

A report presenting best practise

"Business innovation through smart specialisation"

Datum: 2019-09-12

Programme to help SMEs strengthen their market communication

By: Kristina Anderback, Agroväst Livsmedel AB

A program was implemented during 2018/2019 to help food related small companies in West Sweden to strengthen their market communication and increase the visibility and attractiveness of their products on the shelf in the grocery stores. The activity was conducted as a part of the REFRAME project to help the SMEs to better meet the demand from the big regional grocery stores.

Introduction

There is a big demand and high expectations from Swedish consumers to be able to buy locally produced food in their grocery store. Consequently, there is a strong trend among the grocery stores in Sweden to increase their proportion of food from local farms.

The REFRAME project in Sweden have cooperated with retailers such as ICA Maxi, ICA Kvantum and CityGross to introduce them to suitable regional producers that can widen their assortment and match existing demand. Within the REFRAME project we also have supported the regional food producers to develop and strengthen their offer to better meet the requests from the regional retailers/food groceries. One example is a customized programme to strengthen the SMEs market communication and thereby increase their products attractiveness and competitiveness.



Sofia Kvist, from AkSe gårdssprodukter at ICA Maxi in Skövde

How did we do it?

We started by identifying regional food producing SMEs with the need of sharpening their offer to the market with the aim of increasing profitability and volume. In addition to the company's need, the company's own conditions, such as time, money, maturity and will, were important selection criteria.

The next step was to perform a needs analysis in close dialogue with the company. After that we contacted one of the communications agencies, we had procured within the REFRAME project, that could provide the excellence needed in marketing and sales profiling. Based on the needs analysis and dialogue with the company (?) the agency presented an offer that the company could refuse or accept. The limit for each case was 30 hours work by the agency. The company paid 30 % of the invoice, and the remaining amount was paid by the project.

Below some examples of company cases:

<i>Examples of company cases</i>	<i>Performed assignment</i>	<i>Estimated working hours by the communication agency</i>
Company 1	New label layout based on current logotype, graphic design and communications concept.	8 hours
Company 2	Product launch new product/product group based on existing graphic design and communication concept (a slightly more extensive activity – work with unique selling points and argumentation)	24 hours
Company 3	Review graphic design linked to the uniqueness of the company, create a common thread in existing design and communication concept (a more in-depth activity where tweaking existing design solution)	27 hours

The results from the programme

In total, sixteen companies have participated in the programme. All the participating companies have used the results from the communication agencies and produced new marketing materials that will strengthen their products visibility and attractiveness. They have also strengthened their knowledge and their client expertise in marketing and sales communication.

For some companies, we can already see increased sales figures today. We expect more positive results and feedback over time.

Bramley's – one of the participating companies

Bramley's is an apple growers company owned and operated by Joacim and Fiona with two employees. The apple orchard today consists of 20 000 apple trees with 100 apple varieties, 700 pear trees and blueberries.

Their premium quality is picked from trees and is sold fresh. The rest is used for fresh juice production flavoured with Swedish berries and apple mulled wine. Everything is made without sugar and preservatives. The company is in a growth phase, and in 2018 new modern production facilities were built.

Bramley's needed to refresh their marketing communication. They also wanted a new assortment for restaurants with premium-design in bottle and labelling. With consulting within REFRAME project and our programme Bramley's was advised to make a more cohesive design in logos, labels, marketing materials and storytelling around the company. In autumn 2018 new labels were created, both for retail and premium assortment for foodservice.

Joacim at Bramleys says: "The change of design on our labels has given a sense of higher product quality. And with two different range of products we can be more specific towards our target groups. We are experiencing an increase in our sales. In what extent our change of marketing contributes to the sales increase, I can't say. But we are convinced that it matters."



Next step

The implemented programme with 16 companies was a try-out within the project REFRAME. Both we as project owners, and the participating companies, were very pleased with the set-up and the outcome. We have continued offering a similar programme to small food producing companies in West Sweden. In the current concept, the companies will not receive any subsidy, but will have to pay the full cost of the advertising agency's work. We still do not now how much this will affect the companies' interest in participating in the programme.

Do you want to learn more?

Please contact

Ulrika Åkesson

Agroväst Livsmedel AB

E-mail: ulrika.akesson@agrovast.se

Cecilia Faktus

Lokalproducerat i Väst AB

E-mail: cecilia@lpiv.se