CITY HARVEST
RESCUING FOOD FOR NEW YORK'S HUNGRY

MyPlate Program Marketing Plan

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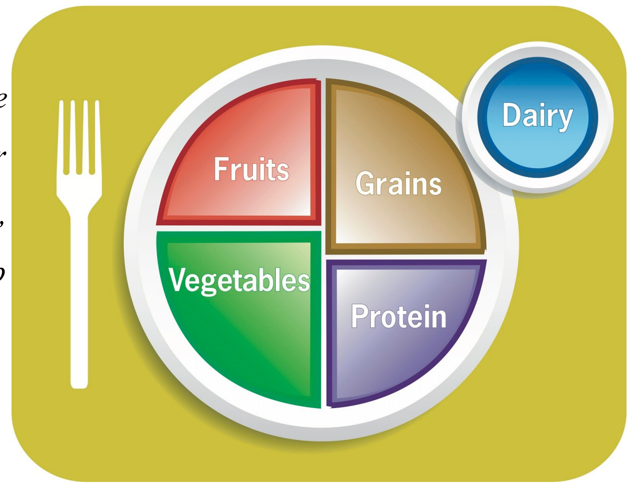
Overview

Caveats: This case study was constructed post-launch, and recommendations were made using available information.

What is the MyPlate Program?

MyPlate illustrates the five food groups that are building blocks for a healthy diet using a familiar image - place setting for a meal. Before you eat, think about what goes on your plate, in your cup or in your bowl.



Source: https://www.choosemyplate.gov/#slideshow-4

City Harvest's Efforts

City Harvest's Healthy Neighborhoods initiative aims to affect an increase in consumption of fruits and vegetables by improving education and access. The stores in the Retail Partnerships are often in areas where:

- ➢ High profit margins: typical produce margin is between 50-75% compared to canned goods around 25% or meat which is rarely over 60%
- ➢ Most visual section of the store
- ➢ Fresh aspect
- ➢ Health aspect

Research & Data

Timeline

The MyPlate Marketing Study ran from January 20, 2017 - April 20th, 2017. The research was conducted on a normal school schedule, causing limited research periods.

Stores & Business Operators

Seven business owners participated in the study representing three varying cultures Sri Lankan, West African and Spanish). We interviewed these stores and relied on the business owners to provide us with feedback on increased sales, customer traffic, and/or awareness, if any, since working with the MyPlate Program.

Customers

Our consumer research consisted of two markets: Trinity Lutheran Soup Kitchen patrons (sample size: 24) and St. John's University students (sample size: 15), in order to gain insight as to which segment is best to market the MyPlate Program to.

Measurement Methods

We used a combination of interviews and surveys to conclude our hypothesis, both qualitative and quantitative. A few examples are: familiarity with the MyPlate Program, correlation between background/culture and that of most frequent customers, amount of money spent on fresh produce per week, and where consumers typically shop for food.

Data Collection

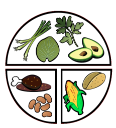
In the spring semester the six of us volunteered our time to interview and survey three important variables: business owners, customers who might presently shop in the participating stores, and new customers. We used a survey as our primary quantitative data* collection capture and interviews for any qualitative data* regarding benefits from working with the MyPlate Program.

**Data available upon request*

Business Owner Data Review

Sri-Lankan:Customers place a high-value on authenticity, even those who are not from a Sri-Lankan background but are familiar with the food from travel, friends, etc. care greatly about the authenticity of food. A lot of customers become friends as they are from the same cultural background. Many people who are from a different background are unaware of what Sri-Lankan food is, which leads to aversion from some potential customers.

