

Love Those Lawn Signs!

Lawn signs are a great tool for boosting community awareness that your new co-op is coming to town. FCI encourages you to make these a free item that is given to each new owner/member. As the signs spread throughout your community, the conversation will grow as well. This is one marketing tool that works well.

Read about three startups as they share their words and thoughts on the fabulous yard signs their owners show off. Then check out the Lawn Sign Gallery, below, and email us yours to join the show.

Jerry Nash, Prairie Food Co-op, Lombard, IL

We introduced our yard signs about a year and a half after we began selling ownership shares. I wish we had implemented them earlier. I'm considering getting weather-proof brochure holders to attach to them to hold our brochures like you see on some for sale signs. Getting yard signs was a move that brought definite results. I'd estimate that at least 15% rise in new ownership rates after we started using them.



These are a conversation starter for many people. They'd walk or drive down their street and see a few. Then they see another house or two with one. Then their neighbor has one and they're suddenly online reading about us. It's also fun to take pictures of them around town for a quick little Instagram or Facebook post. It's also something to give your owners when they stop by your booth at events or meetings. I'd take pictures of kids placing them on their lawns which always got good responses on social media.

We had a great graphic designer design ours with a warm wood pattern. They're not just text on a one-color background. I'd suggest that other co-ops make sure that they are so attractive that they actually make a yard look better. We also have a page on our website where owners can request one and we have a volunteer who delivers them within a week. We also ask them if they'd like a yard sign as an automated step after they become owners. We tell them that they're free but ask them if they'd like to donate \$10 to offset the cost.

Melanie Drake, Cedar Falls Food Co-op, Cedar Falls, IA

Yes, Yes, Yes to yard signs. They increase your visibility 10-fold if not more. People see that their neighbors are member-owners and want to join too. Plus, people want to have selfies with them and that's great for Facebook and Instagram



It is imperative that co-ops check with city regulations before ordering signs. We are able to put them up for no more than 2 months in a calendar year, because we are technically a business. So, we did them early last summer, and will do them again this coming summer.

We had a huge uptick in membership after putting signs around town and we discovered that new member-owners wanted to have a sign (but we had given them all out). We ordered 100 and collected over 90 back (a few disappeared due to vandalism and high wind). Because we had such a limited set of signs, we were strategic about where they went. High visibility areas (i.e. not in a cul de sac), we had volunteers place them, not homeowners, so we knew they are placed well. Make sure both sides have the information on them and place them perpendicular to the road so they can be seen from both sides. We posted a notice that we would have them available and people could ask to have one in their yard. If their yards were not on the beaten track, I would reach out to let them know that we had limited signs this year and were going to add them to next year's list. They seemed okay with that. If we could leave them up longer, we would!

Calling on co-op collective minds to help us out! We wish we could find affordable lawn signs made from recycled materials. Anybody have a source?

Jason Codner, Silverton Food Co-op, Silverton, OR



We began providing owner lawn signs in Stage 1 – Organization with about 150 owners. Our awesome lawn signs gave owners a chance to demonstrate their enthusiasm for the co-op and our community. They initiated conversations between neighbors, visitors, and friends. It gave an easy opportunity for owners to talk with others about the co-op. The signs also provided a visual way for local business owners to show their support for the co-op in their storefront. All these conversations and demonstrations of support has grown our ownership.

Many of our proud owners display the co-op signs and post photos on their social media feeds! They tag our Facebook page, bringing more traffic our way.

Visually seeing the support grow throughout the community has continued to motivate the co-op team and owners. Giving owners the opportunity to display their support and initiate conversations with others has helped spread the message of the co-op!



Assabet Village Co-op,
Maynard, MA



Nourish Community Market,
Denver, CO



Prairie Roots Food
Cooperative, West Fargo, ND



Silverton Food Co-op,
Silverton, OR



Shared Harvest Food Co-op,
Elgin, IL



Green Top Grocery,
Bloomington, IL



Whitewater Grocery Co.,
Whitewater, WI



Montavilla Food Cooperative,
Portland, OR



Elk River Area Food Coop,
Elk River, MN



Wild Root Market,
Racine, WI



Amherst Community Co-op,
Amherst, MA



Wheatsfield Grocery,
Ames, IA



Granite City Grocery,
Barre, VT



Catonsville Cooperative
Market, MD



East Aurora Market Co-op,
East Aurora, NY