smart 4 food

innovative microlearning for farmers

03

Smart Marketing and Communication for Small Producers



Funded by the European Union

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Module Information

Module number: 03

Module title: Smart Marketing and Communication for Small Producers

Estimated completion time for learners: 30–60 minutes

Learning Objective

Learners will be able to communicate the value of their products effectively through modern marketing channels, create authentic brand identity, and manage basic digital tools for promotion and direct sales.

Agenda

Unit 1: Marketing & Branding Basics

Unit 2: Storytelling & Brand Identity

Unit 3: Visual Identity & Design

Unit 4: Social Media Essentials

Unit 5: Smartphone Photos & Videos

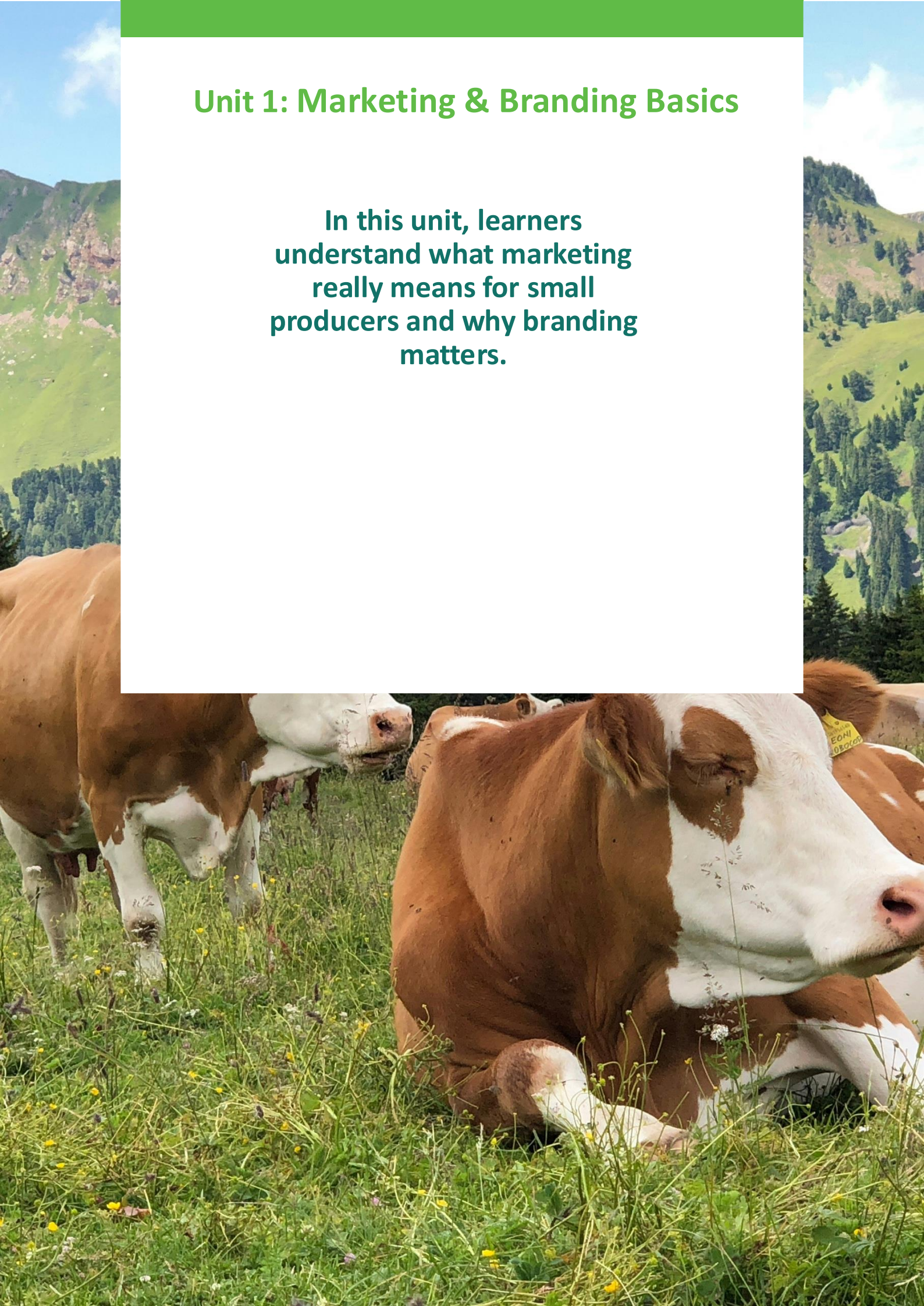
Unit 6: Online Sales & Product Presentation

Unit 7: Offline Marketing

Unit 8: Marketing Strategy & Customer Relations

Unit 1: Marketing & Branding Basics

In this unit, learners understand what marketing really means for small producers and why branding matters.



Unit 1: Marketing & Branding Basics

What is marketing — and why should small producers care?

Marketing is often misunderstood. Many small food producers think marketing is only for big brands with glossy packaging and expensive advertising. But every producer is already doing marketing, whether they realise it or not.

Every time you describe your product, talk to a customer, post on Facebook, or join a local fair, that is marketing. Good marketing helps small producers stand out, survive, and grow.

For small and local producers, marketing is not about shouting the loudest. It is about being authentic, visible, and consistent. It helps customers understand:

- Who you are
- What you offer
- What makes your product different
- Why they should buy from you

Unit 1: Marketing & Branding Basics

What is a brand?

A brand is more than a logo. It is how people perceive your product and business. It is what they remember, how they talk about you, and how they feel when they interact with your product.

Branding includes:

- Your logo, colours, and packaging
- Your voice — how you write and speak to people
- Your story — your values, origin, and mission
- The experience customers have when buying or using your product

Think of your brand as your identity: what people say about you when you are not in the room. Even if you run a small jam business, a herb garden, or a micro-dairy, you have a brand. You can shape it, or let others guess what it is.



Unit 1: Marketing & Branding Basics

What is a brand?

Why is this important for small producers?

Small producers have important advantages:

- Trust — people want to know who makes their food
- Transparency — you can show your process
- Uniqueness — your story is yours only

Unlike supermarkets or anonymous brands, small producers can build real relationships with customers. Customers may return not only for the taste, but because they connect with the producer's values.



Unit 1 – Reflection activity

What makes your product unique?

Think about your product or business. Take 3–5 minutes to reflect on this question:

Why should a customer choose you instead of another producer selling the same product?

