

Markets - Fairs - Expositions - Festivals

TRADER'S ABC GUIDE

for all those working in the outdoor market and event industry, presented in clear sections and taking into account the special demands of selling products outdoors.



The outdoor market and event industry is a world, with which a merchant should become well acquainted.

The purpose of this guide is to help both old and new entrepreneurs to make their business at markets, fairs, expositions and festivals successful. The Finnish market and event trade offers worthwhile opportunities for those who have the ability and knowledge to take advantage of all the opportunities it offers. However, it should be remembered that the same unwritten laws that govern other retail industries do not always apply to **outdoor market** and events. Many entrepreneurs have learnt the hard way before finding the right practices, products and sales locations. This guide contains all the most important things which private entrepreneurs must take into account in order to become successful in their trade, presented in clearly divided sections. **Special attention has been paid to the demands presented by outdoor sales of food products.** The guide is also applicable for training new sales staff just entering the business.

Trader's ABC-guide has been compiled and written by Ari Kallas, the executive director of the Finnish Central Organisation of Market and Fair Trade, based on the material provided by a national team of professionals in outdoor market and event industry.

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1. BACKGROUND AND STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON FINNISH EVENT INDUSTRY

Trade at outdoor markets and fairs is the oldest form of trade in our country, and it always manages to surprise doubters with its amazing ability to transform. It has always been able to adapt to the circumstances of the day and answer to the changing needs of the population.

An example is the liberation of the sale of land in the 19th century and the formation of fixed shops that followed. At this time traditional fairs quickly lost their meaning as places of trade and many were shut down as unnecessary and detrimental to public decency. The amount of fairs was radically reduced, but at the same time outdoor markets became more important and in a few decades they were the centre of food trade in many places. Similarly, the concentration of commerce in large supermarkets and shopping centres has reduced the importance of farmer's markets from the 1960s onwards to this day. However, this change has been accompanied by the re-emergence of fairs and other events. Finland can be seen as the "promised land" of organised events, since 1500 events in which commerce plays a significant role are arranged each year.

The secret of success for outdoor markets and fairs is their closeness to the consumers. Even though technology has changed dramatically and the living environment is changing all the time, modern people are very similar to their forefathers thousands of years ago. People enjoy the opportunity for social contact and shared experiences offered by fairs and outdoor markets. It can be said that the trading business is more than just a way of doing business, it's a part of life itself.



The traditions associated with outdoor market and fair trade are long.

Part-time is the word of the day

All in all, traders at outdoor markets and fairs are a colourful bunch. They range from old ladies selling handicrafts to businesses with a turnover of tens of millions a year. The only common factor they have is the form of trade. However, the following main groups are distinguishable from the mass: professional fair traders, professional outdoor market traders and part-time traders. At the moment there are about 600 professional travelling traders. Similarly, there are about 1200 professional outdoor market traders. The number of entrepreneurs in the former groups has not changed significantly over the last few years. In contrast, the number of part-time traders has hugely increased. The rough estimate for today's situation is that there are 12.000-15.000 of them. Part-time traders include for amongst others traders who for example operate only during the summer season. The group also includes a lot of businesses with fixed shops who supplement their income by travelling around trade locations considered as suitable and good. A significant amount (of people) also practices trade in areas related to agriculture, such as further refiners of goods, organic producers etc. Craftsmen have also found outdoor markets and fairs to a large extent. Job opportunities for this large group are offered by the approximately 400 outdoor markets, 800 yearly fairs and 700 other events and festivals arranged each year in our country.

Fairs, expositions and festivals

During the last decade, events have experienced quite a change in their appearance. At the moment, event marketing is very in, and even big companies want to profile themselves by being a part of events suited to their image. Therefore, an essential part of more and more events these days is a outdoor market or bazaar, which is usually divided into themed areas according to function. Commercialism is a key word in the preparation of many events these days.

The decisive change in the market was in the beginning of the 1990s, when the transition was made from old fashioned market spot auctions to advance booking. This opened the markets to a larger group of traders and paved the way for the participation of entirely new, often part-time, traders. The emergence of event themes is also a new phenomenon. For example, various fish-, garlic-, crafts- and country fairs are fashionable. Today, general fairs often include the summer events of different places and the old fairs organised by old towns and municipalities.

On the other hand, expositions have increasingly become commerce events. A few decades ago it wasn't even allowed to sell products at expositions. Today more and more traders circulate from one exposition to another with the purpose of doing business, just like they would with fairs. Naturally, professional expositions are a chapter unto themselves.

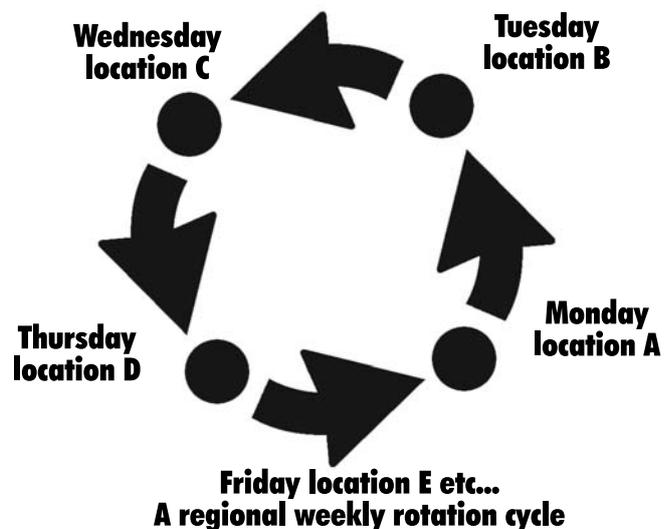
Festivals have recently become increasingly popular. They usually have a theme, for example music or sports. At festivals, culture and trade are seamlessly combined into an outcome that entertains the public.

The re-emergence of outdoor markets - the key position of regional market rotation

For the last few years the outdoor market in our country has been at a standstill. Most markets have only been properly active during the summer season, and only a few dozen of our central markets have been truly functional. This has also been noticed within the industry, and now the Central Organisation of Outdoor market and Fair trade has launched a national outdoor market development project, which aims at stimulating trade commerce on the basis of regional market rotation. In this central European model, the markets within a region are each awarded their own market day, which is repeated weekly. In this way, both traders and customers learn to trust that, for example, Thursday is market day at our market and this is when one should go there. Increased transportation costs and customers' expectations of locally produced goods also encourage regionalism. The re-emergence of outdoor market is in the works, but it will still take years before markets can fully meet the expectations set for them. However, the beginning is promising and especially unique small businesses choose outdoor markets as their marketing channel increasingly often. The developers and coordinators of markets have their own free Functional Market -guide, which delves into things relating to outdoor markets extensively and clearly (it can be downloaded for free at www.markkina.net).

