



Fall 2020 Newsletter

The New York Small Scale Food Processors Association (NYSSFPA) was formed to represent and inform all small-scale food processors. The organization's workshops educate by mentoring, teaching marketing, connecting farmers and processors for value-added production, and guiding food-entrepreneurs in the use of current approved processing practices.

NYSSFPA is composed of the following officers and committees:

President: Kathrine Gregory

Treasurer: OPEN position

Secretary: Deb Krajcik

Communication Committee: Ashley Rossi (Chair), Deb Krajcik, Andrew Dufresne, Kathrine Gregory, Beth Linskey, Nicole Borukhov

Education Committee: Alicia Lührssen-Zombek (Chair), Maria Grimaldi, Stephen Hadcock, Kimberly LaMendola

Membership Committee: Bob Bleistein (Chair)

Newsletter edits and design by: Bhavna Punjwani, Kathrine Gregory

SmallScaleNY@gmail.com

Have a question?

Need some info?

Email us and you will receive a response from one of our board members within 72 hours (remember we are all volunteers and running a business also)

Please add this email address to your contact list to receive our Quarterly Newsletters

Bi-Weekly E-blasts with Time Sensitive Information

CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS? OR EMAIL?

Please remember to let us know so that you don't miss receiving important information.

Send us an email with the update to

SmallScaleNY@gmail.com

President's message

As we hear about increasing cases of infection and hot spots, there is the inclination for all of us to crawl into bed and pull the covers over our head. This is not the mindset (the 'mission') of a foodpreneur! When we decided to go out on our own, we made a commitment to ourselves to be proactive, to forge ahead knowing that the road might be rocky or have some terrifying twists. The pandemic is one terrifying twist and the "noise" surrounding the upcoming election is another bend in the road.

WE CAN NOT sit still. There are interesting opportunities out there, new ways of doing business and potential new partnerships to form. There are many grants being offered by foundations, free webinars to attend, ways of doing business we just never thought about.

This issue of the newsletter is about getting out there and doing it-being true to our vision and product and taking our passion to succeed in a different direction.

I know all of you will forge ahead

Always

Kathrine

Kathrine Gregory *President, NYSSFPA*

CONTINGENCY PLANNING (AND GETTING READY FOR THE HOLIDAYS)

This year running a business will require thinking out-of-the box by being aware of new purchasing trends by consumers. Your primary concern is to generate enough revenue to keep your business operating. That means staying afloat through all the changes; being able to evaluate what will work for you and to act on it. Over-planning in this economic flux is not the best nor is planning for 3 years from now.

Where do I get my inspiration:

My first resource is others...small manufacturers, my purveyors, gourmet store owners/buyers, magazines, and other resources. Before I make a decision to act, I want to get some information-this should not be a long process, maybe two weeks at most. It is intense, as you will be calling/speaking to many people and assessing where they see a need.

I have spent a lot of time speaking to the Farmer Market Organizers to understand how they are running their markets safely and what type of products they want. The fact that they will not allow sampling is a big deterrent to enticing new customers. So how do you solve this? Make the commitment to sell at a particular market for a length of time to build a following. Hand out small sealed packages as samples which the potential customer would taste at home. The sales for the first few weeks will be low as many people may be hesitant to buy a bottle of your hot sauce without tasting, but you have the opportunity to sell using your words and sample recipes. They will come back the following week to buy since you have created the need. i.e. hot sauce sample-small portion cup taped closed, include a few recipes, and of course your contact info. Encourage a pre-order with pick up at the market. Make sure that you also include any stores which carry your product and the dates when you will be at the farmer's market. Another option at the farmers markets is to partner with a fellow vendor who has a complimentary product. See if you can sell some of their products and they can sell some of yours. What about creating a gift basket together with other processors in your neighborhood. "A taste of the ..."

