

Farmers Market Pricing Strategies

The following are some pricing strategies for Smart Marketers.

- **Price-lining:** Price-lining features products at a limited number of prices, reflecting varying product quality or product lines. This strategy can help smart marketers to sell top quality produce at a premium price and an "economy line," e.g. overripe or smaller fruits. Price-lining can also make shopping easier for consumers and sellers because there are fewer prices to consider and handle.
- **Single-pricing:** The single-price strategy charges customers the same price for all items. Items are packaged in different volumes based on the single price they would be sold

for. With such a policy, the variety of offerings is often limited. The strength is being able to avoid employee error and facilitate the speed of transactions. Also, customers know what to expect. There are no surprises for customers.

- **Loss-leader pricing:** A less-than-normal markup or margin on an item is taken to increase customer traffic. The loss-leaders should be well-known, frequently purchased items. The idea is that customers will come to buy the "leaders" and will also purchase regularly priced items. If customers only buy the "loss leaders," the marketer is in trouble.
- **Odd-ending pricing:** Odd-ending prices are set just below the dollar figures, such

as \$1.99 a pound instead of \$2.00. Some believe that consumers perceive odd-ending prices to be substantially lower than prices with even-ending. However, it might not be suitable in some markets. For example, in a farmers market situation, products should be priced in round figures to speed up sales and eliminate problem with change.

- **Quantity discount pricing:** A quantity discount is given to encourage customers to buy in larger amounts, such as \$2.00 each and three for \$5.00. Gross margins should be computed on the quantity prices.
- **Volume pricing:** Volume pricing uses the consumers' perception to its advantage,

and no real discount is given to customers. Rather than selling a single item for \$2.50, two are priced for \$4.99 or \$5.00.

- **Cumulative pricing:** Price discount is given based on the total volume purchased over a period of time. The discount usually increases as the quantity purchased increases. This type of pricing has a promotional impact because it rewards a customer for being a loyal buyer.
- **Trade discount/promotional allowances:** Price is reduced in exchange for marketing services performed by buyers or to compensate buyers for performing promotional services.
- **Cash discount:** A discount is given to buyers who pay the

bills within a specified period of time to encourage prompt payment.

- **Seasonal discount:** This type of discount is used to induce buyers to purchase at the end of the season or during off-season.

While the above strategies are widely used and proven effective, smart marketers should not be limited to these strategies. Creative pricing ideas can help you differentiate your products and services. No matter how you price your products, always go back to check it against your bottom-line. Make sure prices for your products reflect your business image and target market and make a profit. Smart pricing can be a good marketing strategy. (DJ)

Fertilizing Trees

Trees and shrubs are the foundation of a good landscape and an important part of your home. They lend not only beauty and shade, but increase the value of your property as well. It pays to care for them properly.

In urban or suburban neighborhoods, trees and shrubs often need fertilizing. Modern home-building methods create adverse growing conditions for plants. Often, good topsoil is completely removed and not replaced. Heavy machinery scrapes and compacts fertile soil, reducing its aeration and drainage. Plants are crowded by streets and sidewalks, and must compete with grass for nutrients. Proper fertilization is especially important to landscape plants in this type of environment.

You should also watch for some of the following symptoms of nutrient deficiency: pale green or yellow leaves, reduced leaf size and retention, premature fall coloration and leaf drop, reduced twig and branch elongation, yellowing along the leaf veins and overall reduced plant growth and vigor.

To avoid potential nutrient deficiencies, you can establish a fertilization schedule for young and newly transplanted trees and shrubs. Fertilize annually for two years with slow-release fertilizer to promote their establishment in the landscape. Fertilize every two years until the plant matures if it is not in already fertilized turf. Fertilize mature trees and shrubs if growth seems inadequate.

Complete fertilizers contain the three nutrients plants need in the largest amount for optimum growth - nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K). A fertilizer labeled "10-10-10" contains 10% nitrogen, 10% phosphorus and 10% potassium. Consequently, a 50 pound bag of 10-10-10 contains only five pounds of actual nitrogen. Whether you use organic or synthetic fertilizers, try to find one with a high percentage of water-insoluble nitrogen (WIN); this is a slow-release form of nitrogen — becoming available as the plant can use it — that will not wash or leach through the soil into groundwater.

