Marketing Extension to Georgia

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Executive Summary: Extension Marketing Plan

*Learning for Life.* That’s what Extension work is all about, isn’t it? It applies to both our clientele and ourselves.

- To help Georgians compete, survive and thrive in the world, UGA Cooperative Extension must challenge citizens to expand their knowledge throughout their lives. Georgians can look to UGA’s local access point for objective, science-based knowledge in agriculture and the environment, in youth development and in family and consumer sciences.

- To keep our programs relevant to Georgians and to remain a viable and necessary part of the University of Georgia’s broader mission as a land-grant institution, Extension must keep Learning for Life.

**Expectations**

What can agents and administrators expect as a result of a strong marketing strategy? To be honest, some are fearful that a marketing program will only place more demands on an already overworked staff. It is a real possibility. After all, building awareness and appreciation can certainly increase demand. However, it should also result in increased support to respond to that demand. Agents and administrators should give some thought on how to respond to higher demand. A stronger advisory system may help agents respond appropriately.

About 30 county agents, district staff and specialists were chosen for their interest and experience in marketing to respond to a short, on-line survey. Their responses revealed a list of benefits they expect from an Extension marketing program, including:

- Increased visibility
- Awareness
- Appreciation
- Support (philosophically, physically and financially)
- Regionally coordinated branded programs
- Unified message
- Broader public exposure
- Name recognition
- Ability to show worth to decision makers

Can a marketing program deliver all those benefits? Yes, with solid benchmark data and continuing market research, careful planning, implementation, evaluation and funding. But
remember the caution: a marketing plan is only as good as the program it is marketing.

**Successful Support**
This marketing program can be effective only if it can rely and build on support from five areas:

1. Securing the support of three college deans for a singular identity for Extension.
2. Securing a commitment for funding to execute the marketing initiative and providing sustainability.
3. Assigning leadership to the Office of Communications for implementing and overseeing the marketing initiative.
4. Integrating the new web presence for Extension with the goals, messages, and orientation of the marketing effort.
5. The associate dean for Extension must serve as the champion for the marketing plan.

**Key Recommendations**
This plan proposes a number of recommendations and changes that will require administrative approval and support. Once they are approved and funded, the organization must embrace them as part of a team marketing effort. Key recommendations include:

- A new mission statement, logo and slogan (*Learning for Life*)
- Drop “Service” from the name
- Ongoing materials and resources, style guide and for-sale items, including county signs
- A new system to identify and promote banner programs
- Incentives and training needs
- Funding structure to support marketing, including market research and evaluation
- Ideas for featured products, media plans and programming to market Extension
- Administrative and staff review of position titles, materials and program names so they clearly reflect roles and information to clientele

Please note that Web design is not strongly mentioned in this plan because a separate committee is already working on redesigning the Extension home page and setting up a system for unified, attractive county Web pages. However, the Web has obviously become a major force in marketing and communication and must be considered a vital tool in this marketing effort.

Extension programming has developed a reputation as having substance but little flash. A marketing strategy intends to add the flash to the considerable substance that makes up Extension work. In a business environment, you need both the substance and the flash to win acceptance, appreciation and support. With support from administration and from each staff member, the necessity and benefits of a strong, vital marketing strategy will be apparent.
I. INTRODUCTION

A. A Little History
Marketing is not a new concept to the University of Georgia Extension Service. Back in 1993, then-Extension Director Wayne Jordan charged a statewide committee to establish a marketing mission as part of Extension’s strategic plan. What followed was a nearly 200-page notebook, materials and templates, annual required training for new agents and optional training for everyone, and county marketing plans and responsibilities built into personnel evaluations.

Marketing was no longer a dirty word. It was accepted, expected and encouraged.

Since that time, the Extension Service has become more integrated with research and teaching in the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. In 1993, the Extension specialists working in family and consumer sciences were transferred to the College of Family and Consumer Sciences. Extension foresters reside in the Warnell School of Forest Resources. Today’s UGA Cooperative Extension reflects coordination and cooperation among many education, research and public service-outreach programs in the University.

In the ‘90s while Extension underwent changes, budgets tightened and resources had to be funneled toward primary programming. Marketing became more of an attitude than a product since funding was not available to develop tools or techniques.

During this period, the Office of Communications Marketing presented and implemented successful marketing strategies for urban agriculture and student recruitment for the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

In 2004, the CAES marketing plan authorized teaching, research and Extension to develop individual marketing plans. The CAES strategic plan of >04 also encouraged marketing efforts, as did a marketing plan for the College of Family and Consumer Sciences. So the Office of Communications contracted with Janet Rodekohr to review, update and rewrite the Extension marketing plan. She had worked with the original committee in 1993 to write the first plan and served as a marketing specialist until her retirement in 2001.

This marketing plan pulls from several sources: marketing programs at Texas A&M, Iowa State University, the University of Florida, the University of Missouri, North Carolina Extension and Kansas State University, as well as the original Georgia plan, an on-line survey of county agents and current literature. Several groups reviewed it and suggested changes and improvements, including the marketing subcommittee for the Extension Delivery Committee, an urban Extension group that traveled to Texas and shared marketing ideas from that experience and the Extension administrators in the three cooperating colleges.

The final draft was reviewed by a national marketing review team made up of Danny Gardner, leader for marketing and special projects at Mississippi State University Extension Service; Frankie Gould, director of communications and public relations, LSU AgCenter; Elizabeth
Gregory, associate professor and extension communications specialist and coordinator of Extension marketing, Texas Cooperative Extension; Sherrie Whaley, director of public relations at the UGA Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication; and Vicki Miller, assistant coordinator for news and publishing at the University of Nebraska. This document includes some of their comments about the plan.

B. Extension’s Strengths
To market a product, you must know what makes it unique in the marketplace. In marketing terms, that’s called “positioning.” Through surveys and focus groups, the strengths of UGA Cooperative Extension are apparent:

1. **It’s local.** The county delivery system delivers the knowledge and resources of the University of Georgia, state and federal government agencies and other institutions. Agents are part of the community so they understand the local needs and respond to them.

2. **It’s personal.** Extension is not just a Web site, a news story, text book or a slide show. It’s a face. Its people are its greatest asset.

3. **It’s objective, science-based education.** Its information is backed up by scientists at the University of Georgia in multiple fields and colleges. It does not promote a product or a company so it engenders trust.

4. **It’s a change agent.** Extension understands the needs of families and the local community and works to help them advance and thrive in today’s economic, political and environmental climate.

5. **It collaborates.** Extension faculty bring people together through cooperation and collaboration.

6. **It serves the needs of the entire family and the community,** applying its educational principles in both rural and urban areas, and Extension is an accepted traditional leader in the fields of agriculture and the environment, youth development and family and consumer sciences.

The review team made these comments about Extension’s strengths:

The Review Team believes Extension faculty, staff, and administrators need to celebrate these strengths and capitalize on them while planning and delivering educational programs at every level. The synthesis of these six strengths has created the most powerful educational organization in the world.

When the Cooperative Extension System was founded in 1914, the U.S. economy was largely agrarian and supported by a geographically diverse rural population. Agricultural research and Extension education have helped U.S. farmers to become so efficient that
only 2 to 3% of the U.S. population is involved in on-the-farm production of agricultural commodities. Ironically, the successes of agricultural research and Extension education have made the land-grant system anachronistic in the minds of many urban legislators and stakeholders.

Because Extension funding partners and stakeholders are more inclined today to question the need for Cooperative Extension, we need to reiterate the unique values CES offers in every state. The six strengths (local, personal, research-based, change agency, collaborative nature, and serving the needs of the whole family and community) are unique to CES—that is, no other agency or organization shares all of these same strengths.

The point is not that farmers and the agricultural community do not have as much need today for research and education. The point is that the CES network is still the most adept organization in the world for delivering educational programs and services not only to traditional agricultural audiences, but also to grassroots audiences in real time, meeting extremely diverse needs across a wide spectrum of family, community, and business issues.

