



Larry Williams

McKim's IGA
Mt. Vernon, IN

Department: Produce

Difficulty: Easy

Store Specs
10,000 sq. feet

BEST PRACTICES

INCREASE PRODUCE SALES 60% BY PUTTING IT UNDER THE BIG TOP

STRATEGY

Years ago, we bought a 20x30 tent to sell turkeys under. But we soon realized that, if we have a tent that big, we should come up with other uses for it. That's when we decided to host our first annual produce tent sale. On the first full weekend of October, we hoist the tent in the parking lot and stock it with hay bales, pumpkins, and an array of fresh produce. We always make sure that we put a great price on the core produce staples, such as potatoes, corn, onions, and, of course, pumpkins. The produce is arranged on hay bales and in harvest baskets to give the tent sale the feeling of a farmer's market. The event is advertised in our ad, and we send notices to schools and day care centers in the area. Teachers that come in with a request on school letterhead can receive a free pumpkin for their classroom. We also have a variety of small pie pumpkins that we give to teachers so that their students can decorate them. Not only do sales increase on the day of the event, but the produce sale is also a great opportunity for us to showcase the quality of our produce and combat the false assumption that small stores don't have high-quality produce.

WHY IT WORKS

For Our Shoppers

Brings a Sense of Nostalgia

There is something about shopping outside away from the refrigerated cases that just feels more special.

Enjoy Shopping Local

Our pumpkins are from a local grower and we also feature produce from a local orchard. Our customers love having the chance to support their neighbors.

Replicates a Farmers' Market

Our town doesn't have a farmers' market, so this event gives our shoppers the chance to shop in a similar environment.

For Our Store

Give Back to the Community

By giving away pumpkins, we have a chance to support the students and teachers in our area.

Promote Produce

People often assume that little stores don't have a great variety of produce available. This event is our chance to prove that this assumption is wrong.

Boost Sales

By turning produce shopping into a unique event, our sales go way up for the weekend.

60%

INCREASE IN PRODUCE
SALES

20X30

TENT DIMENSIONS

1

YEARLY EVENT

PRICING

Each produce item is discounted individually.

TACTICS

- 1.** Start advertising and sending out notifications to schools a few weeks ahead of the event.
- 2.** The night before, set up the tent in the parking lot and arrange all your bales of straw. We buy the bales for \$3.50-4 per bale and then sell them for \$5.99.
- 3.** In the morning, arrange your produce. We put out the same produce as we have inside except for fresh greens.
- 4.** Place a table with your cashiers at the entrance of the tent. If possible, be sure that they have a way to accept credit cards and EBT.

PRO-TIPS

Although we haven't had much of an issue with it, it's always good to take steps to avoid theft. We secure the produce as well as possible and notify the police department that we are holding the event so that they keep an eye on us.

If you don't want to invest in a huge tent, try getting started with just a 10x10 tent. If it works, you can keep adding 10x10s, or decide that you want to invest in a larger tent. People just love shopping outside!

Offer the same sales inside and outside. This makes it easier for all customers to take advantage of the deals and helps you spread the word about the sale.

