

By [Fresh Produce Marketing](#) founder Lisa Cork

✘ *I know, I know. I normally don't duplicate column themes, but last month's column about stickers really piqued your interest and your comments! I've never had more feedback than I had last month. As a result, I thought I would do one more column on stickers. As you all well know from a business point of view, stickers are a significant investment. So you need to ensure they are working as hard for you as they can when you put them on a product.*

What makes a sticker a good sticker? It's simple. A good sticker tells the shopper something that adds value to their purchase decision. A sticker should be about what the shopper wants or needs to know. In most cases, it isn't about your brand and it isn't about what you want to say. A good sticker adds value to the customer.

The other point to make about stickers is to understand their unique role. In my mind, stickers have the power to a) drive incremental sales and b) to influence purchase decisions via education. Let me explain.

Last month, I used the example of a plum with a PLU sticker that said "'Super Sweet' Purple Majesty". This sticker's power, in a sea of plums to choose from, was the only one that told me something about its taste and flavor, driving an 'incremental sale'. It did not 'convert' me to purchase a plum, because I was already in the market for plums. But it did influence me to select this particular variety versus all the others available. Imagine the power in that! If you have a product, be it an apple, pear or stonefruit, that sit amid a sea of competition, I believe your sticker and what you say on it has the power to influence consumer choice. Do it better than your competition and reap the rewards.

I also believe a sticker can educate. Again, last month we looked at the Heart Foundation Tick sticker on avocados. This is an example of using a sticker to educate and inform. Thinking of the products you grow, pack or ship, does your product lend itself to benefiting from an educational or informational sticker? Most products can.

Sometimes, the best way to understand is to see some examples. So let's look at some photos of stickers I've collected over the past few months where I think the opportunity to drive incremental sales, educate or inform was missed.

Caribbean Red Papaya Sticker



I am not a frequent papaya consumer. As a result, I don't know how to select one, tell if they

are ripe, use them, etcetera. This sticker, while bright, fails to communicate some basic information. First, it doesn't even tell me it is a papaya. Caribbean Red is simply a variety. Would the average consumer know this? Second, when I did a quick search about Caribbean Red - which most shoppers would not do - I saw there were charts available that tell people when a papaya is ripe. One of the charts even said, "Ready to eat when it gives to a gentle squeeze."

If this is critical information enabling a shopper to have success with this product, then why isn't this said on the sticker? There was no POS support at this display in Atlanta. In my mind, multiple opportunities to educate the consumer were missed.

Seedless Watermelon Sticker

This sticker has a lot going on, which is OK. Aside from the mandatory info, I count four pieces of information all vying for shopper attention: 1) Home Grown, 2) Lycopene Leader, 3) Seedless and 4) Indian Hills brand. If I were working with this company, here is what I would change. First, I'd evaluate what motivates watermelon purchase.

✘ Is it more important for a watermelon to be seedless or is it more important for it to be healthy? I vote seedless - that's its differential advantage. So I would significantly increase the word size of Seedless and perhaps add a little line above the word that says "Easy to Eat". Second, I would significantly reduce the size of the logo of the brand. Apologies to Indian Hills, but I don't think this brand is important enough to the shopper to warrant such a dominant space on the small sticker.

Third, I would delete the words Home Grown. Home Grown implies backyard garden. I don't get the feeling these watermelons are farmed that way. If this is a smaller, more bespoke farmer, then replace home grown with Family Farmed. Finally, I would increase the size of "Lycopene Leader" if the statement is true. In fact, without looking up the science behind that statement, perhaps they could refine it by saying "Lycopene Leader Among All Fruits". I would also make the Lycopene graphic something more serious and medical looking to add credibility to the statement.

Since I've looked at two stickers that need improvement, let me close with a final example that I think perfectly showcases how a sticker can educate and inform.

Green Fryers Tomatoes



This sticker is almost perfectly executed. The words Green Fryers are well supported by the

graphic. And the graphic, while simple, speaks volumes in regards to what you do with a green fryer tomato. In my book, no improvement required.

These examples give you some idea of how you can approach evaluating your sticker to see if it can be improved. Remember, stickers are powerful tools that serve an important purpose. The investment you make in them can help you drive incremental sales and they can be an important tool to educate and inform consumers.

Got a great sticker? Share it with me and I will feature it in a future column. Using a QR code on a sticker or on your produce packaging? Please share that as well as I will be devoting a future column to QR codes. Send samples to: Lisa@freshproducemarketing.com. Lisa Cork helps fresh produce companies get more sales by improving their packaging communication. You can follow her on Twitter: [@broccolilady](https://twitter.com/broccolilady) or visit her [website](#).

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