BEYOND THE LOCALVORES: Best Practices to Enhance Workplace Food Culture

www.intervalefoodhub.com
BEYOND THE LOCALVORES: Best Practices to Enhance Workplace Food Culture and Participation in Local Food Delivery Programs

Introduction

In an effort to increase understanding of individual consumer food buying and eating habits inside and outside of work, the Intervale Food Hub launched a research project to conduct a survey and a series of focus groups and interviews at workplaces in Chittenden County, Vermont.

The goals of this initiative included gaining insight into workplace food culture and understanding the perceived benefits of participating in a workplace local food delivery program. Intervale Food Hub set out to gather the information needed to create strategies for encouraging greater employee participation in the local food movement. We are pleased to share the lessons learned with our community and beyond.

Our research provided insight into the role that food culture can play in the workplace. The findings inspire potential ways to enhance workplace culture and increase overall participation by employees at workplaces in local food delivery programs.

Key Takeaways

- Workplace food culture impacts the local food movement
- Know the workplace and their food culture
- Align products, services, and marketing to the consumer and the workplace

About the Intervale Food Hub

Our Mission
The Intervale Food Hub is a local foods market offering convenient, year-round delivery. We collaborate with ecological farmers and food processors in our region to provide you with an array of the highest quality foods. We are nonprofit-owned and are cultivating a local economy that sustains healthy food, farms, land and people.

Our Goal
Our goal is to strengthen the relationship between you and your farmers. We believe in community supported agriculture where farmers and the community know, support and nourish one another. We provide 100% transparency and traceability, sharing the stories of our farms and offering you and your family assurance that you are receiving the freshest, healthiest and safest food available.

Our Commitment
The Intervale Food Hub is committed to our farmers. We offer them a stable market, fair prices and advanced working capital, improving farm viability and quality of life. We also provide ongoing support to our farmers, enabling them to grow more food, diversify production, develop specialty products and push the limits of Vermont’s growing season. When farms thrive, we all thrive.

For more information, see the Intervale Farm to Business Impact Report or contact the Intervale Food Hub Manager, Sona Desai at sona@intervale.org or 802-660-0440 x112.

This project was made possible by funding from the Specialty Crop Block Grant from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.
5. Set Achievable Goals

Work with the employer to assess the existing workplace food culture. Values and practices vary at each workplace, and it is important to understand the existing food culture so you can meet employees where they are.

It is helpful to learn the eating, cooking, and shopping habits of employees, along with age and other demographics. Do people like to bring lunch to work and eat together, or do people often leave to buy lunch? Do employees tend to work long hours and eat out, or do they make dinner? Do employees have children, spouses, partners, or roommates who are involved with making food-related decisions?

Learn the goals of the employer or company and their primary interests. This will vary from employer to employer. Values you might connect with could be sustainability, supporting the local economy, promoting health and nutrition, encouraging fun and happiness, work-life balance, etc.

Work with people where they are, and set achievable goals for your partnership. This will help build a positive relationship, and allow you to set goals as the partnership continues.

6. Evaluate

Evaluate the effectiveness of your strategies with each workplace. It is important to ensure that your efforts are working, or to identify where your program needs improvement, so that you can continue to improve the workplace food culture and increase engagement at the workplace.

Clear and consistent communication with your point person will be an important source of feedback. Online surveys for your customers can also be helpful sources of feedback.

Through evaluation, you can get to know your customers better, and you can track the changes that are happening in the workplace food culture. Seek testimonials and learn about employee experiences.

The evaluation process will help inform and adjust future goals.

Defining Goals

Why enhance workplace food culture?

Although many employers are aware of the benefits associated with workplace wellness programs, we see an opportunity for employers to further enhance the health and well-being of their employees by creating a strong local foods culture at work. We believe that good food, meaning healthy fruits and vegetables, along with engagement in the local community, are both necessary to grow the local food movement.

There are several ways to partner with employers to enhance workplace food culture. A workplace delivery program for employees is only one option.

The following sections outline the best practices that we’ve developed by working with a selection of different workplaces.

Vermont-grown vegetables delivered through Intervale Food Hub
**Defining Best Practices**

**1. Get the Employer On Board**

Help employers understand their role and the benefits to creating a culture of local food at work. Workplace wellness programs vary and may or may not include food programming, so it is important to help employers see the benefits of creating a healthy workplace food culture and how this can influence the health and productivity of their employees.

Local food delivery at the workplace is a simple service for employers to add to their scope of employee benefits. Fresh, local fruits & vegetable are delicious, nutritious, and best of all, they make people feel good.

**2. Find a Point Person**

A strong relationship with a reliable, engaged point person is essential for a sustainable partnership. At first, the point person can be your liaison between you and the stakeholders who will be involved in setting up deliveries. At larger workplaces, there can be several stakeholders, such as Human Resources staff, building managers, wellness coordinators, etc. who will be involved in coordinating logistics.

Throughout the season, you’ll want to have someone to check in with for feedback, as well as communicate with employees in the workplace.

**3. Provide Resources and Support**

Create and curate content for employers to share in the workplace based on your initial assessment of their current food culture. Content can include educational information on the value of eating & buying locally, local food news and events, storage tips, cooking tips, fruit and vegetable descriptions, recipes, and general tips for eating and preparing fruits and vegetables.

One of the best resources available is your ability to share information, educate and answer questions. Most people are not experts when it comes to fresh food, and many are grateful for suggestions, explanations, and advice.

Having clear and consistent policies and schedules will also help simplify customer service and overall experience. Great customer service is essential!

**4. Develop Implementation Strategies**

Develop strategies for implementation that are aligned with the existing workplace culture. From logistics and the day you deliver to the marketing and outreach materials, it is important to stay in touch with your point person to make sure that you have effective systems in place.

Not all strategies will fit all workplaces. Some use email and internal office communications frequently while others prefer posters or printed materials. One workplace might have a very engaged point person who enjoys communicating with coworkers, while others might prefer to pass along information that you create for them.

One workplace might have a culture where employees travel or take long weekends, so deliveries are preferred in the beginning of the week. Some workplaces might enjoy a mid-day delivery for employees who work flexible hours, while others might prefer and end-of-the-day delivery.

Clear communication with your point person will help you find appropriate and effective implementation strategies.
Intervale Food Hub
Strategic Marketing Plan

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Where Are We Now?

“To cultivate a local economy that sustains healthy food, farms, land and people.”

