

Marketing Ideas for Your County



The following marketing tactics are sorted into three areas: marketing a specific program or event, marketing through relationships with key leaders and media, and marketing K-State Research and Extension (or branding). Many of the tactics listed are low-cost or free, and the marketing materials mentioned in this list can be purchased, gotten free or borrowed through the K-State Research and Extension marketing Web site at <http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/marketing>.

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MARKETING PROGRAMS

These pertain to getting people to your programs and events, getting information to the public, providing the actual “Knowledge for Life.”

1. Ask local principals or superintendents to make a tour of the K-State Research and Extension office a required part of in-service training for new teachers. That way, teachers can see the wealth of material available in the office for them to use in classrooms, such as notebooks on health and nutrition, safety, gardening, etc.
2. Ask local banks to include a postcard survey with bank statements. Ask people what programs they want and invite them to an open house. One group in Georgia further increased the response rate by promising a free seedling (from the forestry association) with each survey returned at the open house.
3. Mail a monthly postcard to everyone on your mailing list that entails what is happening for that month.
4. Write a weekly column.
5. Provide news releases to local newspapers with your quotes included. Give the media something on a regular basis (weekly, biweekly, daily) even if it is just hand-carrying releases from the Department of Communication’s news unit. That way the media come to expect materials from you and save space for your materials.
6. Share the costs of programs and promotion. Ask local businesses or organizations to help. For example, invite the local implement dealers to host a program on tractor safety or a local grocery store to sponsor a food safety seminar. (But try to invite all competing businesses so it doesn’t look like you are playing favorites.)
7. Set up tables in local stores. Many shopping malls and discount stores will let you set up a stand for free, as long as you are a nonprofit organization.
8. Ask volunteers to help promote programs through their other activities, such as Lyons Club or playgroups.
9. Develop new publications and use existing publications to inform your audience.
10. Produce professional radio spots. Radio stations are required to provide a certain amount of free air time for public service announcements; use that requirement to your advantage. The K-State Radio Network (formerly KKSU) can assist you with this need.
11. Post announcements of upcoming programs in church bulletins.
12. Get your information in the community spotlights on cable TV.
13. Use community marquees to further promote public programs.
14. Include information about what you are doing or have been doing in the local Chamber of Commerce letter that goes to all chamber members.

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15. Use the WIC program to get information to a specific target audience. Borrow their mailing list or post information in WIC sign-up areas.
16. Offer to speak at local organizations. These can range from the local Kiwanis or American Legion to daycare associations.
17. Take advantage of a captive audience. Post flyers where people wait or spend a lot of time: at the doctor's office, dentist's office, pharmacy, car repair station, restaurants, donut shops, coffee shops, post offices, local stores, public restrooms, libraries, and other public locations.
18. Work with the local health department to distribute information and share announcements.
19. Send letters to businesses, churches, and schools to announce a big program.
20. Splurge on a newspaper ad. That way you can control the message and when and where the information is released. Purchasing ad space may also encourage editors to use your news releases or present you favorably.
21. Ask your Master Gardeners to host an Herb Day, Tomato Day, or other specific-focus event. Be sure the events are publicized in the gardening sections of your local paper.
22. Never underestimate the value of word-of-mouth marketing. Tell people you meet what events you have coming up.
23. Make the publications in your office easily accessible for the public.
24. Use multiple means to market an event. Not everyone reads the newspaper or listens to the radio. By sending the message in multiple ways, you can increase the chances that your target group got the message. And the more they get the message, the more they are likely to attend.
25. Provide demonstrations on local newscasts.
26. Market your Web site URL in news releases, public speaking opportunities, newsletters, radio spots and other communications. Use the Web as a source of information for when the office is closed.
27. Use the Web site to not only inform people of upcoming events, but also to call them to action, through sign-ups or "click for more information."
28. Produce "media advisories" or teaser questions relating to timely topics, such as Christmas tree care, how to plant bulbs, how to avoid hitting a deer, picnic safety, etc.
29. Use the same materials multiple times. That is, put your newsletter information on the Web site. Condense program information for a newspaper column.
30. Place classes and programs in all community calendars.
31. Send all press release/community calendar events to your county Web site.
32. Identify opportunities to reach more than one media outlet with one visit. For example, some newspapers also share information with local radio and TV stations. Or, one station or newspaper may be part of a chain of media that serve not only your community, but also the nearby region or even entire state. Make it known to your contact that the information can be freely distributed throughout the chain.

