



MARKET MANAGERS

# How to Launch and Promote Your Market's Online Store in Under Three Days



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# Day 1: Launching Your Online Market

Now is the time to set up your online farmers market. Before anything else, get your storefront ready!

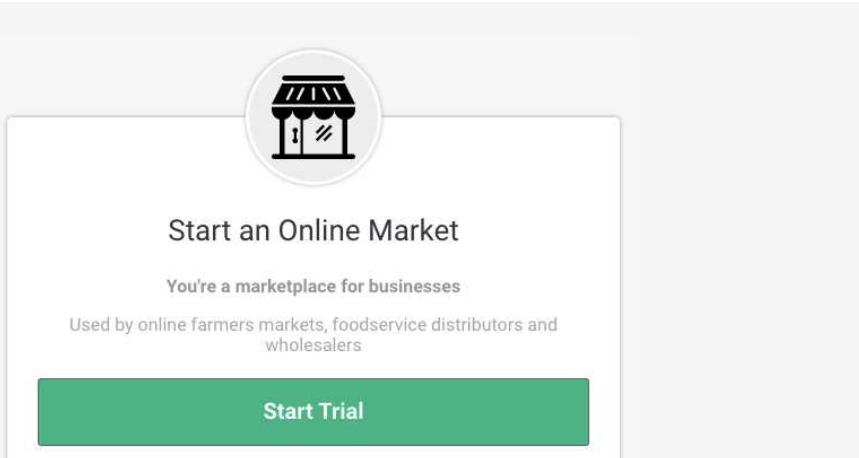
You are now switching from a 1–2 day a week market to a 24/7 market (even if you only deliver once per week).

Day 1 is all about getting organized. You want to set up your store for success, so this means creating supplier profiles and organizing delivery schedules. Be sure to get everything organized first before you launch.

## Set Up Your Storefront

Create your account at [localline.ca/signup](https://www.localline.ca/signup) and click For Food Hubs.

Now that you have an account, your next step is to set up your online store branding. Your branding should match your product and market, and should be easily recognizable as yours.



The image shows a screenshot of a website landing page. At the top is a circular icon containing a stylized building with a canopy. Below the icon, the text "Start an Online Market" is centered. Underneath that, a smaller line of text reads "You're a marketplace for businesses". At the bottom of the page, there is a green rectangular button with the text "Start Trial" in white.

## Store Settings

1. Click the camera under the Cover Photo heading to upload a cover photo, recommended 1280 x 300 px for best results.
2. Simply click the photo again to replace it. Upload a Profile Photo in the same manner, recommended 200 x 200 px for best results.
3. Fill in your business information (contact information, shipping and/or billing addresses, etc.).
4. Tell customers about your business in the About Us section. Describe what you sell, where you're located, what makes your market unique, and why they should buy from you.

Click the Save Changes button at the bottom right when finished.



The screenshot shows the homepage of Brock Online Foodhub. At the top, there's a banner featuring a variety of fresh produce. Below the banner, the store's name "BROCK ONLINE FOODHUB" is displayed in large, bold letters. To the left of the name are three contact boxes: "Kitchener, ON", "(123) 456-7890", and "bjones@localline.ca". Below the banner, there are two main navigation buttons: "Products" and "Suppliers". Underneath these buttons, a section titled "PRODUCT CATALOG" is visible, with categories "ALL PRODUCTS", "MEAT", and "CHEESE".



## View Store

This will show you what your online store looks like to visiting customers. When viewing your store, it'll open in a new tab. You can simply close it when done reviewing.

## Share Store

Here you will find and create your unique online store URL. Share this with customers so they can easily place orders! A good rule of thumb is to use your market name: localline.ca/your-market.

# Photo Gallery

Add photos to your store that add to your story and your brand as a whole.

Include photos such as your team, your suppliers, your facility and your products. Without the opportunity for customers to see, experience, touch and smell your products.