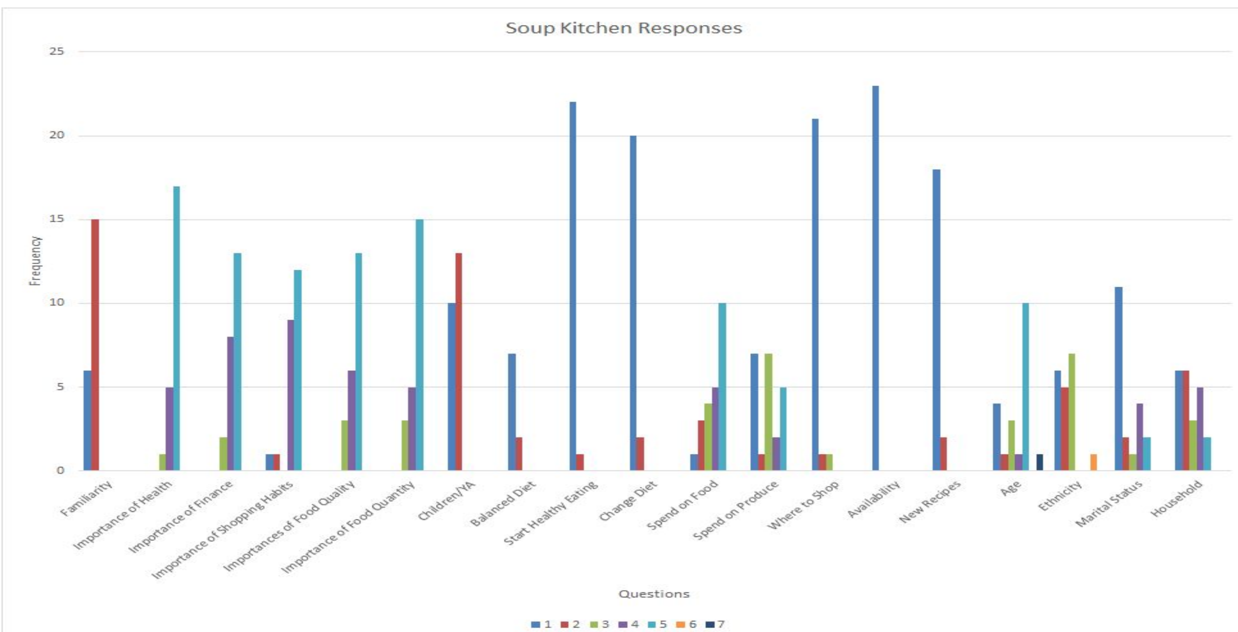
West African: The MyPlate program has provided a way of introducing food in a healthy manner for the general public. There are concerns of maintaining authenticity among regular customers who are from the same culture and grew up with the food. But healthier versions of the same food are found to be appealing to customers of a different background.



Spanish: A lot of customers are repeat and come from a Spanish background, more specifically South America. Authenticity of food is a major component of staying in business and keeping current customers. Many people on Staten Island, being from various backgrounds, are very open to trying food that doesn’t fit with their background which is good for business.

Background Information
Surveys were distributed to two different populations, Trinity Lutheran Soup Kitchen (sample size: 23) and St. John's University (sample size 15), in order to gain insight on two possible markets for City Harvest's MyPlate Program. While the sample sizes are small, the data is quantitative and therefore worth considering as there are definitely patterns in evidence. This data will allow us to formulate a marketing plan based on consumer behavior and needs in two communities. Our research allowed us to conclude that for our classmates, privilege breeds opportunity for understanding but also that they have the luxury of focusing over what they want right now versus a healthy lifestyle.

