

NEEDFINDING

# CONSUMER CHOICE AND SUSTAINABILITY

KYLE, ANASTASIYA, MARIANA, KEVIN



# OUR TEAM



## KEVIN

- PD major
- HCI coterm



## KYLE

- Economics major
- CS minor



## ANASTASIYA

- CS major
- HCI coterm



## MARIANA

- PD major

# WITHIN SUSTAINABILITY...

We are interested in learning about how sustainability factors into consumer choice.

“...the decisions that consumers make with regard to products and services.”



# JULIA

Scientist

She's an active, reflective shopper  
who represents someone that  
wants to make sustainability-driven  
transition

We reached out through Anastasiya  
(her daughter)

Zoom interview (not done by  
Anastasiya)



# MARIA ELENA

Housing Counselor

Does most of the shopping for her household. Friends describe her as environmentally-conscious

She's a friend of Mariana's mom, so we reached out through email

Zoom interview



# HASNA

Engineer at Google

Moved to the US in high school, has  
a different cultural context around  
waste and sustainability

Kevin's friend

In-person interview



# DANIEL

Engineer at Microsoft

Went through a big perspective shift  
on sustainability during college

Kevin's friend

Reached out over text

Zoom interview



# WHAT WE ASKED

## **Building Rapport / Background**

Basic info about where they like to shop, what brands they're into, what they look for in a product (clothes, food, etc.)



## **Habits**

Habits more broadly - which ones they're working on, which ones they're proud of, what makes a habit stick

## **Diving Into Sustainability**

What their understanding of sustainability is, how they relate to it in their lives, any changes



## **Sustainability in Shopping Habits**

How sustainability might connect to the habits they previously mentioned, how it might present challenges or opportunities for them

## **Reflecting On Previous Statements**

Are there any contradictions here, rare cases



;-·JULIA'S·-'  
;·EMPATHY  
MAP;-·-'x

# SAY

sustainability  
is being  
"responsible  
towards  
nature"

wants to avoid  
using plastic  
bags, likes  
reusable ones

"I put my  
desire for a  
green lawn  
above other  
considerations  
"

paper towels  
are bad and a  
complete  
waste, but are  
convenient

there's less  
packaging in  
Ukraine b/c of  
more intense  
cost cutting

sustainability  
always "there",  
not front of  
mind

Hellofresh  
recipes are  
"bulletproof"  
and "new and  
exciting"

Hellofresh  
"feels like  
you're in a  
restaurant"

in Ukraine  
people bring  
own shopping  
bags, don't  
want to buy  
single-use

look for "high  
quality  
materials" and  
"beautiful and  
flattering"  
items

doesn't want  
items to  
"break after  
first wash"

friends are "on  
the same  
page" w/r/t  
sustainability

"goal-oriented  
shopping"

describes  
self-checkout  
as "not  
stressful at  
all"

# DO

gave up on trying to carpool to work with friends due to inconvenience

writes a grocery list and sticks to it to reduce waste

researched what happens to returned mattresses to make a low-waste purchase

chooses to drive her prius instead of other car as much as possible

trouble thinking about concrete examples of sustainability initially

listed many topics as they came to mind throughout conversation

actively avoids food waste with HelloFresh, weekly planning

brainstorms sustainability improvements with friends

animated when talking about how Trader Joe's cares for their customers

# FEEL

comfortable at Trader Joe's, less comfortable at some other grocery stores

grateful that TJ's takes extra effort to take care of customers (sanitizing, social distancing, checkout)

kid's desires sometimes lead to compromises on sustainability

concerned about the amount of gas mileage accumulated

sad that she is using paper towels even though they are a "complete waste"

only likes buying items are high quality and durable

guilty about takeout packaging - too much waste

some sustainable habits are second nature

nervous about COVID, so prefers one stop shopping

cared a lot about making sure mattress return (big) wouldn't go to dumpster

tension between sustainability and convenience

# THINK

enjoys open,  
caring, and  
organized  
environments

sustainability  
isn't the first  
thing that  
comes to mind  
for many of the  
activities where  
it's relevant

