

A decorative graphic in the bottom left corner of the page, featuring a cluster of autumn leaves in various shades of orange, yellow, and brown, arranged in a stylized, overlapping manner.

How to Increase Urban Roots' Foot Traffic

Margaret McEvilly

Grand Valley State University

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Secondary Research.....	8
Primary Research.....	16
Action Plan.....	24
Budget.....	28
Timeline.....	32
Evaluation.....	34
Appendix.....	37
Appendix A.....	38
Appendix B.....	40
Appendix C.....	41
Appendix D.....	42
Appendix E.....	43
Appendix F.....	46
Appendix G.....	49
Appendix H.....	50
Appendix I.....	51
Digital Backup.....	52

Introduction

Urban Roots (UR) is a local company focused on encouraging community members to compost in the Madison Square neighborhood of Grand Rapids, MI. They are a community farm and market that aims to educate about composting in the Grand Rapids (GR) area. The Madison Square community where UR is located is a poorer community that lacks access to quality healthful foods and the employment rate in the area is somewhat high (“Grand Rapids, Michigan Population” 2018). Urban Roots’ motto is “Cultivating Healthy Communities”, with this they mean they are proponents of doing what they can to make it known to the community and other surrounding areas the importance of composting and leading a healthy lifestyle. UR builds their own capital. This means that they have built themselves from the ground up with very few campaigns or branding within social media. Everything that they have done and found success in thus far is based off word of mouth that the company themselves has worked so hard to portray. The services that UR offers in terms of composting is that they have someone come around on a bike to take out your compost for you. If you are wanting to dispose of it yourself and bring it into the store you are charged an extra fee out of inconvenience. If community members of Madison Square are looking at becoming part of the composting program, then they are offered a discount by Urban Roots. They also offer farm to table meals to those who volunteer (“Urban Roots”). While Urban Roots is open to new ideas that could help them grow as a company, they are still looking to keep their budgeting to a minimum, so keeping ideas cheap is the best option for this company.

The main objective of this campaign is to increase the foot traffic of Urban Roots by increasing their social media presence, become a community based environment, and increasing the amount of events the company hosts.

Levi, founder of Urban Roots, is the main client of ours for this project. Although Levi is who will be implementing these changes, Urban Roots is to be considered a secondary client as the business as a whole is supposed to benefit from this plan.

Urban Roots is facing an issue with the number of customers their business is having, so they are looking to expand. This becomes slightly difficult because they do not offer discounts or promotions and do not advertise well enough in order to get the word out there so that more members of the community are able to be aware of what Urban Roots is and what their goal is.

Factors that might be contributing to the lack of foot traffic within Urban Roots is the limited budgeting, limited employees, and limited marketing that has been done. Limited budgeting makes it difficult to do many events or free trials because that money often needs to go to a better cause when dealing with a non-profit organization. Having a limited number of employees also makes things tougher because there are less people who are able to get the word out there, and it also limits the amount of people who can go out and collect compost. Having a small presence on social media makes it difficult to inform surrounding community members and beyond about who Urban Roots is and what they do. Expanding marketing, advertising, and public relations presence allows for businesses to grow and for small businesses to become more recognizable by the general public. Marketing, advertising, and public relations professionals each have their own way to expand businesses and enhance their qualities.

Getting Urban Roots comfortable with putting their brand out there more is important. In order to do this, it will be suggested that they create a more powerful online presence and plan more city-wide events that community members are encouraged to go to with no added expense.

Increasing the foot traffic at Urban Roots will be of the utmost importance to them as their business continues to get older and grow, they need to do so at a steady rate. Getting them to do

more PR work will allow them to get their name out there because with the way today's society works word of mouth is not the only thing to put a business on the map, they need to utilize other platforms to continue to expand over the coming years.

Founder Levi Gardner started this company about half a decade ago in hopes of creating a more simplistic environmental friendly environment for the city of Grand Rapids. Urban Roots is a company built off great morals. Levi and his team are genuine and upfront about the services that they provide. The fact that they provide farm fresh foods is another strength because customers know where it is coming from and that it will be the best option health wise for clients and their potential family members. Being a small business has worked in the favor of Urban Roots thus far as it allows them to be more personable with their customers which many clients find refreshing. Being that they are a small business they are inclusive, meaning that once you sign up to become a member all your services are included.

Despite the positives that come with Urban Roots, they have some weaknesses as well. Urban Roots has very little exposure in terms of social media, print based media, and public relations. This presents obstacles for the company because they are not able to get their name out there as easily which means unless word of mouth spreads beyond the Madison Square or GR area, their business will continue to stay small which is not ideal as the business gets older. Urban Roots also tends to host very few events which makes it more difficult for members of the community or potential business partners to come out and get a feel for what it is that UR is all about. If more events are hosted it would likely make more people interested in investing in UR. For the events that are hosted by UR, they charge the people who come, and while that is beneficial being that they are a non-profit company it often makes people feel less interested in

helping so if they charged less or offered more for the price they currently pay it would be a better investment.

The goal of this campaign is to increase the foot traffic within Urban Roots by organizing more frequent events associated with their brand that more potential clients will want to go to. We will also increase the amount of public relations work such as social media and print usage so that local community members and students at Grand Valley State University can become better aware of the company.

This will be able to be measured by having employees take note of how many people come in and how many of those express interest in their company. Google analytics may also be utilized to track the traffic on the Urban Roots website and social media platforms. With google analytics UR can see how many people visit each site versus how many people interact with the site. UR may also be able to tell if those interacting are members of the community or businesses who might be interested in partnering up.

In this client plan book, it will be detailed why Urban Roots could benefit from an increase in foot traffic as well as what exactly they can do to increase their presence within both the community and the business world. We will discuss social media and how it can be used properly to help a business increase their sales, touch on why hosting events is so crucial especially to small businesses and figure out ways to get other small businesses interested in working with Urban Roots.