Trinity Lutheran Soup Kitchen Data Analysis



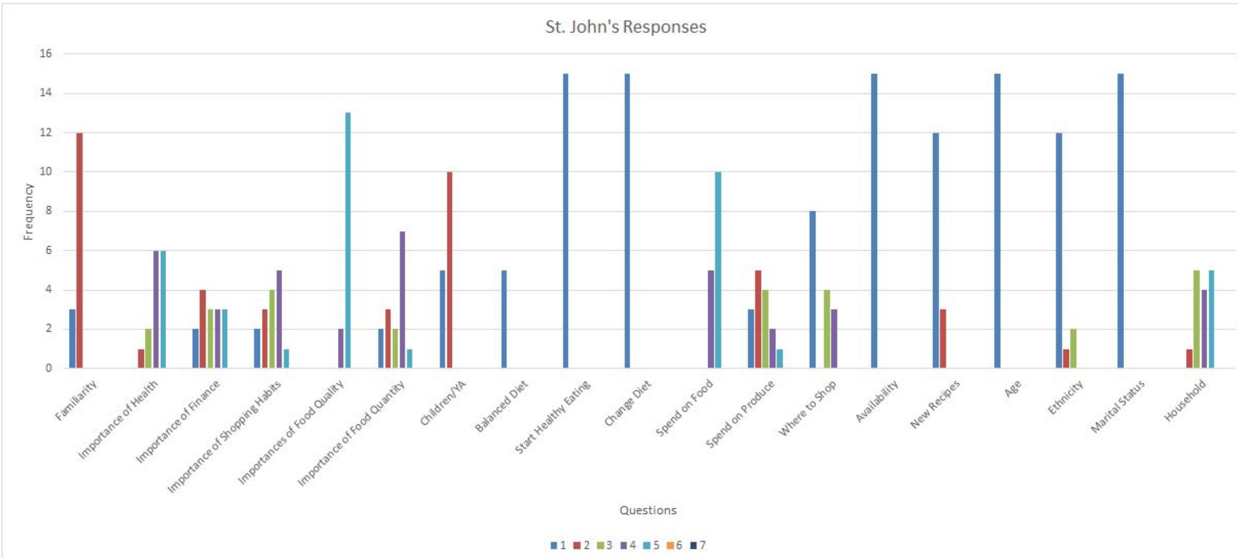
Findings:
**The vertical axis shows frequency of survey responses based on the category of importance located on the horizontal axis*

- 15/23 participants are not familiar with the My Plate Program
- Health is very important to 17/23 participants, important to 5/23 and slightly important to 1 participant when it comes to shopping for food.
- Finances are very important to 13/23, important to 8/23, somewhat important to 2/23 when it comes to food shopping.
- Shopping habits are very important to 12/23, important to 9/23, slightly important to 1/23 and not important to 1/23 when it comes to food shopping.
- Food quality is very important to 13/23, important to 6/23, and somewhat important to

3/23 participants when it comes to food shopping.

- Food quantity is very important to 15/23, important to 5/23, and slightly important to 3/23.
- 10/23 participants had children/young adults who lived with them and of those that answered, 7/9 reported feeding them balanced diets.
- An overwhelming majority, 22/23 participants, knew that it was important to start a healthy diet at a young age and 20/22 participants were willing to change their diets
- 10/23 participants spend $50+ on food per week, 5/23 spend $30-50, 4/23 spend $20-30, 3/23 spend $10-20 and 1/23 spends $0-10 per week on food. On the opposite spectrum, those who spend money on fresh produce a week were 5/23 spend $50+, 2/23 spend $30-50, 7/23 spend $20-30, 1/23 spends $10-20, and 7/23 spend $0-10.
- 21/23 participants primarily shopped at supermarkets, 1 participant shopped at Bodegas/Delis and 1 participant shopped primarily at restaurants.
- All participants reported that they would be willing to shop for fresh produce should it be made more available
- 18/20 who responded said they were willing to try new foods of other cultures, 2/20 respondents were not open to trying new foods.
- It was a mixed group based around age with a larger amount of participants being between 55-64 years old.
- Diverse group.
- Most are single, never married with varied housing numbers, most reporting either just themselves or one other person.

St. John's University Data



<u>Findings</u>:

**The vertical axis shows frequency of survey responses based on the category of importance located on the horizontal axis*

- 12/15 respondents are not familiar with the My Plate Program
- Health is very important to 6/15 respondents, important to 6/15, somewhat important to 2/15, and slightly important to 1/15 when it came to food shopping.
- 3/15 respondents separately reported finances as being very important, important, and somewhat important, while 4/15 considered finances to be slightly important and 2/15 consider finances not to be important when it comes to food shopping.
- Shopping habits are very important to 1/15 respondents, important to 5/15, somewhat important to 4/15, slightly important ot 3/15, and not important to 2/15.
- Food quality is very important to 13/15 respondents and important to 2/15 when it comes to food shopping.
- As quality is the most important feature, the group presents mixed interest in quantity with 1/15 stating it is very important, 7/15 stating quantity is important, 2/15 somewhat important, 3/15 slightly important, and 2/15 report quantity being not important.
- Of the 5/15 participants who had children/young adults living with them, all reported that they receive a balanced diet.
- All participants knew that it was important to start a healthy diet at a young age and were willing to change their diets
- Although a 10/15 of people spend between $50+ and 5/15 spend $30- $50 on food per week, only 1/15 spend $50+, 2/15 spend $30-50, 4/15 spend $20-30, 5/15 spend $10-20,

and 3/15 spend $0-10 on fresh produce per week.

