

MODULE 3: What are the best words and images to use when communicating with consumers about your locally produced food?

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*Understanding effective product messaging

*Messaging for Local Food

The look, feel, and appeal of your product or, your product messaging, ultimately affects whether consumers buy your product and if they become regular customers. This module will present methods to create effective messages about your locally produced food and farm that will resonate with consumers.

At the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- 1. Understand the concepts of framing and branding.**
- 2. Identify the words and images consumers might view negatively or positively.**
- 3. Understand the steps to develop effective messages.**
- 4. Understand how to develop and test messages for your promotional plan about your products and farm.**

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Pertinent symbols and behaviors



Activity → This symbol denotes the start of an activity.

Italicized and indented text designates instructor material and does not need to be read as a script.

Materials you will need for this module:

- 2 easel pads or large white board for split group activity as well as instructor use
- Markers for easel pad or white board
- Tape to post easel pad pages around the room for review
- Pen or pencil for each participant
- Activity worksheets
- Evaluations

Time for module presentation with activities

- 1 hour and 15 minutes

Begin Module

Slide 1 – Title

Hello. My name is _____. I work with _____ and will be your facilitator for this presentation. Today we will be discussing how to select words and images for your promotional plan that will convey your desired message to consumers. I believe that this information will prove useful and beneficial as you conduct your business in the future.

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Slide 2 – Review

In our previous sessions we discussed motivations and potential barriers for products that are part of Florida’s more than \$8 billion annual local food industry.

We also discussed the locations that consumers purchase locally produced foods as well as the reasoning some consumers might have for the purchase of specific products.

As a start to your promotional plan, we also looked at your products to identify foods most likely to be purchased, potential motivations for consumers to make these purchases, and possible market locations for your products.

We also looked at potential barriers for consumer purchase of your products and discussed possible strategies for counteracting those barriers.

Slide 3 – Logo Icebreaker



Refer to Ice Breaker worksheets found after the module portion of this document for instructions and materials.

Purpose of icebreaker is to allow participants to get to know others in the group. This should facilitate group discussion and teamwork throughout the remainder of the module.

Today we will look at brands. Please take a look at the following 10 logos. Identify the company name in the blank beside the logo. After everyone has had a few minutes to complete the list, I’ll ask you to stand, introduce yourself and your major product(s), and identify your answer to the next logo on the page. Don’t worry if you miss a few. After everyone has had the opportunity to introduce him or herself, we will reveal the companies that match each logo.

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Slide 4 – Agenda

Today's agenda will introduce several topics that I hope will be of interest to you and help you develop messages that promote your products to consumers. First we will talk about concepts such as branding and framing. Then we will review words and images that consumers might view positively or negatively. After these discussions we will talk about steps to help you develop effective messaging for your prospective customers, as well as methods you can use to further develop and test your messages for effective marketing.

Slide 5 – Objectives

1. Understand the concepts of framing and branding.
2. Identify the words and images consumers might view negatively or positively.
3. Understand the steps to develop effective messages.
4. Understand how to develop and test messages for your promotional plan about your products and farm.

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Slide 6 – Exercise A



Refer to Exercise A worksheets found after the module portion of this document for instructions and materials.

The purpose of this exercise is to draw out the feelings, emotions, and impressions each participant has with the brands listed in the exercise. This exercise will encourage further thought about how their own brands can influence sales and positive consumer emotions.

Look at the 10 logos on the worksheet and list the first words or phrases you think of that describe the company using each logo. After you have a few minutes to complete your list, we will compile input from all of you and discuss key points about brands.

After participants have had about 5 minutes to write down their responses, facilitate a discussion about how each company is viewed. Call on individuals to share their responses and write them down on an easel pad or white board for all to see. Refer to information below for guidance.

Many people will recognize NBC, Pepsi, Shell, Amazon, Applebee's and Target. Because they are common, you may get many personal impressions based on their opinion of each company. For instance, Shell may receive some negative phrases due to feelings about "big energy" or environmental concerns.

