

4.5 Presenting product

PRODUCT
DISTRIBUTION
PROMOTION
PEOPLE
FINANCE
RISK
GROWTH

- > *Point of sale material*
- > *Tastings, trade and consumer shows*

The first time a customer sees your product will be the image that is retained in their minds. You must make sure that your product is presented appropriately every time. Whether it be in your own retail outlet, with a distributor making sales calls, at a trade or consumer show or on a retailers shelves, your product must be presented well.

Labelling and packaging have been covered in an earlier module. However, it is worth reemphasising the importance of a consistent and quality approach to developing your brand. The label and package are an integral part of your brand and must mirror the brand values and image at all times.

A product can taste good but if it is not presented in a manner that fits with the brand, then it will be difficult to get initial and repeat sales. Take time to look at what others are doing and make sure you step back on a regular basis and look at what you are doing as well!

Point of sale (POS) material

Whether selling in your own retail outlet, or through someone else, or setting a display at a trade/consumer show, the point of sale material is an important element of the visual display.

Point of sale material is made up of:

- > Branded price cards
- > Branded shelf talkers
- > Branded information sheets
- > Branded flyers and brochures
- > Recipe suggestions
- > Posters
- > Maps
- > Banners
- > Bins
- > Racks
- > Stands
- > Other props (*i.e.* baskets, vases, flowers, greenery)

It is important for the point of sale area to be consistent, no matter where the display is. A simple way to deal with this is to get a visual display consultant to develop several display options depending upon space available, type of event and needs of the customer. Map these out on paper and take photographs. Develop a kit containing point of sale material, props and a style chart,

and ensure this is used at all times, by yourself, your staff, your distributor and if you can persuade them, the retailers.

A good visual display is worth investing in. It will:

- > entice customers
- > make them feel welcome
- > give them the information they need
- > assist in making a sale
- > supply after sale advice and support.

Whilst developing your point of sale materials and kit, take time to look at others and see what works *i.e.* different levels of height in a display, different use of your brand colours.

Tastings, trade and consumer shows

Before taking part in a tasting, trade or consumer show, it is important to think about why you are taking part in the show and what you hope to get out of it. Think about the following questions:

- > Am I ready for volume production and distribution? If I get the orders, can I fill them?
- > Is the show the most appropriate place to reach your objectives?
- > Is there something else that could get the same or better results with the same or less investment?



If you decide to proceed, think about your objectives. You may be taking part:

- > To reach a specific market (e.g. mothers with young children)
- > To sell product
- > To create a memorable experience for end consumers by allowing them to meet and talk to the producer
- > To trial new product, packaging, pricing, style, image and get feedback
- > To understand who is interested in your product and get feedback as to why
- > To develop a mailing list for direct sales and or relationship building
- > To meet or train new distributors
- > To train new or existing staff
- > To support other producers, suppliers or key customers who support you
- > To provide tastings
- > To demonstrate how to use the product
- > To cross-promote your product with other complementary products

Think carefully about your objectives, and set some quantified goals: for example, 'I aim to speak with 10 retailers, give them samples, get their business cards and follow up within one week.' Later you will refer to these objectives to assess whether the show—and the time and money it has taken to be there—has been worthwhile.

What will it cost to achieve these objectives? Your budget should include

- > Rent and fit out
- > Equipment hire
- > Point of sale material
- > Stock
- > Energy for lighting, heating or refrigeration, and cooking
- > Travel and accommodation
- > The cost of having somebody else cover your business while you are away

Once you have committed to doing the show it is important to get the most out of it. This means:

- > Renting an appropriate sized and positioned space with the appropriate infrastructure
- > Ensuring that your displays project your brand and are enticing and attractive
- > Developing special offerings for the show

Things to do before the show:

- > Deal with potential food safety issues
- > Organise equipment such as rubbish bags, cleaning equipment, gloves, prep equipment, merchandising props

(including sticky tape, two sided tape, Velcro or Blu-Tak), tea towels and tasting equipment

- > Organise stock
- > Organise the display—ensure that branding is highly visible and consistent
- > Organise promotional materials such as brochures and cards
- > Organise yourself
- > Organise clothes to wear, including aprons—ensure that the clothes have a theme with a professional look
- > Organise professional name tags

Making the most of the show

You must become a performer to attract the right people and make sure that they remember you.

- Tastings
 - > Avoid the snatch and run—offer them samples from your hands rather than just leaving samples on a table.
 - > Engage people in conversations about your product and competing products—what do they like, what do they look for, where do they buy, how do they use.
- Demonstrations
 - > Tastings and demonstrations involve the consumer. They are more likely to stop and think about what it is they are seeing and hearing. You only have seconds in which to make the impression.
 - > Feature something about your product that meets their needs. Explain the advantages and the benefit.
- Sales
 - > Try to up-sell or have sales offerings that are value added
- Incentives
 - > For example, 'Buy two jars of jam and get a special jar of our new jam'
- Contacts
 - > Business cards from trade—keep in a safe place so that they are easy to find afterwards. An electronic business card reader may help you to capture the information efficiently.
 - > Keep a note book with any queries so that you can follow up afterwards.
- Qualification and screening. Try to ask open ended questions. (who, what, when, where, how): for example, 'Tell me how you would prepare a meal using . . .' This will help you work out which customers are worth spending time on and which ones to move on from.
- Look after the stall
 - > At all times the stall must look clean and tidy. Remember to do a tidy up and refresh at set times. Never leave the stall untidy or unclean.

- ❑ Look after yourself
- > Keep water nearby so that you can keep hydrated.
- > Shows are energy sapping, so have regular breaks. If possible, arrange rosters, or do a deal with neighbouring stall holders.
- > Be security-conscious, so that theft does not distract you from your purpose.

After the show

- ❑ Follow up
- > Follow up on any consumer or trade enquiries
- ❑ Evaluate whether your presence was worthwhile

What were the quantifiable objectives that you set? How did you measure against them?

- > The number of portions served (how many forks or spoons were used?)
- > The dollar value of sales
- > The number of enquiries to follow up on
- > The number contacts made with other businesses
- > The number of VIPs
- ❑ Reflect and learn
- ❑ Reward yourself
- > Taking part in trade or consumer shows, in-store tastings and markets is exhausting but rewarding, as long as you plan well, implement your plan and then follow up.

Presentation folder

When you are preparing to take your product to a distributor or directly to a retailer or food service operator, a key tool is the presentation folder. In this folder you will have all the information that is needed to guide you through your presentation and for them to refer back to later.

Sheets that could be included in the folder are:

- > Product description including the benefits to the consumer
- > Profile of target market
- > Product listing with appropriate pricing
- > History of business
- > Storage and usage (this may include recipe suggestions) instructions
- > Outline of point of sale material
- > Testimonials from previous consumers
- > Promotional strategies including how they will be supported
- > Any special deals and or support eg two for one deals, tasting support
- > Order form
- > Credit application
- > Contact details

Websites

Fine Foods www.foodaustralia.com.au/food/index.asp

Case study

Melba's Chocolates at the Royal Adelaide Show
www.abc.net.au/ruralsa/royaladelaideshow2002stories-chocolate.htm

Citrus Display at the Royal Adelaide Show
www.abc.net.au/ruralsa/royaladelaideshow2002stories-citrus.htm