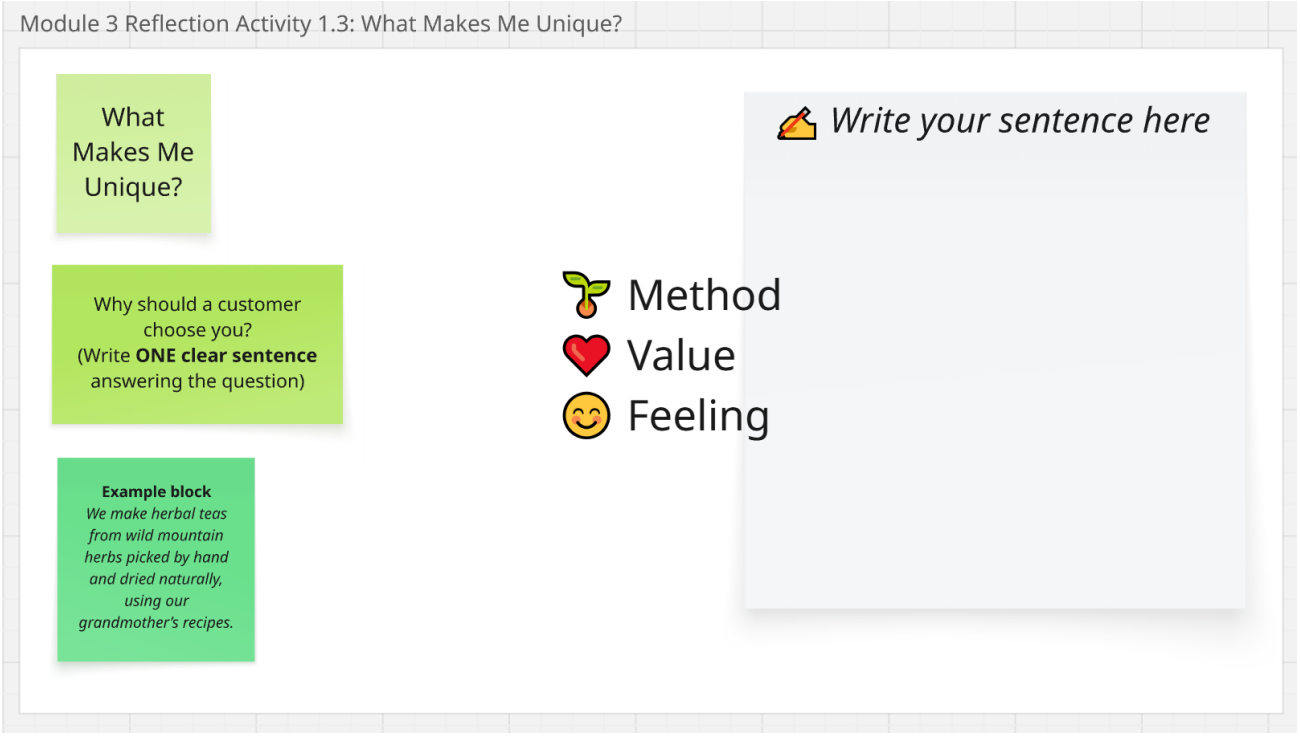
Write your answer in one clear sentence. Try to focus on:

- A special method you use, such as hand-picked, organic, or traditional recipe
- A strong value, such as family farm, zero waste, or fair trade
- A feeling, such as taste of childhood, made with love, or local tradition

Example: "We make herbal teas from wild mountain herbs picked by hand and dried naturally, using our grandmother's recipes."

This reflection will help you later when creating your brand message or product description.

Use MIRO Board and write 1 clear sentence describing why customers should choose you.



Unit 1 –Test Your Knowledge

Q1. What is marketing mostly about?

a) Printing brochures
b) Selling your product at a market
c) Connecting with people and telling your story
d) Making labels look colorful

Q2. Which of the following is part of branding?

a) Tractor type
b) Logo and slogan
c) Weather report
d) Your income level

Q3. Why do customers choose local food from small producers?

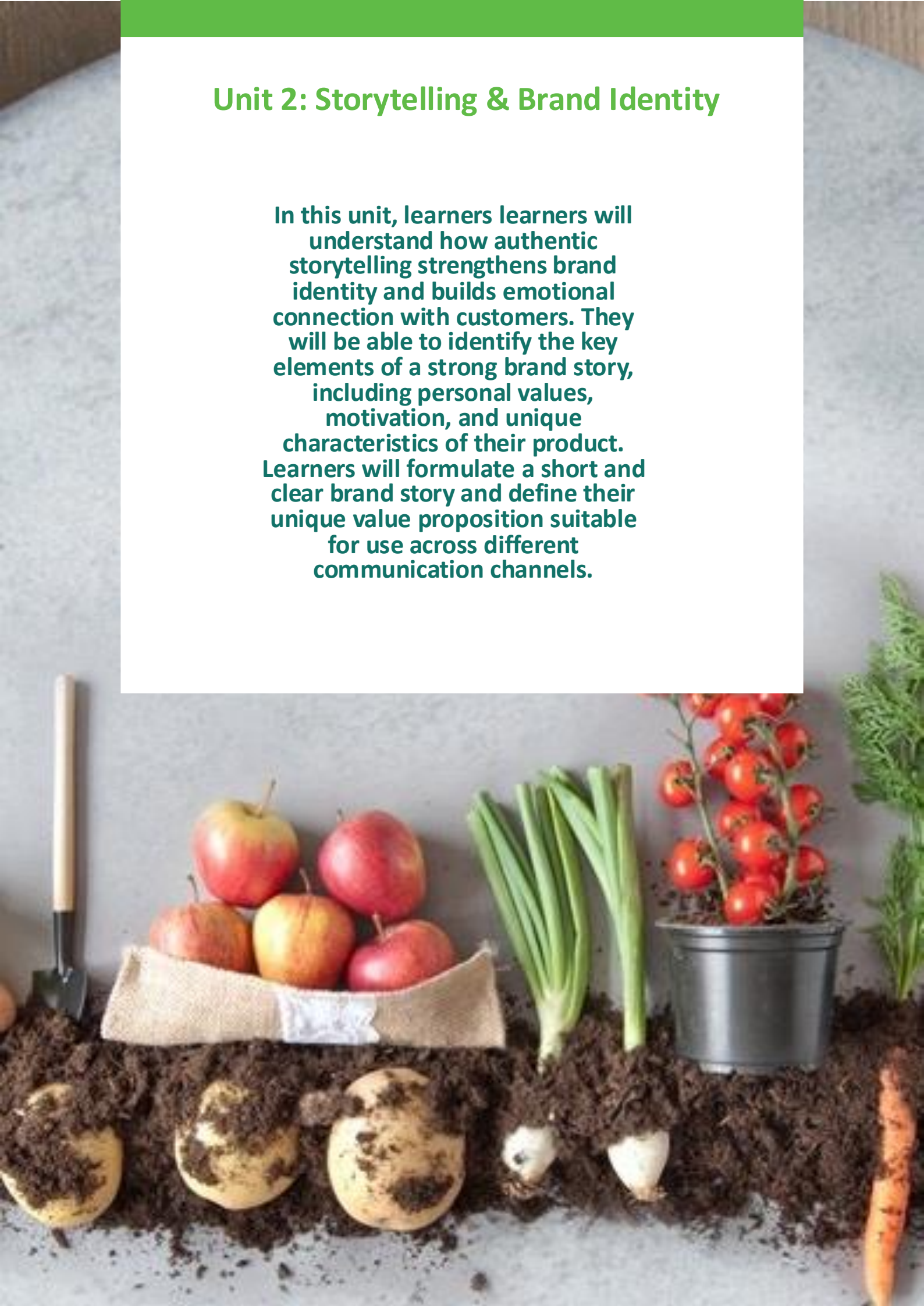
a) They trust the story and values behind it
b) It's always cheaper
c) They want to avoid going to supermarkets
d) Because it's more processed