- 8/15 primarily shopped at supermarkets, 4/15 shopped from restaurants and 3/15 reported other sources for food shopping such as farmer markets.
- All participants reported that they would be willing to shop for fresh produce should it be made more available
- While 12/15 participants were open to trying new foods of other cultures, the remaining 3 were not so open.
- All participants were between the ages of 18-24 with the majority being white.
- All are single, never married with varied housing numbers, but most containing more than just themselves.

Recommendations

Overall

Our suggestion for City Harvest's MyPlate Program is two fold:

1. Cross promote business owner participation through various mean of distribution (i.e. paid social media plan, press outlets native to Staten Islanders, and partnering with other local businesses)
2. Utilize our marketing research to first learn consumers' knowledge of the MyPlate Program and how to increase knowledge and awareness for our two target audiences

Creative Approach

For our MyPlate marketing plan, we have created two individual creative approaches in order to increase awareness of the program. These creative approaches include the business owners and potential new customer outreach.

<u>Business Owners</u>

- Create a campaign to make the public aware of businesses who participate in the MyPlate Program
- Place fliers where they can be seen (social media is a possibility: free; stores part of MyPlate Program can post outside of nearby businesses and each other)
- Incentives
    - Location Based Incentives Examples
        - Plaza San Jeronimo- Port Richmond- near Ralphs- food then ices
        - Wazobia- central location- near ferry terminal- Richmond County Bank Ballpark- near St. John's and Wagner
        - New Asha Sri Lankan Restaurant and Lanka Grocery- good for fresh foods and fruit- Our Lady of Good Council Church can target them outside of church put table with info and possible samples
    - Prize Based
        - Clip card: ten purchases from any business part of My Plate program results in one discounted purchase
    - Food vendors (Sugar Lump's Plate)
        - Those with in-home businesses can attend markets put together by City

Harvest to promote their businesses since not visual to public (semi-annual)

Potential Customers

- Search for "hidden gems" or "a hole in the wall"- don't judge by the outside; keep an open mind
- My Plate to pair up with schools to promote healthy eating (encourage tasting cultural foods)

Targeting

- North Shore Community
  - Our Lady Good Counsel
    - Parishioners
    - Students
  - Staten Island Yankee Stadium
    - Baseball Fans
  - Port Richmond Avenue
    - Ralph's Ices Patrons
    - Denino's Pizzeria Patrons

- St. John's University Community
  - Language Culture Classes
    - Professors → Students
  - Cafeteria
    - Students
    - Faculty
  - Campus Events
    - Student Government
    - Multicultural Affairs

Press

A great way for the MyPlate Program to gain attention from these neighborhoods is through proper press. Although this program is known by some Staten Islanders, it is still considered unknown to the majority of the Staten Island population. With the help of interviews done by reporters from the Staten Island Advance, popular food magazines and even the New York

Times, this program will have reached out to even more individuals than expected. Using newspapers and online articles that do not mainly target the food industry will allow for a greater percentage of people to become aware of this program. A suggestion for these reporters would be to do their interviews in these stores but also to do them during the food competitions that some compete in.

Social Media

Search Engine Optimization (SEO):

One of the most vital tools for social marketing today remains, Search Engine Optimization (SEO). This is a booming step in encouraging social media marketing by creating visibility of websites on the internet.

- Encourages social media marketing
- Marketing plan that directs search engines to drive traffic to websites

Benefits of Social Media:

- Reduces marketing costs
- Increase brand visibility & recognition
- Improve brand loyalty
- Higher search engine rankings

Facebook:

- Business owners can create a Facebook page for their company
- Provide opportunities for customer reviews
- Can control who can view your page
- Can control their own budget

Instagram:

- Dressing up dishes
- Create trending hashtags
- Open to public around the world
- Provides location services
- Huge engagement