1. Click on the camera icon, select photo, click "**Open**," and click the checkmark (top right of the photo to save selection)
2. To remove a photo, click the 'x' to the right of the photo

When creating your online store, be sure to fill out as much information as possible so your customers can learn about your business and what you offer. This includes sections like Ensure to '**Save**' where applicable.

Also, be sure to click 'View Store' frequently to check your work and see what your store looks like from a customer perspective!

The screenshot shows the BigCommerce admin dashboard with a dark header bar. The header includes links for Home, My Store, Customers, Orders, Discover, and user notifications. Below the header, there's a navigation menu with tabs for SUPPLIERS, PRODUCTS, STORE (which is highlighted in green), and EMBED. On the left side, under the 'STORE' tab, there's a sidebar with 'Store Settings' and three buttons: 'View Store', 'Share Store', and 'Photo Gallery'. The main content area has two sections: 'Cover Photo' and 'Profile Photo'. The 'Cover Photo' section contains a placeholder image of a camera with a plus sign, a 'Click to upload' button, and a descriptive text: 'Your cover photo will be the centrepiece of your profile. It gives you the chance to show off your beautiful facility, team, or whatever you feel makes your business special.' The 'Profile Photo' section is partially visible at the bottom.

# Get Your Suppliers Online

Now that you've created a storefront, you need to get your suppliers online. This process is simple, but first: all suppliers at your market need to get their own Local Line supplier accounts.

They can get started with this [here](#) by clicking on '**For Sellers.**'

## Add Suppliers to Your Market

**There are two ways to invite suppliers to your hub:**

1. Add a new supplier
2. Add an existing Local Line supplier

### To add a new supplier:

1. Click on **My Store** on the navigation pane
2. Click the **SUPPLIERS** tab
3. Click **Add A Supplier** button (circle with a plus sign)
4. Fill in supplier information
5. Click **Create** button in the bottom right corner. An email will automatically be sent that the supplier inviting them to create an account and log in.

The screenshot shows the Local Line platform's navigation bar with tabs for Home, My Store, Customers, Orders, and Discover. The Discover tab is active. Below the navigation bar is a search bar with the text 'farm'. Three supplier cards are displayed under the heading 'FIND NEW SUPPLIERS':

- Stone Horse Farm**: Located in Innisfil, ON, Canada, 112.95km away. Buttons: VIEW STORE, REQUEST ACCESS.
- Closed Loop Farms**: Located in Chicago, IL, United States, 616.16km away. Buttons: VIEW STORE, REQUEST ACCESS.
- Argus Farm Stop**: Located in Ann Arbor, MI, United States, 296.41km away. Buttons: VIEW STORE, REQUEST ACCESS.

## To add an existing supplier:

1. Click on **Discover** on the navigation pane.
2. Enter the name of the existing Local Line supplier into the search field
3. Click View Store to check out their online store
4. Click Request Access to invite them to your hub. There's an option to add a message if you choose

Be sure to pass along the [Hub Supplier User Guide](#) to your newly added hub suppliers. This guide will assist suppliers with setting up their profile set up and adding products to their account.

You can also make edits to a hub supplier account on their behalf.

Head to the **My Store** tab > **Suppliers** sub-tab  
Click 'Edit' beside any supplier listed to access their profile and make any edits required.

The screenshot shows the 'My Store' tab selected in the navigation bar. The 'SUPPLIERS' sub-tab is active, indicated by a teal underline. Below the sub-tab, there is a 'UPLOAD SUPPLIERS' button with an upward and downward arrow icon. To the right of the upload button, there is a 'VIEW PRODUCTS' button and an 'EDIT' button for each supplier entry. The first supplier entry is 'AC Demo' with status 'CONNECTED'. The second supplier entry is 'AC Demo 2' with status 'CONNECTED'. Red numbers 1, 2, and 3 are overlaid on the screen to point to these specific elements.