Q4. What does USP stand for?

a) Universal Standard Price
b) Unique Selling Proposition
c) United Supplier Program
d) Useful Sales Promotion

Unit 2: Storytelling & Brand Identity

In this unit, learners learners will understand how authentic storytelling strengthens brand identity and builds emotional connection with customers. They will be able to identify the key elements of a strong brand story, including personal values, motivation, and unique characteristics of their product. Learners will formulate a short and clear brand story and define their unique value proposition suitable for use across different communication channels.



Unit 2: Storytelling & Brand Identity

Every product has a story. What is yours?

Customers do not just buy food. They buy meaning, trust, and connection. In a world full of options, your story is your superpower.
As a small producer, you already have what big companies are trying to fake:

- A real face behind the product
- A local origin
- A reason why you started
- A connection to nature, tradition, or innovation

The goal of storytelling is to make people remember you and choose you, not just once, but again and again.

What makes a good story?

A good brand story:

- Is authentic and true to who you are
- Shows your values and motivation
- Highlights your passion and purpose
- Makes customers feel something

You do not need to write a novel. A few well-chosen sentences on your packaging, social media, or website can make a big difference.



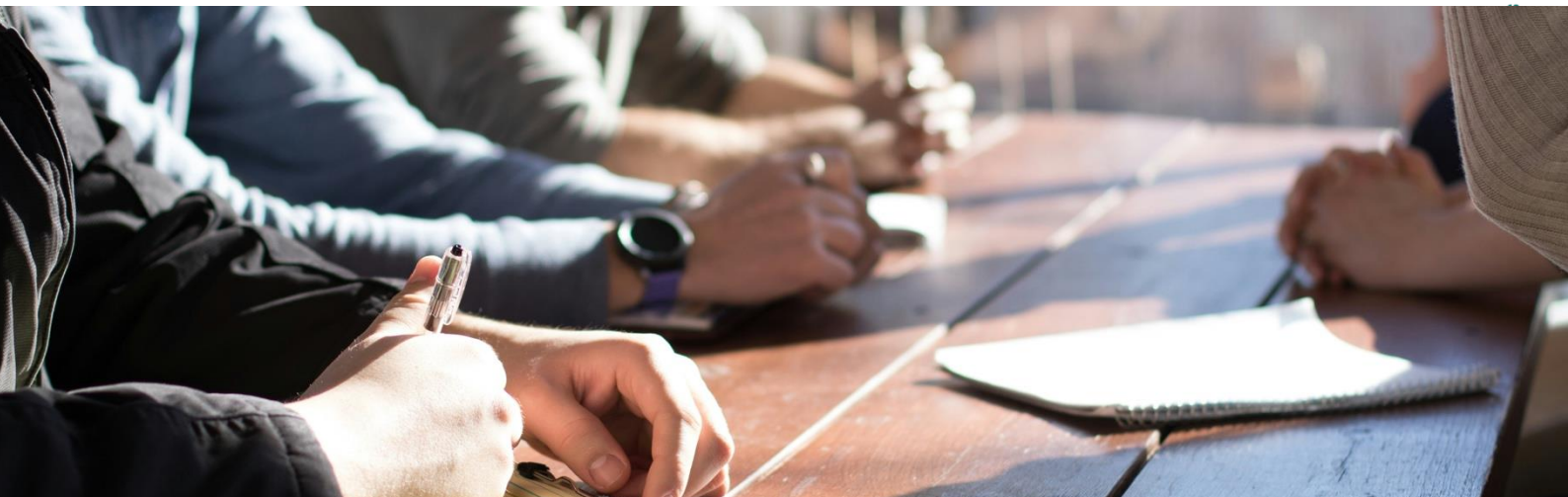
Unit 2: Storytelling & Brand Identity

How to build your story?

How to build your story
1. Who are you? Are you a family business, a young farmer, or a retired chef who started making herbal teas? Tell people who you are and share your journey.
2. Why do you do it? Do you care about health, sustainability, tradition, or community? What is your mission?
3. What makes you different? Do you use old recipes, wild herbs, mountain milk, permaculture, or bike delivery?
Example: “I’m Jana, a herbalist from Orava. I grow herbs using traditional methods and hand-make teas based on my grandmother’s recipes. My goal is to bring calm, health, and a piece of nature into every cup.”

Where to use your story?

Your story can be used in many ways:
As a short text on your labels
As an “About us” section on your website
As posts on social media
As part of farm market signs, flyers, or local events
You are not just selling a product. You are inviting someone into your world.



Unit 1 – Reflection activity

Take 5 minutes to reflect and write down your answers:

· Who are you, and why do you do what you do?

_____

_____

· What makes your product or service different from others?

_____

_____

· What emotion do you want your customers to feel when they think of you?

_____

_____

Use your answers as the first draft of your brand story. Keep it short, honest, and from the heart.

Unit 2 –Test Your Knowledge

Q1. Why is storytelling important in marketing?

a) It helps customers remember your price
b) It creates emotional connection and trust
c) It replaces the need for packaging
d) It increases production speed

Q2. What should a good story include?

a) Detailed list of all ingredients
b) Business registration number
c) Your motivation, values, and uniqueness
d) Warranty and returns policy

Q3. Where can you use your story?

a) Only in printed brochures
b) Only in your accounting documents
c) On labels, websites, and social media
d) Nowhere – it's private

Unit 3: Visual Identity & Design

After completing Unit 3, learners will understand the importance of visual identity in building brand recognition and customer trust. They will be able to identify key elements of visual identity, including logo, colours, typography, and visual style, and apply basic design principles to create consistent and professional-looking materials. Learners will also reflect on their current visual presentation and define improvements aligned with their brand personality.



Unit 3: Visual Identity & Design

Why does visual identity matter?

