



KNOWLEDGE OF THE MARKETPLACE

INTRODUCTION:

Understanding customer needs and market trends, and latest legislation are important aspects of business planning and can be vital to growers that operate in competitive markets.

Keeping your customers happy is likely to be crucial to your business success as they are the ones that buy from you. By getting to know what they like, what they need and how much they will spend will help you be sure that you are producing something that will sell to your target market.

Staying up to date with your competitor's activities can help you understand if you offer something different and what you do that is better. Being informed about new innovations and legislation can also identify new opportunities or areas where you might improve.

Whether you export or sell direct to local customers, doing regular research can be critical to informing your commercial decisions and enabling your business to adapt to change.

In this section find out about:

- undertaking market research
- improving market awareness
- practical ways to do research

Other sections of the Knowledge Hub cover Business and Finance, New Innovations and Future Proofing and are recommended for further reading.

To find out more about import and export please refer to the Plant Health section of the Knowledge Hub.

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1. DO YOUR RESEARCH

To be successful your business will need to know if there is a demand for your produce and if your price is competitive.

Carrying out market research will give you the information you need, reduce the risk of making the wrong decisions, identify new opportunities and ideas for product development, and help you better understand the competition you face.

Good market awareness means knowing what's happening in the sector and in your business. A lot of market intelligence and insights are available online and through trade publications. Talking to your customers, competitors and suppliers and reviewing your sales can be vital. For example, how many online and offline customers you have? what percentage of sales is done locally?

This is informal market research, and commonly includes feedback surveys, for example to ask existing and potential customers for their feedback on a regular basis.

Formal market research is often done to inform decisions or to support grant applications for new activities that require significant investments. In this case external researchers are often commissioned to work to a specific brief.

Useful resources provided by Tyfu Cymru can be found here:

[Policy: Commercial Horticulture Plan 2020](#)

Webinars:

- [Introduction to Agricultural Standards for Commercial Horticulture Production](#)
- [The Flower Farmer's Year](#)
- [The roles of trade associations in raising awareness and representing members](#)

Technical Advice Sheets:

- [Importing, Exporting and Moving plants, between GB and Northern Ireland - Example Guidance to finding information \(January 2021\)](#)
- [What is Red Tractor Certification all about](#)

2. KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS AND COOMPETITORS

Thinking about existing and potential customers in terms of a target market essentially means characterising them based on, for example, demographics, whether they are local to you or further afield, if they prefer to place orders online, over the phone, or in person.

While you may recognise the quality and difference that you offer, it is important to make sure that this is also valued by your customers. Often different customers have different needs and segmenting customers into groups based on their interests can help you to explain how what you offer meets their needs.

Knowing how you compare to your competition can help you focus on what makes you different and how to demonstrate this, potentially by refining what you produce and improving your communications with your target market. Familiarise yourself with companies that do similar to you. Try their produce, look at their packaging, visit their website and research their proposition. How are they different? Who would you buy from and why?

Focussing on your target market and what your competition offers can help you tailor your proposition and any promotions to respond to your customer needs, which could increase your sales.

Useful resources provided by Tyfu Cymru can be found here:

Technical Advice Sheets:

- [Growing Cut Flowers Year Round](#)

Virtual Study Tour: [Electric Daisy](#)



3. DEFINE AND REFINE YOUR PROPOSITION

Your proposition describes what you offer and why this is different. It should also help buyers decide why they should buy from you and not your competitors. This might be because you are the only supplier in the region or because you consistently offer good service, price and convenience.

It is vital to keep your proposition open to change over time. The market research you do will keep you informed about market trends and different customer needs. This will help you consider how you can alter your produce or marketing to keep customers and attract new ones.

For example, this may involve employing sound environmental practices that lower your operational costs, passing the savings on to your customers and becoming recognised for best practice in your sector.

With a clearly defined proposition in place it's critical to communicate it to your target market. For example, through your website, social media, on signage, printed literature and promotions.

Useful resources provided by Tyfu Cymru can be found here:

Technical Advice Sheets:

- [Mobile Card Payment Systems](#)

Factsheets:

- [Grown not Flown Flowers](#)
- [Pick your Own \(PYO\): What you need to know to get 5* rated...](#)
- [Pick your Own \(PYO\): What you need to know to get 5* rated \(part 2\)](#)
- [Pumpkin PYO Marketing with Covid](#)
- [Embracing Wonky](#)



4. FURTHER READING

Other useful information provided by Tyfu Cymru can be found here:

- [Peas Please Progress Report 2020](#)
- [Organic market insight 2017](#)
- [Organic Market Report 2019 - Insights](#)
- [Welsh Fruit and Vegetable Production - Baseline Study 2020](#)

Notes:

Every effort has been taken to ensure the information contained within this guide is accurate and current at the time of writing. We cannot take responsibility for links to external websites.

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