Maserati may be a brand with which individuals are less familiar. Impressions may surround exclusivity or the luxury nature of the brand. You may have few responses that actually describe the product. Yet, does Maserati care if the average American associates quality vehicles or value with the brand? Perhaps they don't care since average Americans may not be part of their target audience.

Responses to Time Warner Cable may include personal impressions from those having a history of business interactions with the company or responses based on the reputation of cable companies in general.

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Buick may present some interesting responses. A specific point may arise if you ask participants if their opinion 15 to 20 years ago would be different than it is today. Company results in vehicle rating activities have improved in the last decade and advertising efforts have emphasized more desirable designs appealing to younger buyers.

Archer Daniels Midland again may be a brand receiving mixed input. As a producer of food products, animal feed, chemicals and more, those with concerns about today's agribusiness industry may view the company negatively. Others may feel that the company has helped feed the world and make crops more readily accessible to consumers.

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Slide 7 – Branding and Framing

First let's talk a few moments about branding. A brand is a name and/or symbol a producer utilizes to set his or her product apart from competitors. A successful brand communicates a set of impressions that causes the consumer to automatically think of positive qualities of the branded product.

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Slide 8 – Coca-Cola

When considering a brand, every action by the producer can affect the consumer's perception of the brand. Let's take a look at Coca-Cola. This iconic brand is well known throughout the world.

What comes to mind when you think about Coca-Cola?

Please take turns offering your impressions of Coca-Cola while I record our results.



Ask participants to take turns offering a word or phrase they associate with Coca-Cola. Record the descriptions from your participants on an easel pad or white board.

After allowing participants to offer their impressions, please attempt to reach a consensus with the participants on whether the brand's impressions are generally positive or negative.

Review the brand's recent history (found in the text that follows).

Since the 1960's, Coca-Cola has been an iconic brand and, up until recent history, has been growing rapidly. Some of you might remember the advertising campaign "We'd Like to Teach the World to Sing." Coke was in demand almost worldwide. Even though the song began as an advertising jingle for Coca-Cola, it was highly adored for its intrinsic musical value.

The Coke brand is still widely known and holds many positive impressions. Yet, sales of Coca-Cola are declining as people are looking for healthier beverages and are trying to eliminate products they now feel may be "bad" for them.

New strategies are needed for Coca-Cola to adjust to changing consumer preference. This is just an example of the effort necessary to establish a successful brand and to adjust for changing consumer preferences.

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Hartung, Adam. Coca-Cola's Problems Reflect a Giant Losing Relevance.

Forbes/Leadership. October 28, 2014.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/adamhartung/2014/10/28/coca-colas-problems-show-us-a-giant-losing-relevance/2/>



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Slide 9 – Effective Messaging

Each of the previously mentioned companies has carefully developed messages and impressions they wish to have associated with their brand. While you may not want to develop a worldwide brand, the messages associated with your product can make a difference in your marketing.

Developing effective messages that call to mind the positive characteristics of your products will help you develop your brand. One of the first steps toward effective messaging involves framing.

Slide 10 – Framing

Framing involves the use of words and images that convey your message to consumers in a specific way. Framing also prompts these consumers to call your message to mind and see your product in a certain way that you have designed. The images and words you use in your message can cause consumers to develop certain impressions and feel various emotions about your products.

Slide 11 – Framing photo 1

Let's use images to help us understand framing. Look at this picture. What do you think of when looking at this photo?

Ask one or two audience participants to tell the group their thoughts of the picture.

Researchers utilized this photo in a previous study where participants were from the general public. Those participants possessed various impressions. Some said that this image reminded them of a clean environment and well cared-for products. Others reported thinking of mass production and said that the picture produced an artificial feeling.

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Slide 12 – Framing photo 2

Here is another photo. What comes to mind when you look at this picture?

Ask one or two other participants what words come to mind when looking at this picture.