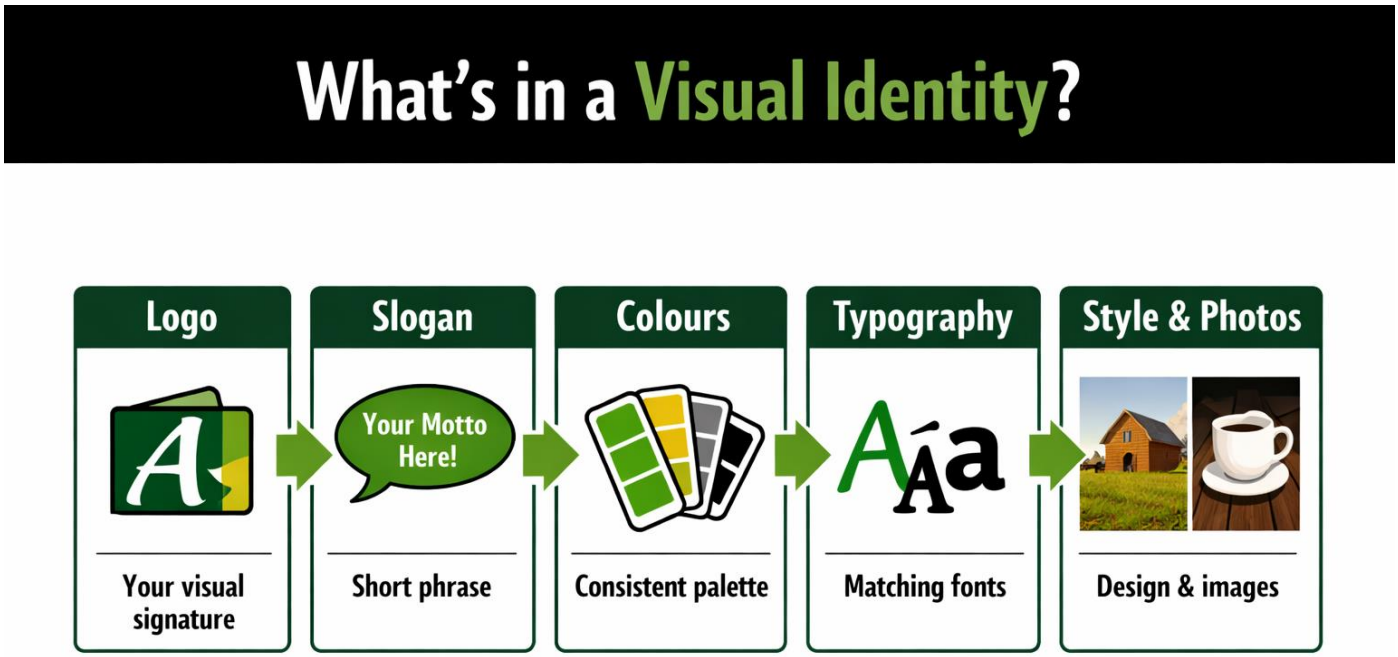
Your products may be delicious, healthy, or locally made, but if they do not look good at first glance, customers may never stop to discover them.

A strong visual identity helps you:

- Build recognition and trust
- Stand out at local markets
- Look professional on social media
- Make your brand memorable

Visual identity is not just a logo. It is a full visual language that includes:

- **Logo** — your visual signature
- **Slogan** — a short phrase that reflects your mission
- **Colours** — consistent and meaningful
- **Typography** — fonts that match your style
- **Style of photos and design**, such as rustic, minimal, or cheerful



Unit 3: Visual Identity & Design

Logo tips

- Keep it simple and easy to recognize
- Avoid too many colours or detailed images
- Use it everywhere: labels, posts, invoices, and packaging



Slogan tips

- Make it short and clear
- Reflect your values, for example “Local. Honest. Fresh.”
- Use it consistently if you choose to have one

Unit 3 – Reflection activity

Take a moment to reflect on your current visual identity

Take a moment to reflect:

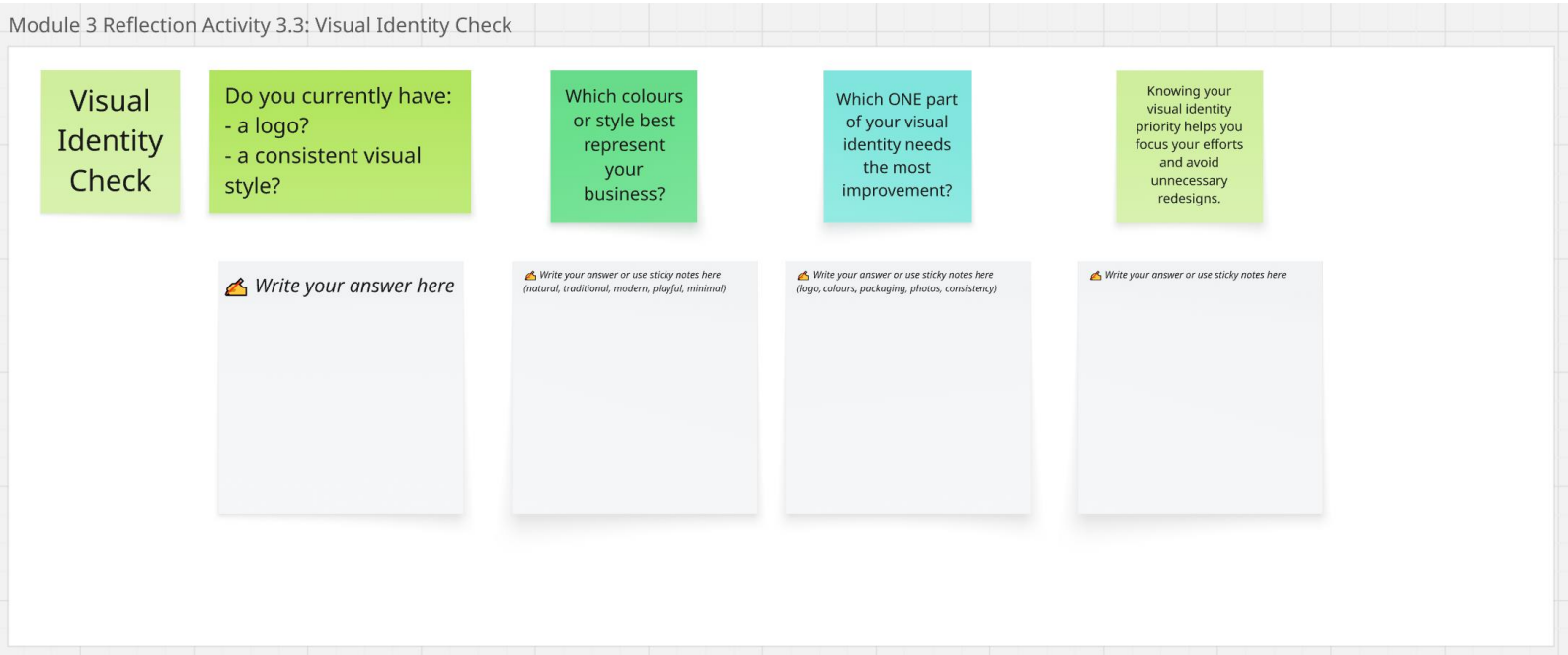
- Do you already have a logo or consistent brand style?
- What colours or style do you think represent your farm or business best?
- Which part of your visual identity needs the most improvement?