**Eight Assumptions**
The new marketing plan for UGA Cooperative Extension centers around the *Learning for Life* concept. It is also built on eight key assumptions:

1. **Extension has a future.** In spite of current budget concerns and uncertainties, we have to move forward with the belief and trust that Extension has a place in education, in community service, in youth development and in family education.

2. **Extension can honor its legacy and still embrace the future.** They are not mutually exclusive. Extension work in Georgia has a proud and solid foundation. Defining the future does not mean abandoning the lessons and successes of the past. It is a continuum of learning.

3. **The essence of Extension is cooperation and community.** Its strength and distinction lie in these two concepts. The county delivery system upholds both concepts.

4. **Extension combines high tech and high touch.** It is the educational and technological outreach of the University of Georgia with a human face and a helping hand.

5. **Extension’s programs must carry out the mission of the University of Georgia and its allied colleges.** To remain relevant, the Extension program this plan markets must remain true to the entities it encompasses. A marketing program is only as strong as the product it markets.
6. **A marketing program markets a product, not a company.** The product is Extension programs. The company is the University of Georgia.

7. **The business approach has become the accepted management style within the University of Georgia.** As in any business, the primary role of this marketing plan is to secure support, awareness and appreciation for Extension programming.

8. **Because of demographics and political realities, this marketing plan recognizes the value and importance of diverse clientele.** Major marketing efforts must include and target these nontraditional and emerging audiences such as urban and Hispanic clientele, while never overlooking Extension’s traditional rural constituents.

The review team wrote these comments about the eight assumptions:

All UGA Extension faculty, staff, and administrators must share the belief that *Extension has a future* to ensure the successful implementation of a statewide endeavor like this. Budget concerns have become perennial across the Cooperative Extension System (CES). Low morale among the troops for whatever reason also seriously undermines even the best-laid marketing plans. All Extension leaders need to keep their vision on the future in order to maintain a healthy enthusiasm for the mission of Cooperative Extension work.

The second and third assumptions are closely related to the first, in that the legacy of UGA Cooperative Extension sets high standards and expectations for the future of Extension work in Georgia. *Cooperation* is our middle name and *community* is our house. Nobody knows more about Georgia communities than local Extension agents.

One of Extension’s strengths has always been the network of agents rooted in local communities in every county. In the 21st century, technology is expediting the reach of Extension into every home, computer, and telephone. *High tech is high touch.* But no technology is expected to replace person-to-person interaction.

The nature of Cooperative Extension work is that a network of partnerships adds value to programs and services offered throughout the state at the local level. Certainly, this nature fully supports and contributes to the *mission of the University of Georgia*, the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, and other UGA partners.

Any successful marketing plan promotes a *single entity*. Clarity of message regarding a single product is essential. Many marketing plans have failed because organizations have tried to sell everything in the store. Clientele, funding partners, and stakeholders need to hear a clear, concise message that identifies a singular enterprise.
Assumptions seven and eight ground this plan in reality. *Marketing Extension to Georgia* is not a pie-in-the-sky add-on to a *business plan*, but is the vital ingredient in an overall business plan that demands a healthy bottom line, especially considering the importance of *urban audiences*.

**Attitude and Respect**

When times are hard, it’s easy to slip into a “poor-me” mentality. UGA Cooperative Extension has suffered through years of budget cuts, painful lay-offs and seemingly endless downsizing and loss of programs.

But through it all, dedicated staff have continued to deliver valuable educational programs. The impact statements and Georgia Counts database systems can track tangible and invaluable successes throughout those years. Clientele still rely on their county agent for solid, science-based information. 4-H’ers still learn and grow. Families still thrive. Farmers, communities, businesses and leaders still look to Extension for education and leadership.

It’s time to let go of past difficulties and move on. Institute a no-whining policy as part of Extension’s guiding principles. When working with commissioners, legislators, congressmen and other leaders, remember that *nobody wants to support a failed program*. Always preach our successes. Whatever the outcome, make UGA Cooperative Extension a positive force for change, now and in the future.

Along with a new attitude should come a new commitment to respect each other. Show professional courtesy, support and trust toward our co-workers, volunteers and clientele.

Attitude and respect will go a long way toward implementing a successful marketing strategy. People often judge an institution by the way employees treat each other.
II. THE PLAN

A. Marketing Plan Summary
The new marketing plan emphasizes long-term goals rather than check-off lists of accomplishments. It focuses on a state plan for all Extension employees, but gives special attention to local county marketing ideas and techniques. The style guide has been expanded as a stand-alone document for easy reference.

The plan consists of six parts:
1. Background and strategy to ground the marketing program
2. Newly developed materials, templates and resources
3. A system to identify and promote banner programs
4. Guidance to build support among decision makers
5. Ongoing incentives and training
6. A process for conducting market research and evaluation

The Office of Communications is at the heart of this plan as it supplies the expertise to carry it out. UGA Cooperative Extension will need to rely on OC’s educational marketing staff, designers, writers and editors to guide and implement the plan. In turn, the OC will need to rely on county, district and state administrators to fund marketing products and approaches as needed, and to identify key programs, concepts and ideas to market to its customers and convey to funding sources.

B. Marketing Goals
This plan outlines ongoing techniques and strategies. The hallmark of a strong marketing approach is constant vigilance to keep on message and coordinate a consistent image to key audiences.

The review team wrote, “Designing a singular identity brand is both elementary and vital to ensuring the success of this marketing effort. Without this singular identity, UGA Cooperative Extension will become one of many sunflowers in a field -- virtually indistinguishable from any other agency, organization, or institution in the state.”

1. Build brand awareness
   • Design an identity program to give materials a professional, consistent, uniform look throughout the organization.
   • Develop a marketing Web site to house templates, materials (free and for-sale), style guide, notebook and ideas, updated regularly.
   • Convey our mission to our target audiences.
   • Establish internal guidelines for passive marketing.
   • Conduct a review of position titles, materials and program names to ensure clarity.
   • Distribute new county signage.
• Develop public service announcements and other media packages.

2. Develop marketing strategies for banner programs
• Set up a selection process to identify banner programs to present in the coming year.
• Set up a marketing team in the Office of Communications to develop marketing strategies and products for selected programs.

The review team wrote, “Successful marketing campaigns often use the banner program concept to offer a peg on which audiences can hang their hats. Carefully selected programs, for which marketing campaigns will be developed and which will be consistently offered across the state, can be extremely effective in adding meaning to the brand for UGA Cooperative Extension. These efforts go beyond name recognition to help audiences understand not only who Extension is, but also what Extension does and why it is a valuable resource. Marketing Extension to Georgia identifies several programs that are likely to have excellent popular appeal. Promoting these programs across the state will raise the standard for UGA Cooperative Extension in the minds of funding partners, stakeholders, and constituents alike. Popularity breeds more popularity.

3. Increase support for UGA Cooperative Extension
• Develop strategies, tactics and products to explain Extension’s impact to legislators, university administrators, Georgia’s Congressional delegation, Board of Regents, institutions such as Fort Valley State University and other key leaders.

4. Establish a marketing training program
• Introduce the new marketing program through statewide or district presentations.
• Include marketing as part of core (required) curriculum for new agents.
• Offer marketing topics to Program Development Coordinators and district heads, secretaries, program assistants, specialists and other internal groups as needed.
• Develop on-line training and PowerPoint presentations on topics as needed.
• Produce an e-newsletter on new marketing tools, techniques and ideas.

5. Set up incentives for rewarding good marketing strategies
• Fund an award program within agent associations for top marketing efforts.
• Include marketing efforts as part of the reporting and evaluation process.
• Feature county programs by nominating their efforts through Georgia Counts.

6. Design a process for conducting market research and evaluation (Faith)

C. Foundational Changes
This plan calls for changes at the foundation level of Extension, including a new mission statement, name change, slogan and logo.