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33. Tie together the Web site and television shows or radio spots. Whenever you appear on television, radio, or in public, place supplemental material such as gardening tips, recipes, etc. on both our Web site and the station's Web site, when possible.
34. Try to keep the home page on your Web site varied and timely.
35. Maintain your strong ties with Extension users with your newsletter. A K-State study showed that Kansans rated the newsletter as the most highly-preferred source of information from Extension. Among those who don't use Extension information directly, newspaper, radio and television are the most preferred sources.
36. Maintain your mailing list. Once a year, mail the newsletter "return service requested" and eliminate or change outdated addresses at that time. Always have an opt-out option blurb in each newsletter, so people can call you to remove their names.
37. Offer the program soon after you promote it. One trend seen in Johnson County is the farther the class date from the mailing date of the newsletter, the lower the enrollment. The classes offered closest to the mail date are the most attended regardless of the program area.
38. Add a "Dates to remember" section at the back of the newsletter, where readers can always find upcoming event information.
39. Target your mailings based on not only demographics (age, gender) but also interest (foods, nutrition, agriculture, youth).
40. Consider automatically adding all contacts to your newsletter mailing list. Try to get customers' names and addresses, whether the customer is a walk-in, class sign-up, or just calling with a question.
41. Use give-aways at the county fair and other events to get additional names for potential customers.
42. Host an informative table at school orientation.
43. Ask 4-Hers or other volunteers to offer a hands-on class at a local craft store.
44. Produce inserts to be put into local grocery story bags.
45. Other ways to get the word out: bumper stickers, bus signs, taxi signs, t-shirts, posters, screen shot in the local movie theater, window decorations in local businesses, a float in the local parade, bulletin boards at local parks or zoos.
46. Use email as a marketing tool. Send out reminders of upcoming events via email. Or send an e-newsletter; it is cheaper than a print newsletter but only effective if the recipients will really read the electronic version.
47. Research your audience. Find out their statistics, demographics, what type of information they want and how they want to receive it. Target your communications based on this information.
48. Use research to identify the "untapped audience." Who are you not yet reaching and how can you get them involved?
49. Use existing research. Oftentimes a county similar to yours has already researched the users and nonusers. That information could be applicable to your county, too.

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MARKETING RELATIONSHIPS

These pertain to getting influential officials “in your corner,” making your presence and value known at the county, state, and national levels. Some of these tactics also pertain to developing a relationship with local media.

50. Try and meet once a year in person with your local county commissioners and legislators at their homes or businesses. Talk about what new and exciting things have been happening, share a few (not too many) publications, and then just listen.
51. See if there is an opportunity to include commissioners and legislators in tours or meetings. Try and get them to a real event and let them see Extension “in action.”
52. Use impact statements as part of quarterly and annual reports to county commissioners and legislators, then include them in county brochures and work with local media. As long as you have to write them, you might as well get some use of them!
53. Be an active volunteer in your community.
54. Meet with commissioners at periodic press conferences.
55. Schedule a local candidate’s forum during election years, to coincide with our Extension Council elections.
56. Remember to share what you are doing with your board and PDC’s so they will support you come budget time.
57. Remember to market your service and expertise when meeting with other agencies.
58. Be in the news, quoted either in the newspapers or on radio.
59. Market yourself as much as you market K-State Research and Extension. One important part of being an agent is having people recognize your name and think of you as someone who can help them.
60. Send monthly newsletters to decision makers and stakeholders.
61. Host a community Open House with games, food, information, and socializing.
62. Invite county commissioners to annual lunches, held at the Extension office with presentations by county faculty.
63. Developing partnerships with other agencies such as the library or health department is another great way to market - two entities marketing your classes are better than one.
64. Always respond to local media, even if you just find them a source outside Extension. The willingness to go the extra mile in finding background information and back-up data for reporters is so important.
65. Develop and maintain good relationships with news media.
66. Try to get an article to the paper at least once a month.
67. Deliver the newsletter to local public places, including doctors’ offices, the Chamber of Commerce, the local newspaper, libraries, etc.