Bonus task: Search for three local brands, for example on Instagram or at markets, that you like visually. What do they have in common? What makes them stand out?

Implementation guidance

The activity is implemented as a structured visual reflection using a collaborative digital Miro board. Learners assess their current visual identity, identify preferred styles and colours, and define one priority area for improvement.

Link to the activity:
https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVGNQH55o=/?moveToWidget=3458764656310791791&cot=14



Unit 3 –Test Your Knowledge

Q1. What is NOT part of visual identity?

a) Your slogan
b) Your farm's GPS location
c) Your logo
d) Your chosen brand colours

Q2. Why is it important to have a consistent visual identity?

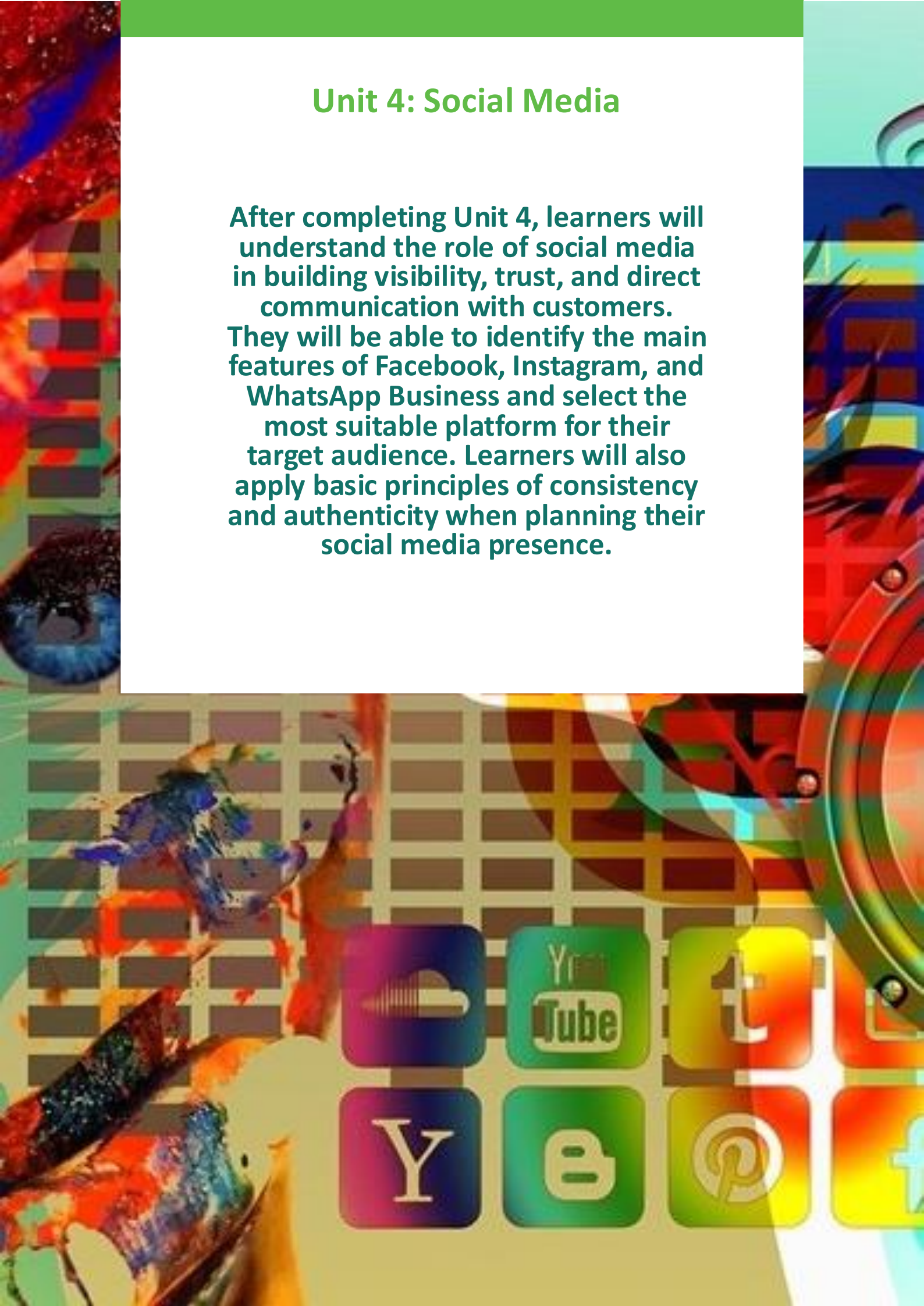
a) It helps you post more often
b) It makes your products healthier
c) It builds recognition and trust
d) It increases the number of farm animals

Q3. Which tool can help you create a logo and visual materials?

a) Google Translate
b) Canva
c) Excel
d) Adobe Premiere Pro

Unit 4: Social Media

After completing Unit 4, learners will understand the role of social media in building visibility, trust, and direct communication with customers. They will be able to identify the main features of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp Business and select the most suitable platform for their target audience. Learners will also apply basic principles of consistency and authenticity when planning their social media presence.



Unit 4: Social Media

Be where your customers are

In today's world, small producers need to be active on social media strategically, not just for fun. You do not need to go viral. You need to:

- Be visible to people nearby
- Show your products regularly
- Stay in touch with your customers
- Build trust and recognition

Three useful tools are:

- **Facebook** — useful for local communities, events, and older audiences
- **Instagram** — ideal for photos, stories, and younger buyers
- **WhatsApp Business** — useful for direct orders and simple customer support

Facebook tips:

- Create a Facebook Page, not just a personal profile
- Post regularly, for example 2–3 times per week
- Share product updates, photos, market locations, and special offers
- Invite friends to follow and ask satisfied customers to leave reviews
- Use Facebook Events to promote markets or farm visits

Instagram tips

- Focus on visual content, such as photos, short videos, and stories
- Use hashtags like #farmtotable, #localfoodsk, and #yourbrandname
- Keep texts short and emotional, for example "Freshly baked today"
- Share behind-the-scenes content such as harvesting, packaging, or family moments

WhatsApp Business tips

- Set up a Business Profile with a photo, description, and contact hours
- Create automated messages, such as "Thank you for your order"
- Group your customers using labels such as "Regulars", "New", or "Shops"
- Offer easy ordering through WhatsApp chat

Start with one channel you are comfortable with. Do not try to be everywhere. Be consistent and real where it matters.