1. New Mission Statement
A marketing plan begins with an understanding of the mission and strengths of UGA Cooperative Extension. It must be in keeping with the missions of the University of Georgia and allied colleges and programs:

*The mission of UGA Cooperative Extension is to extend lifelong learning to the people of Georgia through unbiased, research-based education in agriculture, the environment, communities, youth and families.*

For marketing purposes, employees should be able to explain in one simple message what they do for the people of Georgia. That message is:

*UGA Cooperative Extension extends Learning for Life to Georgians through local science-based education.*

2. *Drop “Service”*

Since its inception, the organization has been known as the Cooperative Extension Service. This plan proposes that “Service” be dropped from the name, so that it will be known as University of Georgia Cooperative Extension. For ease of space and time, it can also be referred to as UGA Extension, but “Cooperative” should always be included in formal references and correspondence.

Several reasons prompt this recommendation:

- The word “service” says nothing about education or research at a time when Extension is tremendously active in education and research, both as partners and as participants.
- The original connotation of “service” meaning agency has changed to relate to the service industry.
- From a marketing view, dropping “service” gives a fresh approach to the product without losing the essence of the original name.
- Several other states have already adopted this change.
- An on-line survey of county agents, a discussion with the Marketing Study Group for the Extension Delivery System and talks with other internal focus groups showed support for the change.

The negatives of such a change involve obtaining whatever approvals are necessary, massive redesigns of materials and building awareness and acceptance of the change, both internally and externally.

3. *New Slogan and Logo*

“Putting Knowledge to Work” has been the slogan of UGA Cooperative Extension since 1993. It was chosen because many other states had already adopted it, making it an unofficial national slogan. It has served us well in embodying the delivery of practical knowledge to its clientele.

However, with the new discussions on the Extension delivery system, a new dean and director
and a new marketing plan should come a fresh approach. “Learning for Life” is a unique statement for Georgia that has not been adopted in any other states. Variations in use include “Lifelong Learning,” “Real Learning for Real Life” and “Knowledge for Life.”

“Learning for Life” offers a simple, memorable phrase that can be incorporated in any Extension program. It’s flexible yet focused.

To introduce the new logo and the shortened name, UGA Cooperative Extension should have a unique logo to readily identify itself on all materials. The University does enforce restrictions on the use of the bulldog and the UGA arch. Yet this logo should embody the link between Extension and UGA, especially considering the fact that the Fort Valley Extension program operates independently in the state.

D. Special Marketing Efforts
To jump-start the new Extension marketing efforts, this plan includes several ideas that have proven successful in other states, as well as original ideas for Georgia. Most of these ideas can feature the partnership with UGA and allied colleges and programs, showing the instructional and research aspects as well as Extension’s public service.

1. **Distribute full line of marketing resources**
   To introduce the marketing efforts, the Office of Communication will develop a full line of resources, including on-line templates, free and for-sale items, including new county signage. The new marketing Web page will be a major resource for agents. It will include this document, the style guide, templates, for-sale items, updates about banner programs and links to resources.

2. **Annual calendar**
   Working with the 12 issues identified in Extension’s annual Plan of Work, feature one issue each month through photos, impact statements and background information. For selected audiences, the calendar could serve as an annual report by including funding and staffing information, volunteer figures and client use of information using Georgia Counts data.

3. **Marketing Products in Spanish**
   Develop a line of basic Extension marketing materials in Spanish, including the logo and slogan, mission statement, brochure, signs, PSAs and other items.

4. **Pizza Farm**
   Invite school classes to a large area (arena, civic center, auditorium) to lead them through the “life” of a pizza. Include sample plots of wheat and vegetables; a live cow for milk, cheese and meat, with horticulturists and animal scientists to explain the processes; food scientists to explain food safety and product development, and nutritionists to talk about health and nutrition. Partner with a pizza company to serve pizza at the conclusion of the
program. This idea works well for both urban and rural audiences.

5. **Legislative Days**
   Designate a period (two weeks to a month) in which all members of the Georgia Legislature will be invited to a presentation about the impact of Extension in their district. Each event should include a coordinated message with local examples of success and testimonials from clientele. The events should be when the Legislature is not in session.

6. **Food Safety Promotion**
   A program has already been piloted that takes food safety messages to customers in the grocery store, with games, giveaways and educational presentations. It builds partnerships with local businesses and schools, and can be adapted with several options.

7. **Marketing E-newsletter**
   One consistent problem is internal awareness. People are simply not aware of the tools, techniques and ideas available to them. The OC Marketing Team should prepare a regular e-newsletter announcing tools, sharing links to the marketing Web site and other sites. It should feature successful county and state program ideas and serve as an informal training tool.

8. **1-800 CALL EXTENSION**
   Set up an 800 number so the public can call one number to reach their county office. The call could go to 1-800ASK-UGA1, recognizing Extension as the portal to the University.

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E. **Incentives Program**

Let’s face it: county agents in Georgia are busy people. They do excellent work that too often goes unnoticed. So the marketing plan includes an incentive program to reward outstanding county marketing programs:

- Marketing has been included on evaluations in the past, but neither staff nor administrators always knew how to evaluate it. The County Marketing Guide of this notebook includes ideas and information for establishing a county marketing plan that includes both active and passive marketing goals. These goals should help establish a way to evaluate progress for a county marketing program, and how to report it on Georgia Counts.
- An annual impact statement is already a requirement for each agent and should be included as part of an evaluation of marketing skills.
- The marketing specialist will also work with district heads and PDCs to help them work with county staffs on marketing plans.
- The Extension Web page can feature outstanding county programming. Through Georgia Counts, agents can nominate their work for consideration.
- The OC marketing team will work with agent associations to establish an award program.
honoring the best marketing efforts within a program area. With support from administration or a donor, these programs will receive cash awards to further their marketing efforts, which can be used to purchase for-sale items or develop marketing materials for future programs.

F. Issue-based and Banner Programs
This plan recommends preparing a portfolio of Extension programs, organized under the state issues identified in the state Plan of Work. These issues will provide focus and clarity for marketing, accountability, program development, reporting, evaluation and other purposes. From this list of programs, a few banner programs will be selected for in-depth marketing development. Note: This process would operate outside of programming planning. It is simply a way to feature marketable programs, not to influence the program planning process, which must be based on the educational needs of clientele.

The list of featured issue-based programs to go into the portfolio will be collected through a nomination process in which agents, specialists and administrators can nominate programs to be included. They could be current statewide programs, county-level programs or pilot programs. This will not be a complete list of all programs offered in each issue. Rather, it will be featured programs to market the educational message of UGA Extension.

The nominations will be submitted to a selection committee made up of agents, marketing staff, program specialists and administrators, who will review the nominations and select programs based on several criteria, then fit them under headings to make up the portfolio for each issue. Criteria for nominating programs include:

1. The program should have a track record, either as an established state or county program or through a pilot effort, to demonstrate its educational effectiveness, marketability and potential for success.

2. The program must have a clear, easy-to-understand educational message.

3. The educational message must be accessible even to people who don’t directly participate in the program.

4. The program must be marketable to audiences, with a hook that will grab people’s interest. This hook will form the basis of the program title, the message, the graphics and other marketing elements.

5. The program must be marketable to the media, which means it must be relevant to a broad spectrum of Georgians. Since media outlets are concentrated in urban areas, urban audiences will be particularly important.
6. **The program must be developed and offered in a packaged format.** Agents should be able to order a complete package including teaching modules, printed resources, marketing and promotional materials, exhibits, evaluation instruments and background data for interpretation. A development team should be available to train agents to use the modules and serve as resource people to implement the program.

7. **The program must relate strongly and directly to a state issue** identified in the state Plan of Work.

Once the portfolio of programs has been selected, a few programs (2-4 each year) will be chosen by a selection committee for special marketing development. These banner programs must have demonstrated educational effectiveness, marketability and potential for further success. With the guidance of the selection committee and the program leaders, the OC marketing team will develop a full marketing strategy and line of products to support these programs.

The criteria for banner programs are similar to issue-based programs. The difference is in the marketability. Banner programs must have:

1. **A clear, simple, easy-to-understand message.**

2. **Educational value available to everyone,** even those who don’t formally participate in the program.

