ROOTED IN VERMONT GRASSROOTS MARKETING PLAN

Prepared for Vermont Farm to Plate Network Consumer Education & Marketing Working Group

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Campaign Goal: To increase purchases of Vermont food by Vermonters in the local food economy by 3% by 2021.

To achieve this goal, three sequential objectives have been identified:

1. Increase awareness of local food options and ways to participate Vermont’s agricultural economy.
2. Increase participation in local food economy.
3. Increase purchasing of local foods by Vermonters.

Target Audiences: Mainstream Vermont consumers not already committed to the local food movement who primarily shop at grocery/retail stores.

Outdoor Enthusiasts participating in outdoor activities leads to a deeper appreciation for the food that is grown or raised on Vermont land and the role the people who care for the land or animals play in our overall wellbeing as a state. Being in nature and exploring the outdoors offers a greater understanding of how essential the health of a local food system is to the health of our state and communities. Their recreational pursuits will show the Outdoor Enthusiast the local food side of Vermont by taking them to the back roads and outside their regular travel patterns, where they will encounter farms on the way to the forests. They will develop an affinity for fresh food and regularly seek it out, even when not headed out for recreational purposes.

Value Driven Shoppers will appreciate a better understanding how accessible local food is and how it can fit into their lives. Coupons would be preferable to CSAs, particularly local food coupons applied at chain grocery stores. A barter network (trading farm work for services or other product) would be appealing. Understanding that food that is less processed and is more healthy in the long term would appeal to the value-driven shopper.
**Working Young Professionals** are working to build their families, careers, and connections. They will identify with local food as a time-saving, and in some cases money-saving asset. In light of the social implications of food, they will also see local food as a way to build community through social interaction for adults and children. They’ll connect to local food through farm-to-school, local gardens, fairs and festivals, and growing their own food with their families.

*Vermonters representing these target audiences participated in focus groups around the state to help inform the development of grassroots marketing efforts to increase consumer demand. These consumers helped develop the brand promise and the Rooted in Vermont concept.*

**Brand Promise:** Rooted in Vermont is a grassroots change movement to increase consumer demand for local food. By celebrating all Vermonters’ connections to local food, Rooted in Vermont intends to create a movement that connects tradition, pride, community, trust, and equity to local food. Grassroots marketing efforts targeted towards Vermonters not already committed to the local food movement will aim to stimulate increased awareness, participation, and purchases in Vermont’s local food economy and help local food consumption become mainstream in the next 5-10 years.

![Flow chart of interactions between awareness, participation, purchase](image-url)

*Figure 1. Flow chart of interactions between awareness, participation, purchase*
Rooted in Vermont: A four month social media pilot to test if the concept “Rooted in Vermont” resonates with target audiences.

The results of the Rooted in Vermont social media pilot (July – November 2016) have shown through content, images, videos, and engagement online that the concept “Rooted in Vermont” is resonating with a growing number of Vermonters not already committed to the local food movement. Vermonters in the target audiences feel motivated enough to share their experiences with local food online and to share the content being produced by Rooted in Vermont social channels. This is an indicator of the strength and viability of the concept that Vermonters value their individual relationship with the tradition of local food and validates that this is a conversation Vermonters are interested in continuing. Social media feedback and analytics helped inform the development of the Rooted in Vermont grassroots marketing plan.

Campaign Timeline: 2017-2021

The three campaign objectives (Awareness, Participation, Purchases) are sequential, starting with building awareness. Strategies and tactics are intended to help refine and further develop the next objective so that by 2021, awareness, participation, and purchases are all actively working together to reach the campaign goal.

Further details are explained in each objective.

Campaign Metrics: Tracking Progress

- Rooted in Vermont brand awareness.
- Awareness of local food values.
- Rooted in Vermont campaign participation.
- Participation in the local food economy.
- Local food purchases.

Further details are explained in each objective.

Objective 1: Awareness

Awareness of local food options and ways to participate Vermont’s agricultural economy will increase with a grassroots marketing campaign. Strategies will draw connections between Rooted in Vermont target audiences and their family, leisure, health, sustainable lifestyle, and independence
motivations to help non-localvore Vermonters feel like they are a part of the local food movement and help them be more open to receiving relevant local food messages.

**INCREASED AWARENESS WILL LEAD TO INCREASED PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN THE LOCAL FOOD MOVEMENT.**

**Timeline for Implementation:** Implementation of awareness strategies should occur through 2017 and into 2018 and be well established prior to working on Objective 2 (Participation). Upon meeting Objective 1: Awareness Metrics, a feedback process should be developed to inform changes and more details for Objective 2 strategies.

**Defining Awareness for Measurement Purposes:** Awareness is inclusive of brand recognition and attitudes toward local food.

- Knowledge of local food options and how to participate in the local food movement.
  - Understanding that the targeted consumer may already be participating in the local food movement.
- Caring about the local food movement and its connection to personal values and motivations.
  - Understanding that people with similar interests and values participate in the local food movement.
  - Awareness of and concern for the food system as a term that encompasses the cycle of growing, distributing, eating, and disposing of food and how it relates to the local economy and why that is relevant to consumers.
- Awareness and familiarity with the Rooted in Vermont brand.
  - Brand recognition on social media and in the broader community as grassroots marketing plan is implemented.
- Understanding of the local food and agricultural economy.
  - Knowledge of broad definition of “local food” (including all entry points).
  - Awareness of the real cost of food.