Expanding a small personally owned business can be difficult and hard to let go of at times; however, with the right amount of community and business presence it is easy to do. Moving forward the importance of what both social and print media can do for a company's image will be discussed as well as break down other ways UR can become better known in the community.

Secondary Research

Methodology

Initially, secondary research was conducted through basic google searches in order to figure out the straightforwardness of Urban Roots and composting. Such google searches included “What is composting?” “What are the benefits of composting?” “What is the demographic information in Madison Square?” “What are Grand Rapids demographics?” “Businesses involved in composting”. These searches gave a rudimentary understanding of what it was that we are looking for and what sorts of things Urban Roots can do to better their business based off competitors and found demographic information.

While the google search engine provided lots of valuable information, the secondary research was not complete, so the Grand Valley library database was utilized. The website offers many different forms of information such as journals, articles, books, databases, etc. To dig deeper they have specific subject guides tailored to certain classes. From there, CAP 220 was chosen to get a more tailored search for our specific topic. Once in the desired subject, the different types of information such as databases, books, journals, and more are available to pick what form of research will work best for a given topic.

Once selecting a source type, it was time to choose key words. Key words are words chosen specifically to find the best articles. The chosen key words included were “composting”, “benefits of composting”, “businesses that compost”, and “how to increase foot traffic”. Using these key words helped to generate numerous results tailored to the overall topic. In order to narrow down the results given, selecting “Full Text” and “Peer Reviewed” as well as changing the date ranges will give more scholarly and up to date results. If this database lacked results in any particular area, other databases such as EBSCO could be used instead. Utilizing both Google

and the GVSU library database helped to complete the search in order to give a quantified amount of quality sources.

The Madison Square area is the primary region of focus for Urban Roots as that is the community that their current store is based. There are just under 10,000 people living in the Madison Square community, most of which are either Hispanic, African American, or White. Madison Square is not a wealthy area, in fact the median income in the community is \$29,838. This low salary puts roughly 38% of the Madison Square area under the poverty line. This is likely because most residence in the area have jobs that are focused on service operations, construction, or office jobs- none of which have top paying salaries. On top of that most households have on average 10 people living in the same house. There is not a generalized audience for the Madison Square area as it has been found that there is a wide variety of family types living there. Such situations include: married, married with children, single mothers, single men, single women, and minorities. The level of education that Madison Square residents have received varies, but in most cases, it is not much more than high school which is a contributing factor to the low incomes in the area (“Grand Rapids Michigan Neighborhood Map”).

In comparison, Grand Rapids is a much bigger potential market with just under 200,000 residents. Although Urban Roots is located in the Madison Square area, it would be beneficial for them to expand their business and reach out to the untapped market that is Grand Rapids. Grand Rapids has a much larger population with a larger median income of around \$45,000. With a bigger median income and a larger amount of people, if UR expanded their business and composting services into Grand Rapids they could see an even larger return on investment as the GR members are more likely to be able to afford constant composting and the more people in the city makes for a better chance that people will want to participate. Grand Rapids also has an

average of 2.5 people per household which makes composting much more manageable. Without having to deal with as many people's compost on top of living in a single standing household or duplex, greatly increases the likelihood that those living in Grand Rapids would be willing to engage in Urban Roots' composting program and spread the word throughout the city ("Grand Rapids Michigan Neighborhood Map").

Composting is not simply throwing out food scraps, it must also be accompanied by leaves or wood in order to have a proper green to brown ratio that emits the right amount of carbon and nitrogen. Compost itself is able to be added to soil in order to help plants grow by providing them nutrients and feeding the soil ("Composting 101"). Compost is typically made up of fruit, vegetables, and soups but there are some exceptions. While compost is available to purchase at stores it is not as useful as homemade compost. Yard waste and our food scraps consist of 30% of what we throw away to go to our landfills and that alone releases an intense amount of forceful greenhouse gas, so by composting we avoid the negative environmental effects and save the planet for just a little while longer. When composting, specifically in a backyard, it is important to select a dry shaded area that has access to a water supply to keep the compostable items ready for use (Silven 2010).

Some people do not like to compost because it poses an inconvenience for them. Having to separate all materials that are compostable is said to be a waste of time. People also find issues with animals. If they leave their compost piles outside-which most do- then animals are likely to get into the pile and create a large mess of the food scraps. It has also become difficult to those who have adapted to the composting lifestyle because they get so used to the idea of composting, that when winter comes along they feel as though they cannot compost ("Foodfuelfuture" 2014). While these are valid concerns, there are ways to combat these issues. A simple solution would

be buying services that do the work for the person. Urban Roots comes around to pick up individuals compost so that they do not have to do anything. By allowing a company to do the work instead, a person is still getting the environmental healthy aspect that they set out to do in the first place without having to deal with the hassle themselves. If someone is trying to budget it is beneficial to inform them of other ways to combat the issues they are facing so that they feel heard and are more likely to come to Urban Roots in the future when they are looking to participate in a composting program. Other ways to combat issues commonly associated with composting would be putting chicken wire up around the area in which someone's compost is stored to keep the animal disturbances to a minimum. As far as winter is concerned, it is hard to keep compost piles in their typical state but that does not mean composting cannot be done in the winter. In fact, making a compost pile a giant freezer for the cold months and composting is all at once when it gets warmer outside is just as beneficial for both the composter and the environment ("Kitchen Waste Composting").

Urban Roots provides services that tend to vary greatly from the services other competitors provide. However, UR should keep an eye on other businesses in the competing field so that they can become aware of what differentiates the two companies and adopt any methods that they believe will help better the business that is UR. A top competitor for Urban Roots would be Organicycle. Organicycle is a company similar to UR as they are too a composting business; however, unlike Urban Roots, they offer a variety of payment plans to their customers. The payment plans consist of quarterly, semi-annually, and annually. Having payment plan options allows Organicycle's customers to test out the program for a period of time of their choosing without feeling locked into the program. Often times the payment plans establish a love for the program and the customers continue their subscriptions and feel as though they are an important

part of the Organiccycle community therefore creating a sense of customer and brand loyalty (“Home”).