3. **Application and accessibility to a broad audience.**

4. **Marketability** A hook that will grab people’s interest.

5. **A consistency with Extension’s mission.** As people understand this program, they understand Extension’s mission.

6. **Potential to bring new audiences to Extension.**

7. **Ability to expand Extension’s brand identity.**

**G. Branding Process for Banner Programs**

The previous marketing plan, developed in 1993, emphasized the development of passive marketing products such as templates, designs and products, and instructed agents on how to carry out active marketing at a county level. This marketing plan takes it to the next level by proposing an ongoing process for branding new banner programs.

The Office of Communications has developed a marketing team to respond to marketing needs for Extension. A member of that team will serve on the Selection Committee for issue-based programs and have a lead voice in selecting banner programs for further development.
Once the banner programs are selected, OC marketing team members will work with the program leaders to develop a name, message and products built around the program’s “hook,” or attention grabber.

Agents will receive an order form for all the products and aspects of the banner program, including teaching modules, printed resources, marketing and promotional materials, exhibits, evaluation instruments and background data for interpretation. Promotional items such as folders, brochures, calendars, key chains, etc. will be at cost unless sponsored by a donor.

H. On-line Templates and for-sale Items

To carry out a consistent look that will brand UGA Extension, the Office of Communication will design a line of materials that apply the logo and a uniform identity.

State and county Web sites should get an immediate makeover to introduce the new look and message.

Other items can be added to the following lists whenever the need arises and promoted through the e-newsletter.

On-line templates should include:
- Newsletters
- County brochure
- Award certificates
- Impact statements and various formats to use them
- Countdown format
- Cover for 3-ring binder
- Meeting registration and sign-in sheet
- PowerPoint presentation about Extension that can be localized
- Column head designs
- Screen savers (logo, slide show, etc.)

Items that can be ordered include:
- Stationery
- Fill-in poster for meetings
- Note cards

For-sale items can be developed as needed, but they could include:
- County signage
- Folders
- Mugs and cups
- Shirt
• Jacket
• Caps and hats
• Pens and pencils
• Banner
• Name tags
• Napkins
• Place mats
• Posters

I. Media Package (Faith)

J. Funding the Marketing Efforts
Marketing, particularly an ongoing program to develop new marketing tools for banner programs, as well as updating a long list of items such as county signs, letterhead and many other things, will require a financial commitment from UGA Extension, cooperating colleges and county government.

The plan will require a one-time development investment for new products and materials, and an ongoing budget for continuing the marketing process, including market research and evaluation. The Office of Communications has already invested in a full-time marketing position and designated others in the unit to support marketing needs.

Counties will need to have marketing funds available to them, either as an additional budget item or by designating current funds for this need.

Establish a for-sale outlet for marketing items, publications and other related materials that can generate more funds to go back into these types of items. Companies and organizations may be willing to help sponsor costs if they can share in a portion of the proceeds.

Allow and encourage counties to charge for programs to help defray costs and generate funds.

For banner program marketing, potential donors related to these programs should be approached to sponsor these educational efforts.

Consider cutting costs by partnering with the UGA Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication and the Terry College of Business. Internships and student projects could add a new dimension of ideas and creativity at minimal cost.
III. DEFINING MARKETING

A. Definition
Marketing in the business world is primarily selling, promoting and advertising. But for organizations such as UGA Cooperative Extension, marketing should be considered more of a process, not a product or a goal in itself. Even in the business world, buying and selling is not necessarily marketing. The extra ingredient of a successful marketing approach is understanding the needs of the customers.

Organizational marketing is the process of learning what the customer wants, responding within its mission and evaluating and reporting the impact. The public has a right to know how its taxes are being spent. A clear marketing strategy can create a strong link between customers and Extension and report results to customers, elected officials, leaders and donors.

B. Active and Passive Marketing
An organizational marketing approach includes both active and passive marketing. Passive marketing covers regular activities. Any contact with the public forms an image of the organization: how the telephone is answered, the way employees treat customers and each other, the quality of service and products, the effectiveness of communications pieces. With or without a marketing plan, Extension is marketing itself to the public with every contact. A marketing plan coordinates those contacts so that they are positive, consistent and effective.

Logos, slogans and other visual linkages help the public form a positive opinion about Extension. They create a visual or verbal identity that people remember. Some logos, such as the 4-H clover or the UGA arch, are so strong that they can stand alone. Others need to be reinforced with the name of the organization. They build awareness and a comfort level with the audience.

Active marketing involves developing a plan. It can include ongoing activities such as a media campaign, exhibits, special events and promotional materials built around a specific program or topic.

C. The 7-Step Marketing Plan
Developing a marketing strategy is expanded program planning. You start with a strong program and then build in a marketing component. In fact, writing a marketing plan is just common sense written down in an orderly manner to be sure you’ve analyzed the situation. Marketing plans seldom fit neatly into a 7-step process. But once you’ve concluded your planning, you should have all seven steps covered in some form. The audience and the situation dictate the emphasis and order of the plan.
The Seven Steps of Marketing:

1. **State the problem.**
2. **Know your capabilities to address the problem.**
3. **Target the audience (customers).**
4. **Develop the program, including goals and evaluation.**
5. **Develop your market position.**
6. **Carry out the program and marketing strategy.**
7. **Evaluate the program and report the results.**

These broad steps are probably second nature to county agents and program leaders who approach program planning in a systematic way. Each step builds on the last. Some will take a few minutes to summarize, others may take days, weeks or months to carry out. But, again, the audience and the situation dictate the emphasis and the order of the plan.

Take a look at each step and see how they all relate to marketing.

1. **State the problem.**
   State the reason an educational program is needed by explaining the problem, opportunity or need. This is also the situation statement for an impact statement.

2. **Know your capabilities to address the problem.**
   Know your organization’s strengths and weaknesses, as well as your mission and vision as it relates to this problem. Acknowledge your limits, whether they are financial, political or technological. You may not have the staff or resources to address the full problem. Laws or the political climate may dictate a subtle or distanced response. The delivery methods may require technology you are uniquely suited to provide. Think about competitors and partners who also care about this issue.

3. **Target the audience (customers).**
   Identify the customers as specifically as possible who are affected by this situation or problem. The more segmented the audience, the easier it is to identify ways to reach them. Think about demographics (gender, age, income, education, ethnic background, etc.), geography, psychographics (social class, lifestyle, personality, special interests, values) and work experiences to help you segment potential customers into manageable groups.

   For each target audience, think about people, groups or things that influence them. Know how they prefer to get information and education.

   Don’t assume you already know the answers. Market research is key to successful target marketing. Use surveys, focus groups, data bases, resources at the library and on the Web.
4. Develop the program, including goals and evaluation.
Now that you’ve studied the problem, your organization’s potential role and the customers you want to reach, you’re ready to decide how to respond. In other words, base your program on knowledge. Measure your plan against this foundation. Does your program really address the problem? Is it part of Extension’s mission or capabilities? Will it reach the right audience?

How will you know if you reached your goals? Build evaluation tools into the program from the beginning so that you can track your success or make adjustments along the way.

5. Develop your market position.
Positioning is a marketing term that explains how you set yourself apart from other groups or organizations that offer similar services. How are you unique in the minds of the target audience? What advantages do you have over your competition? What strengths do you bring to a collaborative process?

Know your competitors’s strengths and weaknesses, how they appeal to the market and where they position themselves on this issue.

6. Carry out the program and marketing strategy.
Once your educational program is developed, you must make some key marketing decisions. Decide on the message(s) you want to deliver, select a mix of delivery methods, set up a timetable and list of responsibilities. Make sure all your plans link back to the customers.

7. Evaluate the program and report the results.
If you built evaluation tools into the program and carried them out along the way, you should have some measurements, quotes and facts to decide how well you reached your goals. You can measure changes in attitudes or actions, track progress through environmental or economic data, or carry out spot interviews or surveys with participants to understand the impact of the program on the target audiences.

