

Fundamental marketing

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Fundamental Marketing

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Individual Report

¹ Diverse adaptation strategies

helped local food producers from Quebec, Canada

cope with initial challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic

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1. Introduction

There are many definitions about marketing the client need would be one (Housden, 2010).

This individual report will highlight diverse adaptation strategies helped local food producers from Quebec, Canada, cope with initial challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the first place, the main problems were workforce, food demand, marketing. In marketing adaptation strategies 6 key adaptation strategies were found: redistribution, streamlining, replacement, collaboration, farm adjustment and outlet adjustment. Most people changed their distribution strategy. Local farmers found problems with production and marketing due because of the safety measures. Most of the farmers were prepared to cope with pandemic challenges, they demonstrated remarkable resilience. Flexibility and redundancy helped farmers to survive Covid-19 (Schreiber et al. 2022).

2. Diverse adaptation strategies helped local food producers from Quebec, Canada, cope with initial challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic

Market analysis is about data, for example production and sales. Market analysis is hard and sometime vague. This structure is complex, the ability to shape the market, to understand the consequences is very difficult (Callingham, 2004).

The marketing planning process has few steps: the mission, corporate objectives, marketing audit, SWOT analyses, assumptions, marketing objectives and strategies, estimate expected results, identify alternative plans and mixes, budget, first year detailed implementation programme (McDonald, 2014).

A study was conducted, combining online survey with interviews with local farmers through video or phone. The intention was to understand the opinions of farmers involved in direct marketing. The questions were about farmers' challenges, resources and support systems. Initial questions were about farmers' locations and farm particularities. The main concern was about questions related to the challenges the farmers coped with production and sales before pandemic and during pandemic. Another important question was about whether the local farmers made some changes in distribution strategy. Another interview was conducted after the initial one and the problems that emerged from it were workforce demand, preferences about food demand, sales outlets, sales procedures and others (Schreiber *et al.* 2022).

From interviews and the numerical, 4 major impact areas were identified: workforce challenges, food supply and demand, distribution and marketing challenges and other operational issues (Schreiber *et al.* 2022).

The challenges for the workforce were acquisition and retention of farm labor. The adaptation strategies came from volunteers, family and friends. In food supply and demand there were some challenges. The adaptation strategies were increase of production and change of marketing strategy. Concerning marketing strategies, the changes were temporary and permanent closure of distribution because of safety measures. Other problems were finding resources, new costs, improvements of business problems. The solutions were online contact, projects delays, better organizing, more money to spend (Schreiber *et al.* 2022).

The first challenge mentioned was workforce. Most participants said they found difficult to find farm workers because of the difficulties and government. Family and friends were a real help. Few farmers received more support than needed. The travel restrictions from March 2020 started in the season of vegetables and fruits in Quebec. Temporary foreign workers were hired after a 2-week quarantine. The workforce was short in the peak season, in the lean season they were too many workers. Farmers were trying to hire locals, but they did not cope with it many times because they didn't have training. Because of this, a farmer reported a loss of several ten thousand pounds of good quality vegetables, the harvest did not happen in the

right time. Some of the farmers lost their international workers due to international travel restrictions. The Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) paid \$2000 CAD for a month to each Canadian because of unemployment due to Covid-19. Having CERB, the motivation to work in farms declined. Some of the farmers said they lost workforce because of the distribution approach change. According to one farmer, because the people were not working in the city during Covid, they were attracted to try farm work (Schreiber *et al.* 2022).

The second challenge was about food supply and demand. The demand for food quantity changed. Some farmers have seen requests in demand, others have noticed a decrease in sales, because of losing contact with clients. Half of the people from the survey said that the pandemic had no influence on sales. Some farmers experienced a rise in demand but for a short time. Because of high demand there was an increase in productivity. Lower demands happened because of changing the distribution. Some of the farmers said the demand was higher than previous years through all the season. The number of subscriptions was more than doubled. Some farmers said that the reason for this demand was the concern about a lack of food because of import restriction. The countries which exported fresh food to Canada were also concerned about ensuring food for their own countries. Farmers considered this high demand for fresh food challenging but also a way to make some profit. Some farmers said it was difficult to supply so much food and mentioned the distress of the situation. One farmer said that he is now prepared for a high demand, but also afraid of not selling the whole harvest. A few farmers lost the connection with customers, and they had low demands. Temporary restrictions were responsible for sales losses. When the city was closed, residents were not allowed to leave or enter other zones for non-essential purposes (Schreiber *et al.* 2022).

The digital era has now different tools to connect people online such as, online advertising, videos, apps, blogs, websites, social media, like Facebook You Tube Instagram (Kotler *et al.* 2020).

Moving sales online was difficult, because of technology, time, and cost. Farmers invested time and money into health and safety policy, sanitizers, masks, sinks (Schreiber *et al.* 2022).

The next challenge would be other operational and development issues. The problems were about finding seeds and other operations. Local farmers found it difficult to adapt to new safety rules. The cost was high. The support from the government was poor and not available to everybody. Because of the safety measures, some farmers reported limitations such as projects had to be put on hold, constructions were delayed, projects were canceled, communication with intermediaries was broken. Most farmers said they managed well the situation before and after Covid-19. There was a real food security concern. The government of Quebec has taken measures to make people buy local products. In Florida, local producers advertised using labels (Schreiber *et al.* 2022).

¹ In nowadays, the global business environment is influenced by many factors: political environment, economic environment, socio-cultural environment, technological environment, legal environment, ecologic environment, geographic environment (Brooks, 2011).

The political environment factors are synonyms with constitutions, changes, government decisions (Perera, 2017).

¹ Economic environment factors are very important such as: age, ¹ income, poverty, employment and unemployment, costs, gender, inflation, exchange rates, population growth, education, customer needs, perception, attitude (Perera, 2017).

¹ Limited resources force the manager to prioritize decisions, for the markets. The success is related to the the development, performance. Gross domestic product, interest rates, inflation and unemployment are important characteristics. Doing analysis as well as attitude assumptions help the consumer, the firm, the industry and the market (Daniel et al. 2019).

Socio-cultural environment is about traditions, cultural life, religion, ethical values, attitudes (Perera, 2017).

Technological environment is important. Without internet it is hard to run any business (Perera, 2017).

Legal environment such as rules, must be respected showing an ethical conduct (Perera, 2017).

National laws on health and safety issues must be obeyed (Griffiths, 2011).

¹ There is a need for going green, to have a better environment (Perera, 2017).

¹ Geographic environment factors are also related to PESTLE, climatic conditions (Perera, 2017).

3. Conclusion

This study highlights the flexibility and redundancy of the farmers trying to cope with food system at the beginning of pandemic. They used different methods to adapt, they coped with problems such as operational systems, travel restrictions, safety measures. Some of them reported negative impact, others reported positive sides. It has been showed how everybody dealt with losses of sales, with lack of workforce and how they managed. The opening of online shops, and infrastructure were a real help. The effect on the businesses at the beginning of Covid-19 is unknown. Some of them lost their businesses, others managed to go through it (Schreiber *et al.* 2022).

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