



## BÖDÖN MARKET

*Market connecting producers and consumers in the city of Szeged*

### **Identification details:**

Name: Renáta Hunyadi-Kardos, sole proprietor

Location: Csongrád-Csanád County, Szeged (Szeged Plaza, Kossuth Lajos Blvd. 117.)

Year of foundation: 2013

Main activities: sales service

Web / Facebook / Twitter: [www.bodonpiac.hu](http://www.bodonpiac.hu)

The Bődön Backyard and Handicraft Market (Market "Bődön") was established by Renáta Hunyadi-Kardos and has been operated as a sole proprietor for 8 years now. Only 15 producers and craftsmen took part for the first occasion in September 2013. In Szeged, this was the first initiative of a similar nature, which fortunately found its place and audience, and has been operating monthly ever since, currently with the occasional participation of 70-80 vendors. They also organize occasional travelling "pop-up" fairs with around 15 vendors. The line-up is a mix of colourful, trendy, and traditional products where everyone can find something they like.

The initial idea can be linked specifically to backyard foods. The goal of the concept was to get as many people as possible to experience "shopping in a market" and the feeling associated with good quality and local food. They wanted to promote the idea that it is important to know what is on the table, where it comes from, how and what it is made of, and how important it is to get it through the short supply chain. This attitude was not so widespread when the market was born.

"Bődön" is essentially a reinterpretation of the traditional market, which is not simply a place of shopping, but also functions as a kind of community space. They place great emphasis on their social media activities, through which they can target and reach an audience that is made up of health-conscious people. They currently reach more than 23,000 people on their various social media platforms who can become potential buyers. This is a customer base where the members do not regret the money for good quality food and are aware of the value, price of handicrafts and backyard products and are willing to pay for it.

All this is a secure income for the participating vendors, as they can build a serious customer base of regular customers from this audience. By committing to the "Bődön" Market, the vendors ensure a continuous supply of quality, which results in returning customers. The vendors are asked to stand behind their own products, to represent what is on their table. This makes it authentic what is happening in the market, thus enabling them to attract buyers. This back-and-forth process has evolved into a real collaboration over the years.

Many start-up micro-enterprises have grown up with the help of the "Bődön" Market, sometimes even businesses that support several families, and many collaborations have been established, between the vendors of "Bődön". When the market was created, it was difficult to convince the vendors that such an initiative could be successful, as there was no example of something similar in the area, near Szeged. Producers had to be "hunted together". The fact that many customers were attracted to the markets eventually changed this attitude, but initially, it was not profitable to operate the market. The expansion also caused difficulties: moving to Szeged Plaza in 2015 meant more space, but also higher rents, and over time one person was no

longer able to perform the tasks related to the organizational tasks, which placed an additional financial burden on the business.

It is difficult to determine the price that will allow the market to function properly and at the same time be affordable for all participants. To eliminate this problem, they also work with tiered, and occasionally individual pricing. Participants occasionally pay a participation fee ("local money") to finance the operation of the market. It is difficult to determine the price that will allow the market to function properly and at the same time be affordable for all participants. In order to eliminate this problem, they also work with banded and occasionally individual pricing.

The market has been operating since September 2013. Initially 1 time per month: on the second Sunday of each month, and since May 2020 it has been held twice a month: on the second and fourth Sunday of each month. Initially, the market was located in the courtyard of a then Rongy Pub (Szeged, Kossuth Lajos Blvd.). The first venue was outgrown in 2015, and Szeged Plaza became the new venue. In addition to having a larger area, another huge advantage was that the products and vendors became protected from the weather due to the indoors setting. In October 2018, the Boba baby-mom fair, which is currently held every 2-3 months, was launched from the market. Until then, occasional, themed "baby" fairs were held. In November 2020 a webshop called Bödön Box ([bodonbox.hu](http://bodonbox.hu)) was launched, where the products of Hungarian craftsmen are sold in thematic gift boxes, for the time being mainly for domestic customers.

2 people work continuously in the organization of the market, and another 2-3 people work on an occasional basis. Before making a decision, the views of market sellers are heard and taken into account, as there are experienced sellers among them, for this purpose and to maintain direct contact with the producers social media is used.

They have about 80 permanent vendors, including those involved in seasonal products. In addition to them, they continuously receive vendors for a few occasions or for a season. Currently they work with approx. 150 partners who are involved in the market at a variable pace.

Family businesses provide the core for market participants. Most of the sales team consists of primary producers, smallholders, sole proprietorships, and individuals with tax numbers. Some operate within the framework of economic associations, mainly social cooperatives. Cooperation between the market and vendors means helping to sell; it is only allowed to sell home-made products to consumers. There are examples of other closer cooperation between producers and sellers through the market. Farmers, producers reach customers who are already open to handicraft products and attract them to the market. Therefore, it is a particularly effective sales channel for the vendors.

The goal is to develop the widest possible range of products on the market. The product ranges currently: meat products, cheese-dairy products, cakes, pies, bakery products, fruit and vegetable products, honey and beekeeping products, pasta, eggs, spices, edible oils, chocolate, wine, baby-mama products, essential oils, soaps and cosmetics, cleaning and toilet preparations, leather and textile products, folk handicrafts, ceramics, jewellery, ornaments and souvenirs made of various materials.

The community is open. They are constantly accepting new applications, but they are subjecting a very strict selection of potential participants. They pay attention to many aspects, but the most important is the quality and origin of the product. Preference is given to local farmers, and they value uniqueness. As it is important for them to diversify the supply of the market, they limit the number of vendors per product category and regulate the range of products according to needs – sometimes trends – to attract as many customers as possible to the market. In addition to all this, of course, the legislation in force must also be complied with by traders, they must have the necessary licenses and their products must come from a verifiably reliable source. The number varies, but at least 5-10 new vendors join the regular participants every year, who most of the time find their place in the market very easily – both professionally and humanly. The drop-out rate is similar, but it is mostly related to the closure of businesses. Fortunately, thanks to careful selection, vendors are sent away very rarely. There have been examples of this, but this kind of decision is always preceded by careful consideration.

What distinguishes “Bödön” from other markets and fairs is that they keep the interests of vendors in mind, decide together and operate as a community. They maintain a personal relationship with the vendors, which occasionally means individual agreements or separate projects. They help them in their appearance and they support collaborations within the community.

The launch of “Böba” (baby-mother fairs) and “Bödön Box” (web shop) are the extra “legs” that mean financial stability and help the market, the community through more difficult times. So far, they have not used the possibility of external loans, the cooperation is managed from its own reserves.

Upcoming plans are to create a membership system that would involve extra training for members, more opportunities to appear, and even deeper and more fruitful collaboration overall. Their long-term plan is the acquisition of an own site, equipment.

**Photos:**

