

OPINION



the Astorian

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OUR VIEW

Effective marketing can make all the difference

Most experts would agree that the worst marketing plan ever is this: “Our product is pretty much the same as everyone else’s.”

Yet, for many farmers, ranchers and fishermen, that may well be their marketing plan — or lack thereof. Seafood, crops and livestock are often marketed en masse with little or no differentiation from others.

They are price-takers.

Those who carve out a niche for their catch, crops and livestock can make the transformation to price-setters.

One example of a readily recognized niche is for foodstuffs that are caught sustainably or raised organically. Some customers seek out these products and are willing to pay a premium price for them.

Many beef producers market their cattle based on how they are raised or the breed. Grass-fed and hormone-free are just two examples of niches. Wagyu cattle, a breed originally from Japan, produce highly marbled beef and extraordinary prices. A wagyu ribeye steak for sale online was priced at \$138 a pound.

That’s the advantage of being a price-setter.

Similarly, some wheat growers market their crop as unique, either in how it is grown or how their cooperative is organized. Some even help consumers trace flour back to the farm where it was



Chinook Observer

The ‘Oyster Crew’ — Dan Findley, Bill Coffin and John Ducharme — kept the seafood coming at a local festival. Taylor Shellfish donated 1,800 oysters.

WHEN IT COMES TO MARKETING, NICHE IS THE THING. IT IS OFTEN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING A PRICE-TAKER AND A PRICE-SETTER.

raised.

Some ranchers sell their beef directly to customers online. Many of those customers become loyal because they get to know the ranchers’ families.

When it comes to West Coast oysters and clams, perhaps no one does a better job of marketing than Taylor Shellfish Farms, whose website, oyster bars and farm stores tout the company’s history and practices.

In the food world, perhaps no farmers have developed the

concept of niche more than the French. Not only is food produced in France marketed as its own niche, but food and wine from various provinces and regions are marketed as special.

Everyone knows that “champagne” sparkling wine must come from the Champagne region, but do they know about black truffles from Dordogne, or scallops and oysters from Brittany, cheese from the French Alps, ham from Bayonne, garlic from Uzès, chili peppers from Espelette or the

unique blue-legged chickens from Bresse?

In their own ways, each of these products is unique, and consumers willingly pay higher prices for them.

France is not alone in its niche-centric marketing. In Spain, the ham is considered to be so special there is a museum dedicated to it in Madrid. Called Jamon Iberico, it and its cousin, Jamon Serrano, sell for many times the price of U.S. ham. It sells for \$13 an ounce online.

As a whole, the wine industry has perfected niche marketing. Not only is wine from various regions marketed separately — think Napa Valley or Willamette Valley — but it is marketed by its American Viticultural Area, or AVA.

California has 139 AVAs, Washington state has 20 and Oregon has 23. Each has its own geography, climate and soil. The federal Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau approves each AVA. A 5,530-acre AVA was just approved for the Mount Pisgah Polk County area in Oregon’s Willamette Valley.

In turn, many wineries market their wines based on the region and the AVA they are in.

Like so many other food producers, they know that when it comes to marketing, niche is the thing. It is often the difference between being a price-taker and a price-setter.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Someone was missing

I am writing to thank the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association for hosting the first gubernatorial debate of 2022.

Last Friday, I was watching the debate you hosted, and noticed someone was missing. Of the multiple candidates running for governor of Oregon, only three of them were invited to attend. A duly elected Libertarian candidate, R. Leon Noble, had been excluded, and I would like to know why.

Noble earned the nomination of the Libertarian Party of Oregon during the primary election held in June. Unlike other “minor” parties, Libertarians do not need to spend millions of dollars on a primary campaign in order to ensure ballot access.

Could it be that Noble was excluded because, in this day of “pay-to-play” politics, he has yet to raise the millions of dollars? Betsy Johnson is still collecting signatures to appear on the November ballot. Noble has no such hurdle to overcome, yet he was excluded from the debate.

Are you trying to silence candidates who haven’t “paid their way” into the governor’s race? Or are you concerned that the people of Oregon might hear a message that disturbs the status quo? Most Oregonians can agree that neither Tina Kotek, Christine Drazan, nor Johnson represent them. Why can’t those disenfranchised voters hear from a candidate who will?

For more information on the Libertarian candidate for governor, please visit his website, SetOregonFree.com

SHARLYN COX

Legacy media director, Set Oregon Free
Roseburg

We need great ideas

There has been so much talk about what to do with the homeless situation in our community. Homelessness is happening across the country, and it is a reflection of the many challenges going on in the U.S.

We need viable long-term ideas, not short-term Band-Aids, to help the homeless in Astoria. I wrote an opinion recently, and I stand by it. The first step is to reopen the mental health hospitals and get the patients off the street who need help.

Many are on drugs because they are self-medicating instead of getting the care they need. This needs to change. These people are at risk to themselves and others. It is unfair and wrong to expect our police officers to manage the mentally ill.

I realize there is a large group of home-

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LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Astorian. Letters should be fewer than 250 words and must include the writer’s name, address and phone number. You will be contacted to confirm authorship. All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar and factual accuracy. Only two letters per writer are allowed each month. Letters written in response

less people who do not fall in the category of needing mental health support. That group needs to be addressed, too. Setting up camping sites does not solve the problem — it truly creates more problems. We now have trash everywhere. That is only one of the problems that are occurring with the current situation.

There are many empty hotels, build-

ings, possibly military camps, where housing could be created, along with community centers to help people get back on their feet. We need great ideas that are sustainable. The resources are out there to make these changes. Anything is possible, if we work together as a community.

MARY HADREAS
Astoria

Honorable thing

I recently went walking on the path-way near the Columbia River, east of downtown Astoria. Upon returning to my car, I noticed that my billfold, with all my important documents, was not in my pants pocket. I searched for several days, attempting to find the billfold, but was not successful.

I received a letter from the Astoria Police Department that a billfold was turned into their office, and informed me to make an appointment at their location. I went up to Astoria and the billfold was, in fact, the one I lost. Everything was untouched.

I would like to thank the person who found my billfold and turned it over to the police. In this time in our nation’s division and turmoil, I thank the person, the city and the public servants, the local police, for doing the right and honorable thing. I’m glad I live in this area, with its honorable citizens.

ROBERT BALL
Seaside