**Awareness Metrics:** The social media pilot has been building awareness of the Rooted in Vermont brand since July, 2016, therefore awareness of Rooted in Vermont on social media will be the first metric to measure. As awareness strategies are implemented, metrics will shift to concepts that can shift attitudes and opinions.

- Track social media engagement metrics and calculate as a percentage of statewide population.
- Use annual tracking poll (Vermonter Poll) to determine benchmark of awareness of Rooted in Vermont brand, local food values and participation, and attitudes towards local food.
Key Messages: Key messages serve as a baseline for the content to be developed for the following strategies and tactics.

- Local food is accessible and available year round.
- Local food can be convenient.
- Local food use and preparation skills.
- Local food is connected to human health.
- Local foods are often a better value when purchased direct from the source.
- How local food can fit in a budget.
- How local food can fit in a busy schedule.
- There is trust in the local food system and education of what local food system means.
- Local food fosters pride in our state.
- Local food can be affordable.
- Education about the real cost of food (federal subsidies and production costs).
- The local food movement has been built from the traditions of Vermonters and food.
- Local food can fuel adventures.
- Local food gives a greater appreciation for the land and the people that care for it.
- The direct benefits to Vermonters of a local food economy.
- Awareness of local food entry-points: hunting, fishing, growing, gardening, donating or receiving from a charitable food organization, farm to school activities, gleaning, agritourism, bartering, and shopping.
Strategy 1: Raise statewide awareness of Rooted in Vermont social media channels and messages to help target audience feel connected to the Rooted in Vermont brand and how and why the local food economy is relevant to consumers living and working in Vermont.

WHO TO IMPLEMENT: Strategy 1 is designed to be implemented by a campaign team managed by a campaign manager.

TACTICS:

- **Develop Messaging Content to Raise Awareness:** Language (or copy) in all marketing and outreach materials and content should focus on raising awareness of key messages across the state. The “call to action” should include proactive words that encourage more engagement on Rooted in Vermont social media channels to continue to build the community of consumers. Copy should be relevant to target audiences.
  - **COPY:** Develop consistent messaging for use in all tactics.
  - **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Incorporate social media and professional photography taken during Rooted in Vermont pilot into messaging and materials and determine what photography is still needed.

- **Develop Grassroots Campaign Team and Approach:** Establish roles and staffing needs for a campaign team; recruit and train participants/volunteers/partners to build team; develop process to implement tactics and build relationships in key regions statewide.
  - **GRASSROOTS OUTREACH:** Coordinate statewide boots-on-the-ground and word-of-mouth opportunities for Farm to Plate Network members and empower Network members to find new opportunities to connect with consumers. Grassroots outreach and connectivity with consumers can also serve as opportunities for qualitative “focus group” research.
    - Identify and mobilize advocates to share stories relevant to the key messages in Vermont communities.
    - Explore opportunities to have a presence at statewide events attended by target audiences and use as both an opportunity to build awareness with consumers and to get feedback about the campaign and local food movement observations directly from consumers.
    - Produce marketing materials such as bumper stickers, magnets, postcards, shopping bags and disseminate statewide.

- **Owned & Earned Media:** Utilize content marketing and public relations to raise awareness of key messages and grow Rooted in Vermont community of consumers.
  - **CONTENT MARKETING:** Develop content and schedule that corresponds to the diversity, history, accessibility, and seasonality of local foods and drives traffic to Rooted in Vermont social media platforms and other relevant social channels and websites.
    - Encourage and promote engagement (sharing, tagging, cross-promoting) of Rooted in Vermont social media channels and content by Network members and campaign partners.
    - Provide timely and relevant copy to be used by Network members and other campaign partners in articles, newsletters, and blogs.
    - Identify self-publishing opportunities for feature stories.
• Provide content for the Network to use statewide that showcases how the local food economy is growing and why it is relevant to target audiences.
• Provide branded Rooted in Vermont graphics to Network members and campaign partners to use in their messaging.
• Statewide sponsorship on Front Porch Forum: has potential to reach all 3 audiences.
  o PUBLIC RELATIONS: Develop media and influencer relationships to further enhance dissemination of Rooted in Vermont content and key messages.
    ▪ Create series of op-eds and editorials that focuses on the accessibility of seasonal food, the history of local food and the diversity of the types of local food.
    ▪ Build media relationships to generate feature stories written by journalists and help them better understand the challenges that connect the need to increase consumer demand and growing the local food system.
    ▪ Connect with TV Meteorologists to explain how weather effects the agricultural community and in turn the local food system and explore ways to change weather messages.
    ▪ Share, comment, and engage with media when they publish articles about food and agriculture in Vermont.

• Traditional Media Placements: Purchase advertising to boost awareness of grassroots outreach and owned/earned media.
  o RADIO ADVERTISING: Explore radio ads that have statewide reach and focus audience demographics with each station to determine the most effective way to reach target audiences. Correspond copy in radio ads with content marketing and public relations efforts to synchronize messaging.
    ▪ WDEV/WOKO Radio Vermont group: has the potential to target all 3 target audiences.
    ▪ VPR Radio: has the potential to target working young professional and outdoor enthusiast.
    ▪ The Point: has the potential to target outdoor enthusiasts and working young professional.
  o PRINT MATERIALS: Explore statewide event opportunities to pay for dissemination of marketing materials or ads to drive traffic to Rooted in Vermont social media channels.