The positive aspects of regional market rotation include the following:

- + it offers a reasonable amount of sales days, ie. it's an economically viable starting point for an entrepreneur
- + the rotation is logistically sensible, in comparison to the rising costs of transportation
- + it brings services to areas where they are lacking
- + it employs numerous new traders
- + for local food, it offers a marketing channel which is otherwise often missing
- + it offers several small and medium-sized businesses a new, sensible distribution channel for their products
- + it gives a facelift to and re-establishes hope in the vitality of many areas.



The practical application of regional market rotation requires careful planning

The organisation of outdoor market activity requires regional cooperation between municipalities, trader organisations, organisations for municipality and city centre development, employment and economic development centres and various authorities. It has been proven many times before that this cooperation will not work unless someone puts time and effort into getting local leaders and authorities who traditionally operate very self-centered to work together countywide.

The situation is made easier by the recent growth in municipality size, the merging of municipalities and the development of cooperation between municipalities. It would be advisable for the different coordinators of outdoor market activity in each region to be called together to discuss who in practice would have the best qualifications to arrange outdoor market activities for the whole region. In practice, the solutions for who is to become the coordinator of outdoor market activities may differ from region to region. The only essential thing is that the organisation in charge of outdoor market within a region has sufficient funds, professional ability and experience in the practical maintenance of markets. Municipalities, private businesses, trader organisations, organisations for municipality and city centre development and other such parties can all be responsible for regional market rotation, as long as all the criteria are met. Advice is always given when necessary by the Central Organisation of Market and Fair Trade.

Correspondingly, regional market rotation can also work on a contract basis, where several of the municipalities or other outdoor market coordinators within a region come to an agreement on market days and -times for each area. Such partial market rotation models have formed over time, partly by accident. Many of the most functional market days in our country have formed alongside them. An example is the market day in Kankaanpää each Thursday and the market day in Karkkila each Friday. Over the years they have become regionally very significant days of commerce. It should be mentioned that in Kankaanpää the market day attracts visitors from such a large area that it is the busiest business day of the week, and even shops with fixed locations build their offers and marketing around the day.

The Central Organisation for Market and Fair Trade advises and helps in all possible ways those parties, who in their own area begin to construct a functional regional market rotation model. On the other hand, new traders should always make first enquiries about the market situation in their own area, and how to participate in the region's rotation.

2. THE SERVICE CENTRE FOR FINNISH OUTDOOR MARKETS, ADVISES AND SERVES

Finnish outdoor market and fair trade has received a fresh breath of life during the last few years due to the cooperation of parties operating within the industry. During the mid-1990s, this cooperation produced **the Central Organisation of Market and Fair Trade** as the national trustee association for the whole industry. Market coordinators, the most important trader organisations and event coordinators are all members of this central body. **The Service Centre for Finnish Outdoor Markets**, the "nerve centre" of the industry, can be seen as the best result of this cooperation with good reason. Through the Service Organisation, communication lines are kept open with both various authorities and all the parties operating within the industry. It is the only organisation which gathers centralised information on all the markets, fairs, expositions and festivals in our country. Information is also published in several different ways. The industry's own magazine *Markkinaviesti* is perhaps the most important source for most, but also the traditional industry calendar, Finland's Event Calendar, has held its ground and is now supplemented with an electronic eventweb. The industry's own website, *Marketweb*, is becoming increasingly popular. In addition to this, various guides and histories are available. The Service Centre for Finnish Outdoor Markets also takes care of organising courses and professional training within the industry, maintains archives and foreign contacts and participates in the practical organisation of several events. It is important to remember that The Service Organisation of Outdoor market and Fair Trade serves all those interested in the industry quickly and efficiently according to its "one-stop shop" principle.

If you are interested in trade at markets and fairs, please feel free to contact us at:

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 www.tuletorille.fi



The Service Centre for Finnish Outdoor Markets serves the entire Finnish event trade.

You can find information of markets, fairs, expositions and festivals with the help of the following medias:

1. **Finland's Event Calendar** is the industry's own calendar, which contains a huge amount of information on our country's events. It is always released at the beginning of January. It also gives the right to use **the electronic eventweb** to all those who order it. The eventweb can be easily accessed through *Marketweb* (www.markkina.net).
2. **Markkinaviesti** is the event industry's own magazine which gives up-to-date information on current issues and updates the event information for the next two months on its calendar site. *Markkinaviesti* is published nine times a year. It is still the most important media in the industry and reaches several thousand entrepreneurs operating in the industry, all outdoor market coordinators and known event coordinators in our country. *Markkinaviesti* is a central tool for those operating in the industry. It can be easily ordered with the electronic order form at www.markkina.net.
3. "**Marketweb**", www.markkina.net, is the portal to the whole of the Finnish event industry with its extensive databases and link lists. **Eventweb**, Finland's real time electronic events calendar, is also a part of *Marketweb*. From *Marketweb* you can find a lot of useful and current information on the Finnish event industry.
4. The information and links for all the markets in our country can be easily be found at www.tuletorille.fi. The website serves both customers and traders for free. You can also find a handy guide for new traders from there.
5. **The almanacs of Helsinki University** also contain lists and information on our country's markets and fairs. This information is also gathered by the Service Centre for Finnish Outdoor Markets, but it is collected a year earlier than that in other published sources and therefore may contain some inaccuracies.

You can order and get additional information on all published sources at www.markkina.net or by phone at 020 749 8700.

3. LAWS APPLICABLE TO THE INDUSTRY - WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT

In modern Finland, entrepreneurship has not been made too easy. Many of those interested in it have a strong background in a particular field of profession. Unfortunately, this alone is not enough. To conduct a successful business one must also have a clear understanding of how to handle all the bureaucracy involved. The law in our country does not favour small businesses, and therefore the same licences and forms to deliver apply to both small outdoor market stalls and large department stores such as Stockmann. It should always be remembered that **despite the form of business, entrepreneurs are responsible for all of their company's business activities**, and being uninformed is always expensive. The tax bureau's assumption is that all entrepreneurs must know all the laws, which in practice is a completely impossible situation.

This chapter focuses on highlighting the things which should be taken into account particularly in the event industry, even though most of them also apply to other businesses. Finland unfortunately does not have a special "outdoor market law", in which all the basic laws pertaining to the industry are stated. Instead, laws and guidelines for their application must be looked for in several different places.