Internal Marketing Factors

The Organization and its Mission

The Burlington, Vermont-based 501c3 nonprofit Intervale Center established the Intervale Food Hub as a multi-farm local food distributor in 2007. IFH grew from $93,000 in gross revenue in 2008 to an expected $500,000 by the end of 2014.

The IFH describes its vision for the future as:

We envision a thriving economy that truly values food and farming. Eaters know where their food comes from, who is growing it and how it is grown. Healthy, local food is convenient and accessible to all people. People are eating and cooking more vegetables, engaging with local farmers, experiencing their local food community and understanding the role of agriculture in their lives. Markets for local food are stable and strong and small and mid-size farms are growing more food, diversifying production, developing specialty products and exploring new and creative technologies to advance Vermont agriculture. Farms are profitable, stable and thriving. Farmers are sustaining our community and our community is sustaining our farmers.

Current Products and Services for Consumers

The Intervale Food Hub aggregates, distributes, and markets products from multiple farmers—mainly in Chittenden County—direct to consumers in the greater Burlington area. The Intervale Food Hub works with 45 farmers who produce primarily fruits, vegetables, meat, and eggs, as well as some dairy, grains, plants, baked goods, prepared foods and canned and frozen produce.

IFH sources and provides 100% transparency and traceability on all food products, based on the following purchasing guidelines:

1. Buy from local, certified organic farms. (Local is defined as Vermont-grown.)
2. Buy from local, non-certified organic farms.
4. Buy from local processors using non-local ingredients.
5. Buy from regional farms and processors. (Foods in this category are limited, but when offered, they are sustainably produced, fair trade and farm-direct.)

These sourced products are sold year-round and delivered direct to its subscriber-members at approximately 50 workplace locations and public buildings in Chittenden County. Through its subscriber program IFH is able to accept SNAP benefits, and it has partnered with the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont to offer subsidized shares to low-income residents in the past.

In addition to their standard weekly delivery, IFH offers an online a la carte ordering option for subscriber-members to add specific items to their weekly delivery.
Current Communications Resources, Tools and Activities

Intervale Food Hub currently uses a variety of marketing tactics and tools to reach its audiences: delivery location hosts; workplace, civic center and neighborhood customers; and, college/school customers.

Here is a listing of tactics, tools and channels by audience location delivery segment:

Delivery location hosts:

- Emails
- Phone
- In-person meetings
- Printed materials/posters/flyers
- Partnership agreement/information
- Rack Card
- Employer incentives (info on payroll deduction, subsidy options, etc.)
- Customized marketing materials (print & digital) to disseminate (program and seasonal subscription details)

Workplace, civic center & neighborhood customers:

- E-newsletters: weekly vegetables, plus occasional a la carte items
- Emails
- Printed materials/posters/flyers
- Website
- Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- Tabling at community events

College/School Customer:

- Weekly e-newsletter
- Emails
- Printed materials/posters/flyers
- Website
- Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- Department and club list servs
- Campus visits / tabling at events
External Marketing Factors

Market Description

The Intervale Food Hub, an enterprise of a nonprofit organization, is operating in a competitive and crowded food purchasing and distribution market that includes regional supermarket chains, national discount big box stores, local health food stores, member-based CSA farms, multiple farmers’ markets and stands, a handful of local food delivery operations, as well as community and homeowner gardens.

IFH sources and delivers both certified organic and non-organic products, fresh food, and select value-added food products (like chocolate!)

Key Players and Market Competition

The Intervale Food Hub initially considered its direct competitors to be other local food delivery organizations, specifically Rise 'n Shine (Charlotte), Graze Home Delivery (Vergennes), Central Vermont Food Hub (Montpelier) and Pete’s Greens (Craftsbury) as competitors. However, Rise 'n Shine does not offer produce, Graze is focused on out-of-state customers, Central Vermont Food Hub serves Washington County, and Pete’s Greens does not have a la carte items for CSA members and delivers wholesale to grocery stores and markets.

However, with the vision of creating a new social norm where the local economy sustains healthy food, farms, land and people — then Intervale Food Hub competitors include all other sources of food in Chittenden County.

An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of these multiple competitors are summarized, grouped and described in two tables on the following pages.
### Intervale Food Hub Competitor Analysis: Consumers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>IFH Difference(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Grocery Stores</strong></td>
<td>Familiar, comfortable&lt;br&gt;Low prices; buy as little or much as you want any day&lt;br&gt;Prepared foods&lt;br&gt;Wide range of offerings&lt;br&gt;Open long hours, convenient</td>
<td>Limited local suppliers&lt;br&gt;No farm-to-plate connection to food producers&lt;br&gt;Erratic and generally lower freshness and quality&lt;br&gt;“You’re on your own”</td>
<td>IFH superior quality, from local producers. (Superior quality fresh, local, sustainably sourced, and mostly organic)&lt;br&gt;IFH model unfamiliar&lt;br&gt;IFH delivery only once a week and only certain items, but at a location near you&lt;br&gt;IFH offers 100% product traceability&lt;br&gt;IFH Provides a curated selection and higher level of customer service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discount grocery,</strong> e.g., Costco, Trader Joe’s</td>
<td>Low prices&lt;br&gt;Prepared foods&lt;br&gt;Gourmet items for entertaining&lt;br&gt;Open long hours, convenient&lt;br&gt;Fun – part of experience&lt;br&gt;Appealing consistent national branding</td>
<td>Limited range of offerings w/ each product category&lt;br&gt;Must buy in bulk volume for many items&lt;br&gt;Almost no local suppliers – and food is not source identified</td>
<td>IFH superior quality, from local producers with 100% product traceability&lt;br&gt;IFH delivery only once a week and only certain items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local CSAs</strong></td>
<td>Local producers&lt;br&gt;Personal interaction with your farmer/producer; strongest farm-to-plate connection&lt;br&gt;High food quality&lt;br&gt;Price generally 15% less than same quantity from health food stores, but higher than grocery&lt;br&gt;Social Pick-ups&lt;br&gt;“get your hands dirty”</td>
<td>Supply/delivery risk associated with single farm producer&lt;br&gt;Fixed share size for the season; cannot increase or decrease&lt;br&gt;Must pay in advance for entire season, or lump-sum installments&lt;br&gt;Limited options for drop off/pick up&lt;br&gt;Quality concerns – seconds,</td>
<td>IFH offers flexible payment options, including monthly&lt;br&gt;Guaranteed supply from multiple producers &amp; CSAs&lt;br&gt;Can add a la carte items to weekly order w/ IFH&lt;br&gt;Product is direct from farms but delivered at off-the-shelf quality and preparation&lt;br&gt;IFH also superior quality, from local producers, and</td>
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### Intervale Food Hub Competitor Analysis: Farmers/Producers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>IFH Difference(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farmers’ Markets &amp; Stands</strong></td>
<td>Local producers, local quality</td>
<td>Higher cost</td>
<td>IFH also superior quality, from local producers but at better prices and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buy as little or much as they have that week</td>
<td>Limited variety/ range of options, limited pick up time frame and short</td>
<td>guaranteed supply, without the hassle</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>“Farm Family” discount cards offered by some stands</td>
<td>seasons</td>
<td>IFH delivers to a location near you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Health Food Stores:</strong></td>
<td>High proportion of local food producers</td>
<td>Highest prices, which lead to nicknames like “City Markup” and “Wealthy</td>
<td>IFH also superior quality, from all local producers but at better price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g., City Market, Healthy Living</td>
<td>High food quality</td>
<td>Living”</td>
<td>IFH offers timely recipes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepared foods</td>
<td>Exclusive/Scene/Attitude</td>
<td>100% product traceability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buy as little or much as you want any day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Source/education materials for some</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experience and environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discount grocery, e.g., Costco,</strong></td>
<td>Can take large volume of goods</td>
<td>Next to no interest in local suppliers</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trader Joe’s</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pay extremely low prices for a large, guaranteed volume</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no farm identification</td>
<td></td>
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- **Intervale Food Hub (IFH)**
  - 100% product traceability