According to an article from the New York Times, the city has implemented composting programs for both households and businesses that are interested. The article details how composting can be achieved in a city environment when it is typically seen as unachievable. While urban composting does present its own challenges, it is still extremely manageable within certain parts of the city. This source emphasizes the point that apartment complexes are unlikely to participate in composting programs until a reasonable plan is established. Having to transport compost to a uniform location likely far away from the residence’s room is a turn off. However, single households do not have much if any main inconveniences presented to them which has made them extremely active and interested in participating in composting. If this level of composting interest can be achieved in such a large city, Urban Roots has the potential to do the same within the Madison Square area as well as Grand Rapids and eventually expand into bigger cities (Rueb 2017).

While there is an abundance of social media platforms, not all of them are cut out for promoting businesses. According to Brandi from the Lyfe Marketing Blog, Facebook, Facebook Messenger, and Instagram are the top three social media sites that should be utilized in order to get Urban Roots’ business out in public domain more easily. Facebook comes in “as the most widely used social media platform with 1.32 billion daily active users.” Because of this immense quantity of activity, it makes it easy for businesses to promote their products and services. “On Facebook, you can target by age, gender, employment, interests, purchasing behaviors, relationship status and so much more!” said Brandi. Being that businesses have the capability of either reaching the extremely large audience that is Facebook users, or being able to limit the

target audience allows for just the right amount of exposure based on what Urban Roots is portraying and who the target audience is at the time. Facebook messenger has the same access to Facebook users and Facebook advertising as the regular Facebook app has, but it has a few other assets to it as well. Messenger enables customers to interact with business ads which then allows the businesses to follow up on the messenger user's opinions. Aside from follow ups and interactions, Messenger lets businesses send personalized ads to people that help encourage users to become more involved with a given company or product. Instagram comes in at number three, and coincidentally (or not) is owned by Facebook. Since Instagram and Facebook are owned by the same person they both have access to the same advertising platforms. Unlike Facebook, on Instagram a business can "organically" grow their followers simply by ramping up their profile and ads that they personally produce on their feed. Being that Instagram is a more organic platform, meaning Urban Roots will not have to pay for ads or followers, it makes it a better option for companies such as Urban Roots who are working with limited budgeting ("Top 10 Social Media Sites").

According to the Organic Trade Association, the amount of American's who are both consuming and purchasing organic food is higher than ever before. While this mostly applies to fruits, vegetables, and poultry that statistic alone aids what Urban Roots is looking for. With the knowledge of this, it increases the chances that those around the Madison Square area are into eating organically. Big cities tend to be where families enjoy eating organically if the opportunity is presented to them at a reasonable cost. Being aware of how many locals enjoy and can afford organic produce is important to keep track of because it allows UR to better track who their target market may be and how best to reach them.

Based on what has been found from other composting businesses, the best target audience that Urban Roots should aim to reach in order to increase foot traffic would be anyone in either the area surrounding Urban Roots, or Grand Valley State University (GVSU) students living downtown Grand Rapids. The ages of these people likely range from 18-70- give or take depending on the target areas demographic- but by reaching an audience of this age it will more likely than not get the attention of those who are more willing to participate in the composting program. By extending the target audience to both groups of people it allows Urban Roots to get their brand out there to more people and increase the likelihood of bettering their brand. It has been found that those who have standalone houses are much more willing to compost and more enthused of the idea to begin with. This is because composting is a very easy thing to adopt when all someone must do is collect their own compost and put it outside in one centralized area. This differs from apartment complexes who have the hassle of not only collecting their compost, but also having to transport it from their rooms to a centralized location in the main lobby of the complex. This added work is typically too much for those who find themselves in apartment living and they tend to stick to normal garbage and recycling instead. Although the GVSU students will likely be living in apartments, or locations that face composting challenges, it is still recommended that they are in the target audience because being in the millennial generation they are more likely to be environmentally conscious. Being knowledgeable of the target audience and what age groups/types of homes are most likely to engage with Urban Roots is helpful to both time and sales.

Primary Research

Methodology

The methods utilized for this campaign included conducting a survey and hosting a focus group. The survey (See Appendix B) was made through Google Forms and was then sent via text or email to both Grand Valley State University students as well as local friends and family. The hopes of encompassing a wide range of people was to get a consensus among different ages in order to get a full read on everyone's composting knowledge and willingness. Both men and women received this survey and their ages ranged from 18-50. This is important to note to prove that a diverse range of individuals' opinions were taken into consideration in order to provide the best feedback for Urban Roots. The results found from the research conducted will help Urban Roots expand their business and become more popular in their current location of Madison Square.

Results

Survey

Our survey was made up of nine questions. We had thirty-seven respondents whose results can be found in Appendix E.

The first question the survey participants were asked was "What age range best describes you?" With the results found from this question it was noted that nearly 60% of participants were between the ages of 18-20. Age group 21-23 was the second highest age group accounted for as 32% of respondents fit that category. The remaining two categories had the least representation. Age group 24-27 was 2% of our respondents and those aged 28+ accounted for approximately 6% of those who participated in our survey. These ages and percentages are important to keep in mind as it will help understand who is most likely to participate in a composting program like Urban Roots.

The second question on the survey was “How would you categorize your community?” With this question it was found that 52% of respondents live in suburban communities, 32% live in what they would consider an urban environment, and 16% live in rural areas. This is useful to know to see if there is a correlation between community style and interest/knowledge in composting.

Participants were then asked the third question which was “Do you know what composting is?” The clear majority, 87% responded saying they knew what composting was, 11% said they maybe knew what it was, and the remaining 2% did not know what composting is.