With data in hand, carry the program to the next level by reporting the results. Who needs to know? Depending on the program, the customers themselves might be interested. So would partners and collaborators. Certainly the elected officials, both locally and at other levels, want to know how you are serving their constituents and using taxpayer dollars. Donors and advisors deserve a report.

Your report can be formal and detailed, or relaxed and informative. It can be in the form of an impact statement, a news release, a quarterly report, a letter, a Web page, an exhibit or a newsletter.

Be sure to report your results to Georgia Counts to get full credit for your hard work and to contribute to the state’s results. You’ve worked hard to put a successful program together. Now let the results of the program work for you. That's marketing your program, your organization and your hard work, all in one.
IV. COUNTY MARKETING GUIDE

A. Building a Marketing Approach

Although this is a state marketing plan, much depends on local county delivery. A county marketing plan is only one aspect of marketing, but it is everyday application that gives legs to a marketing strategy statewide.

Every county Extension office staff needs to work together to incorporate marketing into annual planning and everyday activities. Using both active and passive marketing techniques, county staffs can build knowledge, commitment and enthusiasm for marketing Extension’s message and its programs. Developing a county marketing program enhances the image and visibility of UGA Cooperative Extension and its programs, which can result in stronger support from clientele and decision makers.

What can you do as a team?

- Develop a marketing workshop for all county staff, key volunteers and the advisory committee members. Include the definition of marketing, objectives and benefits. Share the style guide for using the logo and slogan. Evaluate Extension’s image in your county and set some marketing priorities for your county.
- During staff meetings, develop a clear understanding of the direction and impact of each educational program. Allow time for people to report on recent accomplishments and impacts. Educate the staff about all your programs so people know and appreciate the full extent of your county efforts. Promote each educational program to the media, decision makers, clientele and supporters.
- Develop a staff roster. It could be in the form of a brochure, a flyer or a poster. It could include pictures, professional responsibilities, education and experience. A roster builds recognition, a team spirit, public support, media coverage and interagency cooperation.
- Develop your own county marketing manual to help your staff market Extension programs. Include the style guide, mission statement, slogan, strengths and ideas.
- Solicit marketing ideas from the staff and let them know when their ideas are being used.
- Include marketing responsibilities in job descriptions and performance appraisals.
- Include marketing responsibilities during orientation of new employees and volunteers.
- Establish an incentive program for exceptional efforts in marketing and customer service. Recognize them at an annual event.
- Develop a county brochure and order other marketing materials to have on hand.
- Evaluate your office image, conduct a print/Web material analysis and review media contacts.

What can you do individually?

- Include a 1-minute marketing message at each meeting. Don’t take for granted that everyone knows who you are or what you do. Hand out your county brochure to new people. Wear your name tag.
- Use marketing materials, including exhibits, brochures, posters, signs and name tags.
Don’t pass up any opportunity to build awareness of your program.

- Display the mission statement prominently in the office.
- Answer the phone, “UGA Cooperative Extension, ____________ County.” Consistency builds familiarity.
- Make sure your office is listed in the phone book under county government, Cooperative Extension, the University of Georgia. You can add multiple listings under county agent, 4-H, Master Gardeners or whatever you want. But be consistent in the first listing.
- In any PowerPoint programs you develop, identify yourself with the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension in ____________ County and use the slogan.
- Prepare impact statements and success stories wherever appropriate and use them in reports to decision makers and elected officials, and share them with the media.
- For active marketing, use the 7-step marketing plan when preparing an educational program or event. Make it an automatic part of your planning process.
- Check the Extension Style Guide to be sure you are properly using logos and identifying Extension, the University and the College correctly.

B. Create a Positive Office Image
People make snap judgments about someone’s professional abilities, knowledge, attitudes and credibility based on first impressions. That’s why your office appearance is so critical to building a positive public image.

Take a look at your office through the eyes of a new client or visitor. Start with ease of locating the office, including a clear sign; then note parking, landscaping and entryway. If you share the building, note directions or a directory. Open the office door. How are you greeted? Is the atmosphere inviting, chaotic, messy, organized, friendly, quiet? Are your services and resources obvious and available? What about your mission?

Be honest. What impressions would you have as a visitor? You may be too close to be fair, so ask others to fill out the Office Image Checklist. Read their responses carefully and decide whether you are presenting the image and impression you want to project. If not, think about what you can do to improve the office image. You may not have control over some aspects of your location, but pay attention to the areas you control.

Plan your office space for both your staff and your clientele. Beyond the physical layout and design, think about customer service as it relates to phone and in-person visitors. Remember, you only get one chance to make a first impression.
Office Image Checklist
(Please check all that apply)

1. As you approach the UGA Cooperative Extension facility, can you:
   __ find the building easily.
   __ identify the office with a professional, well-lighted sign.
   __ find a parking space.
   __ find reserved parking for handicapped.
   __ see a well-cared-for landscape.

2. As you enter the office, can you:
   __ note handicapped accessibility.
   __ find directions to each office.
   __ be greeted by staff.
   __ find directions to meeting rooms.
   __ find directions to restrooms.
   __ see the mission statement.
   __ know when and where events are scheduled.
   __ know where to go for information.

3. Throughout the building, can you:
   __ see the mission of Extension in action.
   __ see information about program accomplishments through news clippings, awards and recognition.
   __ learn about coming events.
   __ enjoy clean, orderly facilities in good repair.
   __ see neat, orderly desks and offices.
   __ see Extension advice in action (healthy plants, nutritious snacks, recycling, etc.).
   __ see employees following professional work habits.

4. In the reception/information area, can you:
   __ find out what’s available (catalogue or Web access to publications).
   __ find fact sheets and bulletins.
   __ find publications.
   __ find pleasant staff with a positive, helpful attitude.

5. What areas need improvement?

Thank you for your response!
C. Print/Web Material Analysis

Everything about an organization talks. Think about the image presented by the materials people see. Every item, whether a sign-in sheet or poster or publication, adds to or detracts from the professional appearance of Extension.

What do your county’s materials say about UGA Cooperative Extension? Review your printed and Web-based materials to analyze the image they present. Make it a staff and volunteer project to help everyone look at these items through a new perspective.

Collect all the county-generated material your office has made available to the public in the past month or quarter. Take a look at program newsletters, county-generated publications and bulletins, annual and quarterly reports, impact statements, stationery, name tags, posters, exhibits, slide and PowerPoint programs, Web pages, office directory, telephone listing, office sign, newspaper column headings, programs, sign-in sheets and registration forms. Display everything and analyze the material using these criteria:

- Consistent reference to the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension and to the county or unit.
- Consistent use of the slogan, logo and UGA arch.
- Consistent quality to reflect the quality of the educational program.
- Proper credit for the College and other partners.

The image need not be identical to be consistent. Each program, each county, each unit can have its own distinctive look. The audience determines the style and design. But all materials should tie together with Extension’s overall unified image, incorporating the proper and full name of the organization, the slogan and a high standard of quality.

Once you see the image your office is projecting through its materials, you can see consistent design problems. Set some minimum standards for design and quality. Assign someone to be a watchdog for marketing standards. Use the Style Guide to help set up your own identity guidelines.

You can help watchdog design consistency for the entire program as well. If you see materials, publications, flyers or newsletters coming out of departments that you don’t think fit the consistent image, let the OC marketing staff know about them.

D. Reporting Results

Good work no longer speaks for itself, if it ever did. Funders, whether local, state, federal or private, have a right to expect a full accounting of why dollars are needed, how they are spent and what impact they have on the clientele.
In an ideal world, Extension workers could spend all their time developing and delivering educational programs to people who need and want them. But in today’s competitive society, public servants must accept responsibility for reporting the results of their work in order to generate support for future efforts.

**Georgia Counts**
The heart of reporting results is Georgia Counts. The combination of numbers, information and activities paints a vivid picture of the work of UGA Cooperative Extension. It reflects the true Plan of Work and gives substantial support for funding requests and accountability. Extension employees need to take this reporting system seriously and submit necessary information faithfully and accurately.

