



# Module 4:

## Marketing your Smallholder Produce



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# Module 4 Marketing your Smallholder Produce

In this Module 4 , we start with your Unique Selling Point (USP), the power of local heritage and its connection between food and local heritage. You will learn about the importance of branding, and how you can benefit from sharing your story and creating a heritage value in marketing terms. You will also learn of the benefits of creating customer experiences on your smallholding and how they can enhance your business growth and market share.

**1**

**The Connection between Food and Heritage**

**2**

**The Heritage Value of your Produce**

**3**

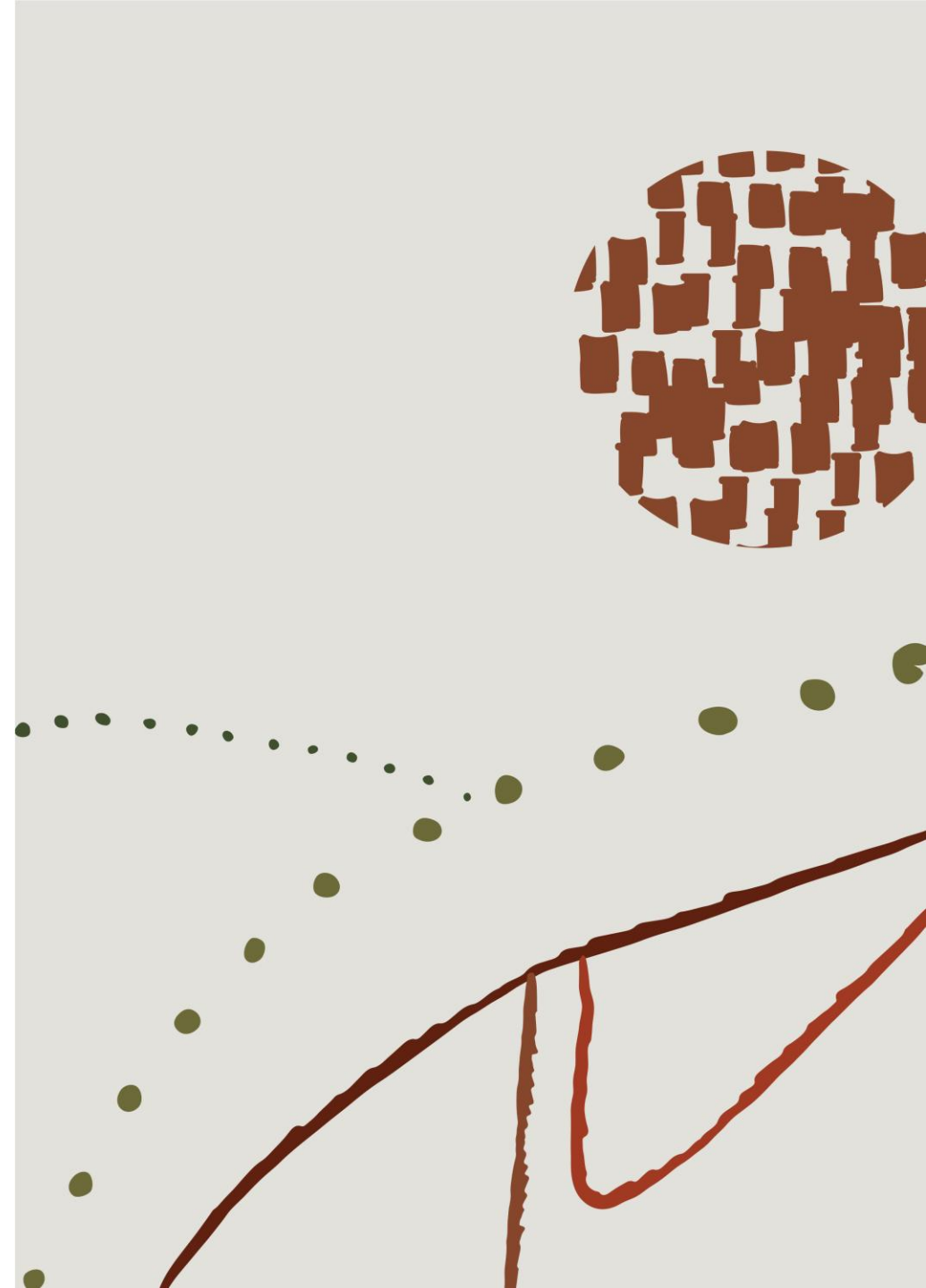
**Winning Communication through Story-telling**

**4**

**Creating Experiences on your Smallholding**

# 01

## The Connection between Food and Heritage



# Your Role as Food Producers...



“

*Food is everything we are.  
It's an extension of nationalist  
feeling, ethnic feeling, your  
personal history, your province,  
your region, your tribe, your  
grandma. It's inseparable from  
those from the get-go*

”

- Anthony Bourdain



# Protecting our Heritage...



“

*There is still much to be done to bring the world of food closer to the world of culture. There must be a growing awareness that they are two worlds that are interchangeable and not incompatible. To save our endangered planet we must start again from the earth, and in particular from food. We are eating our planet. We have an important and urgent job to do.*

”

Piero Sardo, President of the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity

# What is Food Heritage?

Food heritage is defined by the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, namely ***“practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills...that communities...recognised as part of their cultural heritage”*** (UNESCO 2003).

Internationally, several food customs have since been inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, including for instance: the Gastronomic meal of the French; the Mediterranean diet (Cyprus, Croatia, Spain, Greece, Italy, Morocco and Portugal); Beer culture in Belgium; and the Art of Neapolitan ‘Pizzaiuolo’.



Recently Ukrainian Borsch cooking was recognised as needing ‘Urgent Safeguarding’.



# Learning about our Heritage and the Value it holds...

It is our human nature to want to understand who we are and :

- what unites us
- what makes us different from those around us.
- What notions of differences and commonalities form our diversity?
- What knowledge and skills do we want to transmit to our future generations?





# The Opportunities that Lie within our Heritage...

In this section we are going to focus on the social and economic value or opportunities that lie within the transmission of our heritage knowledge, resulting in:

1. Culinary or food heritage survival (Seeds & breeds)
2. Smallholders become recognised as major players in the food sector
3. Our heritage can be used as a marketing tool for smallholders
4. Sustainability in terms of economics and environment.
5. Food Tourism being enhanced





# 1. Food Heritage Survival

Food culture & heritage is an important factor in **maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalisation**. Being aware of and understanding different community traditions helps with intercultural dialogue and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life.

The importance of intangible cultural heritage is in the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next. As smallholders, you play an enormous role in food heritage survival through actions such as seed-saving, maintaining rare breeds in your animal husbandry and through the biodiversity of crops on your farm.

The social and economic value of this food heritage survival is relevant for local communities and their story, as well for the food industry and tourism industry.