The screenshot shows the 'Edit' page for a supplier named 'Jordan Farm'. The left side of the page contains form fields: 'Profile Photo' (with a placeholder image of a vineyard), 'Business Name' (filled with 'Jordan Farm'), 'Phone Number' (filled with '(123) 456-7890'), 'Contact Name' (filled with 'Jordan'), 'Contact Email' (empty), 'Address' (filled with '123 Maryland St'), and 'City' (empty). On the right side, there is a sidebar listing other suppliers with an 'EDIT' button and a close 'X' button next to each entry. The sidebar entries are: 'SUPPLIERS' (EDIT X), 'ADD A S...' (EDIT X), 'STATUS' (EDIT X), 'CONNECTED' (EDIT X), 'CONNECTED' (EDIT X), 'CONNECTED' (EDIT X), and 'CONNECTED' (EDIT X).

# Add Supplier Products

Next, you need to add supplier products to your market. This will be the ongoing list your customers see and can order from. Your suppliers will manage their own products, however as the market, you will be able to select which products to add.

1. Head to the **My Store** tab > **Managed Products** sub-tab
2. Click the '**Add Product**' button, circle with plus sign icon

## Create Catalogs

Catalogs allow you to manage and organize products for certain groups of customers. They enable you to organize products and privately set product prices, pack sizes and availability to the unique needs of your customers. Once your suppliers have added their products, you must assign products to the hub catalog to have them display on your storefront.

After you've assigned products to different catalogs, you can create a catalog schedule. This will allow you to save time and remind customers to place orders by creating automated an email. No more emailing 100s of customers individually!

The screenshot shows the Market dashboard interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home, My Store (highlighted), Deliveries, Customers, Orders, Team, Reports, and a user profile icon. Below the navigation bar, there are three summary boxes: 'TOTAL CUSTOMERS' (3), 'STORE VIEWS THIS MONTH' (0), and 'ORDERS THIS MONTH' (0). The main content area is titled 'MY CUSTOMERS' and includes sections for 'REQUESTS' and 'CREATE CUSTOMER' (with an upload icon). A prominent red circle highlights the 'SEND CATALOG' button, which has a red notification badge with the number '2'. Other buttons include 'IMPORT CUSTOMERS', 'ASSIGN TO CATALOG', and 'DELETE SELECTED CUSTOMERS'. Below these buttons, there are tabs for 'ALL CUSTOMERS', 'ALL PRODUCTS', 'WHOLESALE' (highlighted in green), 'RESTAURANT', and 'NO CATALOG'. At the bottom, there are two filter sections: 'Filter by Customer' (e.g. Jack's Restaurant) and 'Filter by City' (e.g. Toronto, Guelph, Waterloo). A table lists customer details: Gracie's Groceries (Orillia, ON) with a checked checkbox, Penny's Market (Guelph, ON) with an unchecked checkbox, and a third row partially visible. The table includes columns for 'CUSTOMER', 'CATALOG', 'LAST DELIVERY', and 'LOG ORDER/VIEW' buttons.

# Set Up Delivery and Pickup

As market manager, you dictate how, where and when your customers receive their orders. Use delivery plans and pick up locations to best serve your customers. A delivery plan dictates which customers will be offered delivery. A customer with a set city matching one of your delivery locations will automatically be offered delivery. A customer with a non-matching city will not be offered delivery. Pickup locations are always offered to customers no matter their city.

## To add a delivery plan:

1. Click the Deliveries tab on the navigation bar.
2. Click Delivery Plans.
3. Click the Add Plan button.
4. Complete the form fields and note the following:
  - a. **Delivery area:** If you want to add a more specific delivery area than this field allows, such as townships and particular zip codes, you can indicate that by adding a tag to the order to represent it. To add a tag to order, go to the Orders tab and click View next to the order. In the Tags section, type the tag text and then press “Enter” on your keyboard. You can filter your orders by tags from the Orders tab.
  - b. **Order Lead Time:** This is the amount of time you need to prepare the order from when it was received, to when it is delivered. The clock for lead time is based on 11:59 PM on the day of delivery.