The fourth question stated, “I am environmentally conscious.” This question was a bit more split than previous. 16% of respondents would strongly agree that they are environmentally conscious, 43% would agree, 38% consider themselves neutral, and 3% disagree and do not believe they are environmentally conscious.

Those taking the survey were then asked, “How high of a priority do you consider climate change to be?” 38% of the survey participants say it is a very high priority, 41% consider it a high priority, 19% remain neutral on the topic, and the remaining 2% have it marked as a low priority.

The sixth question stated, “I am interested in learning about composting.” With this the answers received were split. 46% of respondents say they agree and are interested, 19% strongly agree, 16% remained neutral, and 19% disagreed saying they are not interested in learning more. This is important to remember because it is evident that about a quarter of our participants are not interested in learning about composting and therefore are not very likely to participate in a composting program either.

The seventh question on the survey said, “I would attend an event on composting.” 14% of survey participants strongly agreed, 16% agreed, 24% remained neutral, 32% disagreed, and 14% strongly disagreed.

The eighth question asked respondents, “Have you heard of Urban Roots?” Many respondents, 78%, said no, 16% said yes, and the remaining 6% answered maybe.

The final question presented asked those who answered yes to the eighth question to explain how you heard about Urban Roots. The answers were: “in class”, “social setting”, “student senate”, “website”, and “social media”. These answers are good news for Urban Roots because it shows that they are being recognized in a multitude of ways.

Focus Group

Our focus group was made up of 6 Grand Valley State University students who expressed their knowledge and interest in Urban Roots and composting as a whole. (Appendix D)

First, participants were asked about their awareness of Urban Roots. Five of the respondents said they were not aware of UR, and the other participant heard of them through others she knew that were planning on volunteering there.

The second question they were prompted with asked, “How much do you know about composting?” The answers received varied. Someone said that composting is “organic matter that breaks down easily in a short time.” Someone elaborated on that saying that they know “you can break down egg shells, coffee, and basically anything.” Another person also discussed how composting can create other stuff such as coffee or other organic food choices. Another participant discussed how they work at a tea store where they participate in composting their products.

The focus group was then asked if they believe composting would be worthwhile. They came to a general consensus that it would be worthwhile because they agree that since we only have a handful of years left of Earth we need to start taking care of it the best we know how.

Participants were then asked, “What would prevent you from composting?” and among the respondents they agreed that especially at the college age their limitations would include not having the space to compost and having limited opportunity for programs based on where they are living at the time. They also discussed the difficulty having the money to fund a composting program while in college and being weary of the bugs that might come along with the process.

When asked if they had ever attended a farmer’s market before, all participants responded yes and were excited about the experiences they had at the ones they went to. They detailed that they were very positive experiences, family oriented, you can see how the community is being benefitted, the vendors were very friendly and personable. Someone else also expanded on the community benefitting, discussing how they enjoyed being able to see where people’s money is going towards and it leaves a sense of fulfilment.

Our next question was not as popular. They were asked to describe their interest in a community event on composting. With this we received answers such as they either were not interested, or they were half interested pending lots of factors. Those factors included wanting to go in a group, depends on who the presenter is and if he/she is knowledgeable of the topic and engaging with the audience, and the largest contributing factor was convenience in terms of location. These are college kids so having the event in a central easy to access location at a good time is important to them.

The next question was, “How willing would you be to make a lifestyle change if you knew it would benefit the environment?” Answers were split in half between our six participants.

Half of them would “definitely be willing” while the other half said it depends on the price and convenience as college is a low budget time for many individuals.

The group was asked what benefits encourage them to start composting, and with this they responded by reiterating that having enough space to compost is beyond important as well as having dedicated composting areas in buildings such as apartments as well as more common in restaurant/cafe type of locations.

The respondents said that their motivating factors to decide whether or not to attend an event include whether there are snacks and if there is tabling involved to promote the event (i.e. in Kirkhof).

The focus group ended with, “What price point would you be willing to pay for a composting service? Would you be willing at all?” One respondent said they would not be willing right now as they are currently too broke; however, there was a more positive response from the other participants. They said they would be willing to pay around \$20, and they introduced other ways of potential payment. Those ideas included being able to volunteer a certain number of hours a month with the business and in turn receive a program or being rewarded with fruits and vegetables made from compost at the end of the month.

Analysis

With the survey results it was found that over three quarters of participants were in college and the rest are either just out of college or well into their adult lives. Knowing this is it easier to gauge the remaining survey questions keeping in mind that most of the answers came from those in school at the moment. Similar in the focus group, those participating in it were all females in college, so the same age consideration applies to them and their answers. The survey went into further detail about where the respondents lived since that was sent out to a wider

variety of individuals. Since the survey gives the option of urban, suburban, and rural it allows us to consider that when reading the results to make it easier to assume that one community is more aware of composting than the other. With the focus group, although the women were not asked directly it is likely that they live either on or off campus nearby which would explain the lack of awareness of Urban Roots since most college kids are not keeping an eye out for composting plants. Both the focus group and the survey participants were asked about their awareness of Urban Roots. In both instances the amount of people who did not know what Urban Roots was greatly outnumbered those who did know what UR was. On the flip side, however, both groups were also asked if they knew what composting was and that had better results. The survey showed that the majority of its respondents knew what composting is and the focus group was able to give us examples of what they knew already about composting which gave great insight. The survey and focus group also showed that both groups of people find that climate change is a high priority and that composting is worthwhile because of the things it does to better our environment. These responses are beneficial because although the participants of both studies may not know what Urban Roots is or what they do, because they are aware of composting and believe that it is important for our planet it would be a good Segway to get them to know more about UR. Because a lot of the response that the focus group gave included scenarios that would prevent them from composting, it is extremely important to consider that and take it into account when advertising Urban Roots' services and when reaching out to certain demographics-college students in particular. This is because since they had concerns about space or where the compost would go, by giving them alternatives or better ideas they may not have thought of would potentially lead them to become more interested in the idea of composting. Also discussing the fact that UR comes and picks up your compost every so often is a huge benefactor that would

encourage many individuals, so by properly utilizing community events and social media Urban Roots would be able to get the word out there leading to an increase in client interest.