• Digital Media (social & online): Explore a cross-channel approach of digital media platforms to promote key messages and drive traffic to Rooted in Vermont social media platforms.
  o DIGITAL RADIO: Take advantage of Pandora’s geographical and interest filters that can serve specific ads to corresponding target audiences. Pandora has audience segments in Vermont that include Outdoor Enthusiast, Coupon Clipper (value driven shopper) and Working Professionals (under 40). Average recommended frequency is 3 times per week.
    ▪ Create videos and/or display ads to be used in Pandora ads online.
  o SOCIAL: Enhance Rooted in Vermont social media platforms to increase awareness and build the Rooted in Vermont consumer community.
    ▪ Increase Farm to Plate Network involvement in using the #RootedinVermont hashtag:
      • #RootedinVermont is owned by whoever uses it and Network members and beyond should be encouraged to use more frequently.
• A grassroots movement builds from those closest to it and up. For the Rooted in Vermont community to grow, it is important for as many people as possible to use the hashtag and to like, comment, and share posts in their networks.

- Continue to manage Rooted in Vermont social media channels and expand reach to grow the consumer community.
- Explore how to leverage attention from out-of-state audiences on social media.
- Incorporate imagery from social media pilot into new social media content.
- Develop social media ad creative and budget. Leverage most commonly used keywords in Google Adwords for relevant keywords to include in social media ads.

- Facebook:
  - Grow followers to expand beyond existing fan base.
  - Develop feedback loop for content from consumers, incorporate imagery taken and collected during pilot into new content.
  - Increase Farm to Plate Network sharing of Rooted in Vermont Facebook content.
  - Engage with social media influencers to increase sharing of content and interest in Rooted in Vermont.
  - Create advertising campaigns that reach beyond current fan base while leveraging positive attributes of fans.
  - Utilize advertising filters for interests, geographical, and gender demographic information to reach target audience.
  - Utilize advertising filters for industry of employment to segment audience.
  - Reach target audiences with families by filtering the age of children.

- Twitter:
  - Engage with Farm to Plate Network members and social media influencers to build #RootedinVermont presence on Twitter.
  - Engage with Twitter users who are the target audience or are a business/organization that reaches the target audiences to build #RootedinVermont presence on Twitter.
  - Create “keyword” targeting advertising on Twitter to ensure tweets (that include keywords) are showing up in feeds. i.e. Vermont, food, local food, etc.

- Instagram:
  - Engage with target audiences, farm and food businesses, Network members, and social media influencers to build use of #RootedinVermont on Instagram.
  - Explore opportunities to collaborate with other Instagram accounts to develop promotions about Rooted in Vermont and local food (i.e. recipe videos, “what’s in my Vermont lunchbox,” etc.).
  - Collect and reuse imagery tagged with #RootedinVermont (permission based).

  VIDEO: Explore opportunities to use existing videos and where low cost videos can be created.
  - Create online video ads using the consumer-focused Rooted in Vermont video to increase awareness with target audiences.
  - Support and promote any Vermont social media videos (Local Motive) or video contests about local food, especially those that feature non-localvore consumers.
- Explore videos contests or other ways to get Farm to Plate Network members and consumers to create Vermont videos on how to prepare, cook, and use local food.

**Strategy 2: Customize Rooted in Vermont messages and tactics to increase awareness for different regions of Vermont through grassroots community engagement and outreach.**

*WHO TO IMPLEMENT:* Strategy 2 is designed to be implemented by Farm to Plate Network organizations in the areas they serve with coordination support from a campaign manager.

**TACTICS:**

- **Adapt Statewide Messaging to be Relevant in Different Vermont Regions:** Farm to Plate Network members should use statewide messaging (language, copy, content, etc.) and adapt it so the message is relevant to the audience the Network member is attempting to reach. The “call to action” should encourage learning more about or getting involved in the Rooted in Vermont community (i.e. add #RootedinVermont to a social media post or print materials, tweak statewide messaging content to include examples in a specific region of Vermont for a newspaper article or blog post).
  - **COPY:** Statewide consistent messaging will need to be developed first (See Strategy 1).
  - **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Statewide photography will be available for Network members to use along with guidelines for use.
- **Grassroots Campaign Team and Community Organizers/Coordinators:** A statewide grassroots campaign approach first needs to be developed (see Strategy 1) followed by developing a campaign team and process to identify, recruit, and train community organizers and/or coordinators.
  - **GRASSROOTS OUTREACH:** Boots-on-the-ground and word-of-mouth opportunities to implement tactics, build relationships in local communities and regions of Vermont, and conduct qualitative “focus group” research with target audiences.
    - Identify community hubs, community socializers (chatty cathy’s), community influencers, media, social media influencers living in the community and build relationships to encourage involvement in grassroots outreach.
    - Share stories by all involved in grassroots outreach that are relevant to the key messages in different Vermont communities – local organization blogs and newsletters, Front Porch Forum, letters to the editor, etc.
    - Presence at local events that reach non-localvore consumers.
    - Identify and develop opportunities to get feedback about the campaign and overall local food movement impressions directly from target audiences.
    - Disseminate marketing materials such as bumper stickers, magnets, postcards, and shopping bags in different Vermont communities/regions.
    - Identify poster and signage opportunities that reach target audiences.
    - Explore ways to have conversations, share local food, participate in community events, and hold small get togethers to engage non-localvore consumers, share key messages, and get feedback to communicate back to statewide campaign organizers so messaging can be adjusted and content can remain relevant to target audiences.
- Build the Rooted in Vermont photography library with photos of target audiences engaging with local food in different Vermont communities.

