

Little Bang Poster Contest

Session 1 Awardee

Stephanie Lew & Anna Gomes

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Team Members:

Stephanie Lew, Environmental Science and Management, fourth year undergraduate

Anna Gomes, Agricultural and Environmental Education, fourth year undergraduate

Business Overview: The Ugly Food Market is dedicated to reducing food waste and eliminating food insecurity. By focusing on “ugly food”, the Ugly Food Market is a marketplace place which offers discounted fresh produce and a unique line of prepared foods, such as breads, soups, and sauces. Without UFM, the produce would otherwise end up producing methane in a landfill and contributing to the 40% of food wasted in the United States.

Inspiration to Compete: Dedicated to moving our entrepreneurial idea forward, we are hungry for feedback and enthusiastic to build our network. After competing in the poster competition in May of 2017, we were excited to share our progress with the Little Bang entrepreneurs. We are passionate about UFM and are eager to gain the necessary skills to be successful. The Big Bang workshop series offers us the guidance and resources critical to moving our business to the next level.

Blog Post:

The Ugly Food Market has grown in support and complexity since the beginning of our journey through the UC Davis Graduate School of Management. During Session 1 the UFM poster received positive feedback pertaining to our colorful display of images and informative statements. One factor missing from our poster was a clear business model. For our Session 2 poster, we plan on revitalizing the images to display the path from the source of ugly food to the marketplace, as fresh produce or processed food. By illustrating the supply chain and processing line, this will create a clear portrait of the UFM business concept. In addition to fixing our poster, we plan on expanding our market survey and interviewing more farmers, grocery stores, and

potential consumers. We plan to conduct at least ten more interviews and will attend a local farmers market in early January 2018.

Furthermore, we need to establish five standard questions for each interview group. The market survey is crucial for confirming that our business solution matches the appropriate need. For farmers, we need to confirm their desire to donate “seconds”, and any produce which grew too small, too large, or is misshapen for strict grocery store standards. For grocery stores, we need to confirm their willingness to donate produce which is overly ripe, misshapen, or simply unsold and to be quickly replaced by fresher fruits and vegetables. For food processing facilities, we need to contact the correct employee for our request. When attempting to contact grocery stores and food processors, we have had difficulties with reaching a representative who will converse with us. Moving forward, we need to find contacts within the UC Davis community who would connect us with the major players in the food retail industry. Learning from our mistakes in market surveying, we need to approach these major players with the “win-win” scenario. UFM would make sorting and disposing of produce easier for grocery stores, allowing these sometimes targeted businesses to claim their “green” or environmental stewardship as a marketing technique. By illustrating the benefits to our potential suppliers, we can convince them to support UFM as beneficial to all parties involved. In attempting to conduct consumer surveys, we need to decide on five to ten standard questions and begin to survey large, diverse groups. One idea we will execute prior to Session 2 is handing out written surveys at club meetings, seminar classes, and hopefully reach potential consumers from outside the college realm.

Besides our market survey, the UFM team needs to make decisions regarding our legal status as a business. Wanting to the UFM to act as a social enterprise, keeping the community and the environment at the forefront of all business decisions, we must decide between the for-profit traditional model compared to a non-profit organization. By interviewing both types of entrepreneurs and discussing our challenge with investment firms, we hope to reach a conclusion. Every successful entrepreneurial team has at least one mentor who provides guidance and serves as a pragmatic filter. We are planning on contacting a few different professors at UC Davis, aiming to set up meetings in early January 2018s. One crucial skill we will need to run a business recovering food waste, is food safety and postharvest science. At UC Davis, we have the incredible expertise of the Postharvest Lab, whom we plan to contact as well.

One of the most exciting aspects of Session 1, was the enthusiasm expressed by those who would like to contribute to the UFM's success. We had multiple individuals offer to help with the website, financial planning, and food insecurity research from a community health perspective. Additionally, we will establish a system of expanding UFM's team and conduct large team meetings, bringing everyone who is interested to the table. With the progress we hope to see on our business idea, our goal is to have a website and Instagram page published by the Session 2 competition. Our elevator pitch and executive summary need extensive work and practice as well. Looking forward, the Ugly Food Market team is ready to move our ideas to reality and start tackling the obstacles which lie ahead. Lettuce love food and reduce waste, allowing ugly to be the new beautiful, and jump start UFM as a pioneering effort to turn the 40% into merely crumbs.