

BOSTON PUBLIC MARKET

about the company

The Boston Public Market (BPM) is a year-round, indoor market featuring fresh, locally sourced food from farmers and fisherman throughout Massachusetts and New England. Their mission is to provide fresh, healthy food to consumers of all income levels, nourish our community, and educate the public about food sources, nutrition, and preparation.

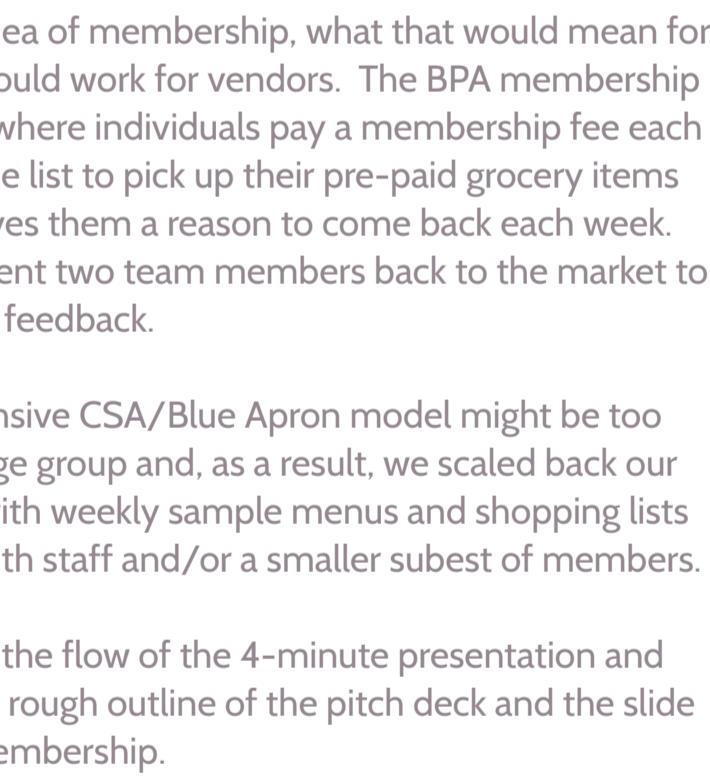
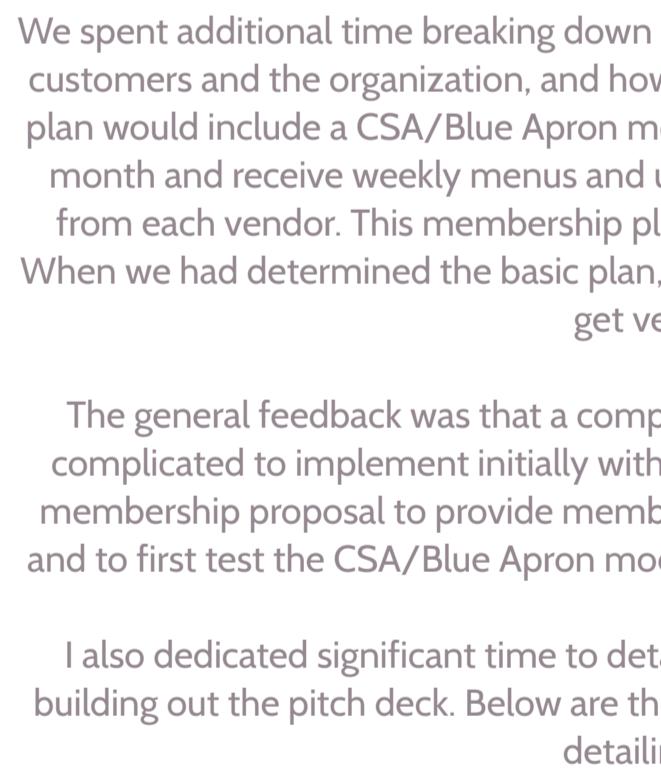
the challenge

In the nine months since opening, BPM has been highly successful and surpassed their customer and foot traffic goals for the year but have struggled to grow awareness, attract repeat customers, and become a strong voice in the community.

design process

Of the 6 members on our team, 2 of us had been to the market before. Our team spent some time exploring the market's physical space and flow, and also made a couple of purchases to get a sense of what it was like to be a customer. If given more time, I would have also focused on conducting initial user interviews with customers.