# 1. Food Heritage Survival, Heritage Cooking

Heritage cooking means embracing and highlighting a culture through food. They are typically historic family recipes that have been passed down from generation to generation.

For some, they're made-from-scratch recipes that use simple, wholesome ingredients and traditional, old-fashioned techniques and tools. They are recipes rich in both flavor and history.

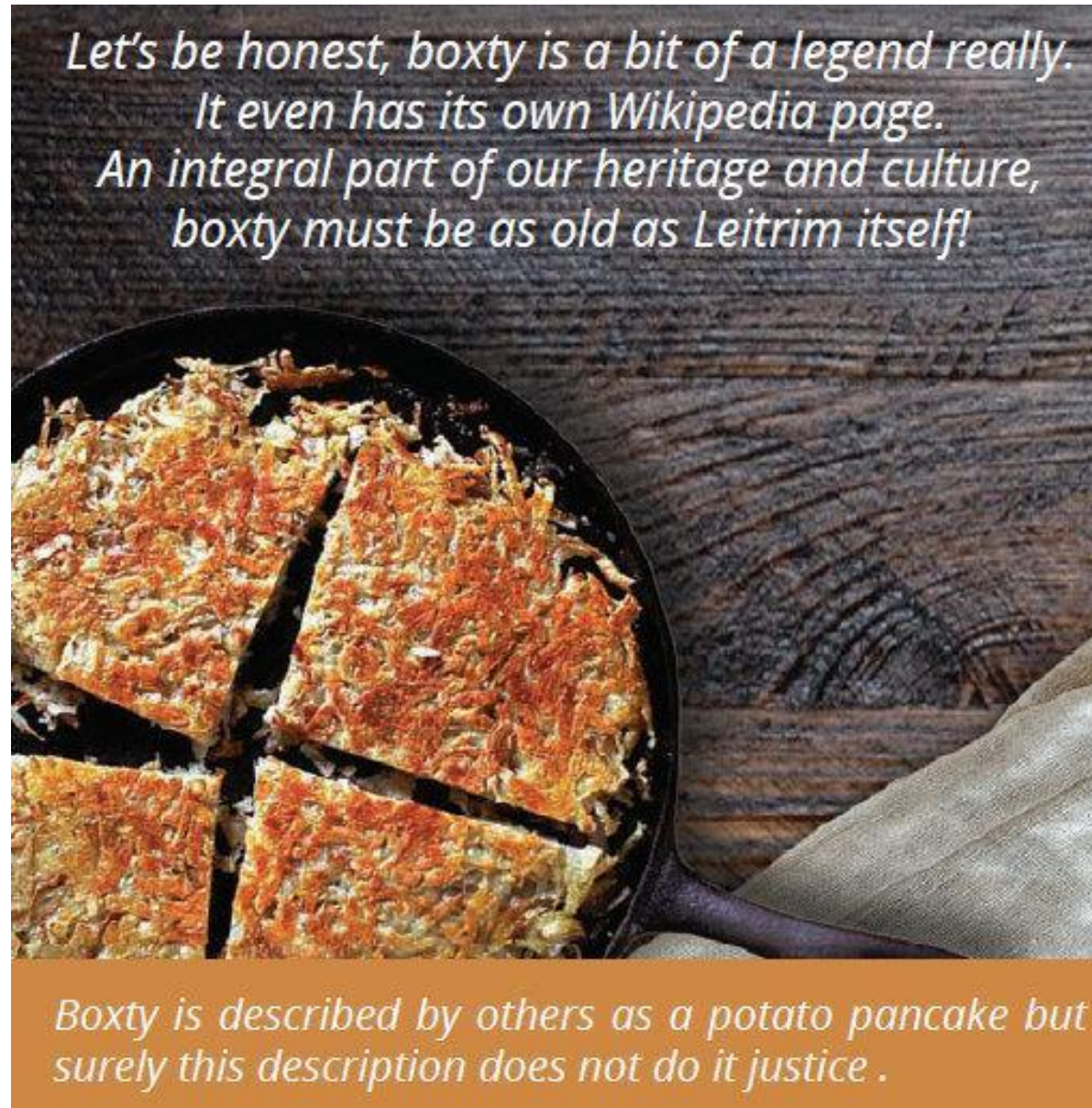
**Let's see heritage cooking example in action in Ireland**

.....





## EXAMPLE HERITAGE FOOD FROM IRELAND



<https://tasteleitrim.com/leitrim-home-of-boxty/>



New and innovative approaches to heritage foods like Dromod Boxty (Ireland) are trending and emerging across Europe



## 2. Smallholders become recognised as major players in the food sector

Smallholders are key contributors to food security and nutrition, producing most of the food in many regions of the world and producing more food and nutrition in the world's most populous, and food-insecure regions. Their farms are better at promoting social equity and community well-being and have advantages in terms of environmental sustainability and addressing climate change. This in part derives from their greater attachment to local communities and landscapes, which foster a higher level of interest and care for the natural environment and climate upon which they rely for agricultural production.



### 3. Using your Heritage as a Marketing Tool

Smallholdings (as do all food producers) need to stand out through unique selling points. One of the best ways to do this is to use the resources you have and in this case it is your heritage story.

#### **Share your farm's history or story...**

- How you came about (the farm's origin etc)?
- What is your motivation?
- Ways of the past and how you are re-establishing them and bringing them into the future
- How you & your customer can make an impact

**We will discuss Storytelling  
in Section 3!**





## 4. Sustainability in terms of economics and environment

Especially now when trying to survive the effects of the Covid Pandemic and the current conflicts, farmers, food producers, and the food service sector everywhere are all struggling. Creating value via your heritage is a key way to survive economically. Sharing your heritage story with your customers will create an awareness of your ethics and practices and can be used as your unique selling point.

Environmentally smallholders are caretakers or protectors of the land. Sell this story now, as environmental sustainability has never been so important.





## 5. Food Tourism being enhanced

The Covid Pandemic resulted in the promotion of more sustainable, and local forms of tourism. Thereby raising awareness of a place's uniqueness, richness, and importance, balancing properly its promotion and safeguarding.

Enhancing the sense of place through food makes it more alive, enjoyable, and develops first-hand experiences by and for visitors and residents alike. Farm-to-Fork is a way of life now. Utilise this trend for your promotion and benefit. Create farm experiences and again share your story.