Starting a business is quite easy today. No special licenses are needed for travelling trade and other such things, and anyone can freely sell eg. crafts at the nearest fair or market. The exception is food, which follows its own bureaucratic procedure (see part "Food products"). Already operating businesses, for example fixed shops selling non-food products, do not need any special licenses when they begin to sell their products at markets.



You do not need to pay value-added tax on **small-scale** (less than 8500 euros a year) **business**. However, you do always need to keep your bookkeeping up-to-date according to the principle of double entry. This is because all sales income must still be reported for the taxation of your income. You must register with the prepayment registry and report yourself as VAT-liable if your business is at all more extensive.

It is always a good idea for **entrepreneurs who are just starting out to ask for advice at their local tax office**. You should always ask for advice to be received in writing to avoid confusion. It is also worth remembering that tax offices usually give good information on compulsory announcements, but in other respects they often offer a solution that is the most expensive from an entrepreneurs point of view.

It is important to choose the right company model. A private unlimited company (meaning a sole trader business), partnership and limited partnership are all relatively equal company models, which should be considered especially by small-scale entrepreneurs. If the business is larger and more risky, it is beneficial to consider a limited liability company. However, it involves a lot of bureaucracy, which adds to the amount of paperwork. It is especially inexpensive to be an agricultural entrepreneur or a fisherman, who only conducts trade at outdoor markets and fairs as a side business. In these situations the business is relieved of many responsibilities in regard to taxation and bookkeeping.

Usually entrepreneurs use the help of accounting firms to survive all the bureaucracy related to bookkeeping. Here should be remembered that the final responsibility lies always with the entrepreneur, who has to pay for any mistakes done by the accountants. It is therefore always beneficial to ask other entrepreneurs and otherwise investigate what kind of a reputation a firm has. Having your books inspected by an independent and knowledgeable accountant, not just someone recommended by the accounting firm, is akin to having a life insurance. Even if the accounting firm is otherwise dependable, they usually do not have any idea of the special features of the event industry and the legal alleviations they it offers, for example in the form of expense compensation. Entrepreneurs should always find these out for themselves and go through their application together with the accounting firm.

Legal compensation for expenses are an essential part of income for many entrepreneurs working in the events industry. An entrepreneur or employee working the industry is entitled to tax-free daily allowances when working away from their home municipality for a long enough period of time. If they also need accommodation for the night during their trip, they may be entitled to nightly travel allowances. If entrepreneurs are travelling with their own car (not one belonging to the company), they have the opportunity to receive tax-free travel expense compensation. You are also legally entitled to eat one meal a day at the expense of the company. The values of all expense compensations are evaluated by the tax bureau on a yearly basis and you can get the latest information on them e.g. from the local tax office. When using expense compensation it is essential to remember to keep books on expenses in the way dictated by the law. For all daily allowances you must keep a special daily allowance list, which explains for example the travel period, where you have traveled to, who has traveled, the distance driven etc.

The battle against grey economy is constant and this is reflected also in our country's event industry. The Central Organisation of Market and Fair Trade is committed to battling grey economy, which distorts competition. So called black market trading can only be kept up for a short amount of time, and the consequences are destructive. The tax bureau

regularly checks with event organisers which traders have been at which event and checks what is known about these traders in the tax bureaus extensive databases. The books of entrepreneurs are also checked at random to see if the given information can be found there. The information on all entrepreneurs within an industry, especially the relationship between sales and purchases, is constantly kept under close watch. If the values are too good or too poor, the chances of a tax inspection are big. We sincerely recommend that entrepreneurs use legal methods in forming income and otherwise take care of their business as well as possible to avoid any uncertainty or confusion.

Choosing the right equipment for sales and transportation is important. More and more traders choose a modern sales vehicle instead of a traditional sales tent. You should pre-estimate which is the best solution for your situation. It is important to remember that apart from a few exceptions, at the moment any trader using a truck, even a light 3500-7500 kg one, is expected to use a tachograph. This may change quickly, so you should check the latest information on the subject from the Service Centre for Finnish Outdoor Markets or on www.markkina.net.

Safety first

These days a lot of attention is paid to safety at markets and fairs. A trader should remember at least the following basic rules of safety:

The size of sales booth and the width of walkways: most markets and events have precisely measured walkways, and all walkways acting as emergency exits must be at least 4 meters wide. A trader must always tell the correct amount of space needed for their sales booth because it is strictly forbidden to place any additional shades, advertisements, clothes racks etc. in the walkways without permission. Each entrepreneur can only use the space allocated to him/her personally.

Tent safety: The biggest threat to sales tents and booth are the constantly changing weather conditions in our country. Today proper weights and equipment are available for all tent models to ensure that they stay well in place even in difficult conditions. Additional information can be found at www.teltat.fi.

All modern sales tents are rated as SL2 in fire safety (the Finnish rating name SL comes from "syttvyysluokka"), which is perfectly adequate for normal sales activities. Contrary to this, at festivals involving pyrotechnics or open fire authorities can demand that tents receive a special protective treatment, in which case they are classed as SL1 (there are 3 ratings, SL1, SL2 and SL3).



Fire safety and the use of liquid gas: Liquid gas is commonly used at markets and events in our country in the wintertime, in order to heat sales booths and especially to prepare food. Open fire is used less, but it is common in, for example, smoking salmon or giving a presentation of blacksmith skills.

Making an open fire without permission is always forbidden. All entrepreneurs handling open fire or gas must have adequate means for putting out fires. This means that you must at least have an extinguishing blanket, a 6 kg 27A 144BC-class fire extinguisher which has been inspected within the last year, and a sign indicating where the extinguisher is located at the sales booth.

One 4x4 meter sales booth is allowed to have a maximum of 25 kg of liquid gas. Similarly, a 4x8 sales booth can have a maximum of 50 kg of liquid gas, but then you also need twice the amount of extinguishing gear. Replacement gas bottles cannot be kept at sales booths. In a car you can store a maximum of 25 kg of gas.

The safety of electrical cords and gas appliances is regularly inspected by officials at events.

At the trader parking lot, any car containing gas must be surrounded by a safety zone of 4-6 meters, minimum. This also applies to caravans.

Rescue authorities may have different interpretations of gas amounts and extinguishing gear depending on the region and event, but the above information is valid in most situations.

Electric appliances: Each trader is responsible for the safety of the electric devices they use. It is useful to get all the proper extension cords and other appliances meant for outdoor use at once. Usually event organisers expect each trader to have at least 20 meters of extension cords. This is the minimum amount that beginning traders should always keep with them to ensure electricity for their sales booth.

The use of extension cords that are meant for indoor use or have not been grounded is strictly forbidden!