Adding pickup locations allows purchasers to order your products even if they aren't in one of your delivery zones. Once an order is placed, you'll be given the name of the location associated with that order and you can drop off the goods for the purchaser(s). To add a pick-up location:

1. Click the **Deliveries** tab on the navigation bar.
2. Click **Pickup Locations**.
3. Click **Add Location**.
4. Complete the form fields.

When you're ready to launch your store, click **Launch** on your dashboard!

# Day 2: Promoting Your Online Market

Day 2 is for marketing!

Now that your market has moved online, it is important to let your customers know. Use this opportunity to attract new customers. You should reach your customers in all of your usual channels, such as:

- Emailing
- Social media
- Word of mouth

## Email Your Customers

As a market, you have the ability to be able to add customers to the platform to keep them updated. If you have customer email addresses already, consider sending them an email to notify them of the recent switch online.



**Here's a sample email to send to customers:**

Hi [CUSTOMERS' NAME],

As you know, at [Your Business Name] customer service is our number one priority. We work hard to provide the best products and the best service for you. To continue to elevate our service offering, we will be introducing our own online ordering program, customized for you. It will contain your order history and a real-time list of all of our products and inventory.

*The program works on all desktop computers as well as smartphones. Through this program, you'll always know what we have available and never be more than a couple clicks away from an order! If you would like to submit your next order with us online, here's what happens next:*

*Click this email link [Your store link/URL here] to register your account. It takes 2 minutes.*

*Once you register, you'll be taken into our online store to submit your first order.*

*When reordering in the future, our store can be found at [YOUR STORE LINK].*

*If you have any questions, I'm reachable at [PHONE NUMBER]. We look forward to continuing to service and grow with you.*

[YOUR NAME]

Continue to update your customers regularly via email on changes in your delivery schedules, suppliers, and any other changes to your market.



# Get on Social

Social media is the next place you need to start promoting your new online market. Create updates on all current social media channels to inform your customers about the recent switch.