# Understanding the European Dimension...

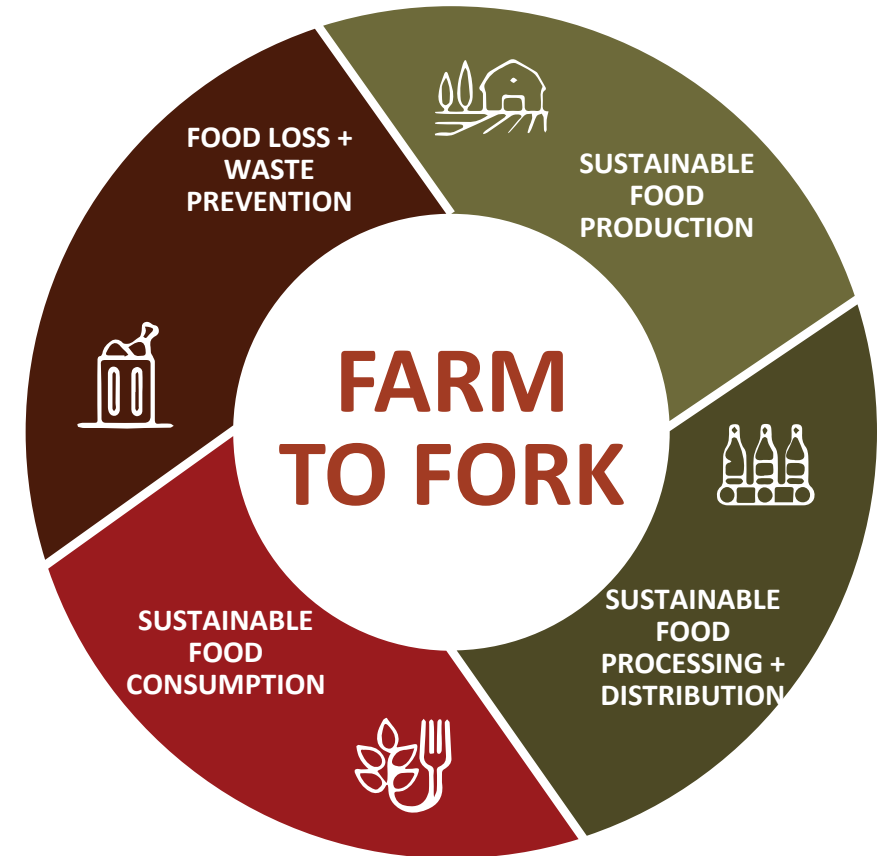


The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)'s stresses the need to maintain a culture that values the nutritional and cultural importance of food on top of its social and environmental impacts. It calls for a Comprehensive European food policy that “should improve coherence across food-related policy areas, restore the value of food and promote a long-term shift from food productivism and consumerism to food citizenship”.

# The Farm to Fork Strategy is at the heart of the European Green Deal however, as important as it is as a strategy...it is becoming a trend wanted by customers.

The Farm to Fork Strategy aims to accelerate our transition to a sustainable food system that should:

- have a neutral or positive environmental impact
- help to mitigate climate change and adapt to its impacts
- reverse the loss of biodiversity
- ensure food security, nutrition and public health, making sure that everyone has access to sufficient, safe, nutritious, sustainable food
- preserve affordability of food while generating fairer economic returns, fostering competitiveness of the EU supply sector and promoting fair trade





## Learner Exercise

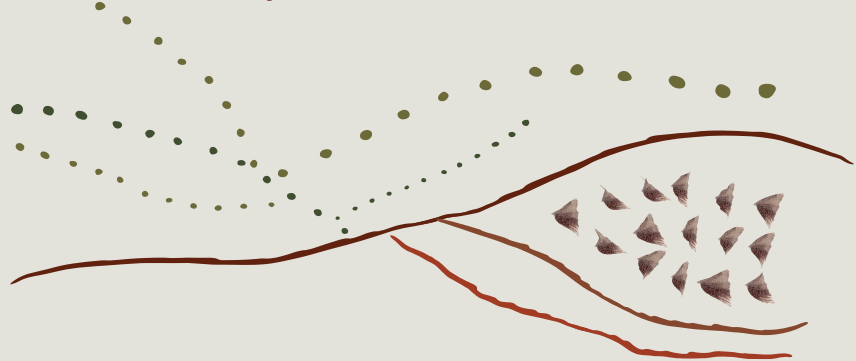
Want to Deepen you Learning About Cultural Heritage ?

Read this report to gain a better understanding of why Cultural Heritage is so important.

[Berlin-Call-Action-Eng.pdf](#)  
[\(europanostra.org\)](#)



We have shared lot of material on culture and heritage and a few words like intangible heritage. Please don't let this scare you off or daunt you. To reiterate, in this course we want to help you create and recognise the value of the work and produce you are already involved in. You may not be aware of the impact you are having in terms of protecting your region's heritage through your daily actions!! However, we to highlight how by sharing your journey and story that you can use the heritage value of your work as a marketing tool.



## Time to Regroup



# 02

## The Heritage Value of your Produce





# Your Heritage & its Value...



“

*let the beauty  
of what you love  
be what you do.*

”

RUMI

# How Smallholders operate...

Smallholder Farmers tend to have an intimate relationship with the land and nature. They act in completely opposite ways to industrial farmers.

Smallholders know and understand their land and animals and practice the safeguarding of these resources rather than pushing them to their limits.

They know when their crops or animals need extra attention and they are attempting to act as protectors of biodiversity, in terms of keeping rare and heritage breeds and seeds alive.

## Smallholders

**RESPECT THE LAND & ARE  
TRUSTWORTHY**

**RESPECT THE LOCAL HISTORY  
& HERITAGE**

**STRIVE TO CREATE  
BIODIVERSITY & SAFEGUARD  
THE FUTURE**



# Adding Value to Farm Produce...

Given our volatile economy, it is important that smallholders like you, seek new ways to increase your holding's revenue or income.

The value of farm products can be increased by cleaning, cooling, cooking, combining, churning, culturing, grinding, extracting, drying, handcrafting, packaging, and distributing. This is called adding value.

A very useful strategy is to communicate your added value is through information and education, informing your customer about your heritage and highlight it to increased the added value of your produce.



# Adding Value to Farm Produce...

We know it is possible to increase a smallholder business by adding value to raw agricultural products, but adding value does not come free, It often means doing more work, hiring more staff, buying more machinery or supplies, and complying with more rules and regulations about buildings, processing, packaging and labelling.

**Adding Heritage Value costs less!**





# Why Heritage?

Luxury brands have long relied on heritage and legacy to convey value, with story-of-origin marketing directly boosting brand strength perception.

**The heritage aspect adds associations of depth, authenticity and credibility to the value perception** of the brand, all contributing to heightened loyalty and acceptance of premium pricing. Your produce should/could be marketed as luxury items. Whether organic or not but typically organic produce is deemed luxury and thus can obtain premium prices.





# How does this work?

By actively engaging with your customers, you should aim to build long-lasting **emotional connections**. Particularly in times of market volatility, it is the heritage that is the mainstream of value and leverage. A common marketing strategy is to use longevity to underline reliability in core values and performance, by adding heritage or your story of origin you are implying national, historic, and cultural values. Speak to your customers' emotions and create culturally relevant connections via your storytelling.