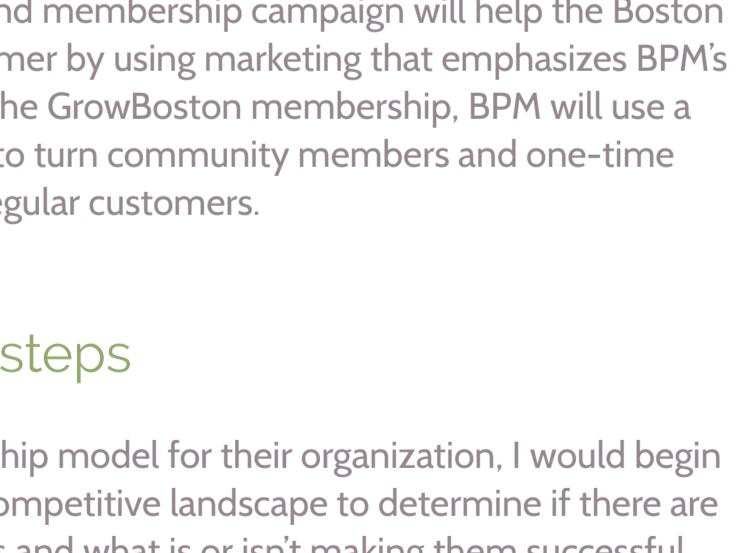
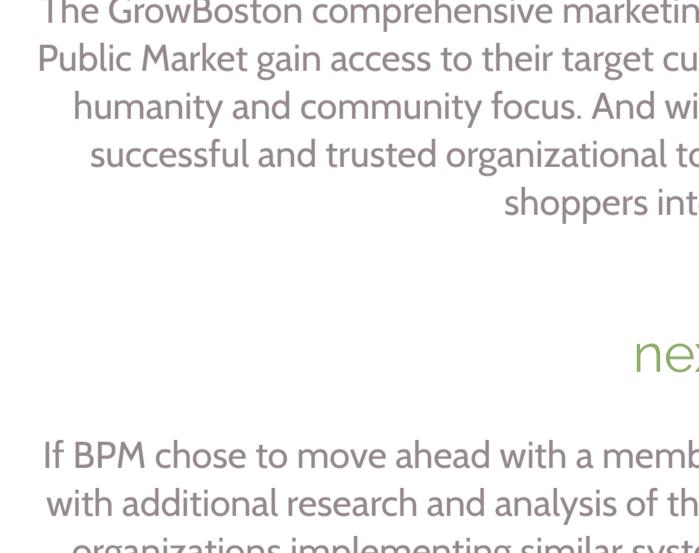
Following our exploration of the market, I helped lead a brainstorming session to determine challenges and possible solutions, which I documented below:



We came to the conclusion that our list of challenges boiled down to two important and intertwined goals: getting the attention of their target customer (young urban professionals and young families within 1 mile of the market) and turning them into repeat shoppers. We selected these two challenges because, as a team, we agreed that they both most affected the bottom line and ultimate success of the market and we felt that that was the most important place to start.

Additional targeted brainstorming led to the development of the GrowBoston Marketing and Membership Campaign. My experience in the non-profit sector and knowledge of successful membership-based organizations helped frame our decision to proceed with the membership model.