**Note:**
- IFH offers stable market, fair prices and advance working capital, in addition to ongoing support.
- Guaranteed Sales
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
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<th>IFH Difference(s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local CSAs</strong></td>
<td>Personal interaction with your share owners&lt;br&gt;Receive payment in advance for entire season&lt;br&gt;Spread the risk of poor crop or weather loss among shareholders&lt;br&gt;Direct-to-consumer sales are the highest (But do business plans account for the required investment of resources for dtc sales?)</td>
<td>Must commit to/handle logistics of drop off/pick up throughout season&lt;br&gt;must produce a wide variety of produce and possibly procure add-ons&lt;br&gt;time and resource intensive- including marketing, sales, and customer service</td>
<td>IFH offers stable market, fair prices and advance working capital, in addition to ongoing support&lt;br&gt;Wholesale PLUS- good pricing, loyalty, and brand identification. IFH offers preplanning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farmers’ Markets &amp; Stands</strong></td>
<td>Direct-to-consumer retail sales means highest margins for producers&lt;br&gt;“Farm Family” discount cards can create more loyalty in customer base over the more transient, inconsistent Farmers Market customers</td>
<td>Hassle factor: must set up and staff market booth in each town location or at farm stand location</td>
<td>IFH offers stable market, fair prices and advance working capital, in addition to ongoing support. IFH offers preplanning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Health Food Stores:</strong></td>
<td>Will buy from local food producers, but generally through usual wholesale distributors&lt;br&gt;Occasionally will make investments in certain product categories</td>
<td>Sales through distributors are at reduced wholesale prices&lt;br&gt;Distributors want consistent supply&lt;br&gt;Waiting line at their loading docks</td>
<td>IFH offers stable market, fair prices and advance working capital, in addition to ongoing support &amp; resource referral IFH offers preplanning IFH guaranteed sales policy Can we offer more in terms of unscheduled on-the-fly purchases?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trends Affecting IFH

- The local-food movement is blossoming, with farmers markets springing up all over the United States. Demand for fresh produce and a desire to invest in local economies are driving this trend. --Source: National Geographic, May 2014

- “People are craving local and fresh and more people are getting it direct than ever before.” Shawn Lavigne, Mazza farm manager, as quoted in Burlington Free Press, August 15, 2014.

- In the U.S., an estimated $180 billion in value and almost half of our food — 40 percent of what we grow — ends up in the garbage. Source: NRDC, BusinessWeek

- Consumers show increased interest in “food transparency” — what the USDA’s Arthur Neal defines as the “full story behind how our food is produced.” --Source: National Geographic, May 2014

- In the U.S., 45% try to include organic foods in their diets, while 15% try to avoid them. Including organic foods is more common among younger Americans and upper-income Americans, as well as those who live in cities and in the West. --Source: Gallup

- The majority of consumers (55%) will pay extra for products and services from companies or organizations committed to positive social and environmental impact. This reflects an increase of +7 in North America between 2011 and 2014. – Source: Nielsen

- To ensure sustainable impact, 52% of consumers check product/packaging materials, with the next largest influence being family and friends. – Source: Nielsen

- Age matters. Millennial (age 21-34) and Generation X (age 35-49) consumers are twice as likely as Baby Boomers (age 50-68), on average, to favor sustainability actions. – Source: Nielsen

- The Natural Marketing Institute (NMI) reports a growing concern over food integrity and interest in buying local (whether or not labeled organic) among the LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability) psychographic. – Source: NMI

- For the first time since the recession in 2008, all 4 segments of organic consumers (DEVOTEDS, TEMPERATES, DABBLERS & RELUCTANTS) reported slight increases in purchases and purchase intent. – Source: NMI

- Two-thirds of the “sustainable mainstream” population (NATURALITES, DRIFTERS & CONVENTIONALS) will consistently choose sustainable products over conventional products, not counting higher choice rate for LOHAS and lower for the UNCONCERNED segment. – Source: Nielsen with NMI

- Although the ways consumers shop and eat are changing rapidly, many still believe “food comes from...the store.” Source: NMI
STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT Analysis)

The marketing SWOT analysis summarizes the internal as well as external factors affecting the success of IFH.

**Strengths.**
- Experienced and committed leadership and board.
- Audience research and basic communication tools are available to support the mission and operations.
- Established culture and relationships between IFH staff, Intervale Center, and many area farmers and producers supports decision-making and delivery of quality products and service.

**Weaknesses.**
- As a start-up operation, limited history and resources to help shore up operations credibility and prove success as a separate entity.
- Extremely tight schedule for recruitment and enrollment of members, and finalizing operational logistics, especially for the Summer/Fall season.
- Sensitivity to the perception of competition with local farmers, CSAs, and markets has curbed the opportunity for testimonials, photos, and other more assertive and visible marketing tactics. Name confusion with multiple “Intervale” entities has also caused brand confusion.