**Owned & Earned Media:** Expand key message awareness in different Vermont regions and communities using content marketing and public relations tactics.

  o **CONTENT MARKETING:** Identify and deliver content adapted from statewide messaging within different Vermont regions and communities to raise awareness of key messages and the Rooted in Vermont social media community.
    - Explore opportunities to collaborate and share content with Farm to Plate Network members, businesses that employ or reach target audiences, and other organizations/associations that serve target audiences in different Vermont regions and communities.
    - Content can be shared by these organizations on their blogs, websites, newsletters, articles, and in social media.
    - Connect with community influencers and encourage them to write an article or blog post about their connection to local food.
    - Create and/or adapt Rooted in Vermont messaging content and share it via your own or organization's social media, blog, website, newsletter, articles, etc.
    - Contribute as a guest blogger or writer in the community.
    - Farm to Plate Network members are encouraged to use Rooted in Vermont graphics in organizational content.
    - Promote Rooted in Vermont social media channels in organization newsletters or email communications and share Rooted in Vermont content in social media.
    - Feature Rooted in Vermont content and graphics on organization websites.

  o **PUBLIC RELATIONS:** Develop media and influencer relationships in different Vermont regions and communities to further enhance dissemination of Rooted in Vermont content and key messages.
    - Customize statewide messaging content to include a regional angle. Submit as a press release or article to regional/community media outlets.
    - Create regional content that focuses on the value of local food to help consumers understand the costs and economic benefits of the local food movement, and how to obtain and prepare local food that is cost effective and efficient from a time and convenience factor.
      - Publish content in community papers and other opportunities for owned media identified under the Content Marketing tactic above.
    - Create regional content that features stories of target audience consumers connecting to local food and share with statewide campaign organizers for statewide dissemination opportunities.
    - Build or strengthen relationships with local media by being a resource to help connect local media to food stories in the region/community.
    - Approach local media and offer to write an article or series of articles related to Rooted in Vermont key messages that is relevant to both target consumers and the local media outlet’s audience (these are probably very similar – the key is messaging that is relevant to non-localvore consumers).
- Write opinion articles (op-eds) for local papers that connect your opinions to the Rooted in Vermont key messages.
- Share, comment, and engage with any media when they publish articles about food and agriculture in Vermont. Include Rooted in Vermont key messages in the communication.
- Build relationships with local radio stations and offer to provide a PSA or be interviewed about the local food movement and Rooted in Vermont key messages.

- **Traditional Media Placements:** Purchase, trade, or explore collaborative potential with Farm to Plate Network members and local businesses/organizations who also reach Rooted in Vermont target audiences to find advertising opportunities to boost awareness of grassroots outreach and owned/earned media.
  - **RADIO ADVERTISING:** Explore radio advertising packages at regional/local stations and who collectively might benefit from being included in an advertising package. Include audience demographics to most effectively reach target audiences.
    - For example, a Farm to Plate Network member could partner with a few local businesses who are Rooted in Vermont and also are trying to reach similar target audiences. The Network member could work with the radio station and provide the content and the businesses could pay – this way the business could help a community organization and be a part of an ad that effectively helps them reach their target audience and the Network organization would not be making a financial commitment. Another way of looking at it is having businesses pay for Rooted in Vermont PSA’s and they get to have their name associated with the message and being Rooted in Vermont.
  - **PRINT MATERIALS/ADVERTISING:** Explore print opportunities in community papers or regional organization/association publications to pay for raising awareness of Rooted in Vermont key messages and recognition of the collaborative partners behind the ad.
    - For example, a Farm to Plate Network member could build a similar partnership as suggested above to do a co-op print ad that recognizes the partners as being Rooted in Vermont and shares a Rooted in Vermont key message.

- **Digital Media (social & online):** Promote and share content online using social media.
  - **SOCIAL:** Increase involvement of Farm to Plate Network members and Vermont businesses and organizations who employ or reach target audiences to share Rooted in Vermont content and promote the Rooted in Vermont channels to grow the community of Vermonters so awareness strategies can be effective.
    - Commitment by Farm to Plate Network members to engage with Rooted in Vermont per [How To Engage video](#).
    - Expand regional outreach to Vermont businesses who employ or reach target audiences and Vermont organizations/associations who serve target audiences to engage with Rooted in Vermont per [How To Engage video](#).
  - **VIDEO:** Explore opportunities to use existing videos and where low cost videos can be created.
    - Locate existing videos in Vermont regions or communities that could be used in Rooted in Vermont social media sharing.
    - Share any videos posted to Rooted channels on regional organization social channels.
    - Share consumer-focused [Rooted in Vermont video](#) via social media to invite new target audience consumers to get involved in the Rooted in Vermont community.
- Consider creating and hosting a regional video competition that is promoted on Rooted in Vermont social media channels.