4. ADVICE ON OUTDOOR SALES OF FOOD PRODUCTS

The sales of food products at markets and events has increased dramatically. This positive development has been achieved due to the long term cooperation of the Central Organisation of Market and Fair Trade and various authorities in, for example, developing guidelines for the industry. Problems naturally exist and especially after 2005 the stricter supervision of food products and the additional bureaucracy that has developed alongside it have slowed down the development of outdoor sales of food. In 2008 the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry formed a task force to sort out the problems brought to light by small and mid-sized companies. This Trader's ABC-guide aims at highlighting the most common things which an entrepreneur selling food products outdoors must take into account, including the areas traders find problematic.

Because the guidelines for the outdoor sales of foodstuffs are being updated constantly, it is impossible to include them all in this guide. **Instead, the complete guideline can always be downloaded off the website of the Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira at www.evira.fi.** Links to the same guidelines can be found at www.markkina.net and www.tuletorille.fi.



The sales of food products at markets and events is increasing all the time.

The beginning is always the most difficult, also for new entrepreneurs in the food industry

According to our experiences, old entrepreneurs already operating in the industry manage quite well with the demands of outdoor sales due to routine. The biggest problem is that many new entrepreneurs face obstacles once they start familiarising themselves with the laws and outdoor sales guidelines relating to the industry. Many are unnecessarily horrified at this point by all the new concepts and seemingly complicated guidelines. **However, the truth is that matters relating to the outdoor sales of food are not overwhelmingly difficult for anyone willing to put a little effort into getting to know them.**

Checklist for a new entrepreneur:

1. Carefully familiarise yourself with the guidelines for outdoor sales of food already during the planning stage of your future activities. Think through the kind of business you will be conducting and the kind of equipment this requires.
2. Reserve enough time! The approval of booths and business activities takes time. We think that three months from starting the process to starting to conduct business is a minimum time frame, unless the entrepreneur has a strong routine in the industry and its practices beforehand. Of course the form of business also significantly affect processing times for applications.
3. Clarify any uncertain points for yourself. Do not be afraid to ask for help from the local food safety authorities, and ask for their advice already at the planning stage. This often saves time and money. In addition, expert guidance is usually available to help you avoid unnecessary mistakes.
4. Be active and believe in your cause! If the hygiene conditions for food are in order, an unbelievable amount of food products can be sold at markets and events.

Significant interpretation differences as a grievance: Even though laws, decrees and guidelines for the outdoor sales of food are the same for the whole country, the health officials of different regions may have significantly different interpretations of them. Some places are too permissive, and on the other hand others are strict to the extreme. This difference in interpretation puts entrepreneurs living in different areas, even in neighbouring municipalities, in very unequal positions. Things such as Evira guidelines and the concentration of health surveillance into larger bodies are used to find solutions to this problem. Entrepreneurs new to the industry should talk with more experienced entrepreneurs operating within the same area in advance, listen to their experiences and take these into account in choosing the location for their business.



All in all, the bureaucracy relating to the sales of food causes quite a lot of work for entrepreneurs in the industry these days. Food product entrepreneurs operating within the event industry must take care of self-supervision, report on all temporary events separately to the health officials in the area, a person handling unpacked goods must have a hygiene pass, and tens of other noteworthy points, which require a thorough knowledge of the industry guidelines. It is therefore worthwhile to carefully familiarise yourself with the guidelines before starting to do business in the industry.

The handling and sales of food products is supervised by authorities

All handling or sales or other delivery of food products is supervised by the authorities, and dependant on a license or approval, unless the handling of food is done by a private person for a family event or similar.

The handling and sales or other delivery of food products must take place in a space suitable for these purposes, ie. in food product premises. This means any building or premises or a part of them, or some other outdoor or indoor space, in which food products meant for sale or delivery are prepared, stored, transported, kept for sale, served or otherwise handled. However, it does not mean the primary production location, to which another set of rules apply.

Depending on the nature and scope of business or activity, food product premises must be approved by the local supervisory authorities (usually represented by the municipality's vet or health inspector), or the activity must be reported to the local supervisory authorities.

A self-supervision plan must be attached to the approval application or report. In this the party operating in the food industry (the company or entrepreneur, ie. the party planning to conduct the business) maps out the hygienic risks of their activities and describes their ways to handle them.

The handling, sales or other delivery of food may be temporary or regular, happen indoors or outdoors and take place from a fixed or mobile food product premises. If the purpose is to conduct business relatively regularly in different locations or it is even considered to conduct business for example at different events, you should apply for approval of mobile food product premises for your premises, tools and business activities. In this case one decision of approval is sufficient, and after this you only need to report the events and places in which business will be conducted to the local municipality.

Here are some of the most important terms relating to the industry with definitions to help understand things:

Food product premises mean any building or premises or a part of them or some other outdoor or indoor space, in which food products meant for sale or donation are prepared, stored, transported, kept for sale, served or otherwise handled. However, it does not mean the original production location, to which another set of rules apply.

Mobile food product premises mean any mobile sales or handling point or equipment of food products, such as a mobile kiosk, sales van, stall, tent etc. Mobile food product premises are accepted by the authorities in their assembled and operational condition with all relating equipment, including transportation gear, if they all fulfill the requirements set.

Self-supervision can usually be taken care of with common sense. The food law requires that a party in the food industry must make a written self-supervision plan. That party must have sufficient and correct information of the food products they produce, refine or distribute.

In a self-supervision plan a party explains how they intend to supervise and be responsible for the safety and quality of the food products they handle. In practice, the self-supervision plan includes the normal everyday routines which would be carried out in any case. Self-supervision is not difficult if you familiarise yourself with it well and forget the fears caused by unnecessarily difficult concepts. In self-supervision the business activities and related hygienic risks are described, along with the ways to manage these risks. In practice risks include temperature control (how and how often it is measured, how food is stored), how food is tracked (when and from where it has been bought), cleanliness (how, where and how often equipment is cleaned), how waste disposal is arranged, temporary storage of food products (the equipment, location and method of storage for items not on sale) etc. Self-supervision helps to ensure good quality business activities and when properly executed is a factor contributing to the success of a business, not a threat to it.



Self-supervision is not difficult if its requirements are made clear to both yourself and the staff.

Problems in self-supervision: In certain areas the health officials have required even small food industry companies to maintain an unreasonably extensive self-supervision plan. In this situation the same expectations are set for companies of 2 or 2000 employees. If problems arise, you should always contact Evira directly.

Keep cold things cold and hot things hot

In outdoor sales you should take special care that the sale and storage of food products requiring cold storage is done in a cold space, and the sale of hot products in a hot space. To keep the products at the required temperature and control this temperature you must have the proper premises and equipment, such as cold and hot storage devices and thermometers. Controlling temperatures and keeping products at the right temperature is important to ensure the quality and safety of food products.