Unit 4 – Reflection activity

Take a moment to reflect on your current visual identity
Write down your answers to these questions:

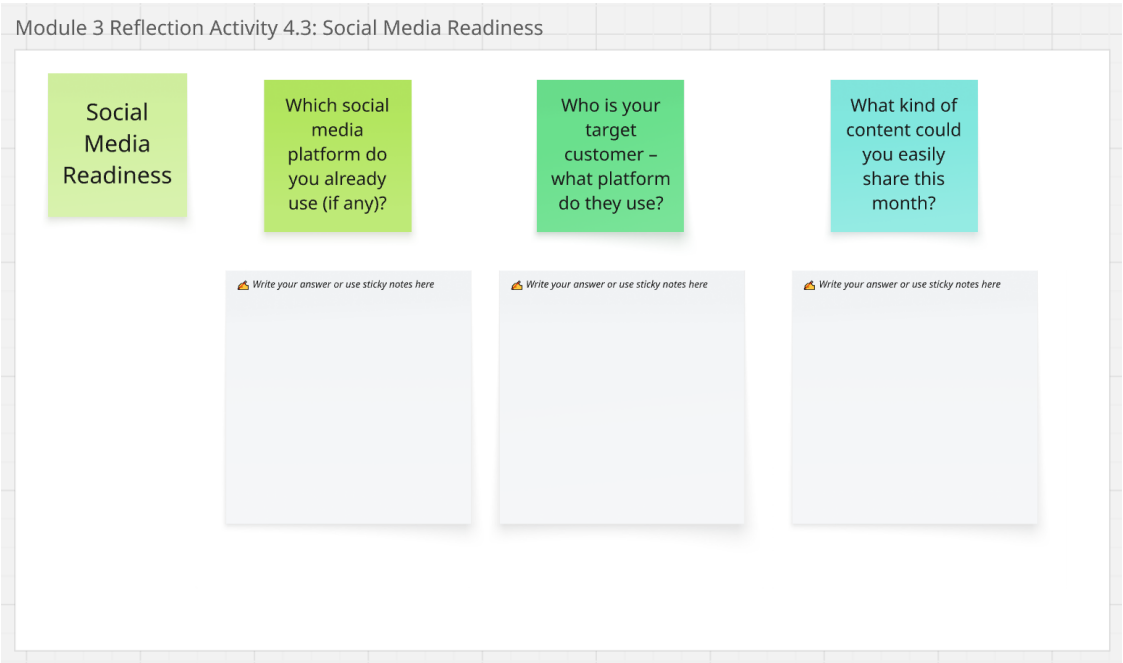
- Which social media platform do you already use, if any?
- Who is your target customer, and what platform do they use?
- What kind of content could you easily share this month?

Bonus: Think of a simple story or product post you could publish this week.

Implementation guidance
This reflection activity supports learners in assessing their current use of social media and identifying realistic communication opportunities. Using a simple digital board, learners respond to three guided questions through short written inputs.

The activity uses concise reflections captured through three sticky notes and encourages learners to translate reflection into action by planning a simple post or story.

Link to the activity:
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Unit 4 –Test Your Knowledge

Q1. What is the main reason for using social media as a small producer?

a) To follow celebrities
b) To build trust and communicate with customers
c) To avoid face-to-face communication
d) To replace physical markets

Q2. Which platform is best for older audiences and local community posts?

a) TikTok
b) WhatsApp
c) Facebook
d) Snapchat

Q3. What should you do on Instagram?

a) Post long technical texts
b) Share invoices and documents
c) Share visual content and use hashtags
d) Sell products only to influencers

Unit 5: Smartphone Photos & Videos

After completing Unit 5, learners will understand the importance of visual content in marketing and how photos and short videos influence customer perception and purchasing decisions.

They will be able to apply basic principles of smartphone photography and video creation, including lighting, composition, and authenticity. Learners will also identify simple digital tools for editing and improving visual content suitable for small-scale promotion.



Unit 5: Smartphone Photos & Videos

Visuals sell

People do not just read about products. They scroll, watch, and feel. For small food producers, good photos and short videos are powerful tools to attract attention, build trust, and increase sales.

You do not need a camera crew. With a modern smartphone, natural light, and a few simple rules, your content can look strong and authentic.

Photo tips

- Use natural light, best near a window or outside
- Avoid strong shadows or yellow light from old bulbs
- Clean your camera lens before shooting
- Focus on one product and do not crowd the frame
- Try different angles, such as side view, top-down, or close-up
- Add a human element, such as hands, a smile, a customer, or a maker

Example: Take a close-up photo of a cheese slice with knife marks and crumbs. It looks natural and delicious.

Video tips

- Keep it short, around 10–30 seconds
- Show action, such as cutting bread, pouring milk, or packing a basket
- Use vertical format for Instagram and Facebook stories or Reels
- Hold the phone steady or use a simple stand
- Talk directly to the audience or add subtitles later

Free tools to improve your content

- Canva — design and quick edits
- CapCut — simple video editing with text and music
- Snapseed — photo edits such as brightness and sharpness
- InShot — cutting and resizing videos

Key message: Beautiful, authentic content builds a strong connection with your customers. Start simple, use natural light, and show the real story of your products and process.

Unit 5 – Reflection activity

Take three photos of your product today using only natural light and your smartphone. Try different angles and compare them. Which one tells your product story best?

