



Small Business Newsletter



August, 2015

Had the opportunity last week to hear Ken Meter at the FARRMS (<http://www.farrms.org/>) **Summit on Local Economies** gathering. Ken is an agricultural economist who has been looking at local foods for over 25 years. Every time I hear Ken I walk away energized but also asking what can be done to move local foods forward.

Ken looks at available data, mostly from the U.S. Census data, on where we spend our food dollars. Mostly we spend them for foods that come to us from outside of our local area. Ken encourages us to take a baby step in our food procurement. He asks what would happen if each person just spend \$5 a week buying local foods.

Ken examined two regions, each about 8 counties. Currently each region spends around \$110 million dollars on food with just over \$100 million on foods sourced from outside the area. Ken's suggests small step would have an economic impact of approximately \$10 million in each region for local foods farmers. What could that do for them? And what could that do for the communities where they are located?

I, like most people I suspect, enjoy foods and food products that come from outside our region and in seasons when we can't be producing fresh food. I also, in deference to full disclosure, grew up on a commodity-based farm and that farm is still owned by my family. But I also am driven by three factors: 1) I enjoy knowing my food producer; 2) I enjoy fresh and homemade items; and 3) I believe in small businesses and supporting local.

In my mind, there is room for both local and the large-scale farm operations we now have. Some on both sides will disagree and that's okay. The goal is to start the dialogue, consider the opportunities and encourage those working to grow the local foods economy. Many of these

In Cooperation With



farmers are serious business owners focused on customer satisfaction, growth, and making a profit. These farmers are businesses. They aren't a hobby or recreational. Let's see what can be done.

Sounds like an editorial. Hope it starts a conversation in your community.

Till next time,
Glenn Muske
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Upcoming Events

Great Opportunity!!

Sept 22nd – Big Ideas for Small Communities. Can your community grow through use of culture, tourism, local foods and agritourism. Keynote speaker, Becky McCray, a small business owner in a small town, will deliver practice steps that your community can use to help shape your community's future. Sponsored by the ND Tourism Division. Register at: www.NDtourism.com/information/big-ideas-small-communities .

Quotes of the Month

Nothing happens unless first a dream - Carl Sandberg

Don't be small because you can't figure out how to get big. Consider being small because it might be better - Seth Godin

This Month's Tips

Using Signs Effectively

We hear so much about digital and social media today. Yet how often doesn't a sign draw you in or encourage a purchase. We are surrounded by them. And they can be very effective if done correctly. Yet what is "correct" can vary widely. I have seen hand-made signs be as effective as large, very elaborate signs. This article provides some background on what makes an effective sign. <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/233961>

Public Relations

This article is worth the read if only for the one line that reminds us, "don't spend money if you don't have anything for them to do (a call to action)." And like any marketing, PR is not a one and done activity. Get even more ideas at: <http://boss.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/08/18/improving-your-public-relations-without-a-public-relations-firm/>

Tips for a Healthy Business

Some of these tips you probably have heard before such as being passionate about what you do. Others may make you think such as the sacrifices you will have to make. It's just a good list to reflect on. <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/business/08/17/14/8-tips-make-your-unique-business-work>

Image File Types

If you are as confused as I am about this topic, you will appreciate this article - What they are and when to use what. <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/different-file-types-definition>

ROI and Metrics

No matter what you are doing, you need to check to see if you are getting the results you want. So what do you measure and how often? Some answers here - <http://www.forbes.com/sites/dailymuse/2014/08/19/the-right-and-wrong-way-to-measure-results/>

Why a Business Might Not be for You

Do you have discipline? Is working without a safety net scary? Do you need regular thanks? This are just three things that suggest owning your own business may not be for you. Check out the rest at: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/236583>

Customers Use Credit Cards

This story could start "once upon a time" people used cash. This is becoming more and more a rare event. Even for purchases under \$5 we dig out our plastic. I do it. Others do it. So if your business doesn't accept cards, you are probably losing business. <http://www.blogtrepreneur.com/2015/07/05/small-business-need-accept-credit-cards/>

Sales Happen in Stores

eCommerce is certainly a growing trend. Yet according to this article, 90% of sales still happen in stores. Will that change? Probably. As you read the article, check out why people still like stores. And those people were of all generations. The future? Probably both avenues are required. <http://smallbiztrends.com/2014/08/consumers-prefer-shopping-in-a-store.html>

Needed Start-Up Skills

If your are thinking of starting a business, then check out this list of skills that will help you be successful. Three of the 11 mentioned are networking, being able to face failure and being alone. Check out the rest. <http://www.inc.com/young-entrepreneur-council/11-startup-skills-you-won-t-learn-in-school.html>

Customer Service

You have probably read hundreds of articles about customer service. But have you read one that discusses it from the perspective of the owner? Good article. It makes you stop and think about promises made and what they really mean.

<http://boss.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/08/21/the-true-price-of-customer-service/>

Running a Family Business

It has always been true that many of the businesses in the United States are owned and operated by families. Yet you don't hear much about them and see even less on what unique challenges they face with the involvement of family, not just as funders, but in the operation of the business. And that varies depending on where the family members are in terms of the family tree. This article takes an overview look at some of the items that should be considered.

