

Marketing Seafood

There is a growing interest in exploring alternative markets for selling seafood products. Alternative markets focus on direct sales to consumers, retailers and other buyers further down the supply chain than the traditional dockside buyers and brokers. While there are many benefits to marketing further down the supply chain, there can also be some challenges. It will be important for those interested in transitioning into an alternative marketing strategy to understand the [risks and benefits](#) to ensure it is right for you.

Alternative Marketing Strategies

Direct marketing often takes more time, effort, skills and money to be successful and it is not always a good fit for all fishermen and growers. There are several alternative marketing strategies that could be utilized by NY producers which are described below.

- » Direct to seafood processors for further processing.
- » Direct to restaurants and other food service establishments.
- » Direct to wholesale and retail markets.
- » Direct to institutions like hospitals, nursing homes, and schools.
- » E-commerce platforms to market your seafood online.
- » Farm/fish stands to market your seafood directly to consumers.
- » Preparing your seafood for direct consumption through mobile and temporary food service establishments.
- » Community supported fisheries where consumers or food service buy in for a portion of your harvest/catch

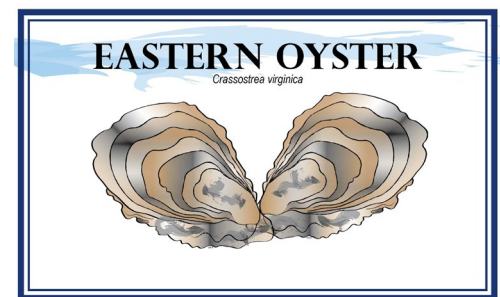
Regardless of which strategy you choose you will need to develop a plan for marketing and promoting your products.

Promotion

When venturing into alternative marketing it will be important to [promote](#) yourself, your product, and your brand. There are four main strategies for doing this.

Branding - [Branding](#) is the use of words and/or images to symbolize your business or product(s) and enhance its recognition among buyers. Creation of a logo that complements and promotes your brand is a great way to build brand recognition.

- » You can also take advantage of [free online marketing resources](#) to assist in promoting your brand.



A series of customizable marketing resources linked above, are available for free online through NY Sea Grant.

Traditional promotion is done through word of mouth, promotional events, printed materials, give-aways, and media stories. While these can be effective tools for promoting your business they are often most effective when complemented with some of the newer strategies such as websites and social media. These online platforms can be shared broadly using the traditional methods of promoting your business.

Online marketing covers the creation of a website that houses written information on you, your business and your products. Online platforms should be easy to navigate and clearly portray your business and products.

- » Take advantage of platforms that already exist to help promote local and sustainable products, some of which are linked here: [LocalCatch](#) | [ChooseLI](#) (Suffolk County Only) | [Local F.I.S.H.](#) (Long Island Only) | [Sustainable Fisheries](#) | [USDA Local Food Directory](#)



Social media is a valuable tool that is commonly used today to promote products and services. Success on social media platforms relies on frequent engagement through regular sharing of content. There are a variety of social media platforms that can be used that accommodate different mediums for promoting your products and services (photos, text, video etc.) The most commonly used social media platforms are [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).

Before determining which of the above strategies will be best for you and your business, it will be important to identify who your customers will be and develop a strategy that will be accessible and effective to them.

You can also explore other programs that could help to expand your client base. For example, [farm/fish stands](#) registered with the Department of Agriculture and Markets are eligible to participate in the [NY FreshConnect Checks Program](#) to redeem SNAP and VA coupons. Check with the market manager to see if your local market is enrolled.

Sustainability Certifications

If moving to larger scale commercial production/sales, the [NOAA Seafood Inspection Program](#) is a voluntary, fee-for-service, inspection program that certifies products as compliant with U.S. food regulations to improve marketability of U.S. seafood. There are a variety of other national 3rd party certification bodies ([Marine Stewardship Council](#), [Best Aquaculture Practices](#), and [Aquaculture Stewardship Council](#)) that will evaluate and/or “certify” your fishery or farm and afford you use of their certification logos, which can be used as a marketing tool.

These types of certifications are typically more useful when trying to attract larger scale commercial buyers who exclusively source certified products. These certifications can be expensive and it will be important to evaluate the cost and feasibility of achieving certification if you are a small scale operation.

Some certification bodies will evaluate and rate or certify harvest/production types collectively (i.e. Monterey Bay [Seafood Watch](#) and the [Marine Stewardship Council](#)).

NY Grown and Certified

The [NY Grown and Certified Program](#) was opened up to fish and shellfish producers/harvesters in 2018. This is a free program that allows use and access to NY Grown and Certified marketing materials. This program is open to all properly licensed and regulatory compliant growers and harvesters in New York State.



Online Sales and Marketing

When considering online sales, there are several existing platforms that could assist you in getting online. This list is not exhaustive and NYSG does not endorse any of the platforms linked: [Barn2Door](#) | [Cropolis](#) | [Farmigo](#) | [Food4All](#) | [Local Food Marketplace](#) | [Local Line](#) | [SaleFish](#) | [WIX](#) | [Square](#) | [WOO Commerce](#) | [Squarespace](#) | [Open Food Network](#) | [GrazeCart](#) | [Harvie](#) | [OurHarvest](#) | [WhatsGood](#) | [CSAware](#) | [Farmers Web](#) | [GrownBy](#) | [Harvest Hand](#) | [Local Orbit](#) | [Shopify](#)

Additional Resources

There are a variety of other more detailed resources on developing a marketing strategy and accessing alternative markets that you can use as you navigate new markets, which are linked below.

Seafood Network Information Center:

bit.ly/SNICSeafoodMarketing

Direct Marketing 101:

bit.ly/LocalCatchMarketing

Fishermens Direct Marketing Manual:

bit.ly/MarketingManual

Market Your Catch:

marketyourcatch.msi.ucsb.edu