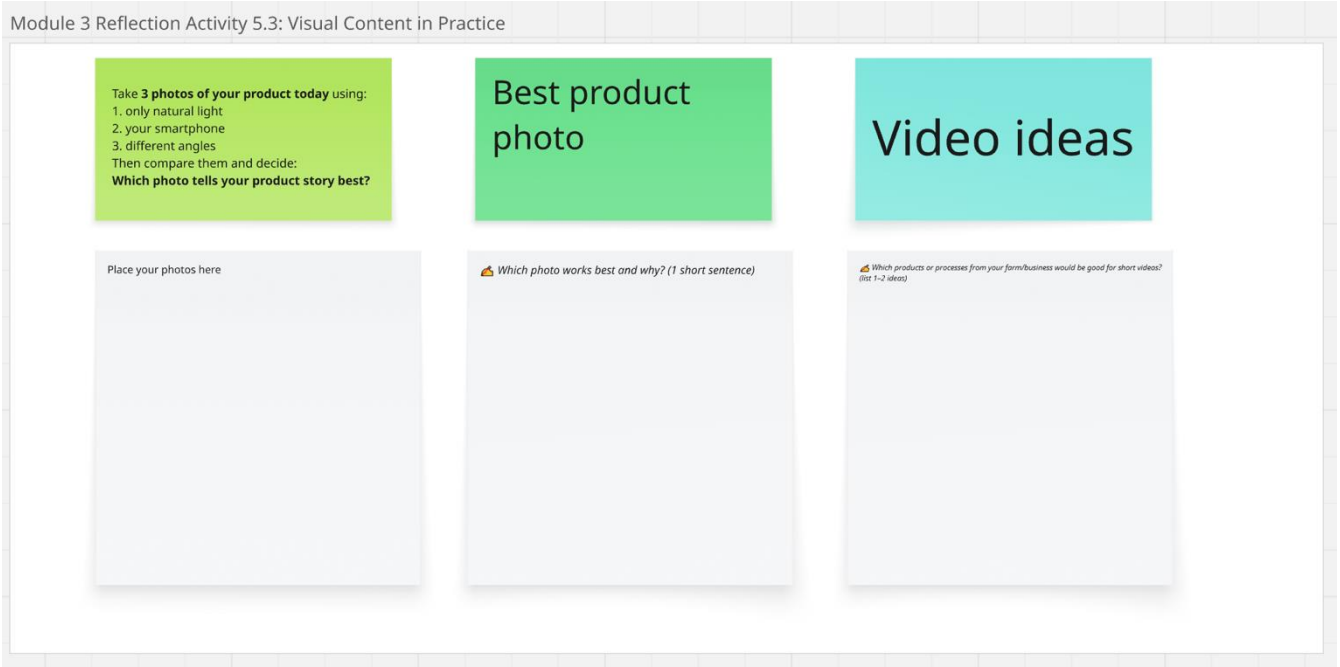
- Then reflect on these questions:
- Which products or processes from your farm or business would be good for videos?
- Do you already have some photos or videos online? If yes, what works best?
- What do you enjoy more — taking photos or making short videos?

Implementation guidance

This activity combines hands-on visual content creation with structured self-reflection through a collaborative digital board. Learners first take three product photos using natural light and then capture their observations and preferences related to visual communication.

This practical exercise helps you immediately apply learned principles and improve your visual marketing skills. The activity also supports experiential learning, self-assessment, and informed decision-making for future visual marketing activities.

Link to the activity:
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Unit 5 –Test Your Knowledge

Q1. What is the best light for taking product photos?

a) Flash from your phone
b) Yellow ceiling light
c) Natural daylight
d) Candlelight

Q2. Why are short videos important?

a) They help with accounting
b) People don’t like long videos
c) Videos can only be 5 seconds
d) Phones cannot record longer videos

Q3. What tool can help you add text or music to videos?

a) Snapseed
b) CapCut
c) Canva
d) Google Docs

Unit 6: Online Sales & Product Presentation

After completing Unit 6, learners will understand the principles of effective online product presentation and how clear communication increases customer trust and sales.

They will be able to structure a simple and persuasive product listing including name, description, price, and ordering information.

Learners will also identify suitable online channels for selling without a full e-shop and apply basic digital sales strategies adapted to small-scale production.



Unit 6: Online Sales & Product Presentation

More and more people are buying food online. Whether it is a local honey jar, a cheese box, or homemade jam, clear and simple product presentation helps customers feel confident and ready to buy.
This unit helps you understand:

- What makes a product listing effective
- How to present your offer in a trustworthy and attractive way
- Where to sell online, even without an e-shop

The basics of a good product page
Every product post or listing should include:
1. Name of the product — clear and specific, for example “Goat Cheese with Herbs 250g”
2. Short description — ingredients, taste, origin, and usage
3. High-quality photo — show the product in context, for example cheese on a wooden board or jam with a spoon
4. Price — always visible, with information about packaging and weight
5. How to order — call, message, or order form
6. Delivery options — pickup, delivery, or shipping

Try writing product descriptions that are simple, honest, and emotional.
Example: “Handmade plum jam from our family orchard. No added sugar, just real fruit and sunshine.”



Unit 6: Online Sales & Product Presentation

Where can you sell online without an e-shop?

You do not need a website to start selling online. Try:

- Facebook posts or shop section
- Instagram DM orders with product photo and price in stories
- Local Facebook groups for farmers or handmade products
- Google Form order sheet shared by link
- Regional online marketplaces, such as Lokálny trh, Scuk, or Tržnica Slovensko

Pro tips

- Group products into themed offers, such as gift baskets or seasonal boxes
- Use customer reviews or testimonials in posts
- Add a personal touch, such as “Packed by grandma Anna” or “Our bees worked hard this summer!”

Key message: You do not need a big e-shop to sell online. You need good photos, clear text, and easy ordering options. Start where your customers already are: on social media or local platforms.

Unit 6 – Reflection activity

Reflect on the following questions:
Think of one product you sell. How would you describe it online in 2–3 sentences?
Where do your current customers spend time online?
What online channel feels most natural for you to use for selling?

Implementation guidance

This reflection activity is implemented as a guided discussion forum on www.smartforfood.eu. Learners write a short product description and reflect on where their customers are most active online and which digital channel feels most natural for selling.

The forum structure limits contributions to one main post and encourages light peer feedback through one short comment.

Mini Task
Pick one product and create a short social media post with:

- Photo
- Description
- Price
- Contact or order information

Then post it in a Facebook story or share it with friends for feedback.

Unit 6 –Test Your Knowledge

1. What should every product listing include?

a) A fun fact
b) A short description and price
c) A logo only
d) Only the product name

2. Where can small farmers sell without an e-shop?

a) Instagram DM and Facebook
b) Google Maps
c) YouTube
d) Only in supermarkets

3. What helps customers feel trust in your offer?

a) Fancy English words
b) Mysterious photos
c) Clear info and real photos
d) Hidden pricing

Unit 7: Offline Marketing

Offline marketing remains an important part of communication for small and local producers. Personal contact builds strong trust, especially in rural communities where relationships and reputation matter.

Even in the digital age, face-to-face interaction and local visibility can significantly influence purchasing decisions.



Unit 7: Online Sales & Product Presentation

Marketing is not just about Instagram or online ads

Digital tools are powerful, but local, personal, and offline communication still plays an important role, especially for small food producers who sell in their region or community.

Imagine a local farmers' market where people stop by your booth, taste your honey or jam, have a quick chat, and leave with a flyer or business card. This kind of personal interaction builds trust, loyalty, and long-term relationships.

Offline marketing is about being present in your community, creating real connections, and building a reputation through personal contact.

Why does offline marketing still work?