**Impact Statements**
The narrative version of reporting results is submitting impact statements, a requirement of all faculty in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. A good impact statement is simply one that shows the impact of a project on a target audience. Each statement should include the situation, response and results.

The situation statement outlines the need for a program. It identifies the issues and the target audience (who is affected). It pulls in facts, trends and figures to support the need for Extension to respond. It tells how people are affected by the problem and the cost to the taxpayer, if that information is appropriate.

The response section explains the program or educational effort in response to the need. It reflects research-based information, describes the strategies for the program, mentions any collaborations and identifies volunteer contributions. It tells how the program was carried out.

The results section measures impact. It tells what people learned, what skills they developed, how they changed the way they do things. Results should be measurable and a direct result of the Extension program.

These statements go onto a public, searchable Web site, so don’t use Extension jargon or abbreviations like DPA, EFNEP or DNR. Keep them short and direct: Here’s the problem, here’s what we did, here’s how it worked.

The real impact of some programs is hard to measure. In some situations, the best impact is one individual’s example, such as a 4-H’er who credits 4-H leadership training with his election as student body president. Quotes from participants can be valuable if they tell how they will apply the information to their own lives.

Having good impact to report goes back to good planning in the first place. If you incorporate marketing in your planning process, you’ll include a way to evaluate your success. Levels of evidence show how you can measure success progressively.
Levels of evidence are:

1. **Inputs**
   This is the lowest level of measurement. It simply includes the amount of time and money you spent on the program and how many volunteers helped.

2. **Activities**
   The second level outlines your planning process and the program activities for the target audience.

3. **People involvement**
   How many people came to the meeting or event? How many received the information by newsletter or the media?

4. **Reactions**
   Keep track of people’s comments after a meeting. Save the thank-you letters.

5. **KASA change (knowledge, attitude, skills, aspirations)**
   Better yet, ask them to fill out an evaluation form and tell you what they learned, how their attitude changed, how their skills improved or if their aspirations (personal goals) have evolved.

6. **Practice change**
   Follow up with your audience in a few weeks, a few months or a year and find out if they are continuing to apply the knowledge they gained from your program.

7. **End results**
   In the highest level of evidence for impact, your audience will indicate a life change. They aren’t just practicing what they learned, they are incorporating it into their lives and making decisions based on your educational program.

The higher level of evidence you can report in your impact statement, the more valuable your work is to your clientele, your supervisors and supporters.

**Quarterly, annual reports**
Once you have strong programs with solid impact, you need to report those results to key leaders. Use the resources available to you through the Web by becoming familiar with Georgia Counts, the impact statements search page and marketing templates designed to help you report your work creatively and effectively.

Legislators, county commissioners, school board members, advisory committee members and others need to be informed about your work. Don’t overwhelm them with information. Think about how much they want and need to know and deliver it to them in a brief, memorable format.
A report can take the form of a PowerPoint, a Web page, a brochure, a fact sheet, a calendar, an exhibit, a formal report or an oral presentation. Use photographs. Invite testimonials from satisfied customers.

When you plan your marketing strategy for the year, build in quarterly and annual reports as needed, work these regular contacts into your schedule and find ways to funnel information about programs into these reports.

The standard ingredients for an annual report are numbers of people reached, numbers of media products developed and numbers of programs delivered. But don’t stop there. Here are some ideas to liven up your reports:

- Dig out those impact statements and show real programs at work. Stress results.
- Build your reports around the key issues you focused on this year. If they are part of the state Plan of Work, show how your efforts are part of a larger program to help Georgians deal with these tough issues.
- Use photographs and videos to show Extension people at work and clientele learning.
- Use quotes and testimonials from customers who applied your educational message. You should have a file of evaluations from each major program to draw on.
- Itemize how your money was spent to show funding sources you are fiscally responsible.
- Extension is in the business of solving problems. State the problem, explain your response and show how it helped solve the problem. Keep the message clear, simple and memorable.
- Draw on statistics, facts and resources available on the Web, from UGA departments and other agencies to strengthen your case.
- With today’s technology, you can put together a professional, attractive product. Check out the marketing templates to see what’s available for reporting. Try something different.

**E. County Marketing Plan**

Georgia Counts requires a marketing plan be submitted for each county. District heads, working with district Program Development Coordinators, should establish benchmark requirements they expect to see in each county’s marketing plan.

But the question is, what is a county marketing plan? A plan should include both active and passive marketing efforts. It should outline marketing goals and deadlines for the coming year. A plan can be as simple as two or three goals. It should be practical, workable and supportive of county programs.

**Passive Marketing Goals**

Each county marketing plan should list passive marketing techniques to address immediately. (Note the section on “Building a Marketing Approach” and decide what you can do as a team and individually.) Here is a starting point:
• Standardize contacts by answering the phone with the proper greeting and standardizing the phone listing to conform to the guidelines.
• Use templates, order items and promote the slogan, logo, name and design. Conduct a print/Web review of all materials to be sure they present a consistent message and identity.
• Check county signage and run an office image check list. Bring your office into compliance.
• Develop impact statements and use them in reports.

Active Marketing Goals
Build marketing into your program planning for major educational programs and events. Follow the 7-step marketing plan to guide you through this process. Consider these active goals:

• Plan and conduct a marketing strategy to convey impact and information to key leaders, including legislators, school board members, county commissioners, advisory committee members and other leaders.
• Carry out one of the designated banner programs in your county, using the marketing plan and products supplied.
• Submit a county-designed program to be considered for the banner program listings.
• Nominate a program or event to be featured on the Extension Web site.
• Apply for an award for your marketing efforts.
V. TARGETING AUDIENCES

The key to any successful marketing or communications effort is identifying and understanding your audience. They determine answers to almost all decisions, including method of delivery, tone of the message, evaluation and impact.

More broadly speaking, marketing goals will divide audiences into three key segments: customers, elected officials and other decision makers, and donors. They each require a different approach and strategy.

A. Customers
Extension employees have traditionally referred to their primary audience as “general public,” or everyone we can reach. But that kind of broad, loose approach makes target marketing virtually impossible. Face it B you cannot reach everyone, so decide who really needs to know your message and set about finding the best ways to reach them.

When you begin a marketing plan, the third step (after stating the problem and knowing your capabilities to address the problem) is targeting the audience. The smaller and more clearly identifiable the group, the easier it is to build a marketing plan.

Begin by identifying the broadest audience, then segment them in priority order to target each segment in your plan. Group segments according to common interests, behavioral patterns, motivations or whatever identifies them as a group.

For example, if the county is experiencing poor water quality in underground wells, you need to segment your customers in several groups: families on private wells, landowners whose decisions may influence underground water quality, business owners who may not meet federal water quality standards, and elected officials assigned to protect water quality.

Each audience requires a different delivery method, a different message and different materials. For families on private wells, a home visit with educational materials may be the proper delivery method. Maybe that’s just the beginning of your educational efforts with this group. Plan your strategy, including expected outcome and impact, before you spend the first dime on materials.

You would develop a marketing strategy for each audience.

Budget and time restraints, as well as the importance of the educational issue, determine what resources you can devote to a marketing plan. That’s why you need to prioritize each segment of the audience so that you can decide how to allocate your resources.
B. Elected officials and other decision makers

A marketing strategy for a program targets the customers to deliver the educational message. But in the age of accountability, it’s just as important to design a strategy to build a relationship and deliver information to elected officials and key decision makers. Depending on your program and position, they could include congressmen, legislators, county commissioners, school board officials, advisory board members and local non-elected leaders.

Before you can build a relationship with an individual, you need to know the purpose. Whether you want to deliver knowledge and awareness of your work, instill a preference for Extension over a competitor’s program, or engage a financial commitment, your plan varies. Each level requires a more demanding approach.

As a relationship moves from interest and awareness through preference to commitment and loyalty, the best method shifts from more generic media coverage to more targeted media and eventually to one-on-one contact. Nothing beats a face-to-face first-name friendship.