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68. Establish an “interpretation committee.” Texas Cooperative Extension initiated this group of volunteers, all of whom were involved with Extension programs already. These volunteers agree to be advocates for Extension with elected officials. Each volunteer took 1-3 names of state representatives and/or senators (later this was expanded to county elected and appointed officials, as well as national elected officials) and made one personal contact and three contacts by mail each year, talking about the areas they were personally involved in.

69. Have lunch away from the office with the editor or publisher of your local newspaper. Use the opportunity simply to get to know each other as members of the community. As the conversation flows, you should have a chance to talk about your Extension work; don’t be too pushy in trying to sell your program.

70. Understand that newspapers are not popular with all age groups. Depending on the group you are targeting with a program or service, focus your media relations effort on reporters who write for sections aimed at reaching young adults, teens or kids, for example.

71. Ask a local news reporter to come talk to your county staff about what makes news at their newspaper or station (radio or television). They’ll appreciate the opportunity to educate potential news sources, and you’ll get a chance to present yourself as objective providers of local information.

72. Propose an idea for a special section to your local newspaper. Offer to provide news copy; the newspaper can sell ads, while you have a chance to land news pieces that include your expertise. Some opportunities for special sections include food safety month, county fair, harvest, farmers’ markets, 4-H days, and more. Use your imagination!

73. Offer names of local farmers or others who can speak favorably of your program. News reporters will appreciate access to “real” people who they believe add objectivity to their story.

74. Make it a point to meet new reporters or editors face-to-face. There’s nothing like a friendly “hello” and hand shake, especially when you’re new to a community. The reporter will remember you long afterwards, and associate you with an early positive experience.

75. When you meet reporters in person, leave behind information that makes it easy for them to contact and remember you. Some examples include a business card, a one-page fact sheet, or a simple brochure.

76. Traditional mass media may not be the only way to reach your local public. Ask people you know about how they receive information, and find out how to get your message into those outlets. For example, do you know who puts information on your local cable access channel?

77. Special sections in newspapers, or features on radio and television, are opportunities for you and your program. The advertising director at these media often will let you know when special features are planned. Find ways to match your program to the planned topic.

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78. In addition to news sections, what other parts of the newspaper might carry your information? For example, is there a gardening column? Does the lifestyles page carry information about youth (including 4-H)? Is there a food section? In addition to news reporters, columnists are a valuable contact at any newspaper.

MARKETING EXTENSION

These pertain to marketing the system, explaining the value of AES and CES in Kansas and in your county.

79. Add K-State Research and Extension identification to news releases and other educational materials released to news media and public.
80. Promote the K-State Research and Extension system when conducting programs.
81. Use the short promotional K-State Research and Extension video.
82. Produce, distribute, and use a general K-State Research and Extension brochure.
83. Use PowerPoint presentation templates that include the K-State Research and Extension logo on every slide.
84. Develop a series of public service announcements featuring the vast array of information available to Kansans through K-State Research and Extension.
85. At the state level, develop online resources: templates, electronic logos, tip sheets for in-county personnel to use to develop their own brochures, flyers, presentations, and newsletters.
86. At the county level, use the online resources. This enables you to print in house or use local vendors and have materials readily available while still maintaining a consistent look overall throughout the K-State Research and Extension system.
87. Wear name badges with the K-State Research and Extension and county logo on it.
88. Get and use an electronic logo for your county, combining the K-State Research and Extension logo and your county name.
89. Produce feature stories on “feel good” K-State Research and Extension experiences to be published not only in local print media but also statewide or regional magazines.
90. Be identified with K-State Research & Extension every time you are quoted or interviewed.
91. Remind area directors about the need for promoting K-State Research and Extension.
92. Submit impact statements that include marketing activities you have done throughout the year.
93. Recognize those in our system who effectively and successfully market, especially office professionals (gatekeepers to K-State Research and Extension)
94. Use the materials available on the K-State Research and Extension marketing Web site.
95. Follow the guidelines set forth in the Communications and Style Guide.
96. Use the expertise of the Department of Communication’s publications unit to get a county brochure about your programs. Print these in the office to have on-hand for new customers.