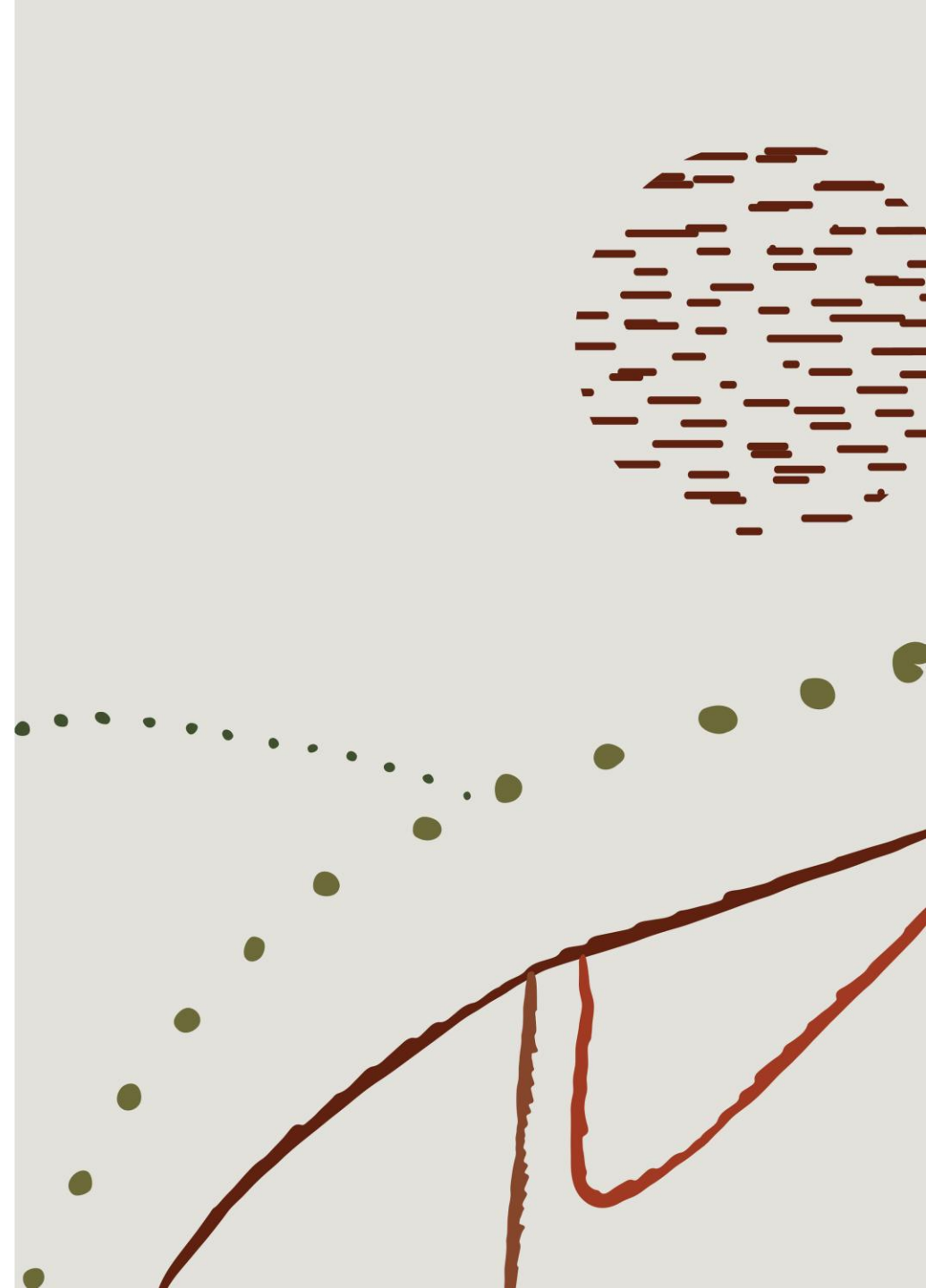
Let's learn more of **HOW** to do this.





# 03

## Storytelling as a Marketing Tool



# Communicating via Storytelling



“  
*Communication is the  
imparting or exchanging of  
information by speaking,  
writing or using some  
other medium*  
”

Oxford Dictionary



# The Power of Storytelling...

**Storytelling has psychological superpowers which make it a powerful marketing tool:**

Emotion: When you hear a story and feel a personal connection, which isn't just theoretical; it's based on some fascinating neuroscience facts.

While hearing a story, many more areas of your brain activate and become engaged.

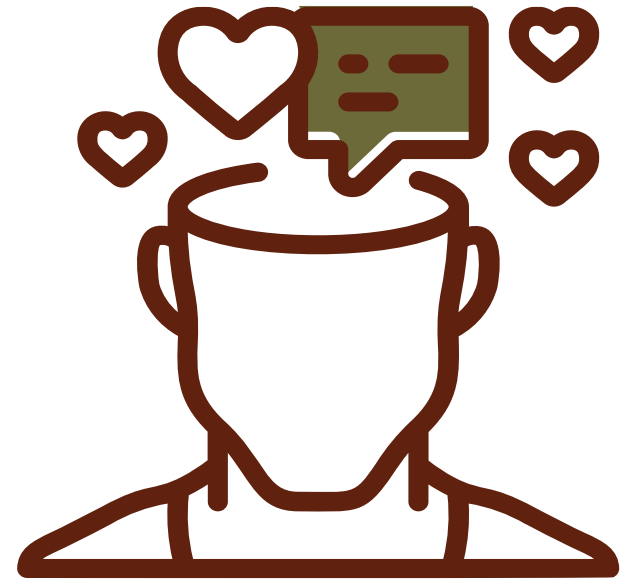


# The Power of Storytelling...

A listener makes an emotional connection with a story, and the message is considered genuine and so it also establishes the teller as a trusted entity. It encourages the listener's active imagination and involves a two-way interaction between a storyteller and listeners.

A story empowers listeners to visualise vivid, sensory elements of the story based on the storyteller's performance and their own experiences and understandings.

