

Harvesting a Crop of Oysters: Intro to Basic Marketing and Telling Your Story

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Oyster South

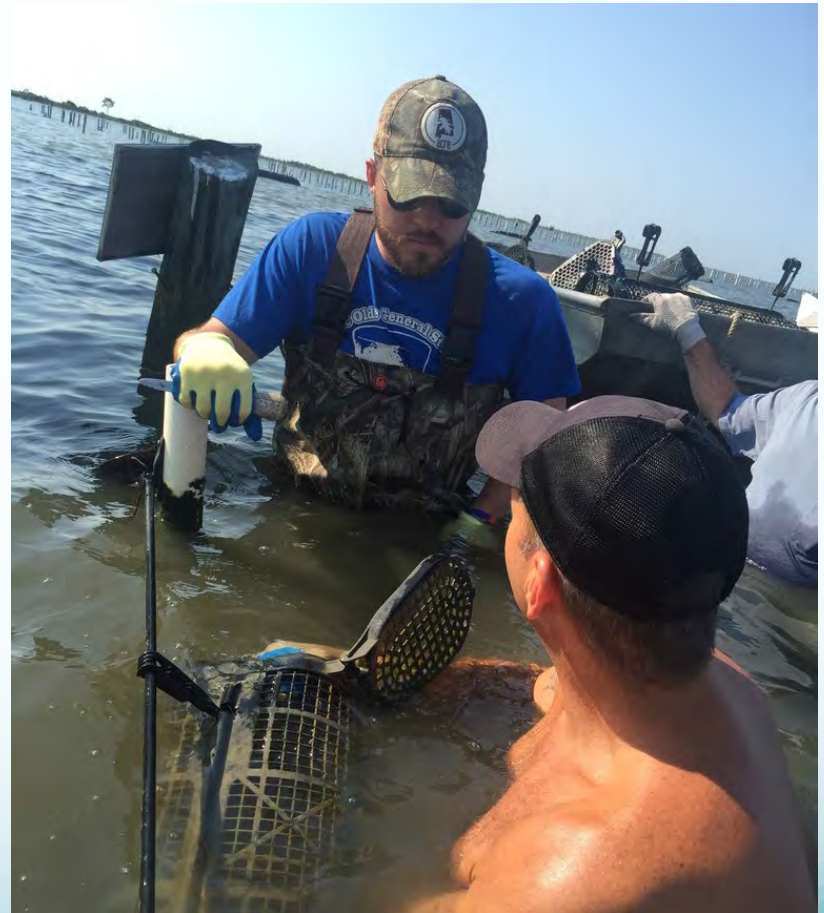
Finally - a Crop of Oysters!

- Now what?
- As Bob Rheault of ECSGA has said, you don't make money growing oysters; you make money selling oysters
- In many cases, you are entering a marketplace with many other choices out there (lots of brands)
- As a farmer, you need to think about a marketing plan that lets you make sales but also gets the price you want



Marketing = Relationship Building

- Relationships are super important!
- Chefs, customers, and fans
- Farmed oysters are often a niche product
- Also, be positive! No need to undercut others. (Think of ordering a variety of beers or wines.)



Telling YOUR Story: #knowyouroysterfarmer

- Your oyster is only part of your story
- Why did you start farming?
- Be authentic and emphasize what's unique about YOU
- Talk about what you know. And if you don't know, that's ok too!
- People love seeing farm photos, short videos, what it's like and what goes on in the life of an oyster farmer
- Show yourself, your family, the other people who work on the farm
- Talk about the place where your oysters are grown



Deciding Where Your Oyster Fits In

- Consistency is a big deal
- Find out what your potential customers want and produce that (if you can)
- Like what?
 - Size
 - Cleanliness
 - Shell shape
 - Meat plumpness
 - Color – Some farmers have found different color patterns with different growing methods
 - Salinity – can decide to not harvest if salinity is outside your target range



Why Do People Care?



- Experiential food
- Oysters are edgy and it's something people can feel that they want
- Oysters have environmental, cultural, and economic benefits; farming oysters can be part of a 'solution'

Tools to Do This

- Social media
- Website
- Swag
- Host farm visits (chefs, buyers, media, etc.)
- Restaurant visits
- Beer / Wine and oysters tasting
- Farm tours
- Festivals

Social Media 101

Pros vs Cons

Things to think about:

- Which platform?
- Goal?
- How much time do you have?
- Do you have staff?