**Opportunities.**
- Untapped potential, as no similar organization currently exists to serve the region and interest in local food and food sources continues to grow.
- In addition to a significant year-round population in Chittenden County, multiple colleges and universities in the Burlington area are in close proximity to IFH, and subscriber/member fees are competitive compared to other local quality food sources such as CSAs, Healthy Living and City Market.
- An appealing and functional website-blog-social media ‘hub and spokes’ with scannable and in-depth information on IFH competitive advantages, member and supplier benefits, food system education, and local provider stories could reach a broad audience and promote positive word-of-mouth.

**Threats.**
- Significant competition locally and from major regional and national grocers.
- A weak economy in Vermont and the Northeast may continue to limit the pool of possible members/subscribers willing to try anything they believe may cost more.
- A real or perceived scandal or incident involving suppliers or the Intervale Center itself could destroy IFH in its early years. (Think CSWD local horse manure resulting in persistent herbicide tainting of compost.)
Where Do We Want To Go?

The overall purpose of the communications plan is to integrate with and support the Intervale Food Hub's operational plan to advance its vision of "a local food economy that sustains healthy food, farms, land and people."

We envision a thriving economy that truly values food and farming. Eaters know where their food comes from, who is growing it and how it is grown. Healthy, local food is convenient and accessible to all people. People are eating and cooking more vegetables, engaging with local farmers, experiencing their local food community and understanding the role of agriculture in their lives. Markets for local food are stable and strong and small and mid-size farms are growing more food, diversifying production, developing specialty products and exploring new and creative technologies to advance Vermont agriculture. Farms are profitable, stable and thriving. Farmers are sustaining our community and our community is sustaining our farmers.

Plan Objectives

1. Development of a strategic three-year plan to cultivate and promote understanding and support by those who live, work or study in Chittenden County for a local food economy that sustains healthy food, farms, land and people in Vermont.
2. Identify key target audiences and strategies for communication efforts.
3. Develop a community engagement approach to support the target audiences, outreach and marketing efforts.

Goal of the Plan

Create an affordable, actionable and measurable communications plan that provides a map for the IFH team and provides IFH farmer-producer-suppliers with resources they can easily integrate into their own communications efforts.

The Challenge

Intervale Food Hub is all but invisible now as a distinct brand or service offering. How can that be changed without cannibalizing CSAs or local producers?

Essentially, and from necessity during the Great Recession, the Master Frame body of work completed during the past seven years focused on "What" should be offered and communicated, with a focus on building a base of subscribers and farmer-producers.

It is the intention of this plan to build on the work of the IFH in creating the Master Frame and not to duplicate or radically alter this work. What is needed now is to create a plan to effectively and efficiently deliver refined messages to targeted audiences and the general public in a way that is fully embraced by mainstream Vermonters. This plan is focused squarely on the "How" and outlines both the strategies and tactics recommended for getting these messages to those who live, work or study in Chittenden County, local workplace employers, and Vermont farmers and producers.
Core Strategies

Building on lessons learned from past efforts nationally and in Vermont, Marketing Partners is recommending three core communication strategies including “Take the Middle”, “Build on Common Ground” and “Show, Don’t Tell.”

Take the Middle

The first strategy, “Take the Middle”, is designed to focus communication towards "regular" Vermonters in Chittenden County. Rather than spending time and resources talking essentially to the choir, the IFH discussed adopting a communication strategy designed to influence a broad base of consumers and community influencers. The “Take the Middle” strategy is best illustrated by the simple bell curve below with the two narrow ends representing detractors and supporters of investing in a sustainable, local-food economy and the middle representing mainstream Vermonters.

This is a classic social marketing approach to creating a new social norm. Given its mission and values, the IFH has no desire to increase its market share by competing with CSAs or local farmers — instead, the goal is to “grow the pie” for everyone serving the local food market.

Build on Common Ground

The second strategy is to “Build on Common Ground”. This strategy is directed at engaging workplace employers, farmer-producers and competitors, if willing, to build trust, cooperation and alignment of interests. The IFH workplace and farmer-producer-partnerships are almost by definition a diverse group of employers, farmers, value-added producers, and community organizations that will never be 100% aligned on every issue, but are part of the IFH because of a shared interest in the local food economy and Vermont’s future. The “Building Common Ground” approach will also help support a broad diverse supplier-partnership base for the IFH.

Show, Don’t Tell

The third strategy is for the Interval Food Hub and its farmer-producers to demonstrate through their actions, and then develop stories to share the principles and lessons learned from actively leading and participating in a sustainable local food economy. Whenever possible, subscriber-members, local town officials and other community members will be encouraged to share their success stories through the IFH. Authentic stories will resonate and will be shared to build a mini-movement where such behavior becomes the new social norm in Chittenden County.

All three of these strategies, “Take the Middle”, “Build on Common Ground,” and “Show, Don’t Tell” are designed to create and reinforce new social norms about local food system sustainability and the impact of food on the Vermont economy,
environment and society. While it is tempting to shape the argument by identifying the negative impact of mega-farms and other "heart-rendering" images; history shows these approaches do not work. Rather, there are newer studies that suggest that framing the argument in positive ways that embrace normative behavior are more effective. The power of social norms can be illustrated in results from a simple experiment of messaging that encouraged hotel guests to reuse the towels in their room's rather than put them in the laundry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Social Norms Change Behavior¹</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Message to Guests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HELP HOTEL SAVE ENERGY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTNER WITH US TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABOUT 75% OF GUESTS REUSE THEIR TOWEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% OF THE GUESTS WHO STAYED IN THIS ROOM REUSED THEIR TOWEL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This research is at the heart of many of the most successful behavior-change campaigns today, leveraging the actions of neighbors and friends to encourage consumers to take action, and it is this approach that is at the heart of the IFH Strategic Communications Plan. Our goal, over time, is to make supporting a sustainable local food economy the norm for Chittenden County Vermonters in "The Middle."

**Plan Requirements**

Marketing Partners has discussed with the IFH team what they needed from the communications plan in order for their stakeholders to have full buy-in and participation. These discussions articulated that the plan needed to consist of:

- Measureable goals/metrics
- Shared vision/compatible/mission alignment
- Efficient/not reinventing the wheel
- Broadening the base/allies/more diverse/ collective input
- Public appeal/education/broad movement building

Additionally, it is clear that this plan must cost-effectively build a movement for public support of a sustainable local food economy. The IFH cannot compete with the large media budgets of competitors or mega-food corporations. The plan, therefore, must apply practical, tactical and easily implementable approaches that do not require additional funding or resources for paid advertising after three years.

