



---

## **Krazy Korn Maze**

*Rod Sharp*

**B**ill and Kathy English live in western Colorado where they have grown sweet corn, vegetables, pumpkins, and squash on their 120-acre farm. They farm in a rural county with a total population of 28,000 people. An additional 150,000 people live in the surrounding counties. After seeing a corn maze in eastern Colorado, they decided to build and offer a maze to the schools and communities in their region.

There were several reasons Bill and Kathy liked the idea of developing a maze on their farm. They already had pumpkin patches and scarecrows that area children visited. The maze was a nice complement to their existing activities. It provided an opportunity to educate school children about agriculture. It provided a fun activity for families throughout the western slope of Colorado and eastern Utah. And finally, it provided an alternative source of income for the farm.

Before developing the maze, Bill and Kathy would attract 2,000 to 4,000 people to their roadside fruit and vegetable stand and pumpkin patches each year. More than ten thousand people visited their farm the first year of the maze. They worked hard to provide for a variety of different visitors. They offered a hay bale maze for their younger guests (under six years old) and they designed a section of the maze that would accommodate wheel chairs. The maze attracted visitors from up to 150 miles away.

### **Threats to the Business**

Currently, Bill and Kathy have the only corn maze in western Colorado. The biggest threat to their business is the potential competition from other farmers in their geographic area. More corn mazes in the area would spread out the people that visit them, resulting in fewer people visiting each individual maze. Since most of the cost of developing a corn maze is the design and cutout of the maze, fewer visitors would significantly reduce profits.



Inviting the public to the farm is also a risk to the business. Exorbitant premiums for liability insurance coverage could prevent the Englishes from doing the maze. To date, Bill and Kathy have been able to add on an affordable \$1,000,000 liability insurance policy from September 15 through October 31.

### **Product Pricing**

Determining the price to experience the maze was based on what other mazes in other areas were charging and on the specific costs the Englishes incurred in physically producing the maze. The design and cutout alone runs them about \$300 per acre. Since the communities in western Colorado are not wealthy, Bill and Kathy decided to price their product at the lower end of the scale to make it affordable for school kids and families in the community. Delta County is one of the poorest counties in Colorado with high unemployment and low per capita income.

### **Competitive Edge**

There are several reasons why the Englishes have a competitive edge. Currently, there are no local competitors to share in their market. The closest maze is in eastern Colorado and provides no direct competition.

Another advantage for Bill and Kathy is their experience. Developing a maze is not simple, and it is hard work. They know how to do a maze and have the local contacts necessary for designing and developing one. In 2001, their maze was shaped like the Colorado state flag. In 2002, they did a maze based on the “Wizard of Oz.” By changing their maze design, each year is a new experience for their customers.

Both Bill and Kathy have outgoing personalities and really enjoy working with kids. These qualities are very important when dealing with the public.

“By changing their maze design, each year is a new experience for their customers.”

### **Future Changes**

No major changes are expected for the future. However, Bill and Kathy would like to improve on the quality and complexity of the maze. They feel it is important to continually change and improve to remain competitive.

### **Guiding Principles**

- To stay competitive, you may need to update your products or services on an annual basis, particularly if you are providing entertainment to the public.
- Your customer base may have a strong connection to your pricing policy. Consider who you actually market to or want to market to when you set your prices.

**Contact Information****Kathy and Bill English**

52110 Amber Road  
Delta, CO 81416

970.874.5629

**Rod Sharp**

Colorado State University  
Cooperative Extension  
2764 Compass Dr., Suite 232  
Grand Junction, CO 81506

970.245.9149

[rsharp@coop.ext.colostate.edu](mailto:rsharp@coop.ext.colostate.edu)