In other words, don’t rely on mass media and mailings to tell your story to critically important audiences. Don’t expect word-of-mouth to nail down support. If you must have your legislator’s or commissioner’s commitment to succeed, nothing replaces personal contact.

Don’t leave these relationships to chance. Identify key leaders, know what level of involvement you want from them and decide how to build a relationship with them.

Here are some ideas to help you plan how to build key relationships:

- A county staff may want to assign staff members to work with key individuals such as the school board director or county commissioner.
- Set up goals for the year, including a schedule of contacts.
- Invite key leaders to events, give them a role, make them feel welcome. Give them opportunities to meet and greet their constituents.
- Make a list of the types of materials you’ll need to develop, such as a county brochure, an annual report or an exhibit. Plan to feature your impact statements. Look for templates and state materials to support your contacts.
- Remember the “no whining” policy. Come to them with good news about your successes. Nobody wants to support a failing program.
- Learn your contact’s interests: legislative committee assignments, pet projects, hobbies, charitable interests, etc.
- Keep a record of your contacts, correspondence and conversations.
- Drop him or her a note of congratulations or concern when appropriate, even if it’s unrelated to your program. Show you are interested on a personal level.
- Follow up after a successful program by sharing clippings, sending a post card or a handwritten note. Brag a little about someone’s work and how it is helping the official’s constituents. If you have built in an evaluation tool, you can point to real impact as the
result.

- Be fiscally responsible by responding quickly and effectively to budget challenges. Look for outside funding, grants and for-sale opportunities to generate funds. Report your successes to elected officials.
- Before an election, inform candidates about your program. Put together a brief packet of information featuring impact statements and success stories. Following elections, contact newly-elected (and re-elected) officials and invite them to visit the Extension staff.
- Say thank-you. Say it loud and say it often. Say it publicly and privately. Let your elected official know you acknowledge and appreciate their support.

C. Donors
Private funding offers many benefits. It provides a margin of excellence to conduct critical educational programs above and beyond baseline necessities. It doesn’t come with state and federal restrictions on how to spend taxpayer dollars. And it doesn’t disappear at the beginning of a new fiscal year. Of course, donors can add their own restrictions of how the funds can be used.

Donors are a very special group. They aren’t usually pressured by voters or customers to support Extension work. They choose to donate funds and services because they are wholeheartedly committed to your work.

Individuals, rather than businesses, make up to 90 percent of all charitable gifts. Nearly half of the dollars are given to higher education, so emphasize the educational aspects of your program. Efficiency in fund raising depends on focusing efforts on people with financial capacity who have a generous attitude toward giving and who care about the cause.

To build a strong relationship with donors, incorporate these ideas into your county’s funding strategies:

- Set up a development committee familiar with Extension’s needs and programs to target potential donors. Include strong donors on this committee.
- Develop a list of gift opportunities. Identify educational programs, positions and facilities that could be funded through private support.
- Gifts can come in many forms: checks or cash, of course; a monthly deduction through an employer; a trust or life income agreement; real estate; stock; securities; in-kind gifts; pledges and challenge grants.
- Put together a fundraising brochure that lists these gift opportunities. Include the need and the potential impact for the county or community.
- Ideally, the idea of making a gift should come from the donor. Often small gifts turn into larger ones once the donor sees the impact of the gift and the credibility of the Extension program.
- Identify potential donors for each gift opportunity. Look for satisfied customers of
educational programs, 4-H alumni, Master Gardeners, civic leaders, successful business people. Look for logical links between a donor or program sponsor and the program.

- Determine the correct person to ask a donor for a gift. Prepare them for a face-to-face meeting with materials and information to answer questions.
- Give the prospective giver time to respond. Listen and acknowledge concerns. Clarify points, suggest alternatives and offer more information. Be patient.
- Acknowledge gifts and involve donors in programs.
- Keep track of an individual’s history of gifts, interests, personal and professional background. This information is critical in knowing the best time to ask for a gift.
VI. IDEAS THAT WORK

Here is a collection of marketing ideas submitted by county agents and marketing experts from Kansas State University, Florida A&M University, Mississippi State University, the University of Kentucky, Texas Cooperative Extension, the University of California-Davis, Colorado State University, Oregon State University and the University of Georgia. It was compiled by the communications state as Kansas State and modified for our use.

These are practical, low-cost or free ideas and tactics that have been successful in other county programs. They are sorted by four areas: marketing a specific program or event, building key relationships with leaders, working with media outlets and branding UGA Cooperative Extension. These ideas may trigger others to help agents see how marketing can extend and enhance their educational message.

The review team wrote, “Truly effective marketing activities arise from a thorough understanding of the target audience, the goals of the program, and the message to be promoted—not from a checklist of isolated ideas. Each of these ideas is like one ingredient in a recipe: none can be the sole ingredient for a successful marketing effort. After analyzing the audience and the value offered by the program and after developing messages, it’s fine to use this list to choose activities that make sense for the individual marketing effort. However, skipping those critical first steps and jumping straight to choosing activities is most likely to result in wasted effort. All of the ideas in the list have merit, but they must be used in context of the unique marketing goals, needs and interests of the audience, and intent of the individual message or program.”

A. Marketing Programs

Ask principles or superintendents to require new teachers to tour the Extension office as part of in-service training. Teachers can see the wealth of materials available to use in classrooms, such as notebooks on health and nutrition, water quality exhibit, the 4-H Environmental Education program and other educational resources.

Ask local banks or utilities to include a post card survey with statements or billings. On the post card, ask customers what Extension education programs they want and invite them to an open house. Increase the response rate by promising a gift such as a seedling (from a local grower or forestry service) with each survey returned at the open house.

Send a monthly post card, e-mail or flyer to targeted audiences that details the upcoming calendar of educational programs and events.

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.

Set up exhibits 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.
Ask volunteers to help promote programs through their other personal activities, such as civic clubs, playgroups or church groups.

Develop new publications and use existing publications to inform your customers. Extension is known for quality publications so use this educational tool to reach your customers.

Use community marquees to further promote public programs.

Include information about county programming in the local Chamber of Commerce letter that goes to all chamber members.

Use the WIC program to get information to a specific target audience. Borrow their mailing list if available or post information in WIC sign-up areas.

Offer to speak at local civic groups and organizations. Use this opportunity to explain your primary issues, programming to address these issues and emphasize your link to UGA and its colleges.

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.

Work with the local health department to distribute information and share announcements.

Set up e-mail listservs or send letters to businesses, churches and school to announce a big program.

Ask your Master Gardeners to host an Herb Day, Tomato Day or other specific-focus event. Develop creative supportive marketing materials, publicize the event and be sure people know Master Gardeners work out of the Extension office.

Never underestimate the value of word-of-mouth marketing. Tell people you meet what events you have coming up.

Make the publications in your office easily accessible for the public. Keep the rack neat, up to date and well stocked.

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 your customers and request county sites link to your site.

Use the template for county Web pages and keep the information varied and timely. N
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.” Use the counter feature so you know how many hits your site receives.

Place classes and programs in all community calendars.

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. That probably holds true in Georgia as well.

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.

Offer the program soon after you promote it. Some agents report 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.

Add a “dates to remember” section at the back of the newsletter, where readers can always find upcoming event information.

Target your mailings based on not only demographics such as age and gender, but also interest, such as foods, gardening, crops, 4-H.

Try to get customers’ names and addresses, whether the customer is a walk-in, class sign-up or just calling with a question, so you can add contacts to your newsletter mailing list. Ask if they’d like to receive information by e-mail as well.

Use give-aways at the county fair and other events to get additional names of potential customers.

Host an informative table at school orientation. Promote UGA and recruit for CAES while you promote 4-H and other Extension programs.

Ask 4-H’ers or other volunteers to offer a hands-on class at a local craft store. It looks good in their portfolio, extends your educational message and promotes Extension.

Produce inserts to be put into local grocery store bags.

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.
Use e-mail as a marketing tool. Send out reminders of upcoming events, design an e-newsletter, send out a link to your Web page. Electronic communication is cheaper than a print newsletter but it’s only effective if the recipients will really read the electronic version.

