



Measuring Effects of Mobile Markets on Healthy Food Choices

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Problem Statement

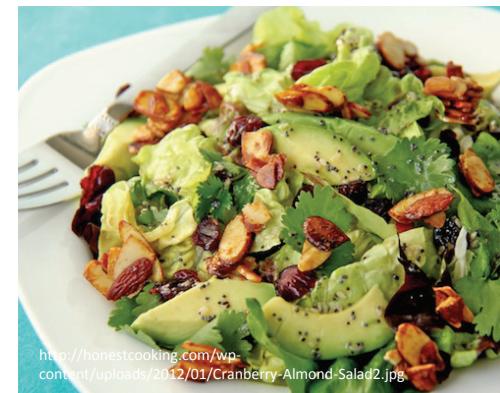
- Low fruit and vegetable consumption related to health problems
- Lack of access to healthy foods in food deserts
- Mobile Markets a solution?



Research questions



1. Who shops at mobile markets, who does not and why?
2. Do mobile markets facilitate healthy eating choices and if so how?



8 focus groups at 4 sites

~ 10 shoppers and
10 non-shoppers/site



Mobile markets' missions

Promotes local, sustainable food with MM as anchor for Farmers' Market

Promotes healthy (conventional) food access and education programs

Promotes healthy (conventional) food access, founded by for profit grocery store

Promotes equitable and sustainable local food system (local, organic) with MM, farm and education programs



Gorge Grown Mobile Market, WA

Community Characteristics:

Rural

94% White

15% poverty rate

\$30,912 median HH income



Shoppers:

Greater income range: Include more affluent

Interested in nutrition, support local farmers and community

Enjoy the market and trying local products

Think it is slightly expensive



Non-shoppers:

Concerned with money

Interested in filling food

Perceive the market as too expensive and elitist

Do not see farmers as a part of the community

Would prefer different, more welcoming location



Fresh Moves, Chicago, IL

Community Characteristics:

Urban

86% African-American

39% poverty rate

\$15,920 median HH income



Shoppers:

Concerned about children's health and having enough

Live close to Fresh Moves stops

Like the vegetables and the service

Consider it affordable

Worry about seniors (staple foods, access)



Non-shoppers:

Concerned with having enough to eat

Like the idea and would shop there

Confused it with normal city bus: signs, loudspeakers



<http://groceronwheels.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/fresh-movs.jpg>

Freshmobile, Madison, WI

Community Characteristics:

Small city

19% African-American, 28% Hispanic

19% poverty rate

\$32,000 median HH income

Shoppers:

Concerned about quality and affordability

Appreciate convenience

Did not know it was a non-profit

Concerned about trust

Non-shoppers:

Heard about it but wanted encouragement

Excited about it being non-profit

Affordability and quality are important



http://wkow.images.worldnow.com/images/18929222_BG1.jpg



<http://willystreetblog.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/FreshMobile-600x301.jpg>

Arcadia, Washington, DC

Community Characteristics:

Urban

97% African-American

38% poverty rate

\$50,188 average HH income

Shoppers:

Loved the produce and the experience

Affordability by the end of the month

Forgetting about the bus coming

Non-shoppers:

Liked the idea of the bus and would shop there

Concerns about affordability and timing

More advertising in advance



http://www.washingtonsgreengrocer.com/sites/default/files/mobile1_0.jpg



http://www.washingtonsgreengrocer.com/sites/default/files/mobile1_0.jpg

Differences in fruit & vegetable consumption

total 45 shoppers vs. 37 non-shoppers

Site	Shoppers (number of servings)	Non-shoppers (number of servings)	P value
Gorge Grown, WA	6.0	3.3	0.08
Fresh Moves, IL	2.7	1.2	0.02
Freshmobile, WI	2.5	1.3	0.03
Arcadia, DC	2.9	2.2	0.37
Total	3.5	1.9	0.002

'In the last few years, my diet has changed fairly radically. I didn't used to really care too much what I ate.... But moving towards the whole foods, you know, the closer you know where it's prepared from, the better off you are. And so the farmer's market, of course, plays into that.' (Shopper #5, WA)



Affordability and Timing

- Markets need to be affordable and understand the financial restrictions

*'Well, I get an ample amount [of fruits and vegetables], but toward the end of the month, **when your little money and your stamps start dwindling, then your vegetables and your fruits dwindle too.** So toward the end, it's not sufficient.'*