**Strategy 3: Draw public connections between health and local food with Vermonter who are utilizing the healthcare system and incorporate Rooted in Vermont messaging into healthcare system local food promotions.**

**WHO TO IMPLEMENT: Strategy 3 is designed to be implemented by members of the Farm to Plate Health Cross-cutting Team as they deem appropriate.**

**TACTICS:**

- Build upon the health key messages to include drawing connections between local food and short- and long-term health benefits and build upon the perception that local food is healthier.
- Share and engage with the Rooted in Vermont social media community per the How To Engage video.
- Expand education of local food in healthcare community.
  - Public Service style campaign on social media channels promoting why local food is relevant to health.
  - Short videos that focus health benefits of eating seasonally
  - Short videos on how to use local foods (and/or recipes)
- Identify existing spokespeople in the healthcare systems to focus regular content through media channels on seasonal food and health benefits.
- Identify a local food and health spokesperson who can become a statewide healthcare “celebrity” showcasing local food and seasonal eating for radio podcast series or other media channel opportunities to discuss equity, health, and environmental benefits related to local food.
- Feature real healthcare professionals and their connections to local food in healthcare established publications or marketing materials.
- Promote and highlight produce CSAs shares and mobile farmstands at healthcare related organizations across the state – share the success of others in healthcare to raise awareness in a new area.
- Healthcare providers can incorporate Rooted in Vermont messaging and other healthcare and food connectivity in existing marketing materials to connect their patients with easily accessible local food.
  - Create marketing toolboxes that could include recipes for common seasonal foods, information on CSAs, farmstand location map, postcard/magnet of seasonal chart for local foods, etc.
  - Create signage highlighting where food comes from and make available to healthcare organizations for their own promotions.
  - Create napkins, tent cards, etc. that share Rooted in Vermont key messages and draw connections between health and local food.
  - Adapt content from Rooted in Vermont key messaging for healthcare organizations to include in newsletter and waiting room communication to patients.
Objective 2: Participation

PARTICIPATION in Vermont’s local food economy will be encouraged by promoting all entry-points for target audiences to engage in the local food movement including hunting, fishing, gardening, donating to and receiving from charitable food organizations, farm to school activities, regional consumer education programs, gleaning, agritourism, bartering, and shopping. Grassroots marketing strategies will continue to build the Rooted in Vermont community and brand by celebrating tradition, pride, community, trust, and equity aimed at increasing participation in all local food entry-points.

INCREASED PARTICIPATION ACROSS LOCAL FOOD ENTRY POINTS WILL LEAD TO INCREASED PURCHASES IN THE FARM AND FOOD ECONOMY.

Timeline for Implementation: Feedback from implementation of Objective 1 (Awareness) strategies should inform changes and more detail for Objective 2 (Participation) strategies. Objective 2 strategies should be implemented after meeting Objective 1 metrics, and then inform the development of strategies to increase purchases (Objective 3).

Define Participation for Measurement Purposes: Participation in the Rooted in Vermont grassroots marketing campaign and participation in the local food economy and movement including hunting, fishing, gardening, donating to and receiving from charitable food organizations, farm to school activities, regional consumer education programs, gleaning, agritourism, bartering, and shopping.

Participation Metrics: Social media metrics will continue to serve as the primary method to track Rooted in Vermont campaign participation. Changes in participation in the above mentioned activities will provide a valuable metric of how the campaign affects participation. Tracking changes in a variety of these activities will also provide intelligence as to what tactics/messages are succeeding and which ones could benefit from reinforcement. Data points to track participation should be obtained from Network organizations and other state partners and should be measured as a percent of the population and to track change over time.

Key Messages: Key messages serve as a baseline for the content and these messages should be more fully developed upon completion of the implementation of Objective 1 (Awareness).

- Promotion of how and where to participate in the local food movement: hunting, fishing, growing, gardening, donating or receiving from a charitable food organization, farm to school activities, cleaning, agritourism, bartering, and shopping.
- Leverage depth of participation beyond existing local food entry points.
- Participation in the local food movement helps Vermont’s local economy and that has a direct benefit back to Vermonters.
- Continue to strengthen the Rooted in Vermont community and brand by continuously connecting local food to tradition, pride, community, trust, and equity.
Identify what awareness messages need to be continued or what new awareness messages still need to be explored based on feedback from Objective 1 implementation.

Strategy 1: Promote statewide participation in the local food movement to encourage target audiences to engage more and/or expand their entry points to local food.

WHO TO IMPLEMENT: **Strategy 1 is designed to be implemented by a campaign team managed by a campaign manager.**

TACTICS:

- **Develop Messaging Content to Increase Participation:** Determine what key messages from Objective 1 (Awareness) need to be continued, adapted, or built into messaging content in Objective 2, as some areas of awareness may need to continue to be developed at the same time as tactics are implemented to increase participation. Language (or copy) in all marketing and outreach materials should focus on increasing participation across the state as well as continuing to raise awareness. The “call to action” should include proactive words that encourage joining in and participating in the local food movement. Copy should feel more assertive yet comfortable and relevant to target audiences.
  - **COPY:** Develop consistent messaging for use in all tactics.
  - **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Determine photography needs.

- **Further Enhance Grassroots Campaign Team Approach:** By this point in the campaign, the campaign team should be fully operational with advocates and relationships in all regions of the state, all working to continue sharing messages and content now tailored towards participation and a “boots on the ground” approach.
  - **GRASSROOTS OUTREACH:** Connect messaging with different areas of local food participation to target consumers.
    - Explore opportunities to have a presence at statewide events that include target audiences.
    - Develop print marketing materials that focus messaging on a strong call to action to participate in different areas of the local food movement; build upon success/feedback of printed materials that did well during implementation of Objective 1 (Awareness).
    - Determine uses and feasibility of poster series.