Conclusion

The results received from both the survey and the focus group shed a positive light into the knowledge that college kids and local residents have regarding composting. These results make it easier to understand the amount of awareness that currently exists and allows Urban Roots to get their brand out there better to the age groups that need it the most. Now being aware of these results it will give us a better idea of how to achieve the goal of increasing the foot traffic within UR by considering answers received when planning events and building the brand on social media platforms.

Action Plan

The main goal of this campaign is to increase the awareness of Urban Roots. In order to achieve this goal, the three objectives that have been thought to work are to establish Urban Roots as a place for the community, increase the number of people who are using Urban Roots' composting program, and increase the community's knowledge of composting.

The first objective is to establish Urban Roots as more of a community center within the next six months. This objective was made in hopes of making the community feeling more connected to UR and in turn feel more inclined to be involved with their composting programs. The strategy that has been discussed the help achieve this objective is to put the Urban Roots staff in charge of hosting community events throughout the year. Community events are a great way to get the surrounding neighborhoods involved with the employees of UR and get the potential customers to understand what UR is all about and why they are so special. The first tactic will be to create a press release (See Appendix H). This press release can be sent to local newspapers, journals, online news sites, and even the GV paper. The amount of people or media forms that adopt this press release will help UR measure the initial interest in the events. By sending out a press release, Urban Roots will also be able to get their events covered on a multitude of platforms that they likely would not have been able to do otherwise. The second tactic suggested is to begin hosting weekly (in the warmer months) farmer's markets that will help better engage the community. At this market, community members may cook themselves using the compost grown food and will also be able to mingle with other customers and the employees. Allowing customers or potential customers to see all of the healthy foods that can come out of composting is more likely to draw them in and want to invest in or continue investing in the composting programs. The third tactic would be to send out a pitch letter (See Appendix I) to a local journalist. This letter would be detailing the upcoming event, stressing what is going on and

making it apparent that this event differs from ones in the past, making people want to come again if they have been to one of the previous events. By submitting a pitch letter and hopefully having it be adopted by a journalist, the event will get better exposure to the surrounding community members. This could be measured based on whether a journalist picks up this letter or not.

The second objective to achieve our overall goal of increasing foot traffic is the increase the number of people using Urban Roots' composting program by 15% within the next year. This will be able to be measured by keeping tabs on how many clients there are at the beginning of the year and taking note of how many clients there are again at the end of the year. Compare the two numbers and see if the increase matches what it should have been. The strategy to accomplish this objective is to utilize both print and digital media. The first tactic is to print out flyers (See Appendix G) detailing the rates that the composting program goes at and what all of services include by purchasing the program. These flyers should then be put up around campus and in nearby neighborhoods/restaurants that surround Urban Roots. The second tactic is to put the staff of Urban Roots in charge of certain social media platforms and post on each platform a certain amount of times a week. By having a regular posting schedule, the followers of the UR account will see how excited and active the business is and will keep customers updated about what is going on. The third and final tactic for this objective is to utilize the most followed platform and make sure to post whatever deals are being offered by UR at the time. it is encouraging for customers to see deals because it makes them feel more inclined to purchase the program. It also shows that the company is working with their customers which is refreshing to see as a customer.

The third and final objective is to increase the community's knowledge of composting by 20% over the next year. By increasing their knowledge about composting it will hopefully inspire people who did not know as much about composting originally to purchase a program offered by Urban Roots now that they know the benefits that come with composting. The strategy to combat this objective is to table in Kirkhof Center at Grand Valley State University's Allendale campus. Tabling is a great way for anyone to get their business out there and it is an easy way to promote upcoming events to the students of GVSU. The first tactic that is recommended to be used in order to carry out the strategy of tabling is to put signs up around campus. By putting signs in various locations around campus students and faculty will be able to see that a specific tabling event is occurring and if their interest is sparked by those signs they will be intrigued to go. This could be measured simply by asking those who stopped by the table if they heard about the table in a way other than seeing it in passing. The second tactic attached to the tabling strategy is to have personal appearances from the owners of UR, for example Levi. Having someone of this stature and dedication to the company come to the tabling events shows the potential customers how invested the company is in its cliental relationships and makes them feel more special and motivated to support such a good cause. This can be a personal measurement based on how many tabling events Levi, or another owner, attends. The third and final tactic is to have staff members post on social media platforms and the Urban Roots website. These posts will include pictures of each tabling event that is being put on by the company. Include in the posts what is being offered at the tabling events and why people should stop by; that way people feel more interested in the idea of visiting. Google Analytics can be utilized the help measure the success of the social media posts as it is able to help track the number of likes, comments, and clicks as well as notice users that continuously visit the sites.

Budget

	Price	Total
Objective 1		
Strategy 1: Community Events	\$100 per event (12)	\$600
Tactic 1: Press Release	\$1,000 per project (1)	\$1,000
Tactic 2: Farmer's Market	\$200 (1)	\$200
Tactic 3: Pitch Letter	\$150	\$150
	Total	\$1,950

	Price	Total
Objective 1		
Strategy 1: Print/Digital Media	\$250 (1)	\$250
Tactic 1: Flyers	\$160 (1)	\$160
Tactic 2: Timely Social Media	\$0	\$0
Tactic 3: Post Deals	\$0	\$0
	Total	\$410

	Price	Total
Objective 1		
Strategy 1: Table in Kirkhof	\$0	\$0
Tactic 1: Signs	\$50	\$50
Tactic 2: Personal Appearances	\$0	\$0
Tactic 3: Social Media	\$0	\$0
	Total	\$50

The first objective is to establish Urban Roots as more of a community center over the next six months. The strategy that is thought to accomplish that is to host community events. Since a lot of the materials that will be at the events could consist of things the company already has, \$100 should be allocated to spend per event. By hosting these events 6 months out of the year, the total cost for all of the community events would cost \$600. In order to advertise for the community events to come, Urban Roots should put out a press release that will cost them \$1,000. One of the events put on should be a designated farmer's market where the event is aimed at getting the community to see the different types of foods composting can get you. This event will expect to cost \$200 as it needs to be set up properly in a venue convenient for all. The final tactic for this strategy is to use social media to advertise the event and this will not cost any money to Urban Roots. The total cost for this first objective will be \$1,800.