(Non-shopper DC#20)

'I would change the prices to make it more affordable, more compatible. ...If their prices are better than [national chain],..., then more likely, more people would use the mobile other than walking.' (Shopper WI#2)

- Keep prices low
- Use promotions and coupons, especially at end of the month



Convenience is important

- Shoppers live closer to the stops
- Providing staples is desired

'I think it sounds like a good thing that they're going into different neighborhoods because there are some people that can't drive to get to certain stores to get fresh fruit or vegetables or anything. I mean, so then they end up going to rip-off joints that are close, like a gas station that's charging you twice or three times the amount of what the item should be.' (Shopper WI#10)

'Because honestly, the reason why we shop at the bigger grocery stores is because it's one-stop shopping, you know. It would be nice if the farmer's market kind of had a lot more to choose from.' (Shopper WA#5)

- Add more stops and make the times convenient, customers will appreciate it
- Add staples



Trust and Community

- Trust may be an issue (stories about theft, low quality produce, etc.)

'I think it's a good idea, because not a lot of neighborhoods have a grocery store, produce store right around their corner. So it's bringing them fresh fruits and vegetables right to them instead of them going on the bus or, you know, driving 18, 30 minutes to get it. So I think it's just more convenient for the people to get fresh, healthy food.' (Non-shopper IL#13)

'I appreciate, you know, someone actually taking out the time to care about maybe people who are not really thinking about something like [healthy eating], as far as your diet and how, ten years from now, that that can affect you....' (Non-shopper WI#20)

- Increase accountability: meet your community, employ community interns
- Shoppers need to know mobile markets are non-profits
- Care of seniors and children



Quality and Service

- People appreciate quality (fresh, good-looking produce) and professional, friendly staff

'It was just nice. I couldn't believe it. I said, oh, my, I said when they coming back? ... And when I went up there, they helped you up on the bus.... When you get through shopping, they help you off the bus saying, thank you, thank you. It's really nice.' (Shopper IL#8)

'I'm encouraged now [to shop at the mobile market]. And what would discourage me if the food wasn't fresh and the person there has kind of got like a bland nature about himself. I like customer service.... So they'll have a great impact if the person is also selling the fruits and vegetables, so if they have fresh fruit and customer service.' (Non-shopper WI#18)

- Provide high quality product & cull/discount seconds
- Nice, helpful staff provide a better experience



Information

- People might not be aware of the mobile market
- Need reminders
- Or they would like to know what is available & prices

'And perhaps a lot of the family members don't know that they can come and buy stuff off the truck.... So I say advertise, advertise, advertise, you know.' (Shopper DC#12)

'And then I thought maybe with the fliers that you would be putting out, I thought you would have, everything, every item on there what you would carry along with what it would cost per pound ... People don't want to go on the bus, get on there and pick up two or three items, and they cost an arm and a leg, you know. So they want to know what it's going to cost before they even get there to see if they can even afford it.' (Non-shopper IL#12)

- Advertise: Word of mouth, flyers (featuring products and prices), buddy system for seniors, loudspeaker/jingle
- Provide information ahead of time so people can plan



Education and Facilitation

- People know they should eat fruits and vegetables
- Price and living alone are obstacles

'No, I don't eat enough [fruits and vegetables]. Mostly because like I only get so much a month, so I'm very limited on what things I can get. So I just get what I know I'm going to eat that won't go bad. Sometimes I don't even get tomatoes, because they go.' (Non-shopper WA#11)

'Well, for me is having the appetite to eat. I kind of now, since I'm alone, it's not like when I had my children with me and my grandkids, and I was cooking for them. I don't like cooking for myself anymore, and so I have to have a taste, and, you know, what I want, I don't know what I want.... And I've got to get out of the habit of doing that.' (Shopper DC#8)

- Focus nutrition education on serving amounts
- Affordability is a key
- Facilitate social events evolving around cooking

Conclusions

Issues of trust in food deserts: resources are constrained, people are vulnerable, and have experience or know about being ripped off.

Provide food deserts with what everyone wants: **value, quality, and service**, while fostering **community trust**.

Facilitating **cooking and tasting events** may improve fruit and vegetable consumption.

Acknowledgments



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