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Conference about Agri-Tourism

North County's microclimate continues to foster an ecosystem of entrepreneurism.

Farmers are location based entrepreneurs

adapting their capital and resources to

actively sell products into their selected

markets, most of which are outside their

own community. Many of their established

channels for distributing products are changing – new patterns are emerging – influenced by movements like farm-to-table or drive-to urban farmer markets offering fresh produce directly to the consumer.

North San Diego County's regional economy consists of over a million residents, each with diverse expectations and the disposable income to buy what they want.

Information; accessible, free and ubiquitous enables customers to search, discover and compare products or services indirectly before choosing. Practicing economic developers, like you, are continuously online sourcing information about available community business resources.

In North San Diego's agricultural history entrepreneurs like the former Paul Ecke developed and grew poinsettias locally then

distributed them internationally all from Encinitas, known at the time as the flower capital of the world. His strategy, "to offer unique, colorful plants to customers worldwide for decoration and celebration" enabled him to understand the value proposition of his product. His experiment lead him to learn how to match and serve the expectations of his customer's value segment. He sold his plants through a

business-to-business (B2B) distribution model.

The budding new farm-direct approach is an alternative business-to-consumer (B2C) distribution model. Similar to a specialty retailer, the farm-as-a-venue is a strategy for a location-based retailer – like a specialty crop farm such as Billy Woodson's farm in Fallbrook – who will employ his new strategy to attract, offer and serve

customers directly. The internet is the access way to the customer – an alternative channel to reach the rising demand for ‘experiential’ purchases.

As a private equity economic developer, I have chosen to use the B2B channel like Paul Ecke when I discovered how the craft beer maker’s supply chain works while attending the Innovate 78 Marketing Conference in Vista. I launched my hop

farm to pursue the opportunity I recognized that was needed by the small craft beer manufacturer. To gain market share these brewers can differentiate their product by infusing their beer with fresh hops so they can compete for customers demanding more flavorful beer. Later while attending the Farm Bureau workshop it led me to adopt my marketing strategy; to distill hops oil I could avoid the hops perishability and

extend its shelf life while maintaining the properties of fresh hops. This will help micro craft beer makers reduce manufacturing costs, improve time-to-market and increase their profits thereby allowing them to focus on marketing to reach more customers.

Opportunity attracts entrepreneurial farmers to innovate. And, reduced regulations incentivize farmers to practice

business differently. Just this month the San Diego County Board of Supervisors amended their regulation to allow hop farms to manufacture and sell beer directly plus they may host hospitality events and be allowed limited overnight stays. Billy Woodson's vision and value proposition is to offer a 'grow-make-serve-stay' farm experience directly to wedding parties and guests. He intends to create a farm-as-a-

venue service to meet this growing customer value segment. He's developing a superior offering to attract weddings directly.

Business development specialists like you and me help businessmen farmers like Billy to learn about new opportunities in emerging marketplaces and how to take calculated risks. We're change agents who can help farmers become aware of

opportunity and use incentives to increase their revenues. Think of yourself as an information broker informing farmers how to gain new knowledge. Demonstrate how to make a financial plan to increase their agri-tourism business and guide them how to source and share resources to reduce risk.

Ultimately value-based marketing strategy leads to bottom-line success. Agritourism

represents a win-win-win proposition;

customers attain fond memories;

businesses gain goodwill and the

community grows its commonwealth.

Thank you!