Specialists recommend applying fertilizer over the entire root zone of a plant. Consequently, the amount you apply will depend on how many square feet are covered by the plant's roots.

To determine a plant's root zone, you must first know the radius of the plant's roots. Root radius is at least twice the radius of the plant's crown. For example, if the branches of a tree appear to spread about 15 feet from the trunk, then the roots spread at least 30 feet. To Find the

total square feet covered by the roots, use the formula $3.14 \times (\text{root radius}) \times (\text{root radius})$. In the example given above, this would be:

$$3.14 \times 30 \times 30 = 2,826 \text{ square feet}$$

Once you know the total area in square feet covered by the roots, you can estimate the amount of fertilizer you need. When you fertilize evergreens, use one to three pounds of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. For plants that lose their leaves, use no more than 2 pounds of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet in one application otherwise, plants may be burned.

Fertilizer Math

Calculating the amount of a given fertilizer formulation to apply per 1,000 square feet is based on both the amount needed and the percentage of nitrogen in the bag. Use the following method:

$$\frac{\text{number of pounds of nitrogen needed} \times 100\%}{\text{Percentage of nitrogen in the bag}} = \text{pounds of fertilizer to apply per 1,000 square feet}$$

Example: Assume the fertilizer to be used is a 30-10-10 formulation with 30% nitrogen.

$$\frac{3 \text{ pounds of nitrogen needed} \times 100\%}{30\% \text{ nitrogen in the bag}} = \text{pounds of fertilizer to apply per 1,000 square feet.}$$

$$\frac{300}{30} = 10 \text{ pounds of 30-10-10 per 1,000 square feet.}$$

The easiest and most effective method of supplying nutrients to the entire root system of the plant is broadcasting — spreading granular fertilizer evenly over the entire root zone. Be sure to keep fertilizer away from driveways and other paved surfaces, as it can wash into storm drains and lower the water quality of our creeks and rivers. (DJ)

In Dry Weather, Watering More Critical For Some Plants



Drought-damaged lawn in Lincoln.

Watering is more critical for some plants than others. If your ability to water the plants in your landscape is limited, setting watering priorities guarantees that the plants that have the most critical need get water first.

Top priority are newly planted lawns, trees and shrubs. These plants haven't established extensive root systems, so they can't survive long periods of dry weather. They'd also be expensive to replace, so if rain is scarce, you must irrigate.

Priority No. 2 is trees and shrubs planted within the past two or three years. Though they're not as vulnerable to drought as newly planted ornamentals, they still don't have the established root systems of older plants. In severe drought, plants up to five or six years old may need watering to survive.

The next priority is flowers, vegetable gardens and older landscape plants.

Though flowers and vegetables may show the effects of dry weather sooner and more dramatically than some other plants, the relatively low cost of establishing them relegates them to a lower spot on the priority list. Mulching to slow the loss of soil moisture can reduce the need to water and control weeds. Weeds can rob desirable plants of available moisture and nutrients.

Older, established woody ornamentals can vary in their need for irrigation. Birch and dogwood are among those more susceptible to drought; oaks, hickory, honeylocust, Norway maple and white and green ash tend to be more drought-resistant. Plants under attack by

defoliating pests will need supplemental water more than unstressed plants.

Healthy, established lawns have a built-in protection against drought — plants go dormant. The lawn may turn brown, but it'll green up and grow again when conditions improve. Keeping a lawn growing and green during hot, dry weather requires watering every two to three days.

Newly transplanted flowers and vegetables and newly seeded lawns require frequent, shallow watering. Other plants do better with deep watering, which encourages the formation of large, deep root systems that help plants withstand dry weather. To water trees and shrubs, place a trickling hose placed near the base of the plant or, for large trees, let the hose trickle at several locations within the dripline. In this case, watering may take three or four hours. A trickle irrigation system or a soaker hose placed upside-down in vegetable or flower beds is more efficient than a sprinkler. It applies water to the soil rather than throwing it up into the air to evaporate or applying it to plant foliage, where it can promote disease development.

The rule of thumb for watering is an inch of water per week from rain, rain and irrigation or irrigation alone. Soil type enters into the calculation. Plants on sandy soils need more; plants exposed to hot, drying winds will also need more. Plants on heavy-clay soils may need their inch applied in more than one watering session so the water has a chance to soak in rather than run off. (DJ)