<http://www.inc.com/christina-desmarais/5-rules-for-family-businesses.html>

Start-Up Mistakes

From this list, I would suggest that the length of time it takes and knowing how to bootstrap are two common issues for the startup. <https://smallbusiness.yahoo.com/advisor/5-rookie-mistakes-every-entrepreneur-avoid-most-133000297.html>

Ideas Have No Value

You may argue with this article but I think the author got it right. Ideas by themselves rarely have value. It is the implementation of the idea where value arises. Technology has lots of examples of where the maybe best idea is not the product that took over the marketplace. It was the steps that came after where value was created. A good read.

<http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/236605>

Know Your Mission

It's important to have a clear picture of what you do, your mission as discussed in this article. Businesses have a mission (actually you may have a public mission and a private mission some might say). The more clear you can be about it, the greater your chances of reaching it.

<http://smallbizsurvival.com/2014/08/how-i-found-my-mission-in-three-steps.html>

The 10-Foot Rule

Does your business follow the 10-foot rule? Do you know what it is? It is a great marketing tool.

<http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/236762>

Planning Good; Persistence Better

The best laid plans – You probably have heard this and know various endings. It's true that no plan will run just the way you laid it out. You are lucky if the plan even gets started before things need to change. That is why Inc argues for persistence. This isn't to say you don't do some up front planning but then be adaptable, realize there will be the unknowns and execute (Amazing how many times this last item is skipped.) <http://www.inc.com/brent-gleeson/why-persistence-is-far-more-important-than-planning.html>

What It Costs to Start a Business?

When starting a business, you need to have some of your own money ready to put into the business. (and don't look for the free grants. That is a myth). But the amount needed isn't as much as what many people think. An Intuit survey suggests \$10,000 cover many start-ups. <http://quickbooks.intuit.com/r/trends-stats/know-small-businesses-start-10000-less/>

Getting a Loan

At some time in the life of your business, you will need to borrow money. Yet often comments heard about the process make it sound like this is nearly an impossible task. Yet it happens daily. So who are those people who get loans? Many of them probably follow these 5 tips such as honesty, references, and practice. See why these matter and what else to think about. <http://www.inc.com/noah-breslow/5-ways-to-make-your-lender-fall-in-love-with-you.html>

Online Tools and Tech Tips

Periscope: A New Marketing Tool

The last thing you probably want to hear about is another new marketing tool. Sorry but it isn't going to stop. The latest one being touted for business use is Periscope, a live streaming video app. Rapid growth right now (10 million news users in one month). Will it live up to the hype? Who knows but maybe something to put on your radar screen. <http://www.cision.com/us/2015/08/six-ways-to-connect-with-consumers-using-periscope/>

Are You Listening to Facebook?

There is a new tool in town on Facebook called Messenger. It allows customers to chat with you. Can be used on a desktop but its real purpose is the mobile world. The thing that caught my attention is that Facebook will be offering a merit badge for your page if you respond to 90% of messages within 5 minutes. Curious if companies will make any effort to meet these criteria. <http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/8257-facebook-pages-for-messaging.html>

Knowing the ROI

Social media takes time and costs money, both direct and indirect. It's important that you understand what is bringing in a return and what is not. Not pointed out in the article though is the need to have online presence simply as part of your marketing/branding effort. To some degree, it just needs to be done. Read more - <http://www.searchenginejournal.com/knowning-roi-social-media-campaigns-important/124049/>

Write for People

This is great advice. While I would not say you ignore what search engines are looking for, write for people, especially your current and potentially future customers and this will impact your search results. So make it content you like, your customers ask for, that is unique, and you have strong headlines. <http://www.socialmediatoday.com/content/6-guidelines-write-your-content-people-not-search-engines>

A View of Mobile Shopping

Mobile shopping continues to grow. Yet as this article notes, it remains just one part of what should be your sales and marketing effort. <http://mashable.com/2015/02/04/pcs-tablets-retailers/>

Retargeting

People often don't buy the first time they come to your website (and often to your store). But this article suggests that it may be well worth your effort to focus on some of those customers as likely candidates to buy in the future, or retargeting. Using the possibilities of technology, you can make sure that what they see the second time they stop in are things they seemed to be looking for. And you want to show them the best content you have. You probably already do this in your store. Do it with your online presence as well. <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/retargeting-ideas>

Writing Great Headlines

It's an art. It's a science. It's probably both, but here is a look more behind the science angle of crafting a headline. See what makes a headline get more attention and gets people to take action. Remember on many devices, the headline is one of the three things people see. <http://www.convinceandconvert.com/content-marketing/how-to-write-a-headline/>

Making Good Use of Your Social Media Time

One often-heard complaint about social media is all of the time it takes. Here are some tips on some tools to use and ways to free up some time. <http://www.searchenginejournal.com/share-social-media-dont-time/123327/>

What's Going on in the Office

What Family Businesses Give to Communities

Last month I did a blog post on family businesses and what they offer to communities. The work used was done by a research colleague, Diane Masuo from the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Family businesses come in all shapes and sizes. We probably are most familiar with those smaller retailers, manufacturers, and service business in our communities. The work of Diane and her colleagues focused on what these businesses offer communities. They provide monetary donations and technical assistance. They also often allow employees to participate in community efforts.

Read more at our **Power of Business** effort: <http://powerofbusiness.net/2015/07/22/family-businesses-give-back-to-communities/> . Sign up to get information on chats with business owners, blogs, and just released tips and ideas.

To see Diane's report, go here: http://www2.hawaii.edu/~masuo/CSR_Natl_070615.pdf

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October – Farm-to-School Month - <http://www.farmtoschool.org/our-work/farm-to-school-month>

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