

marketshare [mahr-kit shair] -noun

1. Is a program of marketumbrella.org, which works to cultivate the field of public markets for public good.
2. These free documents (called "shares") are the best of "lessons learned" from public markets everywhere.
3. Employ as needed, & please feel free to tell us about your results, so that we can share those with other markets.



Organizational Details: governance

As we see it, one of the primary responsibilities of governance is to balance supply and demand—or, said another way, to ensure that the needs of vendors, shoppers, and the community are all given equal consideration. If the interests of one group grow to dominate the other two, the market will become unsustainable. A market cannot survive meeting primarily the needs of vendors over those of shoppers and the community; nor will it be successful considering only the needs of shoppers or the community over those of vendors. A successful market meets the needs of all three groups, thus sustaining their interest and commitment over time.

Although public markets have existed for thousands of years, the current public market “movement,” which started in the 1970s, was based on the success of markets like the Greenmarket in New York City, and by markets in Athens Ohio, Carrboro North Carolina, and other places, which were organized and promoted to fulfill a mission. To be successful, these markets had to answer to their vendors, their shoppers, and their communities. Further, these markets chose to make their decision-making inclusive and their relationships with stakeholders equitable.

In our view, these are unifying factors critical to their success: their commitment to personal, direct, and transparent relationships (what we call “the golden rules of regional economy”) and management organized to fulfill a clearly stated mission, rather for ease, expediency, or other end.

The Carrboro Market was started by farmers. New York’s Greenmarket was started by community activists; other markets started with the efforts of a single individual; still others by nonprofit organizations, private or public redevelopment groups, or even for-profit entities. To be successful, the organizational structure matters less than the commitment to mission and to “personal, direct, and transparent relationships.”

Let us clarify with an example. Say you’re the manager of a farmers market and, for the sake of efficiency, decide to allow resellers at your market, figuring the farmers can just sell to them. Further, you decide, for the sake of shoppers, to hold the market seven days a week. One decision would make life less profitable for farmers; the other would make life more difficult for them. Yet if the well-being of local farmers were not part

of your mission, nor farmers part of your decision-making process at the board, or governance level, both decisions would be completely understandable. By the same token, if all three sets of stake-holders—shoppers, vendors, and community—were represented on your governing body, and if your processes were transparent, personal, and direct, those decisions would be unlikely.

To know whether your organization is acting in the best interests of your stakeholders:

- Ask them directly
- Talk to everyone affected
- Make your board actions transparent
- Make your management's communication style direct

Your entity's articles of incorporation will doubtless set requirements for your governance. We recommend a formal Board of Directors (if you are a nonprofit), or at the least an informal Advisory Board made up of community members. A legally constituted Board has legal decision-making authority over management; an Advisory Board does not. At marketumbrella.org, we operate with a legal board along with advisory teams for every project. The advisory teams are selected by the project staff and include a board member, as well as other stake holders interested in the project. For example, the Crescent City Farmers Market advisory team meets every other month after the second Tuesday market. They discuss any issues that staff need assistance with—such as marketing, reviewing applications for new vendors, and deciding how to deal with problems that arise. The Festivus (our holiday market) advisory team met every year in July to discuss December market dates and review applications. They worked some part of

all three Festivus market days, and gave feedback after in a post-Festivus meeting. This team did much of its work (such as reviewing vendor applications) via email, as the team preferred that.

We recommend 5-11 board members (an odd number so that votes don't end in ties), including at least one vendor and one neighboring business owner. (Our vendors self-nominate in late summer, and we hold a paper ballot election in the fall.) Beyond that, try to fill your board with talents that your organization may need: legal, fundraising, planning, financial, retail, agricultural. We recommend terms of two-three years and term limits of two to three terms. You can allow board members to return after cycling off for a term, if you wish. The point is to keep expanding your circle of friends and advisors, rather than settling into a cozy "clique."

The most important rule to remember about governance (and it is one you will have to remind your board of more often than staff) is: Governance is not management. The staff manage; the Board governs. Boards that try to manage end up dis-empowering staff and hamstringing their market's success. Leave day-to-day operations and decisions to staff. The board's key governing responsibilities are to:

- Hire the executive director, market manager, or whatever the chief management person is called, and review his or her performance annually
- Provide financial oversight monthly, quarterly, or as stipulated by the bylaws
- Fundraise, promote, advocate on behalf of the market
- Identify and nominate new board members
- Advise market staff, as requested

We like to think of board members as linebackers, running interference and clearing a path for staff members to do their jobs. They can also be coaches or trainers, cheering from the sidelines and getting staff members the training and resources they need. But they are not ball-handlers, nor even quarterbacks. If board members are consistently calling the plays, running the plays, or interfering with the plays, then the organization either needs more competent staff or less meddling board members. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to remove board members without creating hard feelings, if not enemies. So it's best to have clear policies in place, well-articulated and

maintained by the board president, before running into this kind of problem.



mission | management | marketing | measurement

Thank you for using a share document. This 4M worksheet below is to help you think through what you just read and how to apply it to your situation. Read the share titled “The Strategy of the 4Ms” to learn more about this marketumbrella.org teaching tool.

Is this issue or strategy covered in your current mission (or values)? _____

Does your management structure allow you time to handle this, or is there another organizational partner to help?

How will you communicate to others about this issue or strategy (marketing)? _____

When and how will you measure the impact of this resolution of this issue or the completion of this strategy?



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