- People like to see, touch, and taste the product before they buy
- In many rural areas, not everyone shops online
- Word-of-mouth from neighbours or local sellers can have more credibility than an online ad
- Local media, such as radio, municipal newspapers, or community bulletin boards, are still widely read and respected

Unit 7: Online Sales & Product Presentation

Examples of offline marketing tools for small producers

Tool	Example of Use
Local newspapers or radio	Tell your story or invite people to an event
Flyers and posters	Place them in local shops, schools, cafés, or gas stations
Tastings and stalls	Use them at markets, fairs, and school events
Partnerships	Collaborate with a local café, restaurant, or B&B
Printed materials	Use business cards, mini product catalogues, recipes, and price lists
Word-of-mouth	Ask satisfied customers to recommend your products

Tip: Combine offline and online efforts. For example, print a QR code that links to your Facebook page, e-shop, or order form. Offline marketing can be simple and low-cost, but highly effective when it is based on honest communication, product quality, and a strong local reputation.

Unit 7 – Reflection activity

Reflect on the following questions:

- What local spaces could you use to share flyers or posters, such as a café, market, or vet?
- Can you partner with another local business to promote each other?
- What message would you write on a tasting stand to attract people?

Implementation guidance

This reflection activity is implemented as a structured micro-planning task using a digital collaborative board. Learners identify suitable local spaces for offline promotion, consider potential partnerships with nearby businesses, and formulate a short on-site message to attract customers during tastings or market events.

Link to the activity:
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Mini Task

Design a simple flyer or stand card with:

- Product name or brand
- Short description or slogan
- Contact information
- QR code linking to your online page

Try creating this with Canva and print one copy to see how it feels.

Unit 7 –Test Your Knowledge

Q1. Why is offline marketing still important?

a) It’s more expensive
b) It works only in cities
c) Some customers prefer personal contact
d) Only young people use offline tools

Q2. What is a good place to share flyers?

a) In the forest
b) Local shops or schools
c) Only on Instagram
d) Government offices only

Q3. What can make your offline promo more effective?

a) Bright colours and big logos
b) Personal touch and useful info
c) Hidden prices
d) Long blocks of text



Unit 8: Marketing Strategy & Customer Relations

Learners will understand the importance of having a simple and structured marketing strategy tailored to small-scale production. They will be able to define clear marketing goals, identify their target audience, select appropriate communication channels, and outline basic customer care practices.

Learners will also reflect on their current marketing approach and formulate realistic and actionable marketing objectives for their business.

Unit 8: Marketing Strategy & Customer Relations

Marketing is not just about promoting a product. It is about setting clear goals, choosing the right customers, building trust, and maintaining long-term relationships.

For small producers, a marketing strategy does not need to be complex. Even a simple one-page plan can help organise priorities, target the right audience, and grow sustainably.

A marketing strategy answers key questions

- Who are your ideal customers?
- What makes your product special to them?
- Where and how can you reach them?
- What do you want to achieve, and how will you measure it?

Customer relations are equally important. Customers who feel heard and valued are more likely to return, leave positive reviews, and recommend your product to others. Poor communication or unclear information can damage your reputation quickly.

Tips for maintaining strong customer relationships

- *Be clear and honest in your communication*
- *Respond to feedback and messages promptly*
- *Use thank-you notes or small gifts to show appreciation*
- *Send updates or reminders using social media or messaging apps*
- *Stay polite and professional, even when solving problems*

Building trust means building a strong brand.

Unit 8: Marketing Strategy & Customer Relations

Elements of a basic marketing strategy

- Goals, for example “Sell 50 jars of jam monthly via direct sales.”
- Target audience, for example “Young parents looking for healthy snacks.”
- Key messages, for example “Locally made, no additives, child-friendly.”
- Promotion channels, such as Facebook, local fairs, and WhatsApp
- Customer service plan, including clear communication, polite handling of complaints, and personal thank-you notes



Unit 8 – Reflection activity

Think about your own business, real or imaginary:

- What are your three main marketing goals?
- Who are your ideal customers, and where can you find them?
- How do you currently stay in touch with your buyers?

Write down your answers and compare them with your current marketing efforts. Can you improve or simplify your strategy?

Implementation guidance

This final reflection activity supports learners in consolidating key insights from the module into a simple and realistic marketing overview. Implemented as a structured one-page reflection using a collaborative digital board, learners identify their main marketing goals, ideal customers, preferred communication channels, and current ways of staying in contact with buyers.

The activity encourages learners to identify opportunities for improvement or simplification and translate acquired knowledge into a manageable marketing focus suited to small-scale production contexts.

Link to the activity:
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Unit 8 –Test Your Knowledge

Q1: What is the most important reason to create a basic marketing strategy?

a) To follow a trend
b) To impress investors
c) To guide decisions and reach the right customers
d) To compete with large corporations

Q2: Which of these is a good example of customer care?

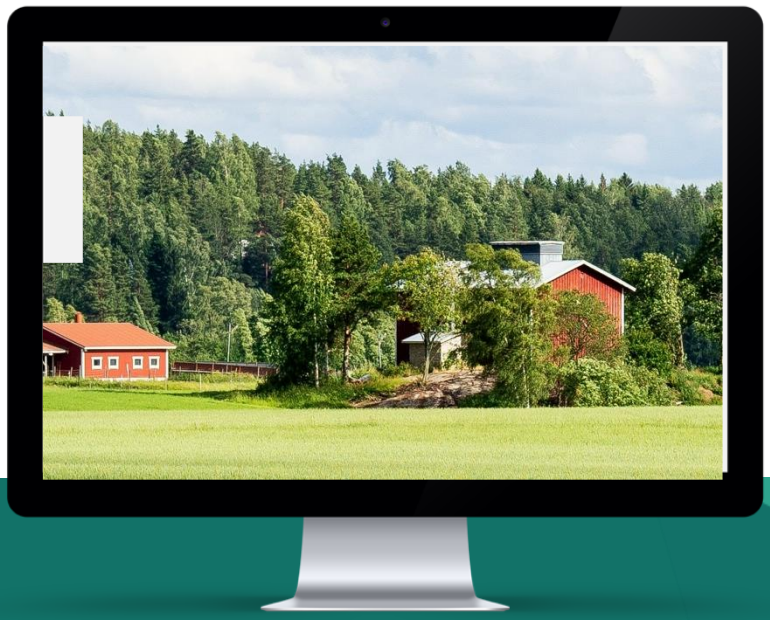
a) Sending a thank-you message after a purchase
b) Ignoring negative reviews
c) Posting random memes on your social media
d) Lowering your prices weekly

Q3: Why is it better to keep an existing customer than constantly seek new ones?

a) It’s easier to manage orders
b) They require less packaging
c) They already trust your brand and are more likely to buy again
d) They cost less in raw materials

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