The second objective is to increase the number of people using the Urban Roots compost program by 15% in the next year. In order to achieve this objective Urban Roots should utilize both print and digital media which in total should cost them \$250 as they can order things in bulk and reuse throughout the year and in different locations. The first tactic which coincides with print media is flyers. By spending \$160 on flyers, Urban Roots will be able to be able to purchase around 500 flyers which can be handed out to Grand Valley students and people around the business as well as posted throughout the city and campus. The next two tactics are to utilize social media in order to engage the public and make them aware of the accomplishments happening because of Urban Roots' composting program as well as use it through story usage to capture deals that are happening so that people can get in on cheaper options. Neither of these tactics will cost Urban Roots any money. This objective total cost would be \$410.

The third and final objective is to increase the community's knowledge about composting by 20% over the next year. In order to achieve that it is recommended that Urban Roots does tabling in Kirkhof Center on Grand Valley's Allendale campus. Tabling will cost them \$0 and will get them lots of recognition. Leading up to and following tabling, UR should purchase signage that can be posted throughout campus and will advertise for them to hopefully bring in more visitors to their tabling. This signage will cost them \$50. It is next recommended that there are personal appearances from Levi himself or other people in charge of Urban Roots because they will be able to be the best asset when it comes to questions people have, and it proves that UR is a company cares about its customers. Having personal appearances will not cost the company any money. The final tactic is a pitch letter that will be sent to a journalist in hopes of getting them to cover the idea of urban roots engaging with the community; this will cost the company a total of \$150. The total cost for this objective will end up being \$200.

Timeline

Evaluation

The first objective was to establish Urban Roots as a community center within the next six months. This objective would be measured by keeping tabs on the increase in involvement between the community, the customers, and the employees of UR. This could be kept track of visually and through taking notes. This measurement would be completed with the help of the strategy that is hosting community events. These community events would happen throughout the year, having events once a month at least 6 months out of the year. These events would vary in activities and themes in order to keep people coming to them. The point of these community events is to show the community that Urban Roots is a company who cares about their customers and is willing to do engaging things with them. If the community events turn out to be not as successful as planned, try to ask for feedback from current Urban Roots customers that attended one or more of the events. They may have better insight into what the other community members thought of the event and would be able to give examples of things they did and did not enjoy from an outsider's point of view. With this information, take those suggestions into consideration and try to host another event, perhaps in a different location or extend the invite to more people.

The second objective was to increase the number of people using Urban Roots' composting program by 15% within the next year. The thought to achieve this was by initiating a strategy utilizing both print and digital media. By using both forms of media, Urban Roots will have a higher likelihood of getting people to see what they are promoting since those who may not have access to digital media in the area would be able to see the news too and hopefully develop an interest in UR. This objective could be measured by taking note of how many customers Urban Roots has at the start of the year and take note again at the end of the year and compare the two numbers after all of the events and new advertising techniques have been put into play. In the event that the program usage does not increase at this rate within a year, reflect

back on the forms of media that noticeably got the most attention. If certain media advertised something more than something else and one of the two events has a better response rate then it is easy to tweak media usage in the future to better accommodate what seemed to be the most successful.

The third objective was to increase the community's knowledge of composting by 20% in the next year. The strategy to achieve this objective is to frequently table in Kirkhof Center at Grand Valley State University. Tabling is a great way to get students involved, especially if something is being offered to them at the table. This could be measured by either asking students to take a very minimal questionnaire that would ask basic questions about composting, or simply ask those who stop by what they know about composting and then take note of it. This phase of evaluating their knowledge will take place the first month of tabling. During the last month of tabling do the same thing but this time with tougher questions that people should have gotten the answers to by coming to the tabling events. If scores and knowledge do not increase and people do not seem to know any more than they did in the beginning, talk to people who frequented the table or did know more the second time around. Maybe those individuals will have a suggestion as to what helped them learn the best and that can then be taken into account when teaching the public about composting again in the future.

As a whole, Urban Roots could receive general feedback from their customers and community members by having a suggestion box inside of their store and sending out an email survey. These two options will allow for them to hear from those who were involved in their objectives if they turn out to be difficult to measure at times, and this way people are able to provide more feedback than they may have originally.

Appendix

Appendix A

“Composting 101: What Is Compost? – Bonnie Plants.” *Bonnie Plants*, Bonnie Plants,

bonnieplants.com/library/what-is-compost/.

Foodfuelfuture. “I Want to Compost, but...!” *Sustainable America*

sustainableamerica.org/blog/i-want-to-compost-but/.

“Grand Rapids, Michigan Neighborhood Map - Income, House Prices, Occupations,

Boundaries.” *Crime in Pine Bluff, Arkansas (AR): Murders, Rapes, Robberies, Assaults,*

Burglaries, Thefts, Auto Thefts, Arson, Law Enforcement Employees, Police Officers,

Crime Map, www.city-data.com/nbmaps/neigh-Grand-Rapids-Michigan.html.

“Grand Rapids, Michigan Population 2018.” *Total Population by Country 2018*,

worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/grand-rapids-population/.

“Home.” *Organicycle*, www.organicycle.org/.