Hygiene pass

Persons handling unpacked, perishable food products in accepted food product premises must have a pass showing that they have sufficient knowledge in food hygiene. Tests are arranged and passes given by various private testers around Finland, who have been approved by the Food Safety Authority. Getting a pass is possible for anyone willing to put even just a small amount of effort into exploring the subject and completing the test. Additional information can be found at www.hygos.fi.

The labels of products on sale have to contain a huge amount of information these days. The easiest way to find additional information on this subject is to visit the website of the Food Safety Authority (www.evira.fi) and read the rules and guidelines given there.

Price labelling must be correct also at markets and fairs. Prices must be shown clearly. For many unpacked goods it is necessary to display prices also in kilograms, and for food products the country of origin must be displayed. You can get more information on price labelling at www.kuluttajavirasto.fi or by calling (09) 772 61.

The same consumer protection laws that apply for other entrepreneurs also apply to entrepreneurs operating within the events industry. Warranty cannot end when the back lights of the traders car disappear from sight.

Other noteworthy things that apply to all entrepreneurs in the industry are:

The name of the company/entrepreneur must be clearly displayed at each sales booth. It is recommended that contact information is also displayed. You can also attach a label with contact information on to the products themselves, so that the customer can contact the trader later; for example, to buy more of the products they have found useful.

The Central Organisation for Market and Fair Trade **has banned** the sale of the following products at markets and events:

1. Products that are past their best before -date, even if their hygienic condition is acceptable. This is because the sale of these products has given the whole industry a lot of bad publicity in the past. The products sold at markets and fairs should be of good quality, not waste batches from wholesalers.

2. Byproducts displaying drug related issues. These include products displaying drug related issues aimed specifically at youth: jewelry, t-shirts, bags, flags, pipes etc. The most common symbol is the cannabis leaf, which is also one of the symbols used by the movement aiming for the liberalisation of drugs.

5. MARKETS, FAIRS, EXPOSITIONS AND FESTIVALS AS COMMERCE LOCATIONS - IMPORTANT POINTS TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION

Markets as locations for trade

A market is best suited for an entrepreneur's sales location if their product range consists of products needed for everyday living. A trader doing trade at a market sells their products directly to the consumer. The market is an excellent sales location for someone who enjoys interacting with different people.

Often entrepreneurs choose the market based on its proximity, i.e. they go to the market in their home municipality. The customers and practices there are familiar. A little further away however, you may find a market with new customers, who appreciate the products in a new way compared to the old familiar customers. In this way it is possible to get a better price for the products. Competition is a factor in choosing the most suitable market. Are there several other traders selling the same products at the market already, and what kind of prices are prevalent? Traders selling the same or similar products are usually grouped together, because in this way it is easier for a customer to find their desired product and compare the products of different traders.

Different sales spots are usually available at markets:

- **Yearly spots** are meant for those traders who sell at the market on a regular basis all year round.
- **Monthly spots** are meant for seasonal traders, who sell their products for example from spring until fall.
- **Daily spots** are meant for visiting traders, who visit the market at random. Especially during busy seasons daily places may be hard to come by, so it is advisable to book your place well in advance. We recommend booking a place about a week before the intended sales date.
- **Individual table spots** are meant for primary producers from the nearby areas and craftsmen. These are usually distributed in the morning according to the arrival order of traders.
- **Car spots** are meant for traders selling their products straight out of a sales car or van.

These days the **basic sizes of a sales spots** is usually 4x4 meters and 2x2 meters, and multiples of these. However, regional differences always exist and it is advisable to always check the size and price of the spot while making the reservation.

Place reservations for markets are usually made with the market supervisor or a person in a comparable position. Contact information for markets can be found e.g. in Finland's Event Calendar and at www.tuletorille.fi.



Fairs as locations for trade

The concept of a fair includes very different sales events, whose standards can vary greatly. Fairs are arranged by municipalities, entrepreneur organisations, sports organisations, various general organisations and private businesses, among others. Without previous experience it is usually difficult to get reliable information on the number of customers, functionality of arrangements or location of a sales spots within the fair grounds. Usually traditional fairs, which have already been arranged several times before, are the best since their arrangements and overall functionality are based on strong professional experience. These days more and more fairs are centered around a theme. For example, fish markets and country markets are popular.



Information on fairs in our country can be found in Finland's Event Calendar, Markkinaviesti-magazine and on the Internet at www.markkina.net.

The benefits of fairs is that they are centered on just one or two days of activity. Customers travel long distances just to find good deals. They are prepared to buy. The unique atmosphere at fairs, with its various entertainers, attracts customers who would otherwise be difficult to reach. An entrepreneur must be ready to adapt their sale style to that of a fair, because customers there always expect originality. The products sold at fairs often include local specialities and products, which can only be found at fairs. Circulating at fairs is not always easy. The distances between fairs can be long and transportation and accommodation are significant sources of expenditure. The days at fairs are long and competition between traders can be harsh.

These days, the sales of spots at fairs is taken care of with several different, more or less functional forms of advance reservation. At a few fairs sales spots are still sold in an auction, but even these are increasingly auctions only

formally. In practice regular traders take their usual spots and new traders are shown to a free place.

In the advance reservation system, the event organiser makes a clear map of the sales area, numbers is, prices the spots and informs entrepreneurs of the event as extensively as possible. entrepreneurs then are able to book a sales spot at the event starting from a specific date either in written form or by phone. In other words, a trader has the possibility to book a specific spot in advance so that they know the price and location of their spot for certain in advance. **We recommend reserving a spot to a fair at least a month in advance.** Fair spots are sold as regularly sized spots, where the prevailing sizes are 2x2, 4x4 and 8x8. You should always ask the organisers while making the reservation whether there are special spots for eg. food traders, craftsmen etc. and if electricity is available to all spots.

Expositions as locations for trade

Expositions are usually a part of the marketing activities of a business, and their aim is to create as much additional value for the business as possible in addition to the actual sales taking place there. Expositions are meant for trade, presenting a company and gaining new customers and orders. At an exposition an entrepreneur meets a clearly defined customer group in a limited exposition area, within a relatively short time frame. Therefore, within their own section which is like a miniature of their business, an entrepreneur has the chance to introduce new products and give information on their business and products to customer and resellers. At fairs an entrepreneur also has the chance to hear opinions on products straight from customers and to compare their business with those of competitors.