"bulletproof"  
brands

high value on  
brands that  
value her  
opinion/trust

wants  
variety/novelty  
through  
choices

stated that price  
difference is  
often more  
important than  
sustainability,  
gave many  
counter  
-examples later

financial  
constraints  
can help with  
choosing more  
sustainable  
habits

values  
customer  
service

cares about  
how long  
something  
lasts

sustainability  
factors into  
decisions, not  
as much as  
convenience  
and price  
often

cars (instead  
of public  
transportation  
) make people  
more inclined  
to buy more

high value on  
comfort in the  
shopping  
experience—  
especially  
during COVID

# WHAT WE LEARNED



FROM OUR INTERVIEWS

“I’M PRETTY HAPPY WITH THE LEVEL OF SUSTAINABILITY IN MY LIFE....THE ONE THING WE’RE BAD ABOUT IS TRAVEL. IF WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL WE ALWAYS WILL.”

**Maria Elena**

“I HAVE TO FLY HALFWAY ACROSS THE WORLD ONCE OR TWICE A YEAR TO SEE MY FAMILY AND I KNOW IT HAS A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT, BUT IT’S WORTH IT TO GET TO SEE THEM.”

**Hasna**

## **INSIGHT**

Traveling by airplane induces a sense of guilt for passengers who want to manage their carbon footprint. Their desire for adventure and/or connecting with friends and family through travel is prioritized.

## **NEED**

A way to turn this guilt about contributing to carbon emissions into positive momentum.

“I WAS IN ROBLE AND THEY HAD THEIR WHOLE ENVIRONMENT FOCUS... I DON’T THINK I LEARNED ANYTHING FROM IT... IT WAS MORE BECAUSE OF HOW STANFORD HAS A LOT OF LITTLE REMINDERS EVERYWHERE.”

## INSIGHT

Using subtle and frequent reminders to reinforce personal agency around sustainability may be more effective than all-in short-term campaigns.

## NEED

A way to consistently nudge users toward agency-building sustainable behaviors.

**Daniel**

“I DON’T WANT [FOOD] WASTING AWAY IN THE REFRIGERATOR.”

**Julia** (on why she likes HelloFresh)

“MOROCCANS DON’T WANT TO WASTE ANYTHING, IT WAS A BIG SHOCK SEEING THE WASTE IN THE US... ESPECIALLY DINING HALLS IN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE.”

**Hasna**

“WE JUST TEND TO USE LESS [AT HOME]... WE JUST FIND A USE FOR ANYTHING... WE DEFINITELY DON’T INTEND TO BE SUSTAINABLE, BUT IT’S JUST KIND OF A BYPRODUCT.”

**Daniel**

## **INSIGHT**

A range of ingrained cultural attitudes around waste lead to sustainable actions without abstract factors, like environmentalism, as the primary motivation.

## **NEED**

A way to encourage sustainable behaviors through existing values.

“SHE WANTS TO HAVE HER OWN STYLE, WHICH IS INFLUENCED BY TIK TOK AND STUFF, AND SO SHE USUALLY WANTS TO BUY MORE CLOTHES. WE’RE SAYING NO TO FAST FASHION, BUT I DON’T WANT TO SAY NO TO SOMETHING SHE SEEMS TO CARE DEEPLY ABOUT.” [REGARDING MIDDLE SCHOOL DAUGHTER]

**Julia**

“MY DAUGHTERS ARE VERY ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS, FOR EXAMPLE THEY ARE VEGETARIAN/VEGAN WHILE I AM NOT. BUT I STILL THINK THEY BUY TOO MANY CLOTHES. I TRY TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO ONLY BUY WHEN THEY ARE REPLACING A PIECE.”

**Maria Elena**

## **INSIGHT**

There is a tension between the desire to allow children to make their own choices and avoid conflict, and the desire to maintain own values around sustainable living.

## **NEED**

Finding a balance that leaves the entire household happy.

# SUMMARY OF OUR FINDINGS

People need...

- Frequent, actionable, yet subtle reminders to reinforce agency in sustainability
- Attainable sustainability goals to motivate action
- A strategy for navigating tensions between sustainability and other values

Our next steps include...

- Interviewing individuals who are less sustainability-conscious
- Secondary research to gain a better understanding of population-wide trends