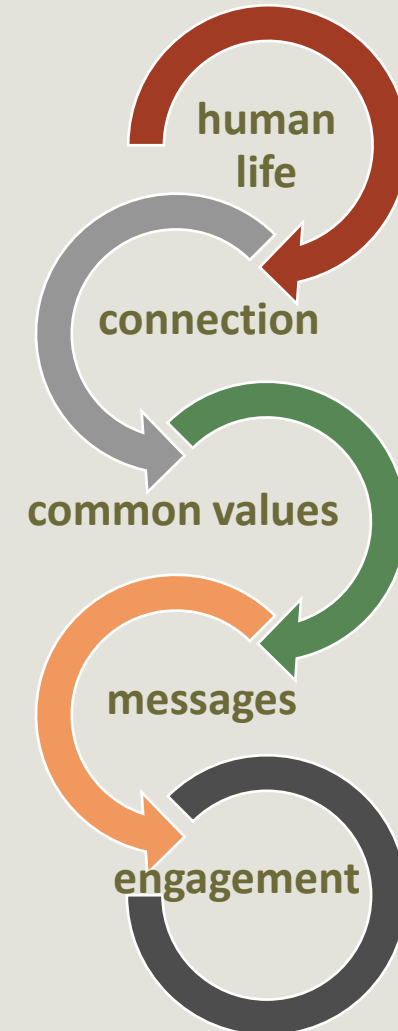
**We want you to learn how to tell your food heritage story!**





# What Stories do...

- Stories define the very essence of **human life**
- People begin to feel a **connection**
- **Common values** are identified and messages are communicated
- Themes like family, provenance, friendship, our history and others are common to every nation – **messages** with global reach
- A compelling story can give the customer the incentive they need to become more **engaged** with your business.



# WATCH - The Power of Storytelling...

Storytelling is an essential communication tool. It can make complex data accessible and sell successfully.

In this short video, we learn:

- The benefits of powerful storytelling
- How to improve your basic storytelling skills
- How to use storytelling to build relationships



[The Power of Storytelling | eLearning Course - YouTube](#)



# WATCH - The Importance of Biodiversity as part of Food heritage

WATCH  
THIS

This short video explains why Slow Food is putting in place projects to protect biodiversity around the world.

Slow Food created the **Ark of Taste**, which collects plants, animals and food products (breads, cheeses, cured meats...) at risk of extinction that belong to the culture, history and traditions of communities around the world.



[Preserve Biodiversity, Preserve the Planet - YouTube](#)

# Creating a Brand story...

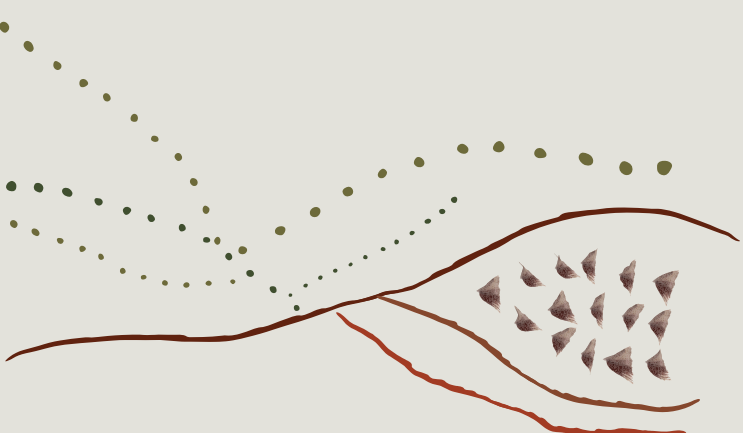
An image or perception is made up of facts, feelings and interpretations, from everything you do...each element of your produce or farm-business, from the old farming/horticultural methods, how you learned them, the crops or breeds you grow, where you source them, the way you prepare and present your 'product', to even your distribution methods.

**Your story isn't just what you tell people, it's also what they believe about you based on the signals or messages that your produce or service/experience sends.**





You understand and appreciate the past...now you want to sell it...so, it is important to tell your customers the story of how you got here and what you have achieved and involve them in the journey!

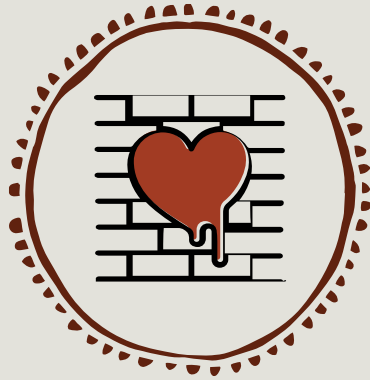




# Elements in Creating a brand story...



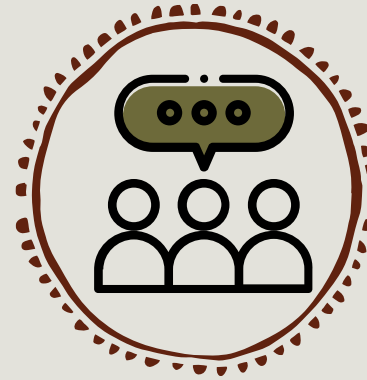
**Start with the Personal Story:** Your and your region's history.



**Your Passion Story:** What you love about the past, the practices/produce, the experience.



**The Personality Story:** What is the customer experience ahead of them.



**The Customer Story:** What do other customers say about your offerings?



**Bring all the story elements together**



# WATCH - Using Storytelling in your marketing - Storyteller to StorySeller

This video by Timir Naha talks about storytelling as a marketing tool or business storytelling and ways to give storytelling presentations. Basically, how to tell marketing stories that are effective for your smallholding/farm business.



[Storytelling marketing | Business storytelling | Storytelling presentation - YouTube](#)



## WATCH - An Irish Smallholder telling his story...

In this video, the story of Leaf & Root smallholding is shared by owner Fergal Anderson.



He mentions the why and the how of this smallholding inc endorsements from customers. All the while, he is making connections with his audience via the important elements of a good story.

[Leaf & Root and Loam, Galway - YouTube](#)



## WATCH - An Irish Smallholder telling his story...

Here smallholder Oisín Kenny shares his story of his business [Bia Oisín](#). You will notice he incorporates the 4 elements that we mentioned in creating a brand story, all within 2 minutes!



[Bia Oisín and Aniar, Galway - YouTube](#)



