

Summary of Presentation ‘Cut – Flowers for Sale : What Market Suits Your Style?’

1. **Introduction** to StrayCat Flower Farm’s structure (positions overlap...)
 - a. 3 full time positions *owner, field manager, office & marketing manager*
 - b. 3 part-time positions *2 field crew, 1 equipment*
2. **What we grow:** - very diverse (field, greenhouse, 2 hoop houses)
 - a. perennial shrubs (*willows, dogwoods, lilac, physocarpus, forsythia, cotinus, ...*)
 - b. perennial plants (*echinacea, phlox, lupine, peony, astilbe, yarrow, sea holly, poppy...*)
 - c. bulbs (*successions of lily, tulip, daffodil, anemone, ranunculus...*)
 - d. annuals (*ageratum, nigella, sunflower, dahlia, statice, zinnia, celosia, lisianthus, ...*)
3. Our **6 types of markets:**
 - a. Burlington Farmer’s market (*Saturdays May – Oct.*)
 - b. Wholesale to 4 grocery stores (*bouquets delivered Mondays and Thursdays*)
 - c. Vases to businesses (*Monday ‘weekly’s’*)
 - d. Bulk buckets *for DIY customers*
 - e. Same-day vase deliveries *to the hospital, the university, birthdays, thank-you’s...*
 - f. Weddings & Events *ranges from a few personals to full-service ceremony & reception*
4. **Each type of market has it’s own pro’s & con’s:**

Farmer’s Market → people like seeing/chatting with the farmer who grew the product
+ gratifying to present finished product & to be well-received
+ leads to more opportunities & connections ‘*free advertising*’
*strength & stamina, interactive, lots of questions, patience, hand-holding
- no Saturdays off, (so no Friday nights on), rough weather, ‘race to the bottom’

Wholesale + flexibility regarding what to grow (straight bunches, mixed bouquets)
+ standing orders, regularity, continuity
* pamper your customer, educate your customer, find niches
* options to sell to grocery stores, to a distributor, or to flower shops
-can be hard to break in to the market, cold calls, fluctuations in supply/demand

Vases to businesses + consistent income

+ good PR & connections to business community

+ develop liasons.

+ opportunity to show design technique & unusual products.

* these must be interesting designs & long-lasting, a good opportunity to showcase specialty cuts and locally foraged materials (sumac, oak and beech leaves, crown vetch, viburnum berries...)

- vase life issues (how does the vase look day 5?) *depends on environment, vase size & fresh water, maintenance.*
- a good fit for businesses that only want flowers in season, though some may want year-round delivery

Bulk buckets for DIY customers + trendy,
 +good return on investment since you don't have to arrange & deliver.
 +customer comes to you

- * need to have a good variety of options so customer can make easy arrangements
foliages, focals, & fillers
- customer asks for specific out-of-season flowers at bulk price. = customer education
- customer might have a lot of questions about "how many flowers do I need to do xyz?"

Same-day vase deliveries + good if your farm is in an urban area.
 + your logo on your vehicle – free advertising
 + good return on investment

- * your website has to be designed to include search-engine optimizers *same-day vase deliveries, call today, fresh flowers delivered in the vase, florist arrangements.*
- * your website has to come up via Google search and have photo's of arrangements with prices.
 - interruptive, need good cell service, callers may ask for flowers not grown at your farm, you want to look nice when you're going to the hospital or office or university

Weddings & Events +good return on investment (ie. Good mark-up on flower value)
 + gratifying if you enjoy design work & delivery/set-up to churches & venues.

- *requires a lot of customer service, e-mails, consultations, changes to the proposal, knowledge of what other florists in your area charge
- * requires strong web presence, Google s.e.o.
 - late night work, may have to break-down after the reception
 - some customers are easy, others are not and may need a lot of 'hand-holding'.

Ultimately it's up to you do decide what suits your style.
 Consider whether you prefer to be a:

Grower -*sell wholesale to grocery stores or distributors, bulk p-up at farm, PYO, farmstand, truck or van route to flower shops.*

Designer –*same day vase deliveries, weekly's to businesses, weddings*

Farmer –Florist - *a combination of above, famer's markets*