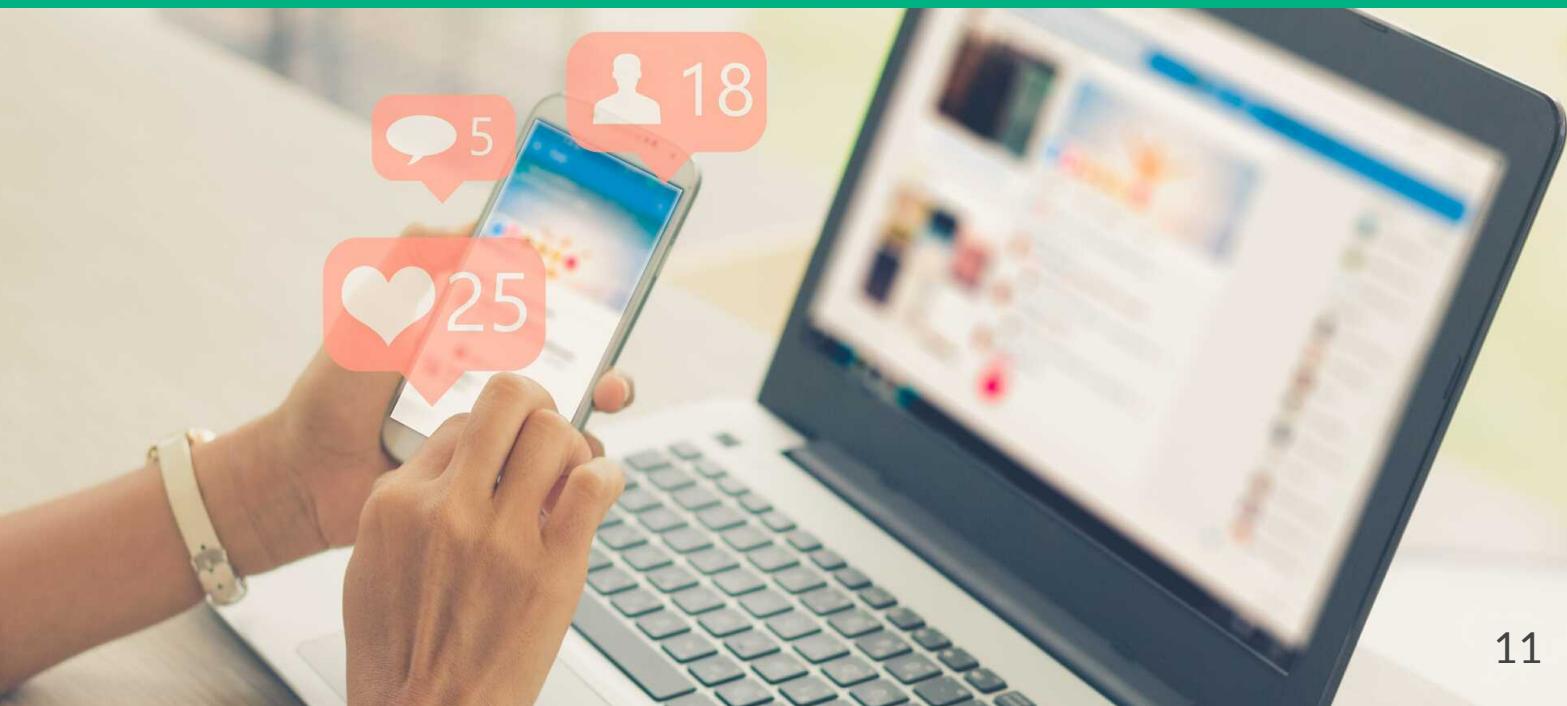
Here are five ways to leverage your social media channels and reach your audience:

## 1. The power of hashtags

Use hashtags and geotags to reach others who are also searching for what you're posting, in the geographic areas you're tagging. Hashtags ensure that your content is seen by as many eyes as possible, not just your own audience. Here are some examples for inspiration:

- #[yourcity]food
- #[yourcity]foodelivery
- #[yourcity]localfoodelivery
- #[yourcity]localfood
- #[yourcity]farmersmarket

Use your suppliers' delivery cities in as many hashtags as possible (not just the city your market is located in). Be as specific as possible and consider what people in your area might be searching for.



## **2. Share your posts to other platforms**

Instagram lets you post across all other channels. Take advantage of Instagram's share feature and publish your Instagram posts to Facebook and Twitter, if applicable.

You may not have the extra time right now to be focusing on a social strategy or keeping up across all platforms, so this will ensure you're still maintaining a presence (and sharing the same message) on every channel.

## **3. Include calls-to-action**

Don't forget to include calls-to-action on every single post! Because you can't sell directly on Instagram, it is crucial that your calls-to-action encourage followers and buyers to take that extra step of your online store. Here are some examples:

- Click the link in our bio to access our online store and buy online
- We deliver to your door on Tuesdays and Thursdays! Place your order today at [YOUR URL HERE]. Link in bio!
- DM us to let us know if there's someone in your community who would benefit from home delivery.

## **4. Be visual and transparent**

Share as many supplier product photos as possible. Because consumers cannot see, touch, or feel products, it's crucial that you showcase what it is available.

Use videos, photo posts—and don't forget Instagram and Facebook stories!



In addition to product photos, let your audience in your behind-the-scenes and show the process behind the photos. Ask suppliers to share some photos and videos of their operations.

Breaking it down communicates not only the hard work that goes into what's being sold but highlights that your customers know where their food is coming from. They're trusting the safety measures you're taking with your product.

## 5. Update your Instagram bio and Facebook page

Update your Instagram bio to inform current and future customers that you are still up and running (and so are your suppliers)! Your bio is one giant call-to-action, so use it to your advantage.