## **WATCH** - A great example of Sharing a Story and creating a picture...Ireland

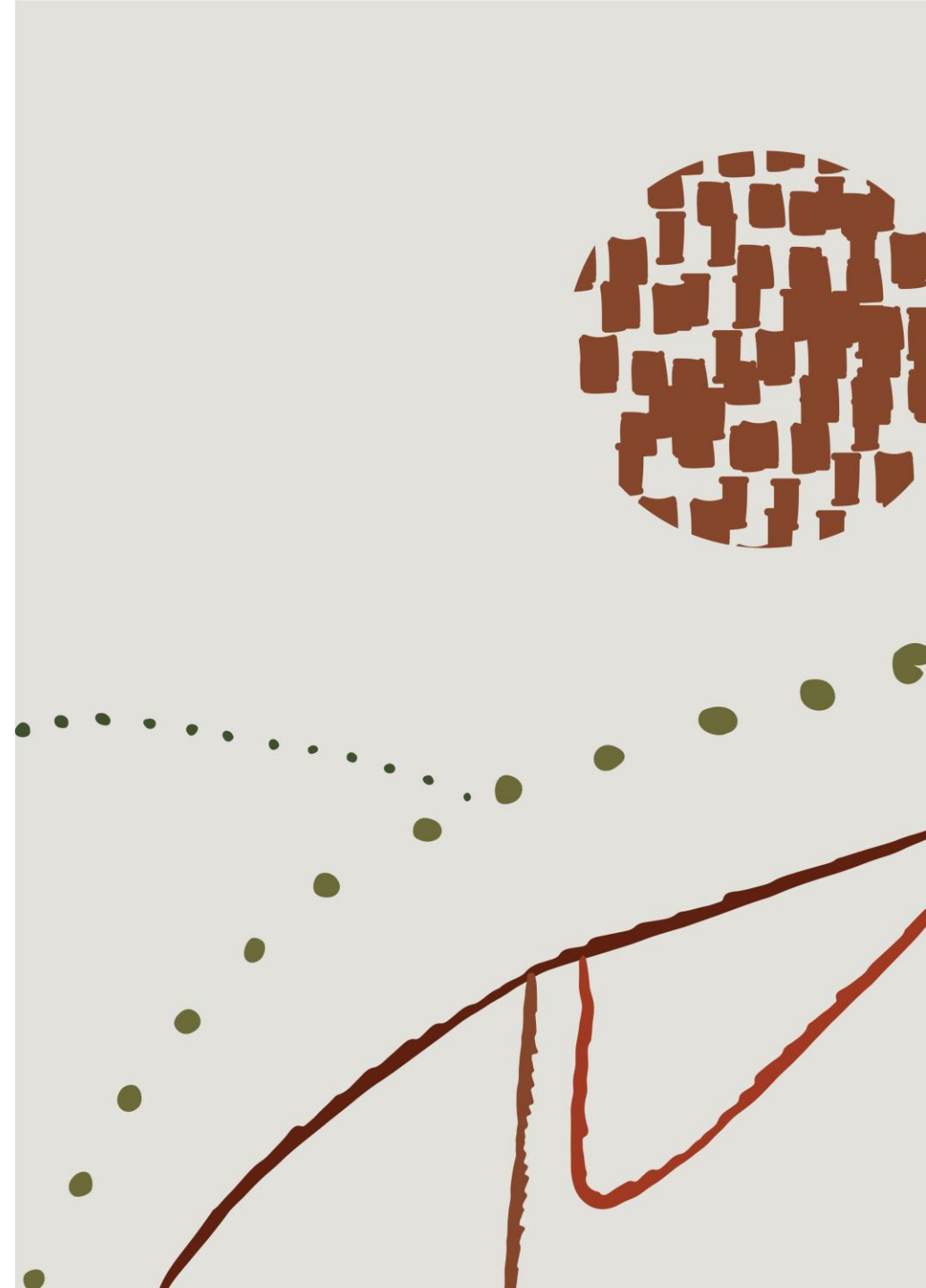
This short Discover Ireland video uses Irish Celebrity Chef Rachel Allen to tell Ireland's food story...From farm to fork and sea to shore, Ireland is renowned for its fresh, local and organic produce and Rachel creates a great picture. The story has a beginning (her personal story), a middle (our heritage story) and an end (what the audience should expect now and in the future) and she creates that emotional connection with the audience.



[A Taste of Ireland: From Farm to Fork - YouTube](#)

# 04

## Creating Experiences on your Smallholding





# The Experience Economy

The Experience Economy is the sale of memorable experiences to customers. The term was first used in a 1998 article by B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore

Pine and Gilmore argued that following on from the

- Agrarian Economy (in which all products and services were based on crop and animal production),
- the Industrial Economy (based on mass production) and
- the Service Economy (containing more service companies and fewer manufacturers than in previous decades),

developed nations now needed to embrace the **Experience Economy**.

The Experience Economy calls for organisations to **progress up the value chain, from ‘commodities’ at the bottom to ‘experiences’ at the top.**

# Types of Experience Economy Businesses...

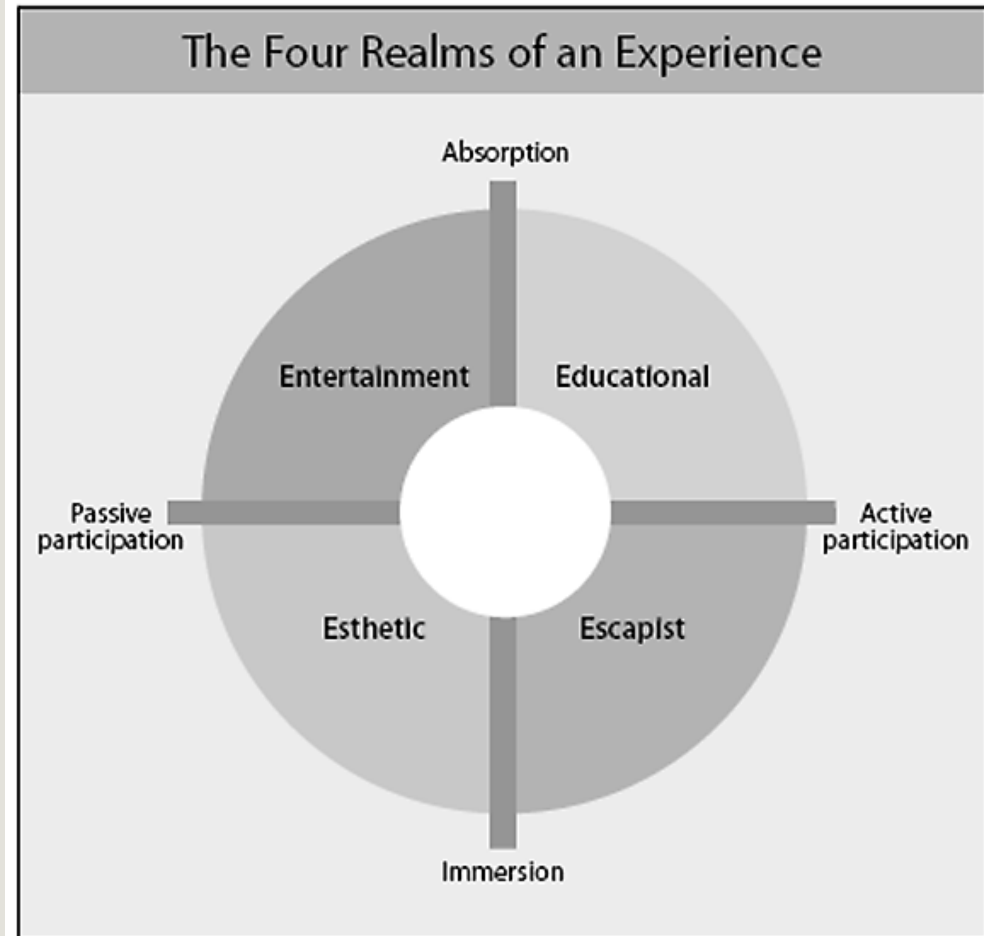
So what does progression from the Agrarian to an Experience Economy look like ?