I mentioned magazines/webinars; One magazine that I particularly like is Food processing Magazine. www.FoodProcessing.com You can get a monthly copy in print or the digital edition. I have found many of their articles worthy of sending to others. What about all the webinars? There are so many being offered, some free, some for a modest cost. I particularly like those being hosted by the Specialty Food Association. They have a library of the old webinars you can view and new webinars are being offered every week. <https://sfa.classroom24-7.com/courses>. The Queens Economic Development Corporation offers a video library of the many webinars they hosted <https://videos.queensny.org/videos/?mode=private>.

What about your purveyors? They will have issues restocking certain items or may be looking for out-of-the-box ways to sell. A prime example is Baldor Specialty Foods www.baldorfood.com. They lost a lot of business because their restaurants customers were not operating, while they continued to sell to small processors and grocery stores, they needed to generate revenue in a different manner. They are selling direct to the consumer via online ordering with a \$400 minimum. Talk to your suppliers and see how you can partner.

This year is the time for online sales/ordering with delivery to the home. If your website is not equipped with a shopping cart you may want to investigate the cost but, in the meantime, you can easily change a tab on your site and offer online ordering. List your products, the prices, and the shipping charges. Have them email you directly or call you to place an order-remember the personal touch is a desired commodity right now; that friendly, positive-toned voice on the phone is creating a connection for you. Take their order and process it thru your merchant (Square or any other service you use). There are many online ordering services (see last month's newsletter about working with an online ordering service). Reach out to them, there are fees, but it is a way for you to gain sales and acquire new customers.

Of course, we have to worry about expenditures:

Here are a few suggestions for trimming expenses which you do while you are generating sales on your best sellers.

Take an inventory of all your ingredients-look to use some of your perishables quickly, can you make cookie dough and freeze it? Can you create a few recipes using your perishable food for the 'Fuel the Frontline Programs' you may get paid for the cost of ingredients and create some good publicity at the same time? Speak to your landlord and see if you can reduce your rent at the present time, offer to add the unpaid rent to the end of the lease. Reduce unnecessary electric use. Power down unused computers and condense refrigeration to one box.

Trim your menu selection making just your best sellers, so you don't have to buy ingredients and carry the cost for slow sellers.

Going forward...The term PIVOT has become ubiquitous-everyone is using it. Those who can pivot are those who can make lemonade out of lemons. But that is something food processors have always been able to do; after all we rely on Mother Nature to supply us with the base. Some years she is generous in the berry crop yield other times she is not-what do we do? Make lots of jam in the good years and make cakes sprinkled with berries in the lean years.

I know you can do it; we will all have great stories to tell a year from now. Possibly be a more profitable business from the lessons learned. Stay safe, Stay positive.



Ashley Rossi, *Communication Committee Chair, NYSSFPA*

TIME MANAGEMENT

By the time you are reading this newsletter, late fall, the Holiday season will have begun. Yes, I am too, holding on to the summer! This year, for our Fall newsletter, the board at Small Scale thought it would be poignant to include a segment on time management around the holiday season. Time management is always important, no matter the time of year. But time management around the holidays is even more critical, and now, compounded by the ongoing health crisis we are facing, planning our time is paramount.



If you talk with other small-scale producers, you will hear stories about packaging shortages, delays on shipping, prices increasing, etc. Supply chains everywhere are being challenged. So, what can we do to be better prepared for the most important selling season? We will discuss a few time management strategies, but first, here are a few questions to ask yourself and your business partners now:

1. What does our current inventory of products look like?
2. Should we produce more products now, before the holiday season starts rolling in?
3. Do we have enough packaging materials to get our products on the shelf, or out the door for online sales?
4. Do we have enough product packaging, product labels, shipping boxes, stuffing, or wrapping paper?
5. What disruptions do I anticipate to my personal schedule due to COVID-19? Homeschooling? Aging parents?
6. What disruptions do I anticipate for my products / supply chain/ current processes due to COVID-19?

Take a total inventory and start placing the orders soon. Good time management involves planning and thinking ahead. Thinking about possible disruptions to our lives with COVID is hard to do, it seems unpredictable. But with some thinking and strategizing you can avoid the hiccups. All of these questions will help you manage your time better over the coming months, and to get the orders for your supplies in time.