Several different kinds of fairs are available for entrepreneurs, and it is often difficult to choose the most suitable ones. General expositions usually have a very diverse content and a larger amount of visitors, but the objects of interest are also more diverse. **These days most expositions are specialty expositions,** which are centered tightly around a theme. In this way both entrepreneurs and exposition visitors know in advance that those present will be interested in a specific theme.

Extensive information on expositions can be found in Finland's Event Calendar, Markkinaviesti-magazine and at www.markkina.net, among other places.

Spots at expositions are usually quite pricey, so every involvement at one should be planned carefully. You should pay attention especially to the size of the spot you will really need, since expositions spots are usually sold according to square meters and there is no use paying for extra space. Additional costs, such as electricity and accommodation, can be surprisingly expensive, so it is advisable to check their price before

signing any contracts for a fair.

Spots for fairs should be reserved well in advance. We recommend at least three months before the actual fair date(s).

Festivals are locations for trade

Festivals are usually large audience events, whose primary purpose is something other than trade, such as a concert, exhibition, sports competition etc. These days all festivals aim at providing extensive services to visitors. This has opened new profitable locations of commerce especially for entrepreneurs selling food to be eaten at the festival location. In addition to this, festival organisers aim at generating income from the sales of spots, so a lot of events have a bazaar street, where products more or less related to the event's theme are sold.

For an entrepreneur **festivals are challenging places for trade,** since they require strong professional abilities and knowledge of the subject. Good festivals may generate the best sales of the year, but many times you should be prepared to be disappointed unless you have previous experience of the event. The prices for sales spots at fairs also varies greatly.

Information on festivals can be found in Finland's Event Calendar, Markkinaviesti-magazine and at www.markkina.net. At festivals being active is rewarded and often you can find information on new events and possible sales opportunities for example by following local newspapers.

Spots for festivals are reserved well in advance. We recommend making a reservation at least three months before the event.



6. How to sell my products - Sales techniques

Trade at markets and events is always **based on direct customer contact**. In these situations you usually receive very important feedback and tips for product development from customers. A successful sales event requires good professional abilities and hard work. It is all too common to see even experienced traders lose valuable sales opportunities for nothing.

The formation of trade at markets and events is best described by the following points:

For the maximal sales of the day:

- appearance and arrangement of products brings in 25-30% of total sales
- advertising, including both advance and on site advertising, brings in 25-30% of total sales
- personal salesmanship is most significant, causing 40-50% of total sales.

If we generalise a little, it can be said that a quite and shy trader who sets up an attractive sales booth and uses advertisements effectively can sell as much as a talkative and active trader with an unattractive point and not advertisements. **To get the best sales, all three areas must be in good shape.**

Appearance and presenting of a sales spot

At markets and events most of the sales booths are either tents designed for this specific purpose or, increasingly these days, sales cars or vans. You can never pay too much attention to the cleanliness of a sales booth. There are so many different sales articles that their presentation methods vary greatly, but as a general rule it can be said that all excess stuff, such as storage boxes and trash, should be placed so that customers cannot see them directly. It is also important to pay attention to whether the products are adequately protected, since the weather can vary greatly even within one day. The correct placement of sidewalls can change the appearance of a sales booth significantly. It is also essential that the sales counter is at the right height in relation to the customer. The placement of products on a counter also greatly affects what and how much is sold.

A good practice is to look at a sales counter from the customer's perspective as soon as it is finished and critically evaluate, if you as a customer would buy something from such a sales booth.

Good, suitable sales booths significantly increase sales and makes working more pleasant. Therefore more and more entrepreneurs are investing in suitable equipment, such as specially equipped sales cars and vans. More information on sales booth and equipment can be found from the Service Centre for Finnish Outdoor Markets, phone number 020 749 8710 or on the Internet at www.borco.info or www.teltat.fi.



A traditional sales tent may not do well when competing with, for example, a new sales car or van.

Advertising

Markets are usually not advertised by their coordinators a lot; instead, the responsibility for advertising belongs to the traders using the market. At events, advertising is usually taken care of by the organiser.

These days more and more entrepreneurs have noticed that customer may not notice them and their offers unless entrepreneurs themselves advertise them actively. Some entrepreneurs circulate at markets and events so that they always have an add in the local newspaper. **You should pay special attention to advertisements at the actual sales location and make sure that they are neat, interesting and well placed.** For example an advertisement on the roof of a sales booth tells potential customers from a large distance what is for sale at that point. When correctly used, advertisements placed at sales booths are an effective way to attract customers to make impulse buys.

In outdoor market and event trade, advertisements must be clear, the text should be big enough and easy to read. You should also pay attention to how your adds withstand weather. For example, by laminating an add its new service life can be several times longer than by not laminating it. Arrangement and an original tone of the advertisements is also an essential part in making your sales booth stand out from the competition.

Personal salesmanship

Personal salesmanship is the most important factor in forming sales in outdoor market and event trade. Even a good salesperson cannot always be "ready", and you can always do something better.

Outdoor market and event traders can be divided into three main categories according to their sales techniques:

1. The entertainer: The entertainer is a trader who entertains people by telling unbelievable stories and jokes, which get people into a good mood. Only after this does the entertainer sell their products to waiting customers, usually as entire bags which can have a varying content and cheap price. Being an entertainer is an art form, which requires special skills from a salesperson. Entertainers are quite rare these days. It takes a lot of practice to become one, so the style is not recommended for beginning traders.

2. Product presenter: A product presenter is usually specialised in just one or at the most a few products, about which they can tell anything and everything possible. A professional product presenter can sell large amounts even during one day. Usually product presenters use professional tools and advertisements that inspire trust. Product presenters need to have a lot of verbal talent and a positive personality.

3. Professional salesperson: Most of outdoor market and event traders these days are professional salespersons. They concentrate on selling their own products and have extensive knowledge about them. They do not highlight their own personality, but aim at directing a customer's attention to the products on sale. Often professional salesperson put a lot of effort into presenting their sales booth in an attractive way and use advertisements effectively to attract attention. Beginning traders should usually use this sales technique and little by little improve it.

7. The lemming phenomenon - stages of commerce - the "mortal sins" of a trader

The **lemming phenomenon** in outdoor market and event sales means the group behaviour exhibited by customer, which has a significant effect on the formation of sales.

It can be best explained with the following example:

Three tents, A, B and C, are placed next to each other at a fair. They all sell the same product, for example pastries. At first, only a small amount of people circulate at the fair and none of the sales booths have many customers. When a potential customer approaches the sales tents, they will most likely go to the one with the most active salesperson. Once the salesperson can make one customer stop, the next approaching customer will most likely go where one or more customers are already standing. People want to see what special products are for sale and why there are so many people at this sales booth specifically. In this situation, **the customer group is constantly being replenished and sales are good**. Similarly, if you have not succeeded in making a single customer stop at your point, it is very difficult to make others interested, unless the customers in question are regulars.

