



# offer makeover #6: *urban farming project*

Guelph's Backyard Bounty talks right to homeowners

- 9 pages -



**An Exclusive, Behind the Scenes Look at an "Offer Makeover" by Tad Hargrave**

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Hey there,

You're about to read an offer makeover.

I take some basic info a client gives me and help them turn a 'good' offer into an 'irresistible' one.

There are a few key components to this process.

They are asked to answer some basic questions about their offer and then email those to me. What you're about to read is what comes after that.

1. **Before:** I respond directly to the info they put down. This goes back and forth (sometimes a dozen times). What you are reading is highly abridged and to the point. But it will give you a 'backstage pass' into how I look at offers (and the things which I see that these entrepreneurs can't). My thoughts and feedback will appear in ALL CAPS.
2. **After:** Then you'll see the finished product. This will be in the form of a long copy sales letter.

Enjoy.

Warmest,  
Tad

*before*

## Backyard Bounty is

HERE'S THE FIRST CHALLENGE. MY COLLEAGUE TOM ST. LOUIS OFTEN TELLS HIS MARKETING CLIENTS THAT HE COULD TELL THEM THE FIRST TWO OR THREE WORDS OF THEIR AD WITHOUT EVEN READING IT. THEY WOULD BE AMAZED AND INCREDULOUS. "NO WAY." THEY'D SAY. AND THEN HE'D TELL THEM, "THE FIRST THREE WORDS ARE "INSERT COMPANY NAME IS . . ."

MOST MARKETING IS INCREDIBLY 'SELF REFERENTIAL'. IT'S ABOUT THE COMPANY. BUT MARKETING SHOULDN'T REALLY BE ABOUT 'US'. IT SHOULD BE ABOUT THE PERSON READING IT.

WHEN SOMEONE READS AN AD THEY ARE IMMEDIATELY TRYING TO FIND OUT IF IT'S RELEVANT TO THEM, THEIR LIFE AND THEIR EXPERIENCE. THEY'RE ACTUALLY NOT THAT INTERESTED IN US. THEY'RE INTERESTED IN WHETHER OR NOT WE CAN SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS AND GIVE THEM THE RESULTS THEY'RE AFTER.

## a microfarming venture

MICROFARMING IS JARGON. IT WILL NOT BE IMMEDIATELY CLEAR TO THE AVERAGE HOME OWNER WHAT THIS IS. YOU NEVER, EVER WANT SOMEONE TO BE CONFUSED WHEN READING YOUR MATERIALS. THE CONFUSED MIND SAYS 'NO'.

seeking partnerships with homeowners to use their yards to grow food organically that will then be marketed locally with a portion of the harvest being divided among the project participants.

THIS BEGINS TO GET A BIT CLEARER. BUT IT'S A REALLY LONG SENTENCE. IN MARKETING, USE SHORT SENTENCES. IF YOU CAN SAY IT IN TWO SHORT SENTENCES, DO. WHAT WASN'T CLEAR FOR ME IS 'WHO ARE THE PROJECT PARTICIPANTS?'

AFTER TALKING WITH THE FOLKS AT BACKYARD BOUNTY, IT BECAME CLEAR THEY WERE NEEDING PEOPLE'S YARDS. THIS IS IMPLIED – BUT IT'S NOT ACTIVELY BEING PURSUED. SURE, I CAN READ THAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR THAT – BUT NOT THAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR THAT FROM 'ME'.

We hope to increase public awareness and education about sustainable food and gardening practices, while fostering community!

THIS IS A REALLY CLEAR STATEMENT OF THE VISION AND GOAL THEY'RE WORKING TOWARDS FOR THE COMMUNITY. WHAT'S NOT SO CLEAR IS 'WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?'

SO, NOW TWO THINGS ARE NOT CLEAR:

- 1) THAT IN IT FOR ME – SELF SERVINGLY – IF THEY USE IT.

Today, much of our food, conventional and organic alike, is traveling literally thousands of miles from farm to fork. Along the way, food loses its nutritional value, burns fossil fuels, and contributes to climate change. Local foods provide exceptional taste and freshness, strengthen our local economy, and create healthy vibrant communities!