A very important aspect of this project is the development of a plan designed to coordinate with IFH outreach efforts so IFH farmer-suppliers take an active role in the communication effort. There will need to be a sufficient sense of "what's in it for me" for each farmer-supplier that it will be willing to spend the time and effort needed to participate. This is not a reflection of the farmer-supplier’s commitment to sustainable food issues, but recognition of competing demands for resources. Therefore this communication strategy approach will require not only the buy-in from farmer-suppliers, but provide them with resources that become part of their own communications strategy and toolkit.

Key Audiences

While there are many important segments of the Chittenden County Vermont public this plan could address, as well as interest groups that could be targeted, we recognize that an affordable and efficient plan must focus its resources on the top priorities. At a series of in-person meetings with the IFH team, we identified the following key groups as our top priority (in order):

1. Sustainable Mainstream (Persuadables, The Middle)
2. Business & Community Hosts (Influencers)
3. Farmers/ Producers
4. The Base (Local Food Community & Long-time Supporters)

Marketing Partners built on previous research efforts by the IFH on the rich body of information on campaigns in other states, to answer questions about these groups, including:

- What does this group currently believe about local and organic food?
- Where do we want them to be in three years?
- What opportunities do we have to move them there?
- What barriers do we face getting there?
- Who are these groups' trusted sources?
# Audience Needs and Wants

The following chart presents a distillation from earlier research and conversations that were part of this process and provided insights that will be addressed in the communications plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Group</th>
<th>Base (Local Food Community &amp; Long-time Supporters)</th>
<th>Sustainable Mainstream (Persuadables, <em>The Middle</em>)</th>
<th>Business &amp; Community Leaders/Hosts (Influencers)</th>
<th>Farmers/Producers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT THEY BELIEVE NOW</strong></td>
<td>We've been at this a long time; all is well — why are you shaking things up?</td>
<td>WHO are you? Wish we could afford it; focused on other issues like jobs, housing, child care, health care</td>
<td>Family, employee and business roles changing, but not sure what to do; not sure how IFH and food system contributes to bottom line or economy; welcome ways to save money and help community</td>
<td>Are you another competitor? Already being done by state and farm-to-plate; not a priority; busy with other issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHERE WE WANT THEM IN 3 YEARS</strong></td>
<td>Engaged and proud Champions, empowered and confident we can make this happen</td>
<td>The local food economy is key to a sustainable natural, human and social solution for Vermont; a sustainable local food system is essential, not just ‘good’</td>
<td>See local food system as a long-term investment and a solution to controlling health and social service costs and building the economy.</td>
<td>It’s too risky (and too much hard work) NOT to participate in a sustainable, local food system; I want more consumers and successful producers in my area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPPORTUNITIES / MOTIVATORS?</strong></td>
<td>People like to be part of something successful; recognition for local successful efforts and partnerships; make them heroes</td>
<td>Build neighborhood networks; more quality food jobs makes it all more real; highlight success (and local farmers and producers) in every town to make it more visible</td>
<td>Case studies, PR; engagement with peers; recognition for local officials; promote successful business hosts and local partnerships</td>
<td>Raise the status and income of farmers and producers; value of not wasting resources (natural, human and financial); make farmers and producers heroes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BARRIERS / CONCERNS?</strong></td>
<td>Misinformation; system complexity; fear of change; loss of initial ‘elite’ status if everybody’s doing it</td>
<td>Lack of time to prepare food or knowledge on how to do it; misinformation; system complexity; unfamiliar mental model; cost; fear of unknown</td>
<td>Competing pressures; limited space availability; return on investment</td>
<td>Access to financing or capital to make changes; don’t understand the system or the economics; competing pressures; short-term focus; inertia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRUSTED SOURCES / MESSENGERS</strong></td>
<td>Peers; social media; traditional media</td>
<td>Peers; social media; traditional media if they hear it enough</td>
<td>Business peers; faith-based; trade associations; employees; customers</td>
<td>Peers, state, business and social organizations; media if they highlight their role</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Positioning

A positioning statement defines the mental position a company and its products/services wants to hold in customers’ minds, in relation to its competitors. It is the touchstone for developing new products, creative copy, and designs for advertising, marketing, and public relations efforts.

The Intervale Food Hub is a local food sourcing, distributor and direct-to-consumer delivery service for people who live, work and learn in Chittenden County and who value fresh, local, good tasting foods and specialty products. Unlike traditional grocery stores, CSAs or health food stores/co-ops, Intervale Food Hub hand-selects the best foods and specialty products from multiple Vermont farmers and producers and verifies that they follow sustainable production practices and delivers to a convenient location near you, to make it easy, convenient and affordable for its subscriber-members to eat healthy while contributing to the sustainability of Vermont’s communities and farmers.

Key Messages

General Audience
1. The Intervale Food Hub sources high quality, local produce, meats and specialty food items from a select group of Vermont farmers and producers and delivers direct to its subscriber-members at multiple sites throughout Chittenden County.

2. The Intervale Food Hub makes it easy, convenient and affordable for Vermonters to eat healthy and support the sustainability of Vermont communities and farmers.

3. Intervale Food Hub, a nonprofit organization owned and managed by the Intervale Center, was formed in 2007.

Farmers
1. The IFH collaborates with select Vermont farmers and producers to help plan their annual production, verify their production practices and provide its subscriber-members with guaranteed product traceability and transparency.

2. Qualified farmers and producers rely on the Intervale Food Hub to offer a stable market and fair prices for their products.

3. IFH farmers and producers enjoy ongoing technical assistance and support from the IFH to help them diversify production, improve farm viability and ultimately, improve the farmer’s quality of life.

Employers/Civic Centers/Schools
1. Participating employers and host sites are supporting the sustainability of Vermont communities and farmers.

2. Participating employers are providing a valuable wellness benefit by making it easy and convenient for their employees to eat healthy, fresh, local foods.

3. Happy and healthy employees are productive employees.

Subscribers-Members
1. IFH makes it easy, convenient and affordable for its subscriber-members to enjoy high quality local foods while supporting the sustainability of Vermont communities and farmers. (mention delivery?)
2. IFH subscriber-members enjoy the health benefits of eating local, fresh foods with the knowledge of who grows it, where and how it is produced. (They know their food and know their farmer.)