Stages of commerce

1. Positive appearance

The customer is important to an active salesperson. They do not sit behind their desk, but stand and follow the movements of potential customers. A smile and a positive attitude can make an astonishing difference. Even if you are tired, cold and angry, don't show it to the customer. Smile!

2. Greeting

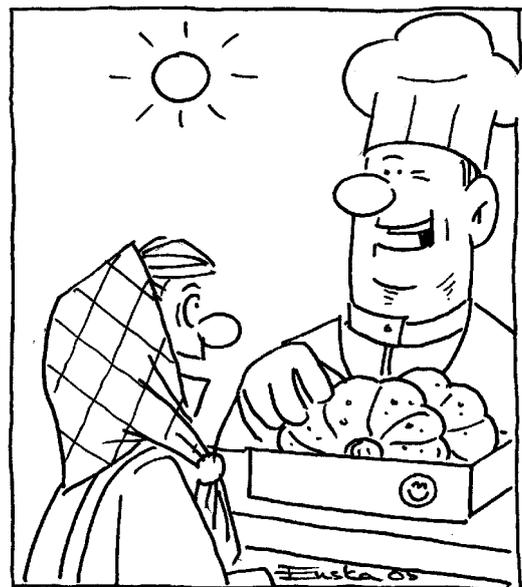
When a potential customer approaches a stall, always greet them. The way in which you greet depends on the situation and customer: good morning, good day, hello, hey etc.

3. Eye contact

Once you have greeted a customer, always make eye contact. This inspires trust and the look of the customer can give you hints about what they are interested in. Making eye contact is crucial in making a sale. A salesperson's appearance, their non-verbal communication, gives the first impression. A happy face will increase your sales.

4. Opening a communication channel

Opening a communication channel between a customer and salesperson is one of the most deciding moments in a sales event. The most horrible situation is one where the salesperson says nothing, and neither does the customer. An awkward silence follows and the customer aims at extracting themselves from the uncomfortable situation as quickly as possible. A good salesperson can judge what the customer may be interested in based on just eye contact, and can then start presenting the offers of the day. If you are not sure about the object of the customer's interest, you can always start by talking



A happy expression will increase your sales.

about the weather to open a communication channel. However, you should avoid topics that inspire strong opinions, like politics and religion. A communication channel may also mean that a customer does not buy anything, but just stays to chat. They are still very valuable, since they attract other customers who may very well buy something.

5. The sales event

The professional abilities of a salesperson are evaluated during the actual sales event. In the same situation where one salesperson sell one small product, another will sell an entire bag full of articles. A good salesperson must have intuition to recognise and empathise with the customer's needs. When presenting products, they must give a trustworthy and professional impression. While selling, it is advisable to use adjectives that strengthen the right perceptions, such as good, delicious, fresh etc. It is also important to listen to the customer and take into account the feedback they give. If you have several customers at your counter at once, take into account the later arrivals by greeting them and offering samples, but concentrate on taking care of one customer at a time up until the point they have paid, in the order they arrived.

6. Accepting payment

If at one time there is only one customer, the situation is easy. You take the money, thank them and set the money aside and give the customer their change. Only after this you put the money into the till. This is because quite often a customer may say that they gave eg. 50 euros when they only gave 20 euros. Keep the till in a place where no outsider can access it. If you have several customers at one time, it may be necessary to start to serve the next customer while the first one is still digging around for the right money. In this situation, the customer waiting to pay must be served at once when they are ready to pay.

7. Thanking

Always remember to thank the customer. If the situation is appropriate, there is nothing stopping you from saying "Welcome back again!"

The Mortal Sins of a Trader

An entrepreneur or a salesperson working for them must always be clear of the fact that they will never be "ready", there will always be something to improve. In the following list we have gathered things and situation which should be avoided at all costs, because they have a significant negative effect on the perception a customer has of a company or the entrepreneur themselves. This is directly reflected in a decrease in sales.

Indifference can be shown in many different ways: careless set up of a sales booth, poor personal hygiene of the salesperson, bad customer service in the sales situation etc. **When you start to make a sale, you always have to do your best. There is no point it doing a careless job when selling; when you are making a sale you have to try as if you mean it or leave the job altogether.**

Sitting behind a sales counter is only acceptable when there are no potential customers nearby, for example early in the morning. Otherwise, it should be avoided at all costs because the signal it sends is "do not disturb me".

If a salesperson has problems with their feet or physical condition so that they must sit down, we recommend a high bar stool against which you can lean less conspicuously, yet still appear active to the customers.

Smoking behind the counter is strictly forbidden. This especially goes for food traders due to hygiene reasons, but because of the unaesthetic appearance of the habit, it is also true for other products. If a salesperson must smoke, they should not do so at the sales counter, but instead ask someone to stand in for them and go to a place nearby where they can observe the situation at their sales booth and go there if needed, yet smoke without the customer knowing.



Would you buy anything from them?

Eating behind the counter should be avoided at all costs. Firstly, it is unaesthetic for the customer to observe and creates an impression that they are disturbing the salesperson's peace. Eating should be concentrated in quiet times when you know there will be little customer, for example early in the morning or late in the evening. The best situation is when there is more than one salesperson and they can take turns in going to eat, for example at a restaurant or coffee tent nearby. Chewing gum counts as eating. Gum should not be chewed while selling, because a customer cannot know what the salesperson is biting on.

The right clothing has a big impact on the impression a customer has of a salesperson.

Cleanliness is crucially important. Otherwise the way you dress depends on the product for sale. The essential thing is that **the salesperson always has separate clothes/jackets for setting up and taking apart the sales stall and for actually conducting trade**. Dirty clothes are not convincing. You should also take into account that the colour of clothes matters. A black piece of clothing may be stylish and stately, but not the best possible choice for conducting trade. For example, if a man wearing a black leather jacket is selling pastries to an elderly customer group, even if he is otherwise dressed neatly sales will be lost because customers will avoid or even fear the salesperson. The impression given by a black leather jacket relates to completely different things than pastries. **When selling, you should always wear positive, happy colours as much as possible and use materials that are easy to keep clean.**



A salesperson at a market or event should dress in layers, so that clothes can be added on or taken off as needed. This is because the weather can change a lot during a day; during the night you may have below freezing temperatures, in the morning it can rain and in the evening it can be quite warm. It is recommended that each salesperson have a so called survival kit with them, ie. a bag with a complete change of clothes, rubber boots and a rain jacket. If one of these is missing, it is almost certain that the item will be needed just then. A change of shoes can also be necessary, since a full day of sales is always hard on the feet.

