- Festivals / events that bring vendors together
- Branded reusable totes to promote sustainability and more purchases
- Programming centered around sustainability

## Secondary strategy: Token program

Initiating a token program will universalize the ability of vendors to accept various payment methods

- Increase sales by allowing customers to purchase tokens using their credit / debit / EBT / SNAP cards
- Exchange tokens as a unit of exchange for goods at all vendors' stands
- This is not a source of revenue (the exchange rate is \$1 to \$1, or \$1 to \$2 in the case of Bonus Bucks)
  - Fee rate based on token prices
- Redemption rates can be used as an indicator of sales



Lexington's token program allows individuals to make purchases even if they don't have cash or if they are paying with SNAP/EBT, allowing smaller vendors to accept these forms of payment more easily.



This is essentially an expansion of the "Bonus Bucks" program

## Secondary strategy: Restaurant week

Given an expanded budget, the creation of a restaurant week that encourages vendors to work with more local restaurateurs will be an innovative way to encourage further collaboration in the local food system.

- Vendors will have the opportunity to partner with restaurants, challenging chefs to create new and exciting menu items using local foods
- Expand customer base to include more repeat wholesale purchases
- By integrating local items and cuisine, consumers will recognize the vibrant food culture of DC.

All the best restaurants are cookin' up \$27 three course dinners – even two can dine for \$27 at a bevy of local hot spots.

All the Restaurant Week specials – every course – inside the links right here.

✓ Archa Nine Thai Kitchen	✓ The Ketch
✓ Athenian Grill	✓ Le Deauville French Bistro
✓ AZUR Restaurant	✓ Lockbox at ZIC
✓ Brasabana Cuban Cuisine	✓ Malone's – Hamburg
✓ Buddha Lounge	✓ Malone's – Lansdowne
✓ Carson's Food & Drink	✓ Malone's – Palomar
✓ Charlie Brown's Restaurant	✓ Merrick Inn
✓ Coles 735 Main	✓ Minglewood
✓ Columbia Steak House	✓ Nick Ryan's
✓ Corto Lima	✓ OBC Kitchen
✓ County Club	✓ Palmers Fresh Grill
✓ Distilled (at the Sire Hotel)	✓ Pasta Garage Italian Cafe
✓ Dudley's On Short	✓ Proud Mary BBQ
✓ Holly Hill Inn	✓ Red Light Kitchen & Lounge
✓ Honeywood Restaurant	✓ The Sage Rabbit
✓ J. Render's	✓ Sutton's Restaurant
✓ Jean Farris Winery & Bistro	✓ Walker's of Lexington
	✓ Zen Sushi & Sake

Minglewood | 859-523-1236 | North Limestone Street

### \$27 Chef Special

**1 I'm High on Cheese** – cheddar and parmesan pimento cheese topped with pickled jalapeño, served with grilled bread or **The Wedge** – crisp iceberg, creamy roasted garlic and parmesan dressing, cherry tomato, cucumber, fried banana peppers

**2 Jamaican Shrimp Cakes** – pan fried shrimp cakes topped with chipotle aioli and watermelon and tomato salsa or **Green Pork Chili Tacos** – green chili tomatillo braised Marksby Farm's pulled pork finished with jalapeño infused mesclun macerated blueberries and avocado creme or **Fried Chicken Hot Brown** – wheat toast, city ham, tomatillo chutney smoked cheddar mornay, spinach and bacon crumble (\*VGT/VGN opt avail)

**3 Donut Holes** – dusted in cinnamon, nutmeg, sugar and cayenne with dark rum blueberry sauce, sorrelle gelato, chocolate hemp seeds or **Kentucky Breakfast** – Knob Creek smoked maple whiskey and rumchata on ice

# Applying the solution

## Implementation

1. Gather vendors and explain the benefits of banding together
2. Explain the necessity of a fee that is based on a percentage of sales
3. Enact marketing efforts to position farmers markets as an alternative to grocery stores
4. Implement token program
5. Facilitate partnerships for Restaurant Week

## Evaluation

- What was the pre-implementation vs. post-implementation attendance at each market?
- Did this reduce cannibalization in existing markets?
- Did vendors engage in collaboration?
- Did smaller operations see gains from this strategy?
- Did vendors report increased sales offset the fees paid to support umbrella marketing, the token program, and other initiatives?
- What was the attendance at Restaurant Week? Did partnering restaurants continue to order from vendors?

## Replicating this model in other locations

- Data can be used to compare income and other demographic factors to provide insights about new market strategies
- Tools are versatile and can be adapted to meet timeline and budget considerations
- We based many of our ideas on the marketing efforts in place in Lexington, Kentucky
  - Despite the differences between markets, the strategies we have defined are ubiquitous and can be successfully replicated

# Questions

## Sources

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