

Problem/Situation

Hungry Harvest is growing in popularity among mainstream consumers in the U.S., however, U.S. Hispanic consumers are not subscribing at the same rate as their non-Hispanic counterparts. There are three reasons that this issue persists, the first is that “It’s assumed people who end up buying these boxes are wealthier people who want to feel good about saving the environment” (Mull, 2019). Second, is that “most ugly-produce companies deliver only to select zip codes in major urban areas” (Mull, 2019). Lastly, Hispanics in the U.S. are more likely than others to enjoy grocery shopping and the produce section is the most enjoyable to three-quarters of Hispanics who participated in a study compiled by Univision (Hermann, 2015).

Media Audit

Analysis

Over the years there has been a lot of coverage about grocery delivery services. Many of the articles focus on comparing the benefits of various services against others or criticizing the value of their mission. Overall sentiment in coverage about Hungry Harvest in particular is positive. The overall themes of the articles are:

1. “XX delivery service is better than the other” comparative articles
2. “Ugly Produce rescue delivery services have a negative impact on the environment and food waste”
3. Round-ups on the best services and why
4. Promotional articles paid for by the companies

While interest is growing in delivery services, most of the coverage is limited to round ups and conservative criticism with room for growth in both positive coverage and extensive coverage on the delivery services. There is a lot of discussion around “ugly” produce delivery services causing more food waste due to incentivizing farmers to overproduce (Atkin, 2019) and thus there is a lot of work to turn coverage into positive news.

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Many large news outlets are creating round ups based on experience and they are also featuring companies like Hungry Harvest in articles increasingly due to COVID-19 and the quickly rising e-commerce business for contactless grocery shopping. Hungry Harvest has the opportunity to insert themselves more into the conversation by leaning into their mission and their close local ties.

Coverage

["Does Your Box of "Ugly" Produce Really Help the Planet? Or Hurt it?,"](#) *The New Republic*, 11 January 2019

["The Murky Ethics of the Ugly-Produce Business,"](#) *The Atlantic*, 25 January 2019

["Is skipping the grocery store enough?,"](#) *Charlotte Magazine*, 24 July 2020

["Investing in the Future of Food: Hungry Harvest shares 3 lessons to expand successfully,"](#)
Food Navigator USA, 26 August 2020

["Why people are flocking to ugly produce during the pandemic,"](#) *CNN Business*, 16 September 2020

["These 7 Fresh Produce Delivery Services Will Help You Eat More Fruits And Veggies,"](#)
Women's Health, 13 October 2020

["How To Save More Money When You Order Groceries Online,"](#) *HuffPost*, 25 January 2021

["Does Your Box of "Ugly" Produce Really Help the Planet? Or Hurt it?,"](#) *CNET*, 16 February 2021

["Ditch dull dinners for good. Spark your cooking creativity with Hungry Harvest,"](#) *The Miami Herald*, 18 February 2021

["Climate Corps America: The urban farms transforming how America's most vulnerable communities eat,"](#) *The Independent*, 22 February 2021

Organizational background

Hungry Harvest is a produce subscription box that uses rescued produce and delivers them to your doorstep for less than a grocery store would. Hungry Harvest rescues produce at three

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points in the supply chain - at the farm, packing house & wholesaler. They rescue produce that is “a little too big, a little too ugly or a little too colorful for grocery to stock.” As well as surplus that their partner farmers have on a better-than-expected growing season that typically goes uneaten (Hungry Harvest, 2021). The organization has two goals: 1) Eliminate food waste and 2) End hunger. The boxes come in four sizes: mini, full, super and office as well as four types: regular, organic, all-veggie and all-fruit. The price of the subscription boxes range from \$15-55 and they are fully customizable, allowing you to choose what type of produce you don't want included in your box as well as how often you get it delivered (Kristen, 2018). Hungry Harvest delivers “throughout Maryland, Washington, DC, Virginia, Greater Philadelphia, Southern New Jersey, Northern Delaware, South Florida, The Triangle Area & Charlotte in North Carolina & the Detroit Metro Area” (Hungry Harvest, 2021).

SWOT analysis

A strength is that Hungry Harvest hand selects their produce locally and is delivered by local drivers in each area that it serves (Kendrick, 2021). Playing into the local factor can entice the community values that are important to the Hispanic consumer. Another strength is how customizable each box is, many other competitors like misfits Market only offer boxes that contain a randomized mix with no choice to the customer (Misfits Market, 2021). A third strength is that Hungry Harvest accepts SNAP/EBT and cash payments via its “Produce in a SNAP” site (Lalvani, 2020), this is a huge benefit because it helps lower income families in their service area have access to fresh produce and advances their goal of eliminating food deserts as well as the fact that 10.9% of Latinos utilize SNAP benefits (Snap to Health, 2021).

A weakness is their subscription reach because currently they are not in the states with a high population of Hispanics, Florida is their largest U.S. Hispanic market that they deliver to with 25.58% of the state's population being Hispanic as of 2021 (World Population Review, 2021). There is room for expansion in general with Hungry Harvest's service but it is particularly imperative that expansion continues into states with higher populations of Hispanic consumers in order to increase the rate that Hispanic consumers utilize this service.

The opportunity is to increase the U.S. Hispanic consumer subscriptions to Hungry Harvest, particularly millennial Hispanics and Hispanic parents. Produce, and food in general, are especially important to Hispanic consumers. Another opportunity is the huge increase in

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demand for customer grocery delivery, especially amid the Covid-19 pandemic, as customers have been pivoting away from physically shopping in stores (Eichensehr, 2020).

Threats to Hungry Harvest are similar subscription boxes like Imperfect Foods, who currently serves 80% of the population (Kendrick, 2021) and is far more well-known and advertised. The digital grocery delivery space is packed with competitors who serve populations in many of the same areas.

Target audience

The target audience is U.S. Hispanic millennials and U.S. Hispanic parents. Hispanics have a preference for in-store grocery shopping, especially those with children, and the produce section is the most important (Hermann, 2015). The Hispanic shopper has a passion for food and especially for fresh ingredients. Acculturation will affect marketing techniques that appeal to Latinx shoppers, millennials in particular “prefer whole, fresh, and ‘natural’ foods” (Hermann, 2015). Bilingual marketing is important for Latinx consumers because of the varying levels of acculturation. Hispanics are eager to try subscription boxes but they have lower awareness of these services than their non-Hispanic counterparts (Whitlock, 2020). “Interest in subscription boxes is even higher among Hispanics (52 percent) and millennials (56 percent), who appreciate the customization and personalization that comes from these types of services (Lifestyle Monitor, 2019)”. The Hispanic consumer views shopping as a shared experience and as such, they rely on ratings and reviews so it is key to make reviews front and center (Whitlock, 2020). In order to reach the Latinx audience, advertising needs to be specifically directed towards them, be bilingual, and marketers need to have an understanding of passion points for the Latinx culture in order to tap in and make the messaging resonate better (Whitlock, 2020).

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