

marketshare [mahr-kit shair] -noun

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



Market Day: hours, location, parking & weather

In planning your very first Market, four basic issues to consider are Market hours, location, parking, and weather policy. Saturday is typically Market Day, so that decision should be straightforward enough. Most Markets are held on Saturday mornings, say from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, or even into the middle of the afternoon. If Saturdays are unavailable for some reason, or if you're considering a mid-week Market, consider shoppers' work schedules, as well as the concerns of Market neighbors. We hold our mid-week Markets in the mornings, but we have held a very successful market in late afternoon, 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. The mid-week markets attract vendors who are too busy on a Saturday morning; 3:00 p.m. is often the best time for seniors, 4:00 p.m. is convenient for parents who have just picked up school-aged children; after 5:00 is great for music events, working folks and so on.

Markets are typically outdoors, which makes them attractive to passersby, but which also makes them subject to weather conditions. Markets look great in a park, but consider access—including vendor set-up, birds in trees overhead (and their effect on market goods), shoppers with walkers or in wheelchairs. Vendors can back their trucks into parking stalls and display their wares on the green; just consider what crowds will do to the lawns and flower beds. (We have seen markets lose their space over too many people.)

Markets can also be run in vacant parking lots, or even on closed-off sections of Main St., if the city grants permission. Remember, however, that asphalt is HOT; therefore, think about some shaded seating for shoppers and even dog bowls, if dogs are allowed. We also bring paper towels, ice, and Florida water for our vendors to dip in and put on the back of their necks on extremely hot days. Volunteers happily do this (as vendors love them for it), and it has reduced the issue of vendors getting overheated—literally and figuratively! It also shows we care about them.

Although it is not necessarily your responsibility to provide parking, lack of it can be a deal-breaker for many shoppers. Consider looking for a church or school that might let you use their parking lot in their off-hours, or even a vacant city parking lot. Maybe you can offer them some barter in return, such as Market tokens. If you do not have off-street parking, talk often to your neighbors about your market and watch for problem situations so you can head them off before they turn ugly. We've had irate shoppers yell at us about parking tickets, but when we investigated, found they were parking in no parking areas at the ends of blocks. We made yard signs that said, "Be Careful! This is not a parking space!" and believe it or not, the complaints and tickets stopped.

Regarding weather: We have a "Rain or shine"

policy, which is only abandoned (with prior communication) in the event of forecasted dangerous winds or damaging hail. Our reasons are simple: For vendors and shoppers to make you a part of their regular routines, they have to be able to count on you. You don't want them wondering whether or not there will be a Market. You want them to know that, barring a mandatory evacuation order, you will be there. We've had many shoppers brave freezing rain to support our vendors on Market day out of appreciation for their (and our) commitment. However, even if shoppers just pass by and don't stop the first time it is pouring, they will learn that they can count on you and start to plan their week around your Market. Think about a Market location that can accommodate inclement

weather. Our Saturday Market is in an empty warehouse parking lot. When it rains, we are able to move inside to the attached garage owned by the same Market patron. Other Markets are able to move under a covered picnic area in a park, into the church basement, or just put up extra tents for shoppers to organize their bags and have a place to wait out heavy rain squalls. And be sure to call your vendors on the first bad weather days of the season to see how they are preparing, and to remind them the shoppers expect to see them. As our founder has often said, "Rainy days are where our market reputation is made."

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

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

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

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

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



cultivating the field of public markets for public good