- **Owned & Earned Media:** Utilize content marketing and public relations to increase participation of target audience consumers in different areas of the local food movement and continue to build awareness of key messages.
  - **CONTENT MARKETING:** Develop content that celebrates, invites, educates, promotes, and features Vermonters’ participation in hunting, fishing, gardening, donating to and receiving from charitable food organizations, farm to school activities, regional consumer education programs, gleaning, agritourism, bartering, and purchasing.
    - Drive traffic to Rooted in Vermont social media channels as a call to action in all content marketing.
Seek out collaborative opportunities to provide content to Farm to Plate Network members, local food influencers, and others with statewide reach to amplify key messages in their networks and communities.

Create articles/blog posts from interviews with real people/target audience consumers as to how they participate in the local food movement and why.

Utilize content distribution services such as Outbrain to amplify content and drive more viewers/readers to article sources.

Post content on one of Reddit’s many “sub-Reddit” niche boards to share content to targeted audience.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS:** Adjust based on success and feedback from implementing Objective 1 (Awareness) and continue to develop media and influencer relationships to further enhance dissemination of Rooted in Vermont content and key messages.

- Develop editorial opportunities with media to feature consumers in each target audience and their participation in the local food movement.
- Incorporate content that focuses on the value of local food to help consumers understand the costs and benefits of local food, and how to grow, prepare, and store food.
- Leverage popularity of images on social channels to create and promote a local food photo contest.
- Share, comment, and engage with media when they publish articles about food and agriculture in Vermont.

**Traditional Media Placements:** Purchase advertising to amplify participation messages.

- **RADIO ADVERTISING:** Explore radio ads that have statewide reach and focus audience demographics with each station to determine the most effective way to reach target audiences. Correspond copy in radio ads with content marketing and public relations efforts to synchronize messaging.
  - WDEV/WOKO Radio Vermont group: has the potential to target all 3 target audiences.
  - VPR Radio: has the potential to target working young professional and outdoor enthusiast.
  - The Point: has the potential to target outdoor enthusiasts and working young professional.

- **PRINT ADVERTISING:** Explore print campaigns with publications that have statewide reach to complement campaign messaging and tactics. Consider regional print advertising to amplify efforts in Strategy 2.

**Digital Media (social & online):** Explore a cross-channel approach of digital media platforms to promote key messages, drive traffic to Rooted in Vermont social media platforms, and promote local food movement activities to increase participation.

- **SOCIAL:** Create advertising campaign to promote the local food movement and incorporate imagery from social media pilot on 3 social channels: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat.
  - Leverage keywords in Google Adwords for relevant keywords to include in social media ads.
  - Facebook:
    - Expand reach by creating a campaign geared to increase video views.
• Utilize advertising filters for interests, geographical, and gender demographic information to reach target audience.
• Utilize advertising filters for industry of employment to segment audience.
• Reach target audiences with families by filtering the age of children.
  ▪ Twitter:
    • Create a “Generate New Leads” Campaign to increase email sign-ups for Rooted Email marketing.
    • Engage with media and influencers to enhance promotion of local food movement participation.
  ▪ Instagram:
    • Create a “Video Views” campaign to increase views of videos.
    • Build upon collaborations developed during Objective 1 and enhance potential.
  ▪ Snapchat:
    • Explore creating snapchat filters and stories related to local food statewide.

  o EMAIL MARKETING: Create responsive email templates that include relevant information and links to social channels. About 53% of emails are opened on mobile devices. Email marketing is 40 times more effective at gaining customers than Facebook and Twitter, and compared to social media, it offers 17 percent higher conversion.
    ▪ Develop process to gather email addresses.
    ▪ Create an email series that includes experts/influencers related to local food as people tend to like email sequences that educate and engage them.
      • Tasty Tuesdays with seasonal recipes/videos or Weekend Cooking on availability of local food.
      • Include video segments in email newsletters that highlight experts and influencers.
    ▪ Leverage email list with social media channels. Use email list to target users on social media via ads. Facebook can match email addresses with users and include them in a custom/targeted advertising campaign.
  o SEARCH (SEM): Search ads with keywords that focus on specific local foods or events related to local food to increase participation. Google Adwords can be directed to social media channels instead of a website to increase followers and participation in social channels.
  o DISPLAY: Leverage graphics/imagery that has been most effective on social channels as display ads. Call to action can be to follow/participate in social channels.
    ▪ Create display ads from social imagery on influencer websites.
    ▪ Create display ads on media outlets that have statewide reach, i.e. Seven Days, VTDigger, VPR, etc.
    ▪ Create display ads on marketing materials created from media channels, i.e. Burlington Free Press’ email newsletter Weekend or Breaking News; Seven Days NOW (notes on the weekend) or Tech Jam News emails.
  o MOBILE: Identify advertising opportunities on mobile apps via statewide organizations to increase participation. i.e. WCAX TV, Star 9.29, VPR, etc.
    ▪ Adwords/Paid Search with a mobile focus.
• Ad campaign with a mobile focus on Youtube featuring consumers/influencers and their connection to local food.
  - VIDEO: Explore online video ads to increase participation in social channels.
    - Capture testimonials and interviews of people in the target audiences who use local food and feature in videos.
    - Create campaign on Youtube and segment by target audience.
    - Promote videos via ads on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.
    - Filter audience segments for video ads using Google Adwords.
    - Consider utilizing videos on news station websites.
  - Consider utilizing videos in commercial segments before films in movie theaters.
  - Youtube reaches more people between the ages of 18 and 49 on mobile devices alone than any TV network. 44% of YouTube viewers in that age bracket don’t watch prime-time broadcast TV in an average week. Ads on YouTube can cost on average between $15 and $20 per thousand people.