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MARKETING 101

97. When writing thank-you notes, use the professional-quality, K-State Research and Extension note cards available through the Department of Communication's distribution unit.

98. Raffle K-State Research and Extension shirts, caps, aprons, or other items that feature our logo at programs or fairs. Be creative but rational with giveaways. Get items useful to your audience and related to specific topics, such as measuring cups or aprons with our logo and contact info for nutrition class participants.

99. Look professional when you are representing K-State Research and Extension. Purchase and wear "wearables" (hats, shirts, jackets) that identify your affiliation with K-State Research and Extension.

100. Always hand out marketing items (pencils, notepads, bookmarks, buttons) at fairs and other highly attended events.

101. Develop a professional-looking exhibit and display about K-State Research and Extension in your county.

102. Contact new residents to your area through welcome wagon packets, realtors, etc.

103. Have a "Kidsownzone@thefair" such as Wyandotte County did last year. "It was a collaborative effort with 4-H and Extension taking the lead. A number of youth-serving groups and community organizations held an event that lasted from 9-3. The youth participants were able to do activities at a variety of stations. The culminating activity was a parade through the fair. It helped make other organizations and fair participants more aware of 4-H and K-State Research and Extension."

104. Purchase a billboard with other like agencies. For example, consider purchasing a 4-H billboard with the Boys and Girls Club, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Use the headline "Get Your Kids Off the Couch" and include the logos of all four organizations with up-to-date pictures. For best results, purchase a billboard where traffic stops a lot and include a link to a Web site for more information.

105. "Tie a green ribbon" campaign. Make people aware of how influential 4-H is by asking every 4-H family in your community to tie a green ribbon to their car antenna.

106. Help customers make the link from one program to another. For example, let 4-H parents know that 4-H is part of K-State Research and Extension; arrange activities with Extension Master Gardeners or Extension Food Volunteers with 4-Hers; host a pasture-to-plate event with agricultural, horticultural, and food safety information.

107. Think NASCAR – always name your sponsors. For example, when doing a 4-H activity, give credit to 4-H, your county, and K-State Research and Extension.

108. Give tours to school groups about K-State Research and Extension resources.

109. Have clear, professional, and visible outdoor signage. Replace the signage when it becomes faded, worn, or damaged.

110. Neatly display the K-State Research and Extension signage in the county office.

111. Have stand-up table signage that can be used in outdoor and indoor programs.

112. Develop a direct mail campaign to K-State alumni in your county.

113. Remind other county agencies that K-State Research and Extension can support their activities.

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114. Host an informative table at local stores. For example, host a healthy diet or food safety table at your local grocery store. Have a sign-up at the table for a free K-State Research and Extension apron and use the sign-up to add to your mailing list. Coincide the event with National Dairy Month or a similar event.

115. Develop, maintain and promote your county Web site. Have a clear link to www.oznet.ksu.edu so visitors to your site know what other resources are available through K-State Research and Extension.

116. Place pictures of all past events on the Web site, especially 4-H events, so people can get an idea of what our activities “look like.”

117. Work with other counties or departments to produce flyers and have them inserted into your local paper.

118. Invite influential community and business leaders to a luncheon to let them know what information and resources are available through your K-State Research and Extension office.

119. Develop a “brag” newsletter. Use it to report on how programs are going. Brag on faculty, volunteer, and participant awards. Introduce new employees or volunteers. Make it a “warm and cozy” read.

120. Consider developing a tabloid style newsletter with impacts and program offerings for the general public, something with general information and a shelf life of a year or more.

121. Produce a promotional interactive kiosk featuring the many areas of knowledge available from K-State Research and Extension.

122. Collect news clippings about your program and post them on bulletin boards or other public displays.

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