3. Intervale Food Hub members can choose from a variety of year-round subscription options and sizes and they can customize their weekly deliveries with an a la carte menu featuring Vermont specialty food items like cheeses, yogurt, syrup and chocolates.

4. IFH members receive storage tips, farmer profiles, recipes and other information from the IFH weekly newsletter.

**Implications for the Strategic Communications Plan**

There are common themes that run across discussions of these audience groups that helped inform the direction of the Strategic Communications Plan. Key among these are:

- The importance of highlighting Local Food Economy successes, which helps make taking these actions less daunting, more understandable, and more achievable.
- Provide the media with content that makes Local Food Economy principles easy to understand.
- Showcasing successes helps make Local Food Economy players more visible.
- An understanding that a Local Food System isn’t simply a farm or delivery service issue but more broadly, an economic driver for the state. This also reinforces vision and messaging priorities.

The opportunity to positively shape the Local Food System message through successful examples, financially smart investments, and the heroes that have driven these successes is at the heart of this strategic plan and contributes to building a new social norm. The objective is to push out an abundance of positive local food system messages over three years across strategically targeted channels to reach and influence our key groups. Ultimately supporting local food system actions will be seen as the norm for elected officials, small and large business owners, community leaders, farm/producer personnel and “The Middle.”
How Do We Get There?

Tactics for Implementing the IFH Marketing Plan

As we launch the IFH Marketing Program in Year 1, we will begin with a phased approach and implementation processes that will help set the groundwork for building on success with more expansive efforts in years two and three.

In Year 1, we suggest implementing the following four key tasks for the Interval Food Hub in sequential order:

#1 Develop a Recognizable Brand

A key element of the strategic plan is building visibility and a case for a sustainable food economy across Chittenden County and to the identified key groups by developing a brand that supports IFH goals. This brand will include the tagline and image that most resonate with "The Middle" and help build the case for why a local-food system is an integral part of Vermont's economic, health, natural and human future.

The brand work will be executed through website, name/logo, tagline, collateral materials, social media and public relations materials as well as the additional executions listed below. The brand will become a "trusted source" for key groups.

#2 Create an Integrated Website-Social Media Hub and Outreach Materials

IFH will create a newly branded website and blog, travel displays and evolving subscriber-member, workplace hosting, and farmer/producer outreach toolkits, which serve as a hub for media and IFH to have easy access to stories and available research to tell compelling stories that promote a sustainable local food economy.

A travel display includes a branded banner/board and materials to use at tabling events, or a mock farmers market/pop-up store to use at events and trainings.

The toolkits contain brand elements, fact sheets, as well as tools for dealing with local media, social media and community leaders.

The website serves as a go-to-site for the media, and its integrated blog as a place to house local food system facts, recipes, photos and Champion success stories. The site will house success stories and messaging designed for social media sharing. In addition the site will link to publically available data and research that tell the human, economic, and societal impact of Vermonters supporting a sustainable local food system. The website will become a go-to site for media to learn about local food in Chittenden County and easily find examples of what is happening across Vermont.

#3 Build a Collection of Creative Materials for Use in a P-O-E-M Framework

IFH will begin building a collection of video, digital, TV, radio and print materials that can work flexibly and in an integrated fashion within what is sometimes described as a Paid-Owned-Earned-Media (P-O-E-M) framework. For example, an initial local food system story could be produced as a short video (under 3 minutes) that can be used on YouTube and embedded in the website, as well as in a 30-second version for use as a TV ad, plus a 15-second version for use as online as a pre-roll ad before a local news video. The graphics used in the video could also be used on the website and in social media and print.
The collection of creative materials will grow over time so something is available for each core message, audience segment, and stage of involvement with the IFH marketing program.

#4 Tell Stories: "Local Food Champions"

Farmer/Producer and Workplace Host stories create an opportunity to tell the causal story of why a local food system action was taken (the problem or opportunity addressed), how it was done and the positive results.

These stories articulate the various motivations for Vermonters who are advancing the local food system, from wanting to eat good, healthy food personally, strengthen the local economy, create more resilient communities or address workforce development. In addition, the stories create a series of "paths" that other similar Vermonters can follow, or a model for action. Collectively, over time, these stories contribute to creating a new social norm for how Vermonters relate to the local food system. Every host location, local town and IFH farmer/producer is a potential “hero” that can be identified and championed. The intent would be to distribute these packaged "success stories" through a variety of channels (unpaid and paid), and engage IFH farmer/producers in sharing these stories out as well. Throughout the year there will be a new local food system success story promoted across media outlets, from traditional media, to trade publications to social media. And because these are Vermont stories about Vermonters, we expect that they will be re-posted by friends, organizations and supporters of these heroes, increasing the likelihood that these stories will go viral.

As pointed out in an article in The New York Times on August 9, 2013 focusing on what we "like", positive stories, examples, and models for changing behavior are powerful tools to influence others.²

"If you “like” this article on a site like Facebook, somebody who reads it is more likely to approve of it, even if the reporting and writing are not all that great."

But surprisingly, an unfair negative reaction will not spur others to dislike the article. Instead, a thumbs-down view will soon be counteracted by thumbs up from other readers.

Those are the implications of new research looking at the behavior of thousands of people reading online comments, scientists reported in November 2013 in the journal Science.³ A positive nudge, they said, can set off a bandwagon of approval. “Hype can work,” said one of the researchers, Sinan K. Aral, a professor of information technology and marketing at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, “and feed on itself as well.”

Our central approach is to highlight Local Food System Champions in Chittenden County. The intent is to profile successful projects and people that are yielding results. The focus would be to champion community leaders, elected officials, small business owners, large business leaders, and farm/producer workers, who have taken on a project and improved outcomes, reduced waste, or improved the quality of life in Vermont.

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Plan Success Metrics

Based on decisions made in the business plan about the tactics and marketing budget level, the following metrics should be considered to determine which specific elements are to be measured as part of this marketing program and identified at the outset to establish appropriate tracking mechanisms. Each communication tactic needs clearly defined metrics for success.