**Strategy 2:** Customize statewide messages and tactics to increase participation for different regions of Vermont through grassroots community engagement and outreach.

**WHO TO IMPLEMENT:** Strategy 2 is designed to be implemented by Farm to Plate Network organizations in the areas they serve with coordination support from a campaign manager.

**TACTICS:**

- **Adapt Statewide Messaging to be Relevant in Different Vermont Regions:** Farm to Plate Network members should adapt statewide Objective 2 (Participation) messaging to be relevant on a regional/community level. The “call to action” should encourage joining in and participating in the local food movement. Statewide consistent messaging (Strategy 1) needs to be developed first.
- **Grassroots Campaign Team and Community Organizers/Coordinators:** Implementation of participation tactics in different Vermont regions and communities to increase participation in the local food movement by campaign target audiences.
  - **GRASSROOTS OUTREACH:** Boots-on-the-ground and word-of-mouth opportunities to implement tactics and build relationships in local communities and regions of Vermont.
    - Build upon success, feedback, and relationships developed while implementing Objective 1 (Awareness) and shift into promoting participation.
    - Explore opportunities to have a presence at regional events that include target audiences.
    - Incorporate agricultural fairs into all relevant components or relationship building and outreach.
    - Disseminate print materials regionally.
- Sharing of stories by all involved in grassroots outreach that are relevant to the key messages in different Vermont communities – local organization blogs and newsletters, Front Porch Forum, letters to the editor, etc.

- **Owned & Earned Media:** Expand key messages to increase participation in different Vermont regions and communities using content marketing and public relations tactics.
  - **CONTENT MARKETING:** Build upon success and feedback from content marketing tactics implemented during Objective 1 (Awareness) and further develop content that corresponds to seasonality of local foods and how to obtain, prepare, and store.
    - Strengthen and build new Farm to Plate Network, community influencer, business, and organizational collaborations to best reach target audiences and amplify Rooted in Vermont key messages in different Vermont regions and communities.
    - Drive traffic to Rooted in Vermont social media channels as a call to action in all content marketing.
    - Identify local food movement participation stories by target audience consumers in different Vermont regions and communities to profile regionally or statewide.
  - **PUBLIC RELATIONS:** Strengthen media and influencer relationships developed during implementation of Objective 1 (Awareness) in different Vermont regions and communities to further enhance dissemination of Rooted in Vermont content and key messages.
    - Develop editorial opportunities with media to feature consumers in each target audience and their participation in the local food movement.
    - Incorporate content that focuses on the value of local food to help consumers understand the costs and benefits of local food, and how to grow, prepare, and store food.
    - Leverage popularity of images on social channels to create and promote a local food photo contest.
    - Share, comment, and engage with media when they publish articles about food and agriculture in Vermont.
    - Continue to implement and explore self-published local food columns, op-eds, editorial opportunities with media, etc. as explored and developed in Objective 1.
    - Promote regional activities that involve participation in the local food movement.

- **Traditional Media Placements:** Expand upon media placement collaborations explored during implementation of Objective 1 (Awareness) and expand to include promotion of participation in the local food movement. There may be more potential for co-op advertising among local/regional businesses who also offer a participatory experience in the local food movement.
  - **RADIO ADVERTISING:** Explore radio ads at regional stations to correspond with regional participation opportunities. Explore demographics by different parts of the day/programming with the radio station to determine the most effective way to reach target audiences.
  - **PRINT ADVERTISING:** Explore print campaigns that promote both Rooted in Vermont key messages and how to participate in the local food movement regionally in publications for targeted local/regional outreach.
    - Explore developing promotional flyers to hang at community boards in regional locations or organizations.
    - Explore unique advertising opportunities such as bathroom stall ads at regional businesses.
• **Digital Media (social & online):** Continue to promote and share content online using social media.
  o **SOCIAL:** Continue to engage businesses, organizations, and influencers in different Vermont regions/communities to share content from Rooted in Vermont social media channels and use Rooted in Vermont in their own social media and local food marketing.
  o **VIDEO:** Continue to identify and find ways to create videos that can be used in Rooted in Vermont social media sharing and further develop regional video competitions.

**Strategy 3: Draw connections between Farm to School participation and being Rooted in Vermont to further enhance the popularity of Farm to School programs among youth and parents.**

**WHO TO IMPLEMENT:** Strategy 3 is designed to be implemented by members of the Vermont Farm to School Network as they deem appropriate.

**TACTICS:**

• Build upon Farm to School as one area of participation in the local food movement to include these additional messages:
  o Youth participation in agricultural and local food activities will increase with involvement in Farm to School initiatives.
  o Local food education for children can change the purchasing behavior and leisure activity choices of parents when kids come home with excitement and ideas about local food.
  o Beginning appreciation for local food at a young age translates to healthier adult lifestyle choices, and ongoing support of (and engagement with) local communities and economies, therefore increasing demand of local food in the years to come.

