

The Wesermarsch specialties box "Schlemmerkiste"

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Small and medium scale food producers need to work with design and marketing to make their products (or sometimes only product) visible and attractive for the consumer. One way to help small regional producers to reach the market is to bundle products from different producers and offer them as a package to the consumer.

In this report you can read more about a test that was made in the region of Wesermarsch and Oldenburg where products from the region was bundled and offered to the consumer in different theme boxes, so called "Schlemmerkisten".

Taste the landscape

The regional marketing organization proRegion Wesermarsch/Oldenburg e.V. worked on preserving and market regional products from Wesermarsch. They did develop a new marketing opportunity for regional producers. This by collecting products from Wesermarsch and tastefully presenting and offering them in an attractively designed box in two sizes: one small and one large. The concept is to offer a "taste of the landscape" with Wesermarsch specialties to tourism organizations and public institutions.

With this concept, customers did not have to visit the individual producers, but were offered a choice of four differently themed boxes. A



"Schlemmerkiste", a "small treasure chest", a "Wesermarsch specialties box" and an "Organic treasure chest". In addition, a "Christmas box" with coffee from a regional roaster was offered.

There was the possibility of home delivery as well as pickup in partner shops, so that interested parties do not necessarily had to pay attention to shop opening hours. In order to attract tourists for the offer, the products were also offered at several tourist information sites. The food boxes were ideal as gifts and are therefore marketed for this purpose. A lot of public institutions like offices for economic development used these boxes as presents for guests.

The price varied between 16 - 45 € depending on quantity and production process (organic/conventional). Included in the boxes were among others ox and lamb specialties, organic cheese, honey, booze, black bread, cow's milk soap, coffee. This type of marketing helped the smallscale producer to reach the customer at a low cost, as the promotion and distribution were organized by the association.

In order to get various attractive products for the boxes, the association proRegion did approach many food producers from the region. In the process, producers were selected who already produced products for direct marketing, and producers with specialties that lacked for a versatile box. For a successful cooperation, it was especially important to agree on the purchase price and the logistics. The concept required that the producer should renounce part of his profit in favor of an increase in awareness. However, the price should not be set too low in order to make clear the uniqueness of the products and not offer them below their value.

Advantages for the regional producer was that the consumers awareness of their products increases, and that it is an easy way for them to reach the market. As a producer they only need to deliver their products, since marketing, distribution and sales are carried out by the association.



The "Wesermarsch-Speciality cookbook ox and lamb" was a perfect match for the specialty boxes. For this, local cooks did develop regional recipes, which are illustrated with appealing pictures and markets the cultural landscape of the Wesermarsch by the slogan "landscape, which one can taste". This is to educate customers to cook for example lamb and oxtail.

Results of the test in Wesermarsch

In the Wesermarsch County the boxes were packed and distributed by the CEO of a local restaurant and market hall, also a board member in the association proRegion. The man was one of the active motors of the regional marketing initiative for almost 20 years.

When the association proRegion dissolved and there was no person left to take care of packing and distributing the boxes, the specialties boxes from the Wesermarsch no longer exist in this form. Due to the disbanding of the association and that the "fire soul" was gone, the initiative lost its power. A relaunch would though be possible. This would require new organizational structures, so that, for example, the tourist offices take over the packing and distribution. In

addition, it would be conceivable to offer the boxes at higher prices so that an employee can be financed.

This type of product marketing been launched also in other regions in Lower Saxony, so regional specialties boxes can also be purchased there.

Participation in the marketing initiative was not the main income for the producers. Only a minor additional income was generated through the initiative. Between 20 and 30 producers took part in the initiative. But temporarily it achieved an enormous drive of awareness. In best times between 2000 and 4000 boxes were sold and especially the Christmas box was in high demand. Sometimes supply bottlenecks came up as seasonal variations in product availability and the delivery of promotional materials occurred. Consumers could buy the boxes in tourist information's and at the central packing station. Advertising was done by word-of-mouth recommendation, tourist shops and in form of public relations (e.g. flyer, webpage). The financing of the marketing was taken over by the office for economic development Wesermarsch (for example the creation of a banderole for the box). Also PR and communication issues was managed by the office for economic development.

What's needed for a successful implementation?

For a successful implementation of this kind of initiative, the following factors are considered as relevant:

- Identify and designate responsible party and its legal form (company, association etc)
- Appoint the person/s responsible for the packing process and the delivery
- Set up a central point where the producers deliver their products
- Timely delivery and seasonal availability of the products
- High and consistent quality and low purchase price of the products
- Creation of promotion material (flyer, poster, etc.) and press releases
- Communication and marketing strategy
- Continuous search for interesting regional high-quality products

Do you want to learn more

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