“Kitchen Waste Composting:” *What Makes Compost? Microorganisms That Make Rot Happen.*,

www.compostheaven.com/kitchen-waste-composting.html.

Rueb, Emily S. “How New York Is Turning Food Waste Into Compost and Gas.” *The New York*

Times, The New York Times, 2 June 2017,

www.nytimes.com/2017/06/02/nyregion/compost-organic-recycling-new-york-city.html.

Silven, Kirsten E. “The Importance of Composting: Help Eliminate Organic Waste, Fertilize

Soil.” *Rock Climbing as a Threat to Cliffs' Biological Diversity | Conservation | The Earth*

Times, [www.earthtimes.org/going-green/importance-composting-help-eliminate-organic-](http://www.earthtimes.org/going-green/importance-composting-help-eliminate-organic-waste-fertilize-soil/82/)

[waste-fertilize-soil/82/](http://www.earthtimes.org/going-green/importance-composting-help-eliminate-organic-waste-fertilize-soil/82/).

“Top 10 Social Media Sites for Business - LYFE Marketing.” *Digital Marketing Blog*, LYFE

Marketing, 19 Sept. 2018, www.lyfemarketing.com/blog/social-media-sites-for-business/.

“Urban Roots.” *Urban Roots*, www.urbanrootsgr.org/.

Appendix B
Survey

1. What age range best describes you?
 - a. 18-20
 - b. 21-23
 - c. 24-27
 - d. 28+
2. How would you categorize your community?
 - a. Urban
 - b. Suburban
 - c. Rural
3. Do you know what composting is?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Maybe
4. I am environmentally conscious.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
5. How high of a priority do you consider climate change to be?
 - a. Very high
 - b. High
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Low
 - e. Very low
6. I am interested in learning about composting.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
7. I would attend an event on composting.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
8. Have you heard of Urban Roots?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Maybe
9. If yes, explain where you heard about them (i.e. social media, in class, websites, etc)

Appendix C Moderators Guide

This is a research survey to measure youth's awareness and usage of the idea of composting. Your participation in this research is very important and much appreciated. The benefit of this study is to better understand how community members feel about composting and how important they believe it is. Using this information can help the composting company Urban Roots increase their foot traffic based on people's awareness and interest in composting. You should be able to complete the survey within 15 minutes. Before starting the study, please read the following statement.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate at all, or you may refuse to participate in certain procedures or end your participation at any time, and you may refuse to answer any particular question within the survey. By participating in this study, your answers may be used to help improve the current status of the environment slowly but surely. All information that you provide will be held in strict confidence. These surveys are anonymous and will not be linked to your identity. Only the researchers involved in this study will have access to the raw information. Information about your answers will be kept confidential to the maximum extent allowable by law.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this study, please contact Margaret McEvilly, the student researcher on this project, at Grand Valley State University, 815-322-3404, mcevillm@mail.gvsu.edu or Professor Wendy Hammond, Department of Advertising, Public Relations, Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Michigan, 49401, 616-405-8358.

Your signature below means that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

Name_____ (please print)

Signature_____Date _____

Appendix D
Focus Group

1. Are you aware of what Urban Roots is?
2. How much do you know about composting?
3. Do you think composting would be worthwhile?
4. What would prevent you from composting?
5. Have you attended a farmer's market before?
6. Describe your interest in a community wide composting event.
7. How willing would you be to make a lifestyle change if you knew it would benefit the environment?
8. What benefits would encourage you to start composting?
9. What factors entice you when deciding if you want to attend an event?
10. What would prevent you from composting?
11. What price would you be willing to pay for a composting program? Would you be willing at all?

Appendix E

Focus Groups

Awareness of Urban Roots

- 1 response yes, rest responded no
- She had heard through others who were planning on volunteering there

How much do you know about composting?

- “organic matters that break down easily in a short time..”
- Knows “you can break down egg shells, coffee and basically anything”
- Compost tea at workplace

Yes very thorough, breaking down objects over a short period of time in order to create other stuff: such as coffee or anything organic

Do you think that composting would be worthwhile?

- Yes , Yes,
- We only have a handful of years left of healthy earth

What would prevent you from composting?

- Not having space to compost // limited ability based on where you live

Have you attended a farmer's market before?

- yes , very positive experience, very family oriented and you can see the way it is benefiting the community. A very personal event and very friendly and direct to many vendor passions.
- Can see the influence they are having on the community directly--see the people their money goes towards, feels fulfilling

Describe your interest in a community event on composting

- One that it located very close to where they live and a great presenter with a very interesting way to discuss composting
- I would not
- Half interested
- It depends on who is presenting, how knowledgeable and engaging of a speaker
- If I could go in a group
- Convenience factor-- space close to them, accessible

How willing would you be to make a lifestyle change if you knew it would benefit the environment?

- Definitely willing
- Depends on the price and convenience

What things/benefits would encourage you to start composting?

- Space would help to start composting (convenience and space)
- More composting areas (dedicated spot in building)

What factors entice you when deciding to attend an event?

- Had a booth in Kirkhof>
- Snacks involved

What would prevent you from composting?

- If it was especially challenging or expensive, or inconvenient
- Not having space to compost
- Worrying about the smell and attracting bugs
- “In an apartment, obviously I don’t have space, or else I would”

- I grew up on a ten acre land, so everyone composted

What price point would you be willing to pay for a composting service? Would you be willing at all?

