

Social Business Plan Competition Submission

Planting the Seed

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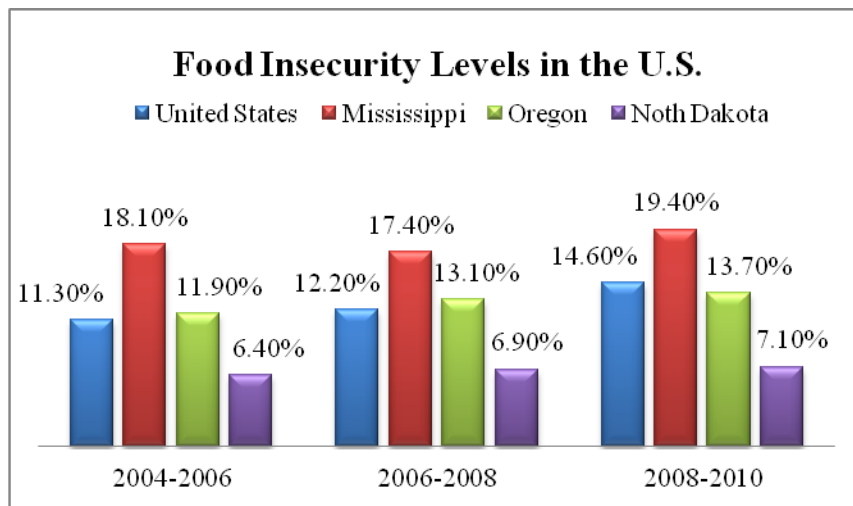
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Institution: Western Oregon University

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Social Problem Addressed - The Social Business Opportunity

Food insecurity is a growing issue nationwide, especially in Oregon. Food security means having constant access to sufficient amounts of nutritious food. Obesity and improper nutrition are serious consequences of low food security. The social business opportunity here is to promote food security among Oregonians. We seek to: encourage Oregonians to eat fresh fruits and vegetables, provide education about how important fresh foods are for the body, and improve the availability of fresh and nutritious food in some areas of Oregon. Inspiring Oregonians to take an interest in healthy eating, gardening, and the agricultural opportunities available could have a huge impact in fighting obesity and disease for generations to come.



The graph above shows the states that have the lowest, middle, and highest percentage of food security in the U.S. as well as the national average.

Solution Proposed - Business Model, Product/Services/Programs

The solution to the lack of food security in Oregon is to involve more students in successful and educational gardening programs. Planting the Seed will provide low cost comprehensive gardening kits to schools ensuring successful gardens. The goals of the gardening kits are: to provide an opportunity for students to engage in gardening, to educate the students about the importance of eating fresh food, and to involve families in order to teach and promote food security in the community. The kits will include soil, seeds, fertilizer, watering supplies, a wheelbarrow, tools, pre-assembled raised beds, and an optional shed. The kit will also include educational material, a plan for coordinating the garden, information on how to harvest the garden, and a guide for school kitchens on how to incorporate the food into school meals. Gardening kits will be customized to best fit particular levels of education and regions in Oregon. As Senator Wyden made clear by his support for the new farm bill, it is very important for Oregonians to reinvest in Oregon agriculture and for schools to supply their students with locally grown, fresh, and nutritious food.

Organization Structure

Planting the Seed will be a not-for-profit organization comprised of six employees and an indeterminate number of volunteers from the Polk County area. The general manager will manage the overall operations of the company and plan for expansion. The two assistant managers will be responsible for marketing, finances, managing orders, arranging donations, assembling and delivering the kits. The educational advisor will develop educational plans customized for each school depending on size and education level. The gardening advisor will choose the contents of the kits and provide a plan for a successful garden that will involve the students. The graphic designer will be responsible for designing all the educational and marketing material for the business.

Marketing Analysis and Strategy

Currently, Oregon has approximately 1,984 schools with roughly 160 existing school gardening programs. Planting the Seed will market and sell our product to the remaining 1,824 schools. Our marketing efforts will be focused mainly on schools in Polk County for the first year and will expand outward to other counties in Oregon as the business grows in years 2-5. Marketing to schools will be accomplished by direct mailing and emailing the marketing materials including prices, supplies, features, and

benefits. Once a school has purchased a kit, they will receive customer support for the first year and recommendations for resupplying garden materials. Marketing to organizations for donations, discounts, and information will be addressed through email, phone, and personal meetings. These organizations include the OSU Extension Service, The Lane County Garden Project, Oregon Nurseryman's Association, Bi-Mart, Lowe's, and Home Depot.

Launch Strategy

Planting the Seed will have headquarters in Dallas, Oregon. This will allow for a low cost building and central location to much of Oregon. During the first year, Planting the Seed will progress through six phases to build a foundation for further expansion.

Year one launch strategy phases:

- I. Conduct marketing research in the Polk County area to determine the viability of the product.
- II. Hire employees and recruit volunteers from the Polk County area, and determine the contents of the gardening kits.
- III. Secure a location for the office, finalize product development, and begin marketing to the community for donations and discounts.
- IV. Market to schools in Polk County showing them our program and the prototype of the kits available for purchase.
- V. Deliver kits and provide customer support via phone and email.
- VI. Develop plans for expansion including personal kits to be marketed toward families of the students and new areas to market our product.

Financial Plan and Sustainability

Planting the Seed will rely on cash donations and owner investment for startup costs. After initial startup costs, Planting the Seed will focus on seeking donations in the form of supplies and materials to keep costs of the kits as low as possible.

Gross Margin For One Kit Based on School Population of 700	
Revenue	\$2,500
Supplies (Including 8, 4' x 8' raised beds)	\$1,200
Printing Materials	\$300
Shed	\$400
Delivery (optional)	\$100
Total Expenses	\$2,000
Gross Margin	\$500

Planting the Seed's Estimated Five Year Budget			
The Year and amount of schools being targeted	Year 1 (20 Schools)	Year 2-4 (40 Schools per year)	Year 5 (60 Schools)
Yearly Gross Margin	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$30,000
Pay Roll	\$2,000	\$9,000	\$15,000
Pay Roll Taxes 15%	\$450	\$1,500	\$2,250
Office Rent	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Computer	\$400	\$400	\$400
Marketing Materials	\$400	\$800	\$1,200
Liability Insurance (\$2,000,000 plan)	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400
Organizational Costs	\$150	\$150	\$150
Total Expenses	\$9,800	\$18,250	\$25,400
Net Margin	\$200	\$1,750	\$4,600

Impact Summary - Social Benefits

Planting the Seed will provide young Oregonians with education about how to grow gardens, the benefits of eating fresh food, and the importance of increasing food security in Oregon. Encouraging young Oregonians to take an interest in gardening will help to decrease obesity and disease due to poor nutrition. We can help to secure the health of future generations by inspiring the young to take a stand for food security.