

Making the Web Work for You: Finding Your Customers

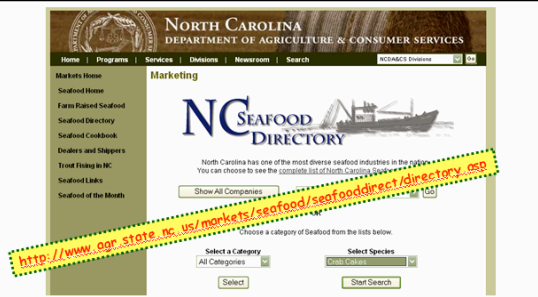
Using the Web to find your customers is a sure-fire way to help you conduct your marketing successfully. You can do this market research at your convenience and for little investment, except for your time. If you do not have an internet connection, ask a friend or go to the library. Good Luck and have fun!

Computer Screen	Simple Directions
 <p>begin by asking</p> <p>http://www.google.com/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ask question keep brief click search 	<p>The first step is to use the search engine at: http://www.google.com/</p> <p>Type in the question: who buys _____ (fill in the blank with your product).</p> <p>When the search engine returns your answer, review the answers to see if you can determine a clear answer. Visualize who this customer is. This activity is called a “customer profile.”</p>
 <p>Zippeedeedoodah</p> <p>U.S. Census Bureau</p> <p>http://factfinder.census.gov/</p>	<p>Now, use your zip code to get an idea of the kind of people that may fit your “customer profile” at: http://factfinder.census.gov/</p> <p>You will get a quick fact sheet that outlines in brief, the population demographics for the people who live in within your area.</p> <p>For more details, click on these menu bars.</p>
 <p>start looking</p> <p>http://www.yellowpages.com</p>	<p>From the first two steps, consider what type of customer you are looking for.</p> <p>For example: <i>Customer Profile-Affluent, college educated, families with children, or Healthy Lifestyle, etc.</i> and ask yourself “Where can these types of customers be found?”</p> <p>Now armed with your zip code and customer profile, go to: http://www.yellowpages.com</p>

Computer Screen

Simple Directions

competitors



Now that you know your customers, consider who your competitors may be. By doing this soul-searching research before you start production, you will determine if it is worthwhile to sell your products in your area, or if the market is already saturated with too many other competitors. This is essential market research!

Go to:

<http://www.agr.state.nc.us/markets/seafood/seafooddirect/directory.asp>

Click on the products you are selling, or thinking about selling in the future.

more competitors



Again, the same idea as above: Check out the competition by using internet search databases. You can use this internet tool to map where your competitors are. Consider how they sell their products and how you could improve on what they are doing and capture the market for yourself. Go visit them and see if they might be a potential market for you in the future. Ask them if they would consider buying from you & what would they be able to pay you.

Visit: <http://www.localharvest.org> and

<http://www.newfarm.org/farmlocator/index.php>

no stone unturned



Also, use this local (SC and NC) member and business database to find the following:

- 1) Other businesses selling products;
- 2) Customers who support local food producers; and
- 3) Businesses that support local foods producers, like you.

Go to:

<http://www.carolinafarmstewards.org/consumers/index.html>