Consider text such as *Shop fresh, local food from the comfort of your home. Place your order through our online store! Your Saturday morning market—now from home!*

Always be sure to include the link to your online store.

Also, remember to link your new online store to the market's Facebook page by adding a shop now button. This will make your online store even more visible to visitors. Here's how:

1. Login to your Facebook admin site
2. Hover over the blue button [could read "Shop Now" "Send Message" "Call Now"]
3. Click the **Edit** button
4. Click **Shop**
5. **Shop Now**
6. **Next**
7. **Website Link**
8. Copy and paste your Local Line store URL

Make sure to announce your **Shop Now** button on Facebook and repost so followers know it's there. You should also include it in every post!

# Word of Mouth

Word of mouth is extremely powerful. Leverage this by implementing tools to promote word of mouth amongst customers.

## Ask your audience to share

Ask your audience to share your info or posts with their friends and family. It helps everyone get involved. If they're happy with your products and service, we're sure they'd be happy to do so!

## Create a competition

Create a “best picture” contest! Ask your customers to share their #socialdistancing cooking photos or their weekly food orders and share them on your social media channels. This will increase social proof, and help spread the word that you are up and running! Maybe even offer a discount or special offer to customers that are most creative.

## Develop a referral program

Consider implementing a referral program among customers. Referrals are a great way to promote word of mouth. The most trusted reviews are those that come from a friend. You should be tapping into your existing customer network to get new customers. If you want to get started with a referral program, [check out this blog post.](#)