The 3-Minute Rule

One of the age-old practices for time management that I employ is called the “3-minute rule.” The 3-minute rule is simply this; if a task comes across your desk or into your mind, ask yourself, can I complete this task in under 3 minutes?

If you can, you should complete the task right away and move on. If you think the task will take longer than 3 minutes, then you should add it to your agenda for the end of the day, or just a different time when you can tackle it, like the next day, or next week. The 3-minute rule applies to all aspects of our lives, from business to personal.

Time Blocking

Another time management strategy that we can employ all year round, but especially around the holiday season, is called “Time Blocking” or “Time Chunking.” This practice is about scheduling your day in blocks or chunks of time, and making your workday more effective because you are working on certain things and certain hours of the day.

TIME MANAGEMENT Cont'd

For example, divide your day up into 2 hour blocks of time. Each block is a different segment, or time for you to tackle specific tasks. A sample of Time Blocking looks like this;

Lunch 12 – 1pm	Lunch 12 – 1pm	Lunch 12 – 1pm	Lunch 12 – 1pm
Meetings 1 – 3pm	Client Work 1 – 5pm	Meetings 1 – 3pm	Client Work 1 – 5pm
Work on Book 3 – 5pm		Work on Book 3 – 5pm	
Drive to Gyr, 5pm	Drive to Gyr, 5pm	Drive to Gyn, 5pm	Drive to Gyn, 5pm
Change Clothes and 5:30 – 6:30pm			
Drive Hor, 6:30pm	Drive Hor, 6:30pm	Drive Hor, 6:30pm	Drive Hor, 6:30pm
Dinner and Kids Be 7 – 8pm			
Shower and Read Until Bed 8 – 10:30pm			

Image from Projectmanager.com

Here is my current routine. As apple season is approaching, I will fine-tune this schedule:

- 6-8 am coffee, meditation/prayer, exercise
- 8-10 am checking emails, responding to emails or anything in the inbox
- 10-11 social media, replying to social media requests
- 11-12 lunch break
- 12-3 processing time in the kitchen
- 3-5 organizing, cleaning, close out any last-minute requests, setting your schedule for the next day

You can also include your personal time as well. For example, blocking out time for dinner with the kids, a date night, time for yoga or self-care. It does not have to be all business.

Learning effective time management takes time, it is also a process of self-evaluation. As entrepreneurs and business owners, we often don't take time for ourselves or for self-care, which is so important now with the ongoing health crisis. It is a work in progress!

12 TIPS FOR INCORPORATING PACKAGING INTO YOUR HOLIDAY MARKETING STRATEGY

By Laura Craven



Summer has come to a close and fall is in session, as is the holiday season. According to the National Retail Federation about 40% of consumers begin their holiday shopping in October. And, this year with COVID-related travel and event restrictions, more gifts will be shipped in advance of the holidays than ever before.

If you have not started to plan your holiday marketing strategy, you may already be running late. Here are some helpful tips on how incorporating packaging into your marketing plan will help you design Instagrammable products that will delight your customers and increase sales.