1. Measure success: Public participation and subscriber-member engagement around issue/messages
   - Number of visits to IFH website and blog
   - Number Placements in traditional press
   - Number of Placements in vertical or specialized media
   - Number of newsletter/update subscribers
   - Number of Social media posts
   - Number of Social media followers
   - Percent Social media engagement (likes, retweets, sharing, mentions)
   - Number of IFH messages, keywords and hashtags across media channels

2. Measure success: IFH farmer-producer participation
   - Percent of IFH farmer-producers involved in marketing program in any way
   - Number of supplier-partners nominating Champions
   - Number of farmer-producers Champions identified and profiled
   - Number of new farmer-producers recruited for IFH

4. Measure success: Subscriber-member customers
   - Number of new subscriber-member customers
   - Number of returning subscriber-member customers

5. Measure success: Ideally, polling of the public concerning local food issues (prior to launch and at the end of the program) gauging positive movement:
   - Awareness of the IFH
   - Importance of local food system to Vermont
   - Changes in beliefs, attitudes and behaviors
Detailed Action Plan

See joint Smartsheet file for integrated Communication Plan shared with the IFH team at: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/home?lx=ltpTPlVprqYoLz9sU7GhyA
Marketing Budget

These are representative costs for what have been identified as priority tactics in the marketing plan.

1. Basic Website
   The development of a basic (easy to use and maintain) Content Management System (CMS) website (with blog functionality) using a popular platform (WordPress), and including minor customization to enhance the visual appearance. The content will be based on your existing website, and training and user guide will enable you to update regularly.
   **Cost:** $5,000 - $7,500.

2. Pick-up Location Poster
   The design and production of one evergreen (timeless) color poster for IFH pick-sites. Includes stock photography.
   **Cost:** $850 + printing (suggested allowance of $500)

3. Travel Display
   Depending on your needs (and venues, i.e., outdoor or indoor), this would include the design and production for a fitted custom table skirt, table top display and two 45” pull-up banners with stands. Custom photography additional if needed.
   **Cost:** $2,800

4. Public relations retainer (with integrated social media support)
   A retainer arrangement provides a predictable level of service and budget for each month. In addition to implementing your overall marketing PR strategy and plan, typical components in a PR program are included.
   **Cost:** $3,000 per month ($36,000 for one year)

5. Pop-up Store
   We believe a temporary pop-up store could be developed from existing (and proposed) materials (such as, the travel display, pick up location poster and customer baskets). A more elaborate pop-up store could be budgeted and planned for another year.
   **Cost:** None

6. Fact sheets
   A series of 6 fact sheets featuring more unusual (or unfamiliar) vegetables (with stock photography), description and potential uses. These fact sheets would have multiple uses (website, blog, public relations, etc.).
   **Cost:** $1,500 for design template and first six fact sheets designed; IFH would be able to produce additional sheets as needed. Printing additional.

7. Identity & Branding
   Build a new identity based on the existing IFH name, word mark and icon; develop color palette and apply new mark to existing materials; develop basic style guide and art files to enable consistent use.
   **Cost:** $3,000 - $7,000
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Name</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Feb</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Plan Finalized</td>
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<td>Writing website content</td>
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<td>Build coding pages and optimize images</td>
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<td>Relaunch site and promote</td>
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<td>Staff training and website user manual</td>
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<td>Ongoing Website Updates</td>
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<td>Add weekly delivery information</td>
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<td>Add new recipes</td>
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<td>Update Featured Producers, Stores, Photos</td>
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<td>LOGO &amp; IDENTITY REFRESH</td>
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<td>Creative platform/brief</td>
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<td>Briefing designers</td>
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<td>Develop round #1 concepts</td>
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<td>Develop round #2 designs</td>
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<td>Final design &amp; style guide to IFH</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARKETING MATERIALS</td>
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<td>Posters for pickup locations</td>
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<td>Develop tabletop display materials</td>
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<td>Potential EVENTS to table at/participate in(s)</td>
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<td>WYSHWYG 2015</td>
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<td>Eat By Northeast 2015</td>
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<td>Burlington Wine &amp; Food Fest</td>
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<td>S-RM (Burlington area group)</td>
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<td>Kids Day - Burlington</td>
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<td>Summervale &amp; other Intervale events</td>
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<td>CORE PR &amp; Social Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>News Releases</td>
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<td>Develop and distribute 1 major news release quarterly, OR 1 - 2 basic news releases per month to announce new farm-producers, milestones, speaking opportunities.</td>
<td>IFH</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Intervale Food Hub

## Creative Platform for 2015

| Service Definition | Intervale Food Hub, an enterprise of the 501c3 nonprofit Intervale Center, is a local food sourcing, distributor and direct-to-consumer delivery service for people who live, work and learn in Chittenden County.

Intervale Food Hub hand-selects the best foods and specialty products from multiple Vermont farmers and producers and verifies that they follow sustainable production practices to make it easy, convenient and affordable for its subscriber-members to eat healthy while contributing to the sustainability of Vermont’s communities and farmers. |
|---|---|
| Target Audiences | PRIMARY

- The “Middle” (mainstream Vermonters in Chittenden County)
- Business and Community Hosts (influencers)
- Farmer-producers

SECONDARY

- The Base (local food community and long-time supporters) |
| Broad Goals | **•** Inspire mainstream Vermonters in Chittenden County to eat fresh, local foods and support local farms

**•** Make supporting a sustainable local food economy the norm for Chittenden County Vermonters in the “middle”

**•** Build on Common Ground (targeting current member-subscribers, host sites, farmer-producers and competitors) to build trust, cooperation and alignment of interests to “grow the pie” for those who participate in and support a local food economy

**•** Build awareness and enthusiasm for the Intervale Food Hub, its mission, vision, approach, and services (while not cannibalizing current CSAs)

**•** Create an environment where the Intervale |
| **Food Hub ‘brand’ is easily recognized among the mainstream public in Chittenden County** |
| • Educate target audiences on the economic, environmental and health advantages/benefits of supporting local farms and eating high quality, fresh, locally grown foods |

| **Communication Objectives** |
| *(Desired results. What do we want the audience to think, feel or do? Ideally, these are SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant to communication activities, time-bound results.)* |
| • Stimulate increased number seasonal member subscriptions *(increase by XX% year-over-year)* |
| • Increase satisfaction level and retention for seasonal subscriber-members *(increase by XX% year-over-year)* |
| • Increase inquiries and retention for farmer-producers *(increase by XX% year-over-year)* |
| • Increase traffic to IFH website *(increase by XX% year-over-year)* |
| • Develop subscriber database *(increase by XX% year-over-year)* |
| • Increase sharing/engagement in IFH social media activities *(increase by XX% year-over-year)* |

| **Key Messages** |
| *(What is the single most important benefit to the audience?)* |
| **General audience:** |
| • IFH sources high quality, local produce, meats and specialty food items from a select group of Vermont farmers and producers and delivers direct to its subscriber-members at multiple sites throughout Chittenden County |
| • IFH makes it easy, convenient and affordable for Vermonters to eat healthy and support the sustainability of Vermont communities and farmers |
| **Farmers:** |
| • IFH collaborates with select Vermont farmers and producers to help plan their annual production, verify their production practices and provide its subscriber-members with guaranteed product traceability and transparency |
| • Qualified farmers and producers rely on the Intervale Food Hub to offer a stable market and fair prices for their products |
• IFH farmers and producers enjoy ongoing technical assistance and support from the IFH to help them diversify production, improve farm viability and ultimately, improve the farmer’s quality of life