You should always remember the golden rule, **"The customer is always right"**, because it still hold true even today. Do not start to argue with a customer, but instead try to steer the conversation to a less dangerous topic. Never tell off or embarrass a customer. If someone complains of a product, take it as positive

feedback and aim to improve your products based on that feedback. Remember that customer vote with their feet, and it is a lot more difficult to gain a new customer to replace one that has been lost. Additionally, you should remember that a satisfied customer will tell about their experiences to one person on average, whereas an unhappy one will tell ten people.

8. Other points to take into account in outdoor market and event sales

Sales spot receipts

Always keep sales spot receipts. The bill or receipt from the coordinator of a outdoor market or event should always show the following things: who received the payment, company ID-number, who paid, the amount paid, the VAT and cash receipts should also always be signed and dated.

Pay attention to whether the sales spot payment includes deductible taxes or not. It is a completely different thing to pay 50 euros including VAT than to pay 50 euros with 0% VAT. You should especially check the receipts of payments made with cash at the sales location, which even today are lacking in detail surprisingly often. If, for example, there is no mention of the percentage and amount of VAT, the accounting agency of the entrepreneur and tax authorities will interpret the law to the loss of the entrepreneur by deducing that they have no right for deductions.

Good to know about sales spot payments

At markets yearly spots and monthly spots on a permanent contract can be completely without VAT, or they can include VAT if the market coordinator has declared themselves as responsible for VAT. At markets daily spots and spots with a contract of less than a month include VAT.

At events the prices of sales spots always includes VAT if the organiser is a municipality, city or private company. If the event organiser is a general organisation, you should be careful since:

- if the yearly sales activities of the organisation are so small that the income generated from it doesn't exceed 8500 euros, it is not responsible for VAT and sales spot prices include 0% VAT. A few organisations, such as SPR and Unicef, have also been granted a special legal position in which they do not need to pay VAT.
- if the general organisation's income from sales activities within a year exceeds 8500, they must pay VAT (not including the exceptions mentioned above).

The price-quality ratio of sales spots.

When an entrepreneur is considering which sales channel would be best for their products, the ratio between the prices at different sales events is often described as follows (the prices are not averages, but figures representing the ratio between prices for different events):

- at a market a 4x4 meter sales spot costs 5 euros, including VAT (+ small expenses - customer flow and buying potential?)
- at fairs a 4x4 meter sales spot is 50 euros, including VAT (+ more potential customers - bigger expenses)
- at expositions a 4x4 meter sales spot is 500 euros, including VAT (+ more specialized customers with more buying potential - large expenses)
- at festivals prices for sales spots are usually negotiable and spots are often sold with exclusive commerce rights (+ the opportunity for very good sales - a larger risk of total failure)

The competitive rules in handing out sales spots

The Service Centre for Finnish outdoor markets is constantly being contacted with questions on which actions are restricting of competition and which aren't. It should be first said that an organiser of an event or coordinator of a outdoor market has the full right to take as many of a certain type of trader as they wish. They may sell sales spots with exclusive commerce rights if they wish so. Often in these situations an open auction is held, which aims at finding the best overall solution for the event organiser. However, you should take into account that traditionally general fairs do not have many restrictions. Markets on the other hand can have very strict restrictions on how many traders of a certain product they can have. It is perfectly legal for a market to have, for example, 2 coffee spots, 3 strawberry spots etc. It is important to notice that all traders selling the same product are treated equally and that they are charged the same rate for sales spots, regardless of their home municipality. Most illegal actions relate to officials wanting to favour local entrepreneurs by charging them less for sales spots. However, this is illegal and if someone complains of it, the coordinator of the outdoor market will lose the dispute and possibly also have to pay damages. **Due to EU laws on competition, the municipality of origin cannot be a basis for fees.** Different types of spots and spots for different products may of course be priced differently. For example, fish and strawberry spots may be priced differently, but all craftsman spots that are the same size must also be the same price regardless of the municipality of origin of the entrepreneur.

Handling money and other payment tools

You can never pay too much attention to how you handle money. The change till of a sales booth must be in a place where outsiders cannot access it too easily. It is also good to keep enough coins and small bills in the till, since most customers pay with large bills that they receive from cash points. Money which has just been received should be place in the till only once you have given change for it. This is so that no disagreements on the amount of money given are caused. Most entrepreneurs keep the change till or at least all bigger bills in a special money bag around their waist, where it is easy to keep an eye on. You should pay special attention to the placement of the till when taking the sales booth apart. As soon as possible, move the till to a locked place in a non-visible location, or alternatively keep it with you at all times. Thieves often strike specifically at this time of day.

Cash cards and credit cards are becoming increasingly popular. For many entrepreneurs it is important that they can receive also payment by cards. Right now we are moving at a fast pace from cards with magnetic stripes to cards with chips, which always require contact with the card owner's bank for acceptance of the transaction. This is not always technically possible outside, in the rain or in below freezing weather. All cards do still have the option to use the magnetic stripe, but when using it the entrepreneur is the one taking the risk if the card is used without the owner's permission. In any case, any entrepreneur selling products with a high unit price should seriously consider getting a card terminal with GPRS.

Each trader must have the ability to write receipts for a customer should they ask for one. A good receipt book is a compulsory accessory for all entrepreneurs. Counting the amount of VAT can take up precious sales time. Therefore, you should mark the multipliers for VAT eg. on the cover of the receipt book to make counting quicker. Additionally, the company's ID-number (or in the case of small scale business the social security number of the entrepreneur) should always be clearly written in the book and you may even fill information in in advance as much as possible.

What a market and event entrepreneur should always remember

1. Make reservations well in advance
 - for a market at least a week before the sales date
 - for fairs at least a month before the event
 - for expositions and festivals at least three months before the event.
2. When making a reservation, always give the best contact information possible for you and your company.
3. If you cannot make it, always call and cancel. In this way the sales spot can be released to someone who needs it.
4. Always get acquainted with the instructions given by the organisers / coordinators in advance.
5. Always take the sales spot receipt, or a copy of it, with you. You often need it to clear up misunderstandings.
6. Arrive at the sales location early and report with the organiser before setting up.
7. Behave according to good trader practices and the recommendations of this guide in whatever you do.

We wish everyone good and successful sales experiences!

This guide has been produced by:

The Finnish Central Organisation for Market and Fair Trade, Markkinaperinteiden tuki ry and Suomen kauppiainliitto ry. For additional information: The Service Centre for Finnish Outdoor Marketsplace and fair trade, www.markkina.net or by phone 020 749 8700.

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