1. Consider your product offering and decide which items are ideal for holiday gift giving. Do you have items that can be packaged in small “stocking stuffer” sizes? Do you have products that can be bundled together to create a gift set? Once you determine your holiday line-up, it’s time to get creative with packaging.
2. Package your products with gifting in mind. In today’s convenience culture, items that do not require additional gift wrap are more popular and consumers are willing to pay a premium.
3. Use the correct size package for each product. Too large a package will increase shipping costs and may cause the contents to shift and become damaged. Too small a package may prevent proper closure. Just like Goldilocks, you need to find packaging that is just right.
4. Consumers today are concerned with safety and sanitation. You may want to consider tamper-evident containers, labels, or [wrap-around bands](#) to demonstrate security. The labels and bands can be custom-printed and increase your brand recognition while protecting the contents.
5. Package items in surprising ways. Bento boxes, [wire-handle food pails](#), and [tin-tie window bags](#) are interesting options for items other than sushi, take-out lo mein, or coffee beans. [Wood trays](#), and cheeseboards are a great substitute for traditional wicker gift baskets and can be reused. Cardboard pop-up [drink carriers](#) can be used to hold products sold in bottles and jars. Get creative and think out of the box, literally!
6. Containers and cartons are available in hundreds of shapes, materials, colors, and sizes. Find options that reflect your brand image and appeal to your customers’ preferences. Do you sell organic foods? If so, use packages made from rapidly renewable materials such as bamboo or [palm leaves](#). Does your target customer love luxury? If so, select designer boxes with magnetic closures and built-in ribbons. Do you create miniature works of edible art? Choose clear or window packaging to showcase your talent.
7. If your budget is small, use colorful raffia ribbon to tie up a standard [kraft paper carton](#), add a pretty “produced locally” label with your logo and voila, your product is ready to gift!
8. If your products naturally go with fun activities, such as popcorn and movies, create themed bundles. Use a large movie-style [popcorn tub](#), include a bag of your gourmet popcorn and a gift code for a movie download from a streaming service. Instant date night!
9. Incorporate QR codes using labels that, once scanned, will link customers to your website or social media channels where they can learn more about your products.
10. Shopping local and shopping small are growing trends. Share your story as a small business by including an “About Us” card or a newsletter with each purchase. This will help you engage with your customer on a personal level and may even help spread the word, growing your fan base.
11. Order your holiday packaging as early as possible (now). This will give you time to photograph your products for your website, social media posts, email campaigns, printed flyers, etc.
12. If you ship your products, secondary or outer packaging is also important. Choose adjustable shipping cartons that can be configured for a variety of sizes to minimize your inventory. Use dunnage or void fill stuffing to protect the contents, avoiding foam peanuts which tend to make a mess and annoy customers. Use custom-printed carton-sealing tape to promote your brand. Printed tape is much less expensive than custom-printed boxes and can be ordered in small quantities.

Laura Craven, VP of Marketing and Communications at Imperial Dade which is a source of packaging products and sanitation supplies for 85 years; for a complimentary consultation contact Ross Hiller Ross@ImperialDade.com.

Maria Grimaldi, Education Committee

SHIPPING FOR THE HOLIDAYS AND BEYOND



Halloween marks the beginning of the winter holiday season. Knowing shipping options and clever marketing can keep you ahead of the competition to bring your products directly to your retail and wholesale customers efficiently and profitably.

Obviously offering free shipping to retail customers provides a one step checkout for the customer and can encourage multiple purchases if a minimum purchase is required to offer the added value of shopping with you. Whether shipping directly to a retail customer or to a wholesale account it is important for you as the producer to select the best shipping source that maintains profitability, saving time and resources better spent on marketing and production.

I will briefly go over the major shippers with which I have had experience to share my thoughts and suggestions for you this holiday season and going forward into next year. Online sales will continue to be a major source of revenue for all producers and getting to know the best ways to ship your product will keep you at the cutting edge of getting your product to market quickly and efficiently.

- United States Postal Service, USPS—Open an online account from where you can create shipping labels, pay for shipping, get a tracking number and order a pick-up. The Priority Mail flat rate boxes are provided free, regional flat rate shipping is also available in Priority Mail. First class mail is available for small packages based on size and weight. Both services deliver mail, in most cases within 3 days. Yes, even now. You can check out the rates ahead of time at www.ups.com to put together holiday specials knowing what it will cost to ship that special gift package that you have created.
- United Parcel Service, UPS—If you are a regular shipper to wholesale or orders are flying in for bulky and heavy items such as gift baskets you may find UPS to be your best choice. UPS is more expensive than USPS but worth the extra cost if offered to a customer to guarantee delivery. You can request regular pick-ups for a modest surcharge which is invaluable in saving time and resources. UPS seldom has disappointed me. Again open an account to facilitate paying for the services. www.ups.com
- FedEx—FedEx is similar to UPS with guaranteed delivery and has started to add more FedEx stores where you have to go to ship or drop off packages. There is an app available on the FedEx website which can be downloaded on your computer or Iphone and taken to a FedEx store where the label will be affixed to your package. Many vendors find this useful to facilitate return shipping options if offered. www.fedexstores.com

All of the above shipping services offer free boxes. For Priority Mail you MUST use the USPS box. These can be picked up at the Post Office or ordered online. Tape and packing materials are on you. It is important to learn how to pack and wrap your products professionally to prevent breakage. Insurance should be included in your shipping costs to cover accidents which can happen!