• Incorporate Rooted in Vermont messaging into existing Farm to School resources:
  o *Harvest of the Month* program using calendars and posters that K-8 schools can use for taste tests and food education.
  o Make *Rooted in Vermont* stickers available to schools so that teachers can use them to stick on water bottles and create incentives for kids to earn them. Teachers can use Rooted in Vermont values to instill civic engagement.
  o Drive traffic to FTS website, which has great resources.
  o Rooted in Vermont display at professional development events, like summer Institute, and #RootedinVermont presence on FTS Network website.

• In the Classrooms:
  o Create a flier about the Rooted campaign to distribute to teachers, food service, and administrators, and provide tips on how to incorporate with FTS programming.
  o Use the campaign as a way to re-brand curriculum that teachers already have access to.
  o Draw connections between local food and Vermont heritage (including Abenaki) using case studies and digital stories.
  o Field trips to local farms, producers and processing centers will generate conversation about where our food comes from, and also introduce students to the food workforce, and what is out there for careers in the food industry.

• In the Cafeteria:
- Promote the New School Cuisine Cookbook and build interest in afterschool programs and cooking classes run by foodie parents or local chefs.
- Know your Farmer, Know your Food - invite farmers to have lunch with kids.
- Indicate local foods/farmers on school lunch menus that are sent home.
- In the School Community:
  - Farms and food businesses collaborate with school art departments – art teacher annual conference, mini-grants for art teachers, visiting artist program through VT Council on the Arts, explore opportunities with kidsgardening.org.
  - Offer community building and fundraising ideas to Parent Associations.
  - Initiate Rooted in Vermont CSAs and school buying clubs, as well as support school/community gardens.
  - Partner with Jr Iron Chef, 4H, Girl Scouts, and Boy Scouts.
  - Connect with supervisory unions, principals associations and school board associations to spread the Rooted message/goals
  - Use student driven social media to seek out groups and have them develop media campaigns.
  - Student Government - kid ambassadors, activate advocacy in students with existing leadership programs like the Youth Environmental Summit.
  - Put on contests and challenges to schools, students, families and communities that invite participants to share how they are Rooted in Vermont via art, photography or writing.
  - Encourage collaboration and connection with other local food related businesses, like kitchen stores, book stores, coops and farms.

**Objective 3: Purchases**

**PURCHASES** will increase in the Vermont local food economy when a new segment of Vermont consumers not already committed to buying local food begin to demonstrate increased demand and, at the same time, more local food becomes available and affordable in all market channels (retail, restaurants, institutions, direct sale). Increased consumer demand is the anticipated result of heightening awareness and participation using consistent and relevant messaging statewide and in different Vermont regions.

**INCREASED PURCHASES OF LOCAL FOOD WILL HELP LOCAL FOOD CONSUMPTION BECOME MAINSTREAM IN THE NEXT 5-10 YEARS.**

*Timeline for Implementation:* Feedback from implementation of Objective 2 (Participation) strategies should inform the development of Objective 3 (Purchases).

*Define Purchases for Measurement Purposes:* Local food purchases include any food produced or processed in Vermont plus 30 miles from the Vermont border. Purchases are tracked using direct sales data (USDA), non-employer statistics (Census Bureau), Vermont Fresh Network survey data, data from coop grocers, distributors, hospitals, farm to school, food hubs, and other types (processed foods, sweeteners, grains).
Purchasing Metrics: The Rooted in Vermont grassroots marketing campaign will use the UVM methodology (Connor & Becot, 2015), developed for tracking the goals of Vermont’s Farm to Plate food system plan.

Consumer Demand Intel: How Market Channels Can Better Connect with Target Audiences

ROOTED IN VERMONT: A Two-Way Communication Channel

The Rooted in Vermont social media channels, especially Facebook, are becoming a way to communicate directly with consumers not already committed to purchasing local food. This presents an opportunity to collect information from consumers through surveys and conversations about how and where they may purchase local food and/or what may drive them to make shifts in purchasing behavior.

THE PREPARERS OF THE ROOTED IN VERMONT GRASSROOTS MARKETING PLAN RECOMMEND A CONSUMER DEMAND INTEL PROJECT FOR THE FARM TO PLATE NETWORK TO CONSIDER AS SOMETHING THAT CAN BE DEVELOPED OUTSIDE OF THE SCOPE OF THE MARKETING PLAN.

Timeline for Implementation: A Consumer Demand Intel project should be developed and executed during the implementation of Objective 1 (Awareness) so that consumer intelligence is available for market channels when implementation of Objective 2 (Participation) begins.

WHO TO IMPLEMENT: It is suggested that the Farm to Plate Consumer Education & Marketing Working Group collaborate with the Aggregation & Distribution Working Group to develop a scope of what kind of consumer demand intelligence would be useful for marketing channels and how to disseminate the intel once gathered. The Rooted in Vermont campaign team (once determined) could execute the gathering of the consumer intelligence.

CONSUMER DEMAND INTEL PROJECT SUGGESTIONS:

- **Market Channels:**
  - Explore what types of information from consumers would be beneficial to retailers, restaurants, institutions, and direct sale.
  - Determine how consumer intelligence might be used in the different market channels.
  - Identify what format would the consumer intelligence be most useful to be used (report, webinar, workshops, etc.).

- **Rooted in Vermont Communication Channels**
  - Surveys can be deployed over social media to collect consumer intelligence.
  - Conversations and dialogue taking place online could be captured to help inform the project.