Social Media 101

Pros vs Cons

- “Free”
- Highly interactive
- Incentivize followers
- Giveaways
- Online store
- Offer pickup of product on socials

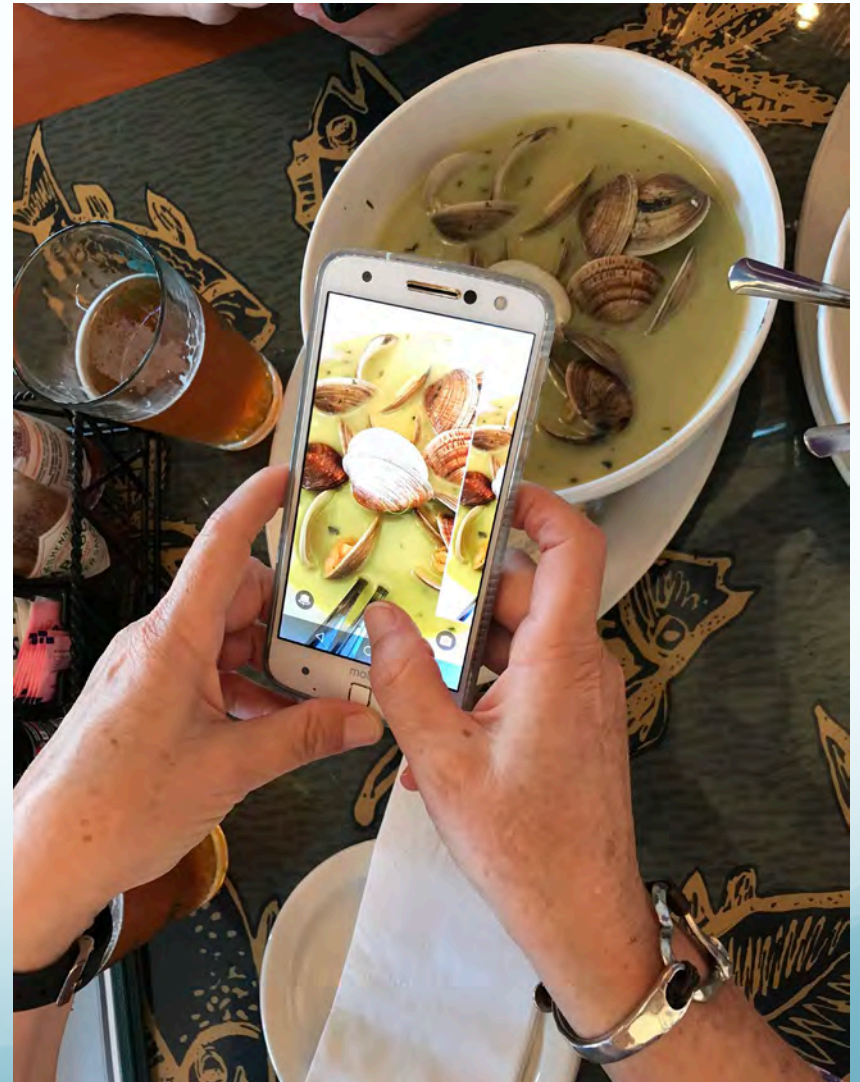


<https://www.searchenginejournal.com/social-media-marketing-examples/380202/#close>

Social Media 101

Cons

- Need someone on point to post, monitor, and comment
- Content creation. However, that's where you can get creative. Dropbox to share photos, IG takeovers, etc.



To website or not to website?

- Gives you “street cred”
- Can add content from social media
- Online store for oysters and merchandise
- Wix, Squarespace, Shopify



Get Your Name Out There!

- Chefs love swag!
- Stickers and pins
- Shirts and hats



Get Your Name Out There!

- Restaurant visits
- Guest shucking



Get Your Name Out There!

Beer / Wine and oysters tasting



Get Your Name Out There!

Festivals – Oyster South's LANDLOCKED



Photo cred: Andrew Thomas Lee

Get Your Name Out There!

Farm tours



Oyster South

- Mission: Oyster South is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization that connects communities and provides resources to foster the success of oyster farming in the Southern United States.
- Vision: To spotlight and expand the environmental and economic benefits of oyster farming in the South, which will increase sustainable seafood production, improve the health of our waters, increase the prosperity of our coastal communities and elevate appreciation for Southern farm-raised oysters.

Oyster South

We are not just a growers' association, but include scientists, students, chefs, restaurants, wholesalers, artists, writers, shucking knife makers, cookware makers, photographers, and others.

Two annual events: early spring Industry Symposium and a fall fundraiser, LANDLOCKED.



Photo:
Andrew Thomas Lee

We'd love to hear from you!

- Please visit our website for more information:

<https://www.oystersouth.com/>

- Please email me with any questions:

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