I have two scales that I use regularly when shipping. One is a small postal scale that works well on USPS Shipping from First Class Mail items to Priority Mail box items. For heavy items that you would likely ship by UPS a floor scale that can weigh up to 70 pounds or more is essential.

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year! Online shopping and efficient shipping will keep you in business.

Beth Linskey, *Communication Committee, NYSSFPA*

PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS GIFT GIVING

Holidays got here fast. At this time, you have looked at what sold well last year. If you had a brochure printed, you have revised it. The photos are almost ready for the finishing touches. The printer will want all the copy and new photos by mid October.

Let me backup a step; my customers were used to receiving a printed brochure to order their holiday gifts but that is no longer the case; just about everyone is ordering online so let's revise the beginning.



What sold well last year, are you repeating it this year? Is it in an important position on your website? We are talking about gift boxing. Primarily, we sold 2 jars of jam or 4 jars. One jar gift box became popular because of price. We were in an outdoor market where Moms shopped for teacher gifts. With online schooling, that market has diminished. Is your website ready to receive orders? Do some dry runs. Who will pick and process the orders? Who will notify the customer that the order was received or shipped? Set up a system using your most reliable workers. Set a shipping deadline for orders. How a package looks when it is received is enormously important.

Brass tacks

- 1) Do you have sufficient product to fulfill your projected needs? In my case, that always meant fruit and jars/lids.
- 2) Do you have sufficient gift wrap materials to meet your projections?
- 3) Most items are mail order. Do you have access to packaging supplies and a place set up with a scale and tape?
- 4) Are you going to UPS/USPS or are they coming to you? Do you have an account?
- 5) Make a social media plan and stick to it. Put a creative person in charge. Get your great looking product out on Instagram, Facebook and wherever else your customer shops. Take good photos and use them lavishly! Accept offers to share ads but don't spend lavishly.
- 6) Work hard and this event is over by the 22nd of Dec. There will be stragglers but basically you can clean up by New Years.

Mike Merwin, *Owner of Crazy Mike's Jerky*

SOME PRACTICALITIES FOR E-COMMERCE



E-Commerce is essential, especially during this pandemic.

The Credit Card processor is necessary. My website design/host is with Squarespace and I use Stripe and PayPal. PayPal has numerous "versions" and I only have the basic free plan, which suffices for me. When I researched which processor to use, they all have about the same net fees when it's all said and done.

I also read an article when I first started while I was trying to figure out how to handle shipping costs, that about 75% of abandoned carts are due to the "sticker shock" when you get to the end of the checkout due to shipping costs. I decided to bump my price up a little and have free shipping with no minimum order quantity/cost; Or you can show the upfront shipping costs on your website. I think that's particularly important to the customer; it inherently creates an upsale as most customers if they know they're going to pay a set amount for shipping even with higher quantities would more than likely order more (I know I do).

For me, the free shipping made the website design easier too. My only homework in advance was to come up with a big spreadsheet for each size of jerky (I have two sizes) and compute shipping costs by quantities starting from 1. I had to weigh each quantity set, figure out what packaging to use, etc.

I use USPS because when I get into the larger purchases, I can ship flat rate; the boxes are free, so that saves me from having to purchase boxes.

I use ShipStation as my shipping program, it integrates right into my website and the orders from the website transfer over into ShipStation. I print a packing list and label as well. You get a reduced postage rate this way as opposed to taking the package to the post office and paying for postage onsite as ShipStation postage purchases tie into stamps.com.