Research found that people associated the photo with chemical application and how chemicals are in the foods we eat. A couple of participants held a different view and used the word modernization. Others reported being uncertain as they questioned what was being applied to the plants and what was growing in the field.

Slide 13 – Framing photo 3

Another photo from the study is shown here. What do you think about upon seeing this picture?

Ask one or two other participants what words come to mind when looking at this picture.

Previous participants reported feeling that this photo caused warm and happy thoughts. The family was described as a typical family complete with a dog.

Slide 14 – Framing photo 4

What do you think of when you see this image?

Ask one or two other participants what words come to mind when looking at this picture.

Many people said that this photo was aesthetically pleasing. Beauty normally causes positive thoughts. However, some people in the previous study held a more negative view. These participants focused on the need for water conservation and the negative impression farming has regarding water consumption.

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Slide 15 – Framing photo 5

Here is the last picture from the study we will look at. What comes to mind when you look at this picture?

Ask one or two other participants what words come to mind when looking at this picture.

Participants in the previous study viewed this image with mixed feelings. Some said that the images of the tomatoes were very appetizing. In general, some people voiced a dislike of hydroponic tomatoes because of the taste. Some people were skeptical if tomatoes could really grow in this environment. Other people were particularly confused with the railroad track in the middle of the tomatoes. Participants felt this was the most unbelievable image of the group.

Slide 16 – Framing photo summary

The previous slides revealed several interesting characteristics about consumer reactions to images. Although participants viewed the same photographs, the impressions differed widely. Some viewers saw a positive image while others felt that the same picture held negative connotations.

Remember also, that the participants in this study came from a population of the general public. Many of these people may have had little to no knowledge of agricultural techniques, so the consideration of your audience is essential when selecting images to promote your farm or product. Little things such as the lighting and colors in an image can impact whether an image is viewed positively or negatively.

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Slide 17 – Tips for selecting images

There are tips for helping you select images to help you communicate your message.

First off, those viewing photos of families and children generally have positive responses.

Next, your message can be enhanced by the inclusion of people who look like your target audience. If your audience sees someone like themselves in the photos, they are more likely to relate to the image.

Additionally, photos depicting the environment and natural resources, specifically those showcasing the beauty of nature, tend to generate positive responses from most audience members.

Slide 18 – Tips for selecting images continued

A fourth tip reminds us that audiences like seeing photos of farmers. Yet, these same people want the photos to be authentic and transparent rather than staged and unrealistic. Select images carefully that present positive but realistic images of farming scenes and avoid the appearance of staging.

A final tip involves providing context to the photo, so the audience isn't confused. For example, some explanation of what is shown in the tomato picture would help with the viewer understanding what they are looking at.

Slide 19 – Importance of words

Just as image selection is important, the words you select for your message carry a great deal of weight in creating an impression with potential customers.

Words used in communication about agriculture may mean something different to the general public than those of us involved in the industry based on personal opinions and experiences. These double meanings may result in consumer confusion and distrust.

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Slide 20 – Exercise B



Refer to Exercise B worksheets found after the module portion of this document for instructions and materials.

The purpose of Exercise B is to help evaluate how words are associated with emotions and the influence they can have on consumer purchase.

Take a look at this list of words often associated with farming and/or food production. Which words do you view as positive and which are negative? Write your responses in the blanks next to the words. After about 5 minutes, we will poll everyone and discuss group opinions.



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Slide 21 – Word connotations

Many studies have been conducted in efforts to understand how consumers view certain words and phrases. Let's look at study responses for these words.

Farmer and Farm worker - Participants in a previous study indicated that a farmer was viewed as the owner or primary individual involved with a farm, while a farm worker was someone employed on a farm. Other participants pointed out that a farm owner would likely also be working on the farm and thus could be considered a farm worker as well.

Another interesting comparison is “agribusiness” and “agriculture.” Study participants appeared to overwhelmingly feel that “agriculture” referred to the raising/growing of crops and livestock. Many of those same participants felt that “agribusiness” covered the financial activities involved with farming. Further impressions of “agribusiness” included corporate agriculture perceptions such as factory farms, mass production, and conglomerates controlling agriculture.