THIS IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF STATING A CLEAR POINT OF VIEW. YOU KNOW WHERE THEY'RE COMING FROM. THEY'RE CLEARLY STATING THE PROBLEMS THEY'RE ADDRESSING. BUT IT BRINGS UP AN IMPORTANT ISSUE – WITH SOCIAL ENTERPRISES, THERE ARE TWO LEVELS OF PROBLEMS:

- 1) **THE BIG PROBLEMS:** SOCIAL, COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENTAL LEVEL PROBLEMS CLIMATE CHANGE, POVERTY, RACISM, POLLUTION, COST OF GAS TO SHIP FOOD, LOSS OF FRESHNESS AND TASTE ETC.
- 2) **THE PERSONAL PROBLEM:** THESE ARE THE PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY YOUR TARGET MARKET PERSONALLY. IT'S NOT THE LARGER WORLD PROBLEMS – IT'S HOW THEY FEEL ABOUT AND RELATE TO THOSE PROBLEMS. IN THIS CASE, IT MIGHT BE THAT THEY FEEL HELPLESS, THAT THEY WANT TO CONTRIBUTE BUT DON'T KNOW HOW, THAT THEY FEEL GUILTY FOR NOT DOING MORE, THAT THEY'VE ALWAYS WANTED A GARDEN BUT NOT NEVER GOTTEN AROUND TO IT.

Backyard bounty believes in a balance of economical, environmental and social values. We recognize the importance of economic sustainability in continuing to meet our social and environmental goals. Our definition of sustainability is to be able to provide a valuable, necessary service while our efforts remain intent on creating vibrant healthy communities respecting the natural world so both may grow and flourish harmoniously!

THIS IS ALL CLEAR AND IMPORTANT . . . BUT JARGONY. THERE'S A LOT OF BIG WORDS HERE. ALWAYS MAKE SURE TO WRITE AT A GRADE SEVEN LEVEL. PREFER THE SIMPLE WORD TO THE BIG ONE. DON'T SAY, "ENCOURAGE," SAY "URGE" INSTEAD OF "CONTINUE" SAY "KEEP UP". KEEP IT SO SIMPLE. PHRASING LIKE THE ABOVE SOUNDS LIKE 'PUBLIC POLICY' AND WON'T READ WELL IN A SALES LETTER OR BROCHURE.

## GROWING LOCAL FOOD & FOSTERING COMMUNITY

THIS IS A NICE TAGLINE. IT'S CLEAR.

## A NEW URBAN FARMING PROJECT

HERE WE'RE INTRODUCED TO A NEW TERM, 'URBAN FARMING'. IS THAT THE SAME AS GARDENING? IS IT DIFFERENT? DON'T CONFUSE THEM.

**How do I find out about having you farm our yard?**

Simply contact us by phone or email and we can go through a quick qualifying questionnaire to see if your space offers suitable growing conditions.

THAT'S GOOD. IT TELLS ME WHAT I NEED TO DO TO GET INVOLVED AND WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN I CALL. PERFECT. WHAT'S NOT CLEAR IS 'WHO' IS GOING TO FARM MY YARD. OR WHAT THEY'LL GROW. OR WHAT HOURS THEY'LL BE SHOWING UP.

### **If I don't have a yard can I still get involved?**

Yes, we love volunteers and there will be plenty of opportunity to get involved, learn new skills & create community. Just give us a call or send us an email.

GREAT. THIS KEEPS THINGS OPEN FOR THEM TO DETERMINE THEIR INVOLVEMENT. VERY IMPORTANT.

### **Where can I buy/eat your produce?**

We will be marketing our produce to local stores, restaurants and markets so check our website for a list of local businesses carrying our products. If you want to buy direct from us, let us know & we will oblige your requests whenever possible. Also we hope to run a small **Community Supported Agriculture** program with just a few members so if you are interested call soon!

### **Are you only growing in backyards?**

Nope we like front yards and side yards too, and any other cultivatable urban space. If you are connected with a church, school, business or another community organization that can offer growing space please contact us!

PERFECT. THIS ALSO GIVES US A CLEAR SENSE OF WHAT ELSE THEY'RE LOOKING FOR. PERFECT.