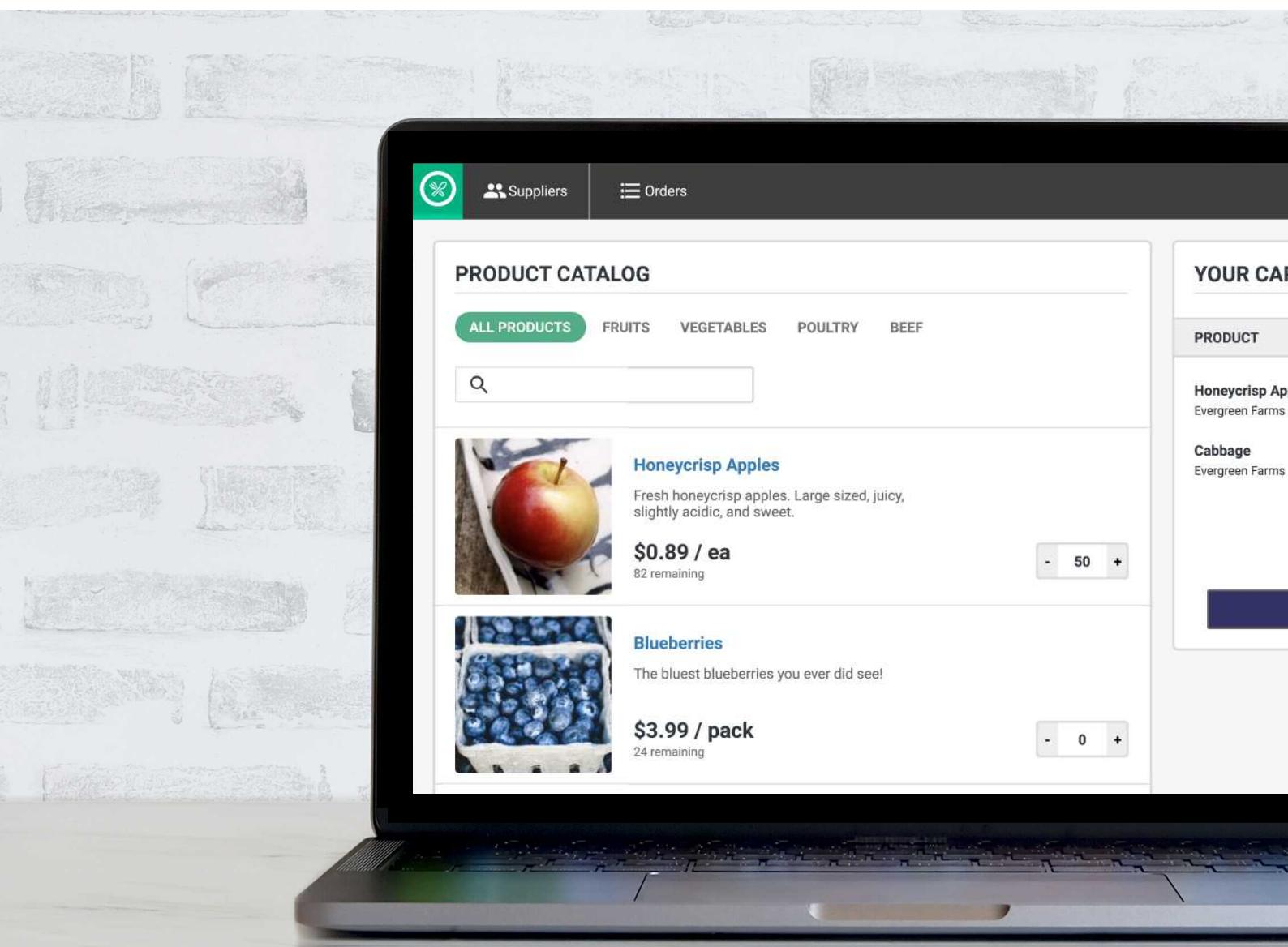


# Day 3: Start Selling

It's go time! You've set up your store, added your suppliers, and have been marketing your online market—you're ready to start selling.

As a market manager, we know it is essential to continue to stay on top of your day-to-day operations, even if it looks a little differently now. Be sure to keep communication lines open with your suppliers and continue to promote your new online store. As always, if you have any questions about getting started, the Local Line team is here to support you!

Happy selling!



**LOCAL LINE FOR FOOD MARKETS**

# Take your farmers market online!

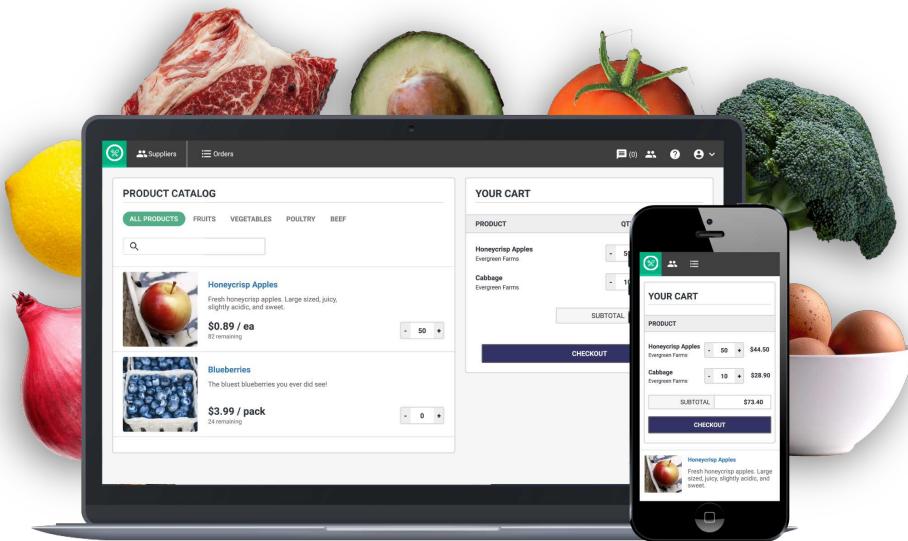
Enable farmers market vendors to pre-sell, reduce waste, and access a new segment of customers.

## Food Markets features:

Separate per vendor checkout

Flexible per vendor set up controls

**Get started today at [localline.ca](http://localline.ca)**



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