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.

Use research to identify the untapped audience. Who are you not yet reaching and how can you get them involved?
Use existing research. Often, a county similar to yours has already researched the users and nonusers. That information could be applicable to your county, too.

Get involved in professional agent associations so you can learn from other successful agents. Find out how they market their programs. Share your best ideas with them.

B. Building Relationships with Leaders
Try and meet once a year in person with your local county commissioners and legislators at their homes or businesses. Talk about the new and exciting ways you are helping their constituents. Keep your message positive B no whining. Share a few materials (impact statements, new publications, brochures) and then just listen. Find out what their issues are and look for connections.

Look for opportunities to include commissioners and legislators in tours or meetings. Try to get them to a real event so they can see Extension in action.

Use impact statements as part of your quarterly and annual reports to county commissioners and legislators. Include them in county brochures, share them with the local media, use them as examples in civic group speeches.

Be an active volunteer in your community. It’s good visibility for Extension and it helps you keep your finger on the pulse of the community.

Remember to market your service and expertise when meeting with other agencies. Be sure your leaders are aware of your collaborative efforts.

Market yourself as much as your market Extension. One important part of being an agent is having people recognize your name and think of you as someone who can help them. When you have a happy customer who wants to thank you, encourage them to tell their commissioner.

Send monthly newsletters to decision makers.

Host a community open house with games, food, information and socializing. Give your leaders
this opportunity to mingle with constituents in an informal setting.

Invite county commissioners to annual lunches, held at the Extension office with presentations by county faculty. Let them know you need and appreciate their support and ideas.

Developing partnerships with the library, continuing education centers and other adult classes is a great way to extend your educational message and to market your program to a new audience.

Establish an “advocates committee.” Texas Cooperative Extension initiated this group of volunteers, all of whom were involved with Extension programs already, who agreed to be advocates for Extension with elected officials. Each volunteer took 1-3 names of state legislators, county elected and appointed officials, and national elected officials, and made one personal contact and three contacts by mail each year, talking about the areas of Extension in which they were personally involved.

C. Marketing to Media
Write a weekly column. Feature programs, extend the educational messages from these programs, and stress Extension’s mission through educational programming.

Provide news releases to local newspapers quoting county faculty. Give the media something on a regular basis, even if it’s just calling their attention to the CAES news site, FACES. Help the media expect materials from you.

Produce professional radio spots. Most radio stations will be happy to work with you on your delivery and style.

Get your information in the community spotlights on cable TV.

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

Use multiple means to market an event. Not everyone reads the newspaper or listens to the same radio station. By sending the message in multiple ways, you can increase the chances that your target audience got the message.

Provide demonstrations on local TV newscasts, especially during crises such as droughts, hurricanes, freezes or floods.

Provide media advisories or teaser questions relating to timely topics, such as Christmas tree care, how to plant bulbs, picnic food safety and other seasonal topics.
Use the same materials in various formats. Put your column on your Web site, pull out highlights of it for your radio program, reprint it in your newsletter, etc.

Send all press release and community calendar events to your county Web site.

Identify ways to reach more than one media outlet with one visit. For example, some newspapers also share information with local radio and TV stations. One station or newspaper may be part of a chain of media that serves the region or state. Let your contact know the information can be freely distributed throughout the chain.

Tie together the Web site and television shows or radio spots. Whenever you appear on television, radio or in the public, place supplemental material such as gardening tips or links to publications on your Web site and the media outlet’s Web site.

Be quotable as a news source. Practice explaining your message clearly, briefly and logically.

Be identified with UGA Extension every time you are quoted or interviewed.

Always respond to local media, even if you just find them a source outside of Extension. Be willing to go the extra mile in finding background information and back-up data for reporters.

Have lunch away from the office with the editor, publisher or news director of your local media outlets. Use the opportunity simply to get to know each other as members of the community. Explain how you see the major issues in your community. Keep it positive. Listen as much as you talk.

Depending on the group you are targeting for a program or service, focus your media relations effort on reporters who write or report for sections or programs followed by your audience.

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

Show local media contacts your impact statements and explain how to use the search page at http://apps.caes.uga.edu/impact/

Propose ideas for special sections to your local newspaper. Offer to provide news copy. The newspaper can sell ads, while you have a chance to land news pieces in a featured section. Some opportunities for special sections include food safety, county fair, harvest, back to school, farm safety, 4-H week and many more.

In addition to news sections, what other parts of the newspaper might carry your information? Does someone have a gardening column? Does the lifestyles page feature young people? Is there a foods section? Get to know columnists who write about topics you cover.
Offer names of local customers who can speak favorably of your program. News reporters will appreciate access to “real” people who can add objectivity and color to their story.

Make it a point to meet new reporters. There’s nothing like a friendly welcome and hand shake when you’re new to a community and you need to make contacts quickly.

When you meet reporters, give them your business card, a fact sheet, county brochure B anything to help them think of you when they need expertise in your field.

Traditional mass media may not be the only way to reach your local target audiences. Ask people how they receive information and find ways to supply it to them.

Produce feature stories on UGA research and Extension and alert the CAES media staff. They may be able to give them wider distribution.

**D. Branding Extension**

Add UGA Extension identification to news releases, publications, flyers and fact sheets.

Customize the short promotional Extension PowerPoint presentation for your programs.

Develop a county Web site and keep it up to date. Use the template to maintain a consistent statewide appearance.

Develop and use a county brochure using the template available on the marketing Web site. While you’re at the site, study all the resources available and decide how you can incorporate them into your county marketing plan. These templates allow you to use local vendors or print in-house and have materials readily available while still maintaining a consistent overall look throughout the UGA Extension system.

Develop a series of public service announcements featuring the vast array of information available through UGA Extension, featuring your office as the local access point.

Wear name badges, shirts, caps and other UGA Extension items. Look professional whenever you are representing UGA Extension.

Download the logo from the marketing site and use it on locally developed materials. Incorporate your county name where appropriate to show the link between the state and county program.

Submit impact statements that include marketing activities you have done throughout the year.

Follow the guidelines set forth in the style guide for Extension and CAES.
When writing thank-you notes, use the professional UGA Extension note cards available on the marketing Web site.

Raffle UGA Extension shirts, caps, mugs and other items that feature the logo at programs and fairs. Be creative but rational with giveaways. Get items useful to your audience and related to specific topics, such as measuring cups or meat thermometers for food safety.

Hand out inexpensive marketing items such as pens, pencils, notepads, bookmarks or buttons at fairs and other highly attended events.

Develop a professional county exhibit, building around the state exhibit available from the districts.

Contact new residents in your area through welcome wagon packets, realtors, etc. Include your county brochure and selected publications for new home owners.

Purchase a local billboard with similar agencies or work with a billboard company willing to offer the billboard for public service. For example, consider partnering with Boys and Girls Clubs or Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Include the logo of all the organizations and your Web site.

Make people aware of how influential 4-H is by asking every 4-H family to tie a green ribbon in their car antenna. Explain the ribbons in your column and radio programs to build awareness of 4-H and Extension.

Help customers make the link from one program to another. Make sure 4-H parents realize 4-H is conducted by UGA and Fort Valley Extension. Get Master Gardeners and 4-H’ers working together.

At any event, always prominently display and thank your sponsors. Be sure to include UGA Extension as a sponsor as well.

Give tours to school students and teachers to explain UGA Extension resources.

Have clear, professional, visible outdoor signage. Replace the signage when it becomes faded, worn, damaged or out of date.

Develop an online or direct mail campaign to get 4-H alumni involved in Extension support and promotion.

Place pictures of past events on the Web site, especially 4-H events that show activity, service and fun, so people can see what Extension activities look like. Put a human face on Extension.

Develop an internal “brag” newsletter to report on successful programs; awards for faculty, staff and volunteers, and introduce new employees and staff.
Develop a newsletter with impacts and program offerings for the public with general information and a shelf life of several months.

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