IN THE MAKEOVER – WE WENT FOR A FEW THINGS:

- 1) SPEAKING RIGHT TO THE HOMEOWNER INSTEAD OF SPEAKING ABOUT THE PROJECT. THIS STARTS WITH A VERY CLEAR HEADLINE AND SUBHEADLINE THAT SPEAK TO THEM ABOUT THINGS THEY'RE ALREADY WANTING AND EXPERIENCING.
- 2) ONCE THE RELEVANCE HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, THEN (AND ONLY THEN) DO WE BEGIN TO EDUCATE THEM ABOUT THE BIG PROBLEMS AROUND LOCAL FOOD.
- 3) NOTICE THAT IT'S NOT UNTIL ALMOST A PAGE IN THAT WE EVEN BOTH MENTIONING THE NAME OF THE GROUP – INSTEAD OF IT BEING THE FIRST WORDS. IT DOESN'T MATTER IN THE BEGINNING.
- 4) REALLY SPELLING OUT AND DESCRIBING WHAT THE EXPERIENCE WOULD BE LIKE FOR THEM

*after*

**Attention Guelph Homeowners:**

***do you have a backyard  
you're not using?***

**how your backyard can make you the envy of your  
neighbours, a hero to your community, provide local  
jobs and get you free delicious food**

(*and* maybe even a little money without you ever lifting a finger).

Do you have a backyard you're not using?

Maybe you've been meaning to do something with it. Maybe you've given up in the battle against the weeds and dandelions. Maybe you've been thinking of starting a garden. Well . . .

We'd like to make you an offer. It will mean that you never need to mow or tend to your backyard again.

**However, we can only accept \_\_\_\_\_ number of applications and they need to be in by \_\_\_\_\_ date.**

But before we tell you what it is, consider this:

- much of the food you eat (conventional and organic alike) travels thousands of miles from farm to fork.
- Along the way, food loses an average of \_\_\_\_\_ of its nutritional value, burns an average of \_\_\_\_\_ in fossil fuels, and contributes to climate change.
- The average city has only three days of food supply (meaning if roads were cut off and food was evenly divided, it would be gone in three days).
- Guelph has \_\_\_\_\_ acres of dormant land that could be used to grow delicious, organic food right in the city.

Local food – on the other hand - tastes better, is fresher, strengthens our local economy, and create healthy vibrant communities.

### **Don't Buy Organic! (*grow organic*)**

One of the fastest growing trends in North America is the return of the backyard garden. Even faster (and far more sustainable) than large scale organic farming – is small scale, organic **urban farming**.

We believe that one of the most untapped resources in our city are own backyards.

We are a local group called Backyard Bounty. We are working on a solution that can create local 'green jobs', grow healthy food right here in Guelph, support local restaurants and get people like you involved in a big solution (with minimal effort).

### **Our Proposal to You:**

We would like to lease your backyard and grow food in it.

We want to turn your backyard into a thriving, organic, highly productive, sustainable 'microfarm'. But you don't lift a finger (unless you want to). You will have inspired, professional young people coming to your home throughout the week to tend your garden.

Your neighbours will walk by, peer over their fences and look out their back windows and wonder what is going on. As they walk by they'll read signs in your front yard that describe what's going on and you'll find yourself speaking eloquently and powerfully about the movement your yard is a part of. You'll be the talk of your block.

You will get to look through your back window to see your beautifully kept garden growing throughout the summer. And every few months you'll get an overflowing basket of some of the most delicious corn, squash, lettuce, tomatoes and cucumbers you've ever tasted.

The rest of what's grown will be sold locally to restaurants and \_\_\_\_\_ (???)

And your yard will be a part of a local movement to get folks in Guelph more aware about sustainable food and gardening practices, while fostering community.

Your backyard will become a beautiful embodiment of the new green economy – an economy that balances economic, environmental and social values.

**Want to apply to be one of the \_\_\_\_\_ yards in our project this year?**

Simply contact us by phone or email and we can go through a quick qualifying questionnaire to see if your space offers suitable growing conditions.

**If I don't have a yard can I still get involved?**

Yes, we love volunteers and there will be plenty of opportunity to get involved, learn new skills & create community. Just give us a call or send us an email.

**Where can I buy/eat your produce?**

We will be marketing our produce to local stores, restaurants and markets so check our website for a list of local businesses carrying our products. If you want to buy direct from us, let us know & we will oblige your requests whenever possible. Also we hope to run a small Community Supported Agriculture program with just a few members so if you are interested call soon!

**Are you only growing in backyards?**

Nope we like front yards and side yards too, and any other cultivatable urban space. If you are connected with a church, school, business or another community organization that can offer growing space please contact us!

Again – if you'd like to apply to be on of the \_\_\_\_\_ yards we work with just drop us an email at \_\_\_\_\_ or call at \_\_\_\_\_.

Warmest,

Shannon Lee and \_\_\_\_\_  
Backyard Bounty