CASE

FERIA VERDE

WHAT IT’S ABOUT:

Feria Verde is a marketplace located in San José, Costa Rica where organic farmers, food artisans, designers, handicrafters, restaurants, and consumers come together twice a week to exchange products, ideas, and to support each other in pursuing sustainable, prosperous lives. The marketplace promotes agro-ecological food production, appropriate agricultural scale, family businesses, health, heirloom seeds, direct fair trade, health, “deliciousness”, and activism. Feria Verde also hosts a wide variety of courses and events including sustainability-themed workshops, producer idea exchanges and training seminars, yoga classes, a hula hoop club, children’s programming, live music and cultural events, and a recycling centre. The marketplace is funded by the fees paid by vendors, and managed by the Asociación Amantes de lo Orgánico (AAMOR), which provides a quality assurance system, an ecological fair ground, marketing, and ensures market activities reflect the core values that Feria Verde represents including Abundance for Everyone, Concordance in Diversity, The Power of Encounter, The Politics of Desire and Reverence for the Spirit of the Earth. Feria Verde has deeply influenced the public discussion of organic foods and their production, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), industrial and family farming models, conservation, and the links between health and nutrition at the national level.

PRINCIPLES IN ACTION

STAKEHOLDER-FOCUSED

The Feria Verde is grounded in local experiences and interests. Much of its work centres on achieving sustainable livelihoods for farmers and making smart, sustainable consumer choices available for the community at large. Feria Verde listens to the needs of producers and consumers, and designs and supports courses to help spread knowledge of sustainable agricultural and consumption practices. Working with its stakeholders, the Feria Verde supports producers to become organically certified at a low cost in Costa Rica.
Feria Verde enhances the capabilities of the community to make more informed production and consumption choices related to food, the environment, and health. It fosters ongoing dialogues about community desires and needs, and emphasizes pathways towards sustainable abundance for everyone.

In the eight years since Feria Verde first began, the two weekly markets have scaled up to provide space for more than 140 producer-vendors of foods, handicrafts and restaurants that draw 3,000 visitors every week. Feria Verde’s social media presence has been an asset in growing the marketplace with more than 35,000 Facebook followers sharing posts about the market, discussion of food-related issues, advertisements for upcoming courses and public lectures, and pictures of products and market-goers. Feria Verde has also been featured on many media channels such as radio, TV newspapers, magazines, and blogs.

Feria Verde increases knowledge and understanding of food systems and how they are connected to other local and global systems, including health and livelihood impacts for producers and consumers alike.

Feria Verde supports a wide range of sustainable lifestyles choices for its community. The marketplace features a diverse set of vendors and draws in consumers from different walks of life, ranging from activists to bankers.

Connecting with Audiences:
Integrate in-person and online community building efforts

Make clear ties between face-to-face interaction and online activities and build on the strengths of both. For example, Feria Verde takes the dynamic experience of the marketplace and training programs and pairs these in-person activities with continued interactive dialogue on Facebook. The trust and community connections nurtured at the marketplace have become the vibrant online community. For example, discussions of organic food among vendors has become a dialogue and movement to advocate for organic food policy online.
Strategy:
Reveal and experience the system

Show people rather than tell them about a system in order to achieve lasting shifts. For example, in Feria Verde, stakeholder training and exchanges in the marketplace with producers, restaurants and consumers are deeply experiential. The marketplace experience connects the dots across different elements of the food system, reinforces common values, and sheds light on the whole. One result is new understanding. Evidence can be found in the small stakeholder-driven movements inspired by Feria Verde which focus on systemic change. These include campaigns against food waste and awareness on true cost campaigns as well as overall debates on sustainable living.

Framing:
Emphasize the opportunity for social justice in compelling ways

Be bold in tying framing to big beautiful goals that everyone can hold. By using language such as “Abundance for Everyone”, Feria Verde adopts emotionally compelling and inspiring language to connect people together. This is an aspirational frame that places daily food actions in a context related to social justice.

MORE INFORMATION

http://www.feriaverde.org/
https://www.facebook.com/FeriaVerde/

Video about the market
https://vimeo.com/64614805