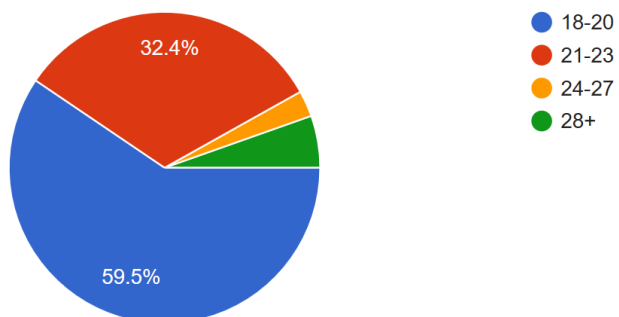
- Yes for an incentive, maybe after college when can afford. Not a lot maybe \$20

Incentives are listed below

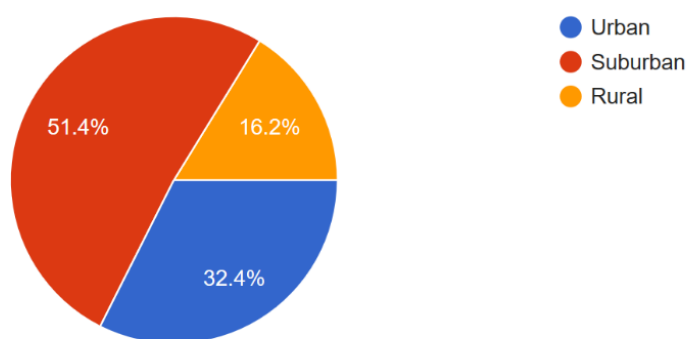
- \$19
- Willing to pay if they knew what the money was going towards.
- And If they gained something in the end
- Vegetables/ fruit at the end of the month, pay through volunteering
- No as of now, too broke, would if there was a college discount

Appendix F Survey Results

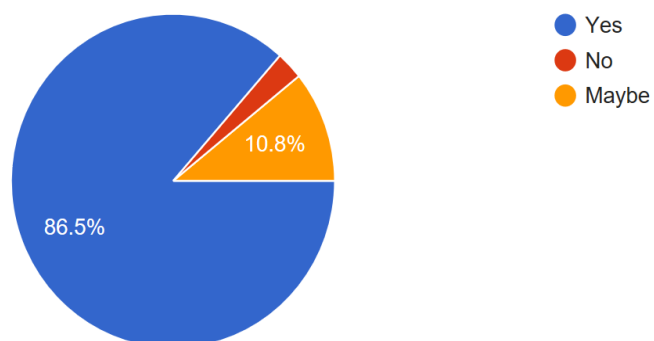
1. What age range best describes you



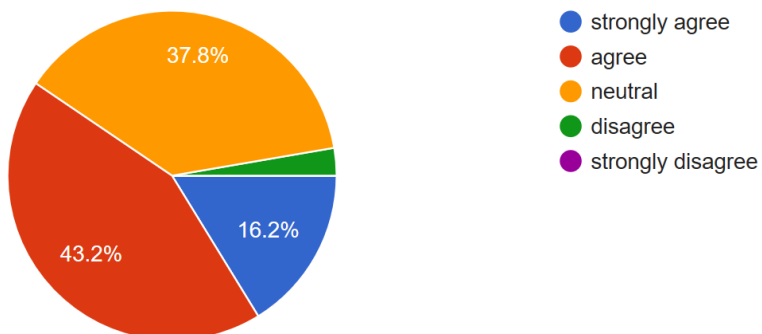
2. How would you categorize your community



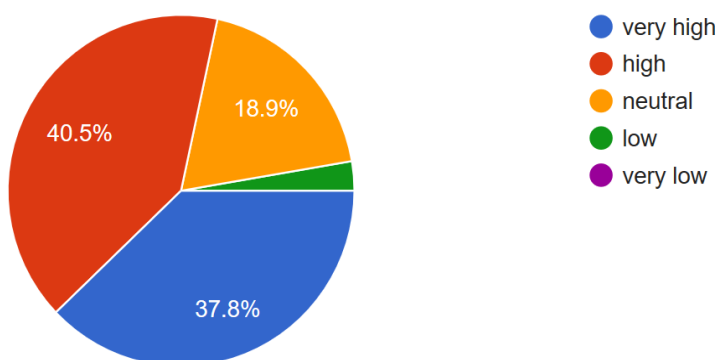
3. Do you know what composting is?



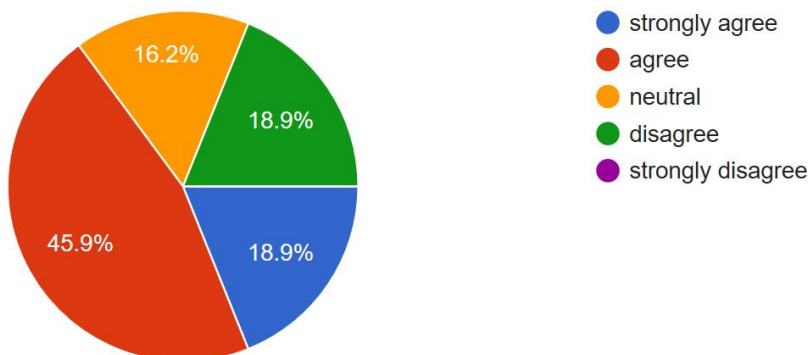
4. I am environmentally conscious.



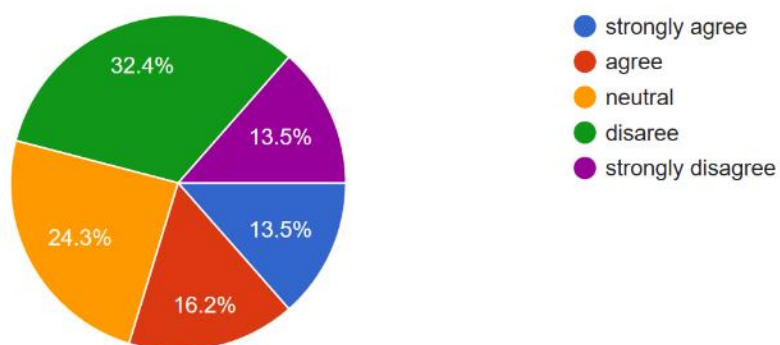
5. How high of a priority do you consider climate change to be?