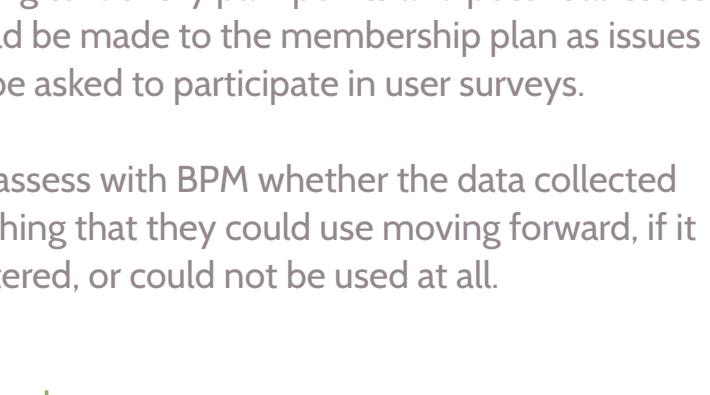
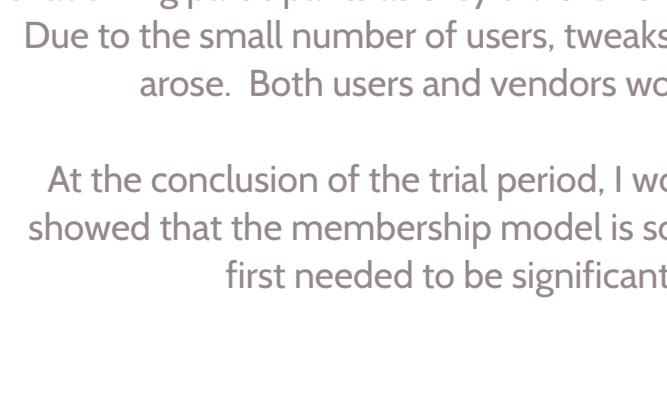
The GrowBoston marketing campaign focused around making their target audience feel a part of something larger than themselves. Our goal was to show people that shopping at BPM was not only good for themselves but good for the whole Boston community. The team worked together closely on marketing copy/content and throughout the design process.



We spent additional time breaking down the idea of membership, what that would mean for customers and the organization, and how it would work for vendors. The BPA membership plan would include a CSA/Blue Apron model where individuals pay a membership fee each month and receive weekly menus and use the list to pick up their pre-paid grocery items from each vendor. This membership plan gives them a reason to come back each week. When we had determined the basic plan, we sent two team members back to the market to get vendor feedback.

The general feedback was that a comprehensive CSA/Blue Apron model might be too complicated to implement initially with a large group and, as a result, we scaled back our membership proposal to provide members with weekly sample menus and shopping lists and to first test the CSA/Blue Apron model with staff and/or a smaller subset of members.

I also dedicated significant time to detailing the flow of the 4-minute presentation and building out the pitch deck. Below are the first rough outline of the pitch deck and the slide detailing membership.



solution

The GrowBoston comprehensive marketing and membership campaign will help the Boston Public Market gain access to their target customer by using marketing that emphasizes BPM's humanity and community focus. And with the GrowBoston membership, BPM will use a successful and trusted organizational tool to turn community members and one-time shoppers into regular customers.

next steps

If BPM chose to move ahead with a membership model for their organization, I would begin with additional research and analysis of the competitive landscape to determine if there are organizations implementing similar systems and what is or isn't making them successful.

I would follow up that analysis with user interviews to determine the interest level amongst current customers as well as potential customers. Their feedback would also help frame the design of the CSA/Blue Apron membership model and refine the project scope.

Given sufficient interest to proceed with the model, I would begin by offering a trial membership to a subset of 10-15 customers. I would be able to test the process by shadowing participants as they did their shopping to identify pain points and potential issues. Due to the small number of users, tweaks could be made to the membership plan as issues arose. Both users and vendors would be asked to participate in user surveys.

At the conclusion of the trial period, I would assess with BPM whether the data collected showed that the membership model is something that they could use moving forward, if it first needed to be significantly altered, or could not be used at all.

awards

1st Place Winner in Startup Institute's Spring 2016 IdeaHack