According to participants the terms “locally grown” and “family owned” created many of the same impressions as the term “local food.” Discussions involved characteristics such as freshness, safety, and high quality. Some participants did, however, question if “family owned” would actually produce foods that were safer and healthier. Yet, other participants expressed the feelings that family owned farms were responsible, respectable segments of the community that obeyed the laws and used better environmental practices.

Goodwin, J. N., Chiarelli, C., & Irani T. Is Perception Reality? Improving Agricultural Messages by Discovering How Consumers Perceive Messages. Journal of Applied Communications, Presented at the 2011 Association of Communication Excellence in Denver, Colorado. Funding for this study was provided by the Agricultural Institute of Florida. Volume 95, No. 3 • 21

Rumble, J. N., Holt, J., & Irani, T. The Power of Words: Exploring Consumers' Perceptions of Words Commonly Associated with Agriculture Journal of Applied Communications. Journal of Applied Communication. Volume 98, No. 2 • 23

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Slide 22 – Word connotations continued

Participants' impressions of the terms "animal welfare" varied widely. Some participants felt the words referred to the health and safety of animals. Yet others perceived that the term referred to the care provided by the person in charge of the animal.

According to participants, "food safety" involved the handling and testing of food. Some participants associated food safety with the Food and Drug Administration. Others felt that the term involved testing food to ensure it was safe for human consumption and of acceptable quality.

The term "green industry" produced varied responses from participants. Many study members felt that green industry included much more than agricultural issues. Some participants held that the term extended to improving the environment and reversing previous damage.

The impressions created by the term "organic" involved several characteristics such as healthy, not processed, similar to homegrown, natural and expensive. Some participants believed that organic food is healthier than other food, but they also believe it is more expensive.

Slide 23 – What is a message?

As you can see by now, the images and words you select for your promotional plan can elicit many different impressions and generate many feelings about your product. Here are some tips to help you select words and develop your message.

- Remember that a message should be short and easily understood.
- Avoid using jargon or abbreviations that your target audience may not understand.
- Develop a message that can be repeated without becoming redundant.
- Your message can be used as a catch phrase, tag line, or slogan.
- You can also use your message as a summary of information about your product.

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Slide 24 – Strong message

Present slide information.

Slide 25 – Identify your audience

When you are developing your message, keep your audience in mind. First you will need to identify the general audience you wish to reach. Next, get to know your audience through an analysis. Examine the demographics of your audience, interests, personalities, attitudes and life-styles.

Slide 26 – Why it is important to know your audience when developing messages

Examples of messages that went wrong: (An extra if you need to fill time)

The KFC slogan, “finger-licking good” translates to “eat your fingers off” in China.

Schweppes Tonic Water translates to Schweppes Toilet water in Italy.

Pepsi lost its market share in Southeast Asia to Coke when it changed the color on their machines from deep regal blue to ice blue. Light blue in that area is associated with death and mourning.

Slide 27 – Purchasing habits

In addition to personal information about your audience, seek out information about their shopping habits.

Where does your audience shop?

How frequently do they shop and make purchases?

What products do they prefer?

This information should provide you with a basic idea of how the people you are targeting would respond to your message.

Once you have decided what you want in your message, test your message on representatives from your target audience to ensure that your message is being received in the way you intended.

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Slide 28 – Summary

Let's review today's session.

We discussed how developing a brand and framing a message will prompt consumers to associate your product with the favorable characteristics you are aiming for.

Remember that words and images may be received differently by varying groups of people, or even hold multiple meanings to an individual.

We also discussed tips to select the best images and words for your message and steps to develop an effective message.

Finally we talked about testing your message on representatives from your target audience.

Slide 29 – End

I hope you have learned something that may help you get your piece of the multi-billion dollar local food pie. Furthermore, we will be conducting other sessions to discuss additional aspects of and issues surrounding local food. We hope that you will plan to attend.