**Subscriber-Members:**

- IFH makes it easy, convenient and affordable for its subscriber-members to enjoy high quality local foods while supporting the sustainability of Vermont communities and farmers
- IFH subscriber-members enjoy the health benefits of eating local, fresh foods with the knowledge of who grows it, where and how it is produced. (They know their food and know their farmer.)
- IFH members can choose from a variety of year-round subscription options and sizes
- IFH members receive storage tips, farmer profiles, recipes and other information from the IFH weekly newsletter and blog

**Business/Community Hosts: (lowest priority audience)**

- Participating host sites are supporting the sustainability of Vermont communities and farmers
- Participating employers are providing a valuable wellness benefit by making it easy and convenient for their employees to eat healthy, fresh, local foods
- Happy and healthy employees are productive employees

| Communication Vehicles | 1. Refine logo (apply mark to existing materials)  
|                       | 2. Improved website with new color palette (based on logo refinement) and blog functionality with fresh look to appeal to target audiences (website to house success stories, food system facts, recipes, photos)  
<p>|                       | 3. IFH blog (serve as cornerstone for IFH social media activities) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Pick-up location posters</th>
<th>5. Travel, pop-up display</th>
</tr>
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</table>

**Support**  
*(What are the supporting rational or emotional ‘reasons to believe’?)*

*Source: Multiple economic development reports. See examples at National Good Food Network [http://www.ngfn.org/resources/research-1](http://www.ngfn.org/resources/research-1)*

- Buying local is good for the local economy
- Fresh food is healthy
- Members are supporting their community and local farmers
- Members are learning to eat seasonally
- Members become more connected to their food and where it comes from.

**Tone & Manner**  
*(Adjectives which describe the product/service personality)*

Real/authentic, knowledgeable, friendly, down-to-earth, transparent, community feel

**Design Considerations**

- Clean, open and fresh from the farm
- Bright, vibrant photos (food should look freshly from the farm delicious), but also convey sustainability, environmental consciousness, organic look and feel
- NOT heavily murky, bland or dark colors

**Required Elements**

- Intervale Food Hub logo
- Website address
- Social media sharing icons
- Subscription option for blog
- Other contact info (phone, email)

**Timing**

- Logo work: December 2014-January 2015
- New website & blog (Jan-March 2015)
- Posters (April)
**Project Overview**

Development of a basic (easy to use and maintain) Content Management System (CMS) website with blog functionality using a popular platform (WordPress), and including minor customization to enhance the visual appearance and complement new IFH color palette and logo.

**Target Audiences**

**PRIMARY**
- The “Middle” (mainstream Vermonters who live, learn or work in Chittenden County)
- Farmer-producers
- Employers, Business and Community leaders (influencers)

**SECONDARY**
- The Base (local food community and long-time supporters)

**Website Goals**

- Serve as a resource on the economic, environmental & health benefits of a robust local food market
- Become a key go-to source for local food media
- Help build and foster relationships with subscriber/members
- Provide accessible information that makes it easier to imagine success (especially for first-time subscribers), such as recipes, how to subscribe to IFH, blog posts about the local food economy and producers, plus newsroom items
- Make it easier to sustain relationships with Vermont IFH farmer partners and to share their stories (in multi-media formats)
- Serve as a transparent source for people who want to know where their food comes from, who is growing it and how it is grown
- Build IFH’s reputation and brand equity
- Educate users on the Intervale Food Hub, its mission, vision, approach, and services
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Website Communication Objectives (and Suggested Metrics)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Technical Elements</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Stimulate visits to new website [Number of web sessions, users and average pages per session to increase website traffic from xxx per year to yyy per year.]</td>
<td>• WordPress content management system (CMS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Motivate potential members and farmer-producers to contact IFH and/or subscribe online [Number of website-generated form inquiries and online subscriptions submitted]</td>
<td>• Integrated blog, with subscription option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create awareness of IFH’s services and mission. [Combined number of inquiries from email, telephone and website]</td>
<td>• Responsive theme for desktop, tablet and mobile devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make it easy for visitors to find general information on IFH subscriptions, sourcing priorities, farmer-producers and the broad array of options for eating, cooking &amp; serving fresh, local food [pageviews of the educational areas of the site, e.g., about us, farmer-producers, resource food information]</td>
<td>• Page layout templates for home page and sub pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engage visitors, i.e., stickiness of IFH website. [Average Session Duration]</td>
<td>• Transfer of existing website content into new site</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Design Considerations</strong></th>
<th><strong>Technical Elements</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Bright, vibrant photography (food should look delicious), but also convey sustainability, environmental consciousness, organic look and feel</td>
<td>• Image optimization and placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Extensive use of photos (people and food to convey community, health, sustainability, etc.)</td>
<td>• Contact form page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Able to handle multi-media formats</td>
<td>• Follow links to existing social media accounts</td>
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</table>

Marketing Partners, Inc.  December 2014
| Required Elements | • Intervale Food Hub logo  
• Social media sharing and follow icons  
• Blog section  
• Subscription option for blog  
• Other contact info (phone, email) |
|-------------------|---|
| Timing            | • New website needed for start of Summer 2015 subscriptions (March 2015)  
• Blog may be implemented after core site launch |
| Budget            | $5,000 - $7,500 |

**Sample Local and Benchmark Websites:**

- City Market (Burlington)  
  [https://www.citymarket.coop/](https://www.citymarket.coop/)
- Healthy Living Market (So. Burlington)  
- Red Tomato  
- Eatwell Farm CSA  
- Heron Pond Farm (NH)  
- The Farm at Eastman’s Corners (NH)  
  [http://eastmanscorner.com/about/](http://eastmanscorner.com/about/)
- Rutland Area Farm and Food Link  
Core Content Areas/ Preliminary Site Map:

[Information Site]