

Introduction to Vendor Meetings at the Matchmaker

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For an introduction to a Vendor you will be most successful if you are prepared with answers to as many questions as possible. Following are some key topics they will be interested in learning and ideas for presenting within a 10 minute session.

Product Introduction

- There isn't much time for catching the vendor's interest – so presenting something to start will be important. Present the product sample or mock up packaging or, for seasonal products, photographs. If you do not have UPC codes but are planning to get them, indicate that when vendors look at your packaging.
- This is like Show & Tell - hand it around and, if you have samples, offer some to taste/drink.
- Describe what you are introducing to them. This is your time to make the product shine, point out what makes it special and unique, what are its features and benefits?

History of the Product and the Business

- Next talk about the history of the product. How did you come about making what you are making? How long have you been doing it? Local foods should have a story to tell.

Pricing Pricing will be a question on both your minds and it's important not to have pricing surprises down the road.

- Pass out your sell sheet(s) which should show your desired package and product offerings
- While handing out your sell sheet talk about your pricing. What are your anticipated price points? Make sure you explain all your price point options:
 - What is your base price point, do you have a volume price point discount and what is it?
 - Do you have multiple packaging options for a single product and what is the price point per package option (for example, a case of loose bottles, a case with four 6 packs, a case with 2 twelve packs, and a case of 24);
 - Does your price vary if they buy direct versus if they buy from your wholesalers?
 - Have you listed what shipping/freight fees there might be, if any?
- What happens with unsold product? It's important for both you and the vendor to be on the same page with respect to what you expect will happen with unsold product that expires its date code... do they expect you to reimburse them for product that hasn't sold? Do you have a buy-back policy? Or do you explicitly have a "no buy-back" policy?

Distribution You may have already divulged a wee bit about how you will be distributing your product when you talk about pricing. But now is your time to give them the fleshed out version:

- How will you get your product from you to the store(s)? (will we self-distribute, use a wholesaler (and if so who), etc.)
- Does it need to be refrigerated/frozen? If so demonstrate you have a thought out cold-chain distribution plan
- If you are not currently carried by a distributor that the vendor uses, be prepared to discuss steps to getting onto that distributor or how you will meet their distribution needs in a different way.
- If you prefer self-distribution, be prepared to ask about and have answers to:
 - How orders are placed
 - Turn around time from order to delivery
 - Buyer's restrictions on days, times, and minimum quantities
 - Safety and quality standards – especially HACCP plans and liability insurance

Closing the Deal By this point your session time may already be over. Even though all participants will receive a packet with everyone's contact information, it is still important to have a business card / brochure / some contact information to leave behind. As time allows, here are some more points to go over:

- Procedures in place to ensure a high quality, safe product.
- If you are selling produce, procedures in place to ensure it arrives cleaned at the buyer (or if you can't do extensive pre-washing, say so)
- Liability insurance – what you have, what they require
- Product demos – if you are up for it, product demos are a great way to launch the product, and the store may be looking for those as well.

Ask if you can take their order while there, and if not when would be a good time to follow up and whether there is someone else you should talk to. Jot down next steps for both sides.

Vocabulary You Need to Know The following terms are not covered in this sheet but you should be prepared to talk about them. If any of these terms are unfamiliar, please consider looking them up and knowing how they apply to your business before talking with vendors:

- UPC Codes
- HACCP
- GAP / GHP and GAP audits
- Sell Sheet
- Net 30 or Net 60