Next pass out the promotional plan worksheet found in overview document and instruct participants to fill out the section corresponding to Module 3.

Please distribute your evaluation at this point and designate a collection point. If you wish for your participants to complete an electronic evaluation they can complete the evaluation at this link https://ufl.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_eyvtSj3a5YEXuv3. In the electronic evaluation, the participants will be required to enter the name of their instructor as well as the date that they completed the workshop. You can obtain the results of the electronic evaluation by emailing piecenter@ifas.ufl.edu or calling 352-273-2598. For questions contact Dr. Joy Rumble at jnrumble@ufl.edu or calling 352-273-1663.

End Module

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Ice Breaker – Instructor Worksheet

Note: Purpose of icebreaker is to allow participants to get to know others in the group. This should facilitate group discussion and teamwork throughout the remainder of the module.

Materials:

- Participant's worksheet for each participant
- Pencil or pen for each participant

Time:

- About 2-3 minutes for individuals to fill in worksheet and about 5-10 minutes for all participants to introduce himself/herself and identify the next logo on the list.

Instructions:

- Today we will look at brands.
- Please take a look at the following 10 logos. Identify the company name in the blank beside the logo.
- After everyone has had a few minutes to complete the list, I'll ask you to stand, introduce yourself, the local food product(s) you produce, and identify your answer to the next logo on the page. Don't worry if you do not know the company name that matches the logo. After everyone has had the opportunity to introduce him or herself, we will reveal all correct answers.

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Ice Breaker – Instructor Answer Sheet

Logo	Company Name	Logo	Company Name
	NBC		Maserati
	Time Warner Cable		Pepsi
	Buick		Shell
	Amazon		Archer Daniels Midland
	Applebee's		Target

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Exercise A – Instructor Worksheet

Materials:

- Pencils or pens for participants
- Participant's Worksheet for each individual
- Easel pad to record company name and words/phrases that participants use to describe each brand.

Time:

- Approximately 5 minutes for individuals to fill in the worksheets.
- Approximately 15 minutes to record group input on master sheet and review key points to the exercise.

Brands: What do they mean to you?

Instructions:

- Look at the following 10 logos and list the first words or phrases you think of that describe the company using each logo.
- After about 5 minutes, we will compile your input and discuss key points about brands.

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Logo	Company name	Word(s) or Phrase Description
	NBC	
	Maserati	
	Time Warner Cable	
	Pepsi	
	Buick	
	Shell	
	Amazon	
	Archer Daniels Midland	
	Applebee's	
	Target	

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Exercise B – Instructor Worksheet

Materials:

- Pencil or pen for each participant
- Worksheet for each participant

Time:

- Allow 3-4 minutes for participants to mark each word as positive or negative.
- Approximately 5 minutes will be needed to poll the entire group and record results on an easel pad or white board.

Instructions:

- Prepare the list of words on an easel pad or white board
- Instruct participants to record whether he/she views the word as generally positive or negative.
- After 1-2 minutes for worksheet completion, poll all participants by having everyone raise their hand to either positive or negative for each word.

Words Convey Feelings and Impressions

Farmer _____	Locally grown _____
Family-owned _____	Agriculture _____
Green industry _____	Animal welfare _____
Agribusiness _____	Organic _____
Food safety _____	Farm worker _____

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Evaluation for Module 3

For the following statements, please answer by circling a number where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, and 5=strongly agree.

	Before Workshop					After Workshop						
a. I understand the concept of branding.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
b. I understand the concept of framing.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
c. I can identify images consumers might view positively.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
d. I can identify words consumers might view positively.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
e. I know the steps to developing effective messages.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
f. I can use messages to promote my products.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

What are the three most important things you feel you have learned in this module?

What have you learned from this module that you plan to implement in the next year?

The amount of time spent on this module was: Too Short Just Right Too Long
 (Please circle one)

The amount of material covered in this module was: (Please circle one) Too Little Just Right Too Much