- **A commodity business** provides raw commodities, usually found in or grown on the ground.
- **A goods business** produces and provides 'products' from fast moving consumer goods such as jam to luxury goods such as liqueur infused preserves.
- **A service business** provides a service, rather than a product; but often this includes some element of products.
- **An experience business** provides an experience – we look at examples very shortly
- **A transformation business** provides positive changes in people's lives.

# Types of Experiences...

Pine and Gilmore identify four forms of experience that companies use to either add experiential properties to their combination of either goods or services or as a standalone offering :

- **Entertainment** – passive participation e.g. a farm walk
- **Educational** – active participation, taking a class/or a lesson
- **Esthetic** - immersed in an activity or environment, but have little or no effect on it e.g. looking at old farm equipment in a small museum
- **Escapist** – greater customer immersion, animal care, making a product e.g cheese making.





# The Types of Experiences...

Experiences can be a distinct economic offering, i.e., a new income stream for your smallholding. Consumers are seeking out meaningful experiences, and more and more smallholders are responding by explicitly designing and promoting new experiences. The next competitive battleground lies in **staging experiences** and your smallholding may hold great potential as a ‘theatre’!

*“An experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event. Commodities are replaceable, goods tangible, services intangible, and experiences memorable.”* [Source](#)



## What Type of Experience could your smallholding provide??

- **Entertainment** – Meeting animals in a passive manner
- **Educational** – Learning about horticulture and husbandry
- **Esthetic** – Simple smallholder farm tours, farm cafe
- **Escapist** – Be a smallholder farmer for a day



While this UK farm based experience is based on a large farm, it is a prime example of how one can develop packages and experiences using the farm as the stage and the surrounds as the stage, and the animals and crops as the props. [Farm Experiences - Farm Adventure](#)

# WATCH

## Be Inspired, an Irish example



The Burren Farm Experience is a family-owned smallholding in the West of Ireland.

They have opened their farm to visitors and are providing a number of experience options like:

- Guided Walks
- Rustic Picnics and Food Trails
- Wellness and rejuvenation



[Burren Farm Experience - YouTube](#)

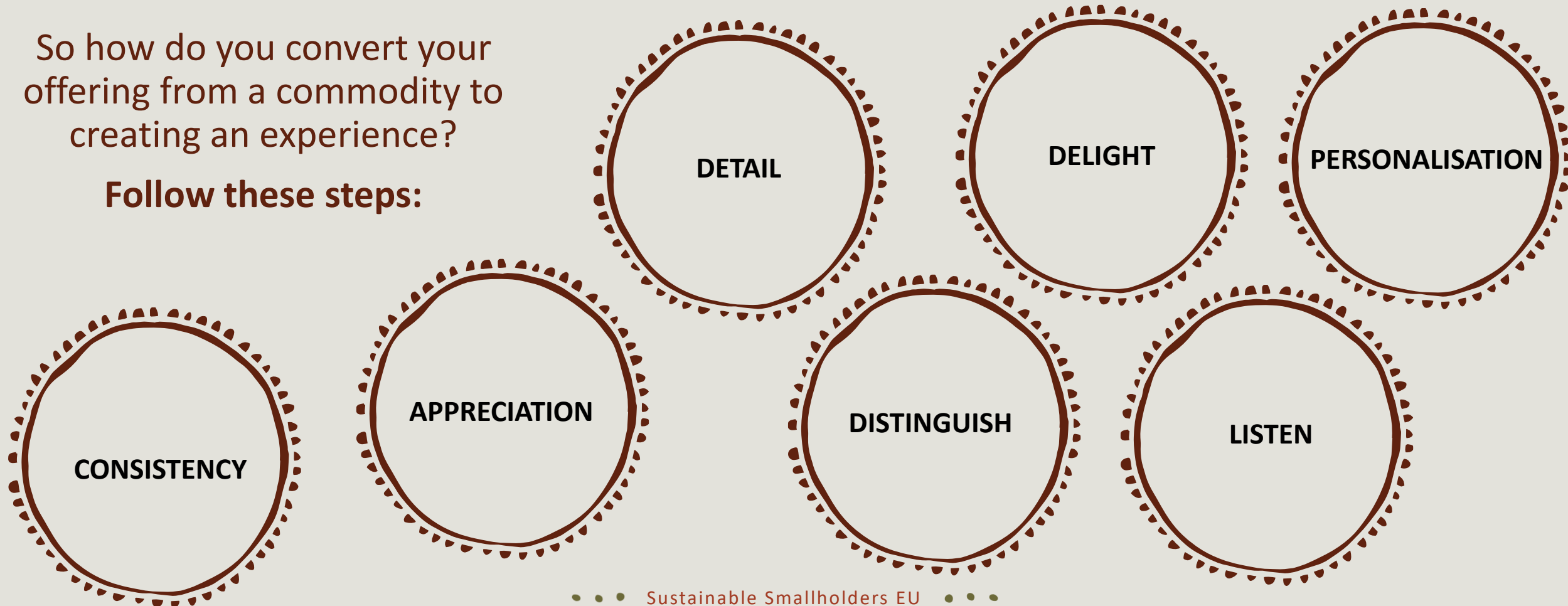


# How to create an Experience on your Smallholding

Regardless of your offering, creating a **positive experience** is one of the most important things you can do.

So how do you convert your offering from a commodity to creating an experience?

**Follow these steps:**



# How to create an Experience on your Smallholding



## DETAIL

Every step of an interaction should be intentional and planned. Use your customer journey map (Module 2) that details every point of customer interaction. Determine how they will be greeted, where they should go, and what they should feel.



## DELIGHT

Look for small ways to delight your customers & set your smallholding apart from others. Use the customer journey map to discover small places to make a big impact. Great or fun service. Small details make a big impact.



## PERSONALISATION

All people want to feel valued and important.  
Focus on delighting customers with personal touches.

# How to create an Experience on your Smallholding



## CONSISTENCY

Mapping, delighting and personalisation are all important. But, if they aren't consistent, it's all for nothing. Your brand is the sum of ALL experiences, not just a few. Ensure every interaction conveys the same great experience.



## APPRECIATE

Everyone wants to be appreciated and businesses certainly need to appreciate their customers. After all, at the end of the day, they keep the lights on. Make sure you show your appreciation – whether tangibly or verbally. A hand-written note or a heart-felt thank you goes a long way.



## DISTINGUISH

Stop looking sideways at your competitors and try not to imitate. Your customers have chosen you for a reason. Keep them coming back, by providing unique touches that fit your ethos and culture. Embrace your differences and don't be afraid to stand out.

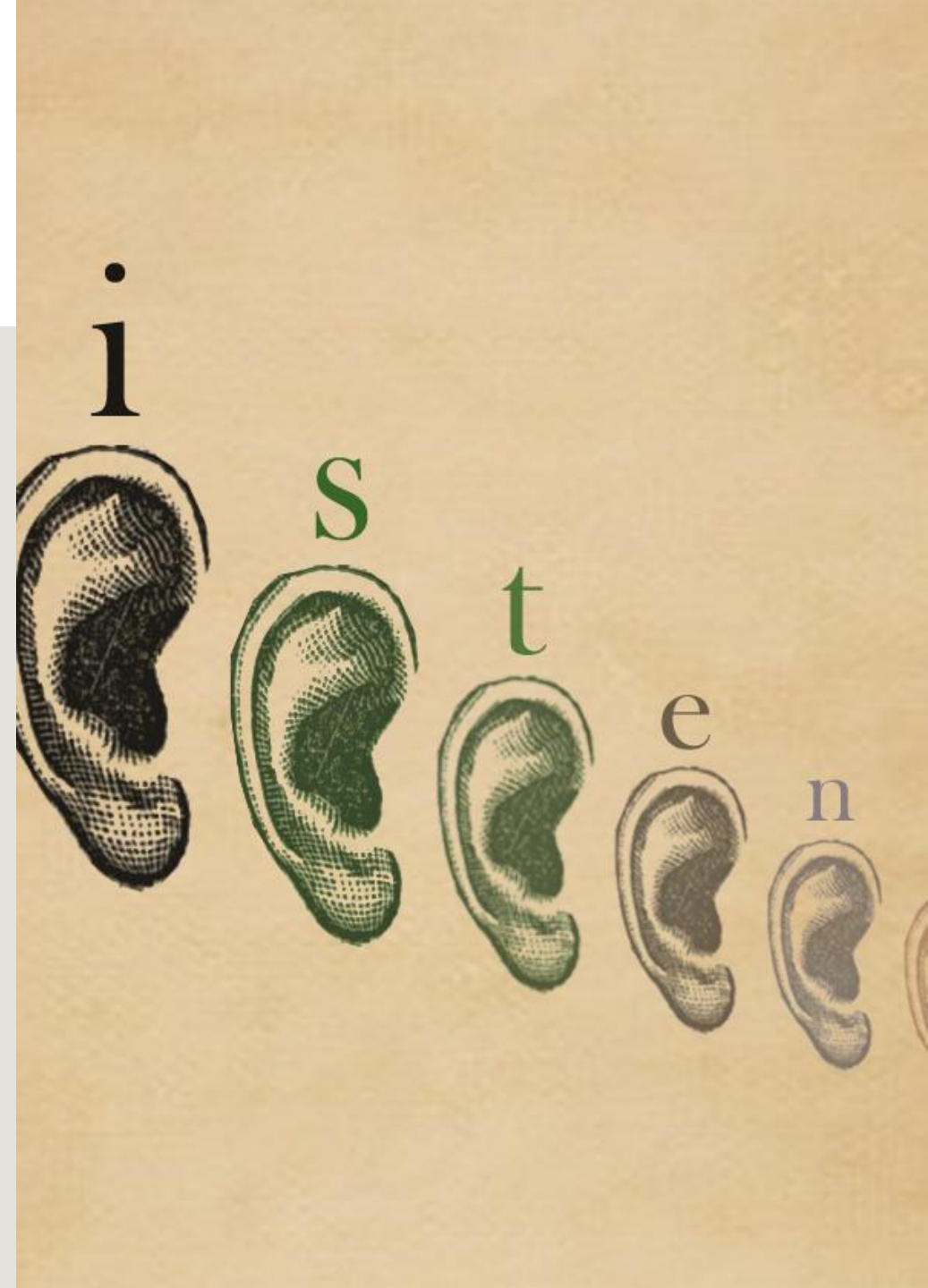


# Finally...

## 7. LISTEN

In Module 2, we discussed the importance of knowing and understanding your customers. We created empathy maps make sure you take the time to pause and listen to your customers. Key learning:-

- Listen to what they say and what they don't say.
- Pay attention to their stories, habits, families and reactions. They'll tell you what they want. Pursue that whole-heartedly.
- Bring their wants, needs, delights, and goals into your experience and you'll have their attention for a long time to come.



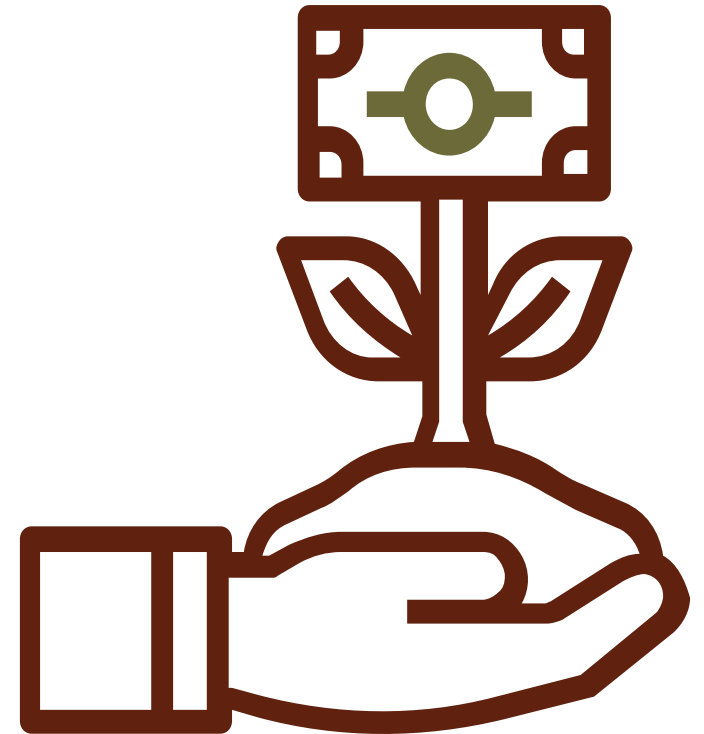
# The Benefits of creating a Smallholding Experience ...

Creating an experience brings value to your smallholding business in many ways.

- Repeat customers.
- Higher margins.
- Stability against threats and competitors.
- Referrals.

All of these grow your business, while reducing expenses. making an experience one of your top performing investments.

Source



# Well done!!!

You have just completed Module 4. We hope you benefitted from deeper learning about the power of local heritage and its connection between food and local heritage, the importance of branding, and the benefits of creating customer experiences on your smallholding

Now it is time for Module 5, where our learning focus moves to Focusing on Sales for Smallholders.



[www.small-holders.eu](http://www.small-holders.eu)

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