

— SCALE YOUR —



PROGRESSIVE FOOD BUSINESS

Creative Markets for Sustainable Food Products

— ONLINE OPTIONS —

PERSONAL WEBSITE



Having your own online store is much like having your own physical store but in the digital world.

FULFILLED BY AMAZON



A great compliment to having your own website. Similar to getting into a major national retailer.

TRADE SHOW ALTERNATIVES



It's time to think of alternative plans now that the cancellation of many 2020 trade shows hit the food industry hard.

PRE-ORDER OR SUBSCRIPTION MODEL



Pre-orders work well for quick cash flow for in-demand products; subscriptions if you have a regular customer base.

— OFFLINE OPTIONS —

DIRECT TO RETAILERS



Buyers have become more flexible with the renewed focus on local products. They don't want empty shelves like in April 2020.

DISTRIBUTOR SUPPORT



If going to retailers sounds exhausting, a distributor can help. They can get you on a retailer's shelf, but at a price.

HOME DELIVERY



An option that is quick to set up and has lots of flexibility; however, infrastructure costs can quickly add up.

FARMER'S MARKETS



Farmer's markets have changed with social distancing, but they are still a helpful sales channel for some.

FEEDING GROWTH: CREATIVE MARKETS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTS

COVID-19 has challenged every business, whether it's with rising costs or a sales channel constricting. Refer to this sheet for new sales channel ideas, and reach out to our Feeding Growth community if you have any questions!

ONLINE OPTIONS

Personal Website: Having your own online store is like having your own physical store but in the digital world. It comes with lots of work, but if you do it right, it can be extremely rewarding.

Pros: Control over your story/narrative, direct engagement with your customers, increased brand presence, ability to get feedback and know who is buying

Cons: Expensive (may need to hire help to build the website), time commitment (need to keep your customers engaged), shipping costs (these can catch you off guard)

Tip: Companies like Shopify and Squarespace have made building your own website and getting started selling much quicker and easier. If you don't have experience building websites, this may be an excellent place to start.

Tip: Online Ads (Google, Facebook) can help drive traffic once your store is built. However, the costs can add up quickly. Make sure you learn about important metrics to track, such as Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC).

*Difficulty Rating: 2/3

Fulfilled by Amazon: A great compliment to having your own website. This sales channel is all about volume (think of it as the equivalent of getting into a major national retailer). If you go this route, it is essential to ensure you have the infrastructure to support fast growth.

Pros: Potential for high volume sales, economies of scale (bring variable costs down), outsource workload

Cons: Mistakes are very costly, customer over supplier centric platform

Tip: Speak with someone who succeeded with this option before committing to it! Check this [link](#) to get started.

Difficulty Rating: 3/3

Trade Show Alternatives: Whether you were heading back to big industry trade shows to debut new products or heading to trade shows for the first time to set your plans for company growth, the cancellation of many 2020 trade shows has hit the sustainable food industry hard.

Canadian Health Food Association is organizing a virtual trade show called [Connect](#) from September 29 to October 1. BC Food and Beverage is making plans for a virtual tradeshow replacement for manufacturers in November.

Pros: Potential to generate strong leads, boost brand awareness, keep up on industry trends

Cons: Can be expensive, high competition, results aren't guaranteed, potential low turnouts

Difficulty Rating: 1/3

Pre-Order or Subscription Model: Pre-orders work well for quick cash flow if you have an in-demand product. Subscriptions work well if you have a regular customer base who you know buy regularly.

Pros: Great for cashflow, data (can purchase just the inventory needed)

Cons: Requires current customer base, potential for high marketing costs

Tip: This is another great area for collaboration. Consider teaming up with an Instagram influencer to promote ahead of the launch. Try to create urgency to buy for these initiatives.

Difficulty Rating: 2/3

OFFLINE OPTIONS

Direct to Retailers: Buyers at some organizations have become more flexible with the renewed focus on local products. The last thing they want is empty shelves that happened in April 2020.

Pros: Own the relationship with retailer, keep the distributor margin, get feedback quicker

Cons: Time consuming, multiple visits and conversations required, may be harder to scale later

Tip: Be prepared to make multiple visits and listen to what they tell you. Different retailers may have different processes, so be ready to follow these. Always have samples, a sell sheet and price sheet handy!

Difficulty Rating: 2/3

Distributor Support: If going to retailers sounds exhausting to you, a distributor can help. They take on the task of getting you on a retailer's shelf, but at a price. Examples include Horizon and Left Coast Naturals.

Pros: Established relationships with retailers, take on logistics of product distribution, ability to get into locations faster

Cons: Expensive (give up a percentage), may need a broker, higher amount of working capital required (inventory intensive)

Tip: Typically, distributors expect you to have a certain amount of retail accounts before taking you on. Make sure to explore a few options to find the right one for your business.

Difficulty Rating: 3/3

Home Delivery: Setting up your own delivery to your customers is a viable option that can be quick to setup. This option allows lots of flexibility, but the infrastructure costs can quickly add up.

Pros: Own customer relationship, low initial setup cost, ability for testing our collaborations

Cons: Time consuming, high variable costs, delivery logistics can be a difficult challenge

Tip: Consider partnering with other local brands that offer complementary products to your own but have a similar target market.

Difficulty Rating: 2/3

Farmer's Markets: Farmer's markets have changed with social distancing but are still a helpful sales channel for some. UBC Farm's farmer's market has a low fee and revolving applications. For a list of other farmer's markets, visit the [BCFMA website](#).

Pros: Brand building, quick sales, ability to verbalize your story, test marketing material, get quick feedback

Cons: No sampling, very different vibe, strict rules, need to be there in person (or have staff willing to be there)

Tip: If you're currently building an online sales channel, try marketing it when on location at farmers' markets. This can be a great way to make your customers aware of other places to find you.

Difficulty Rating: 1/3

Was this helpful? Confused about anything? Do you know the difference between a marketing channel and a sales channel? If this is of interest, let us know. We are always sourcing ideas for workshops to help growing sustainable food businesses!

*Difficulty Rating: This is a subjective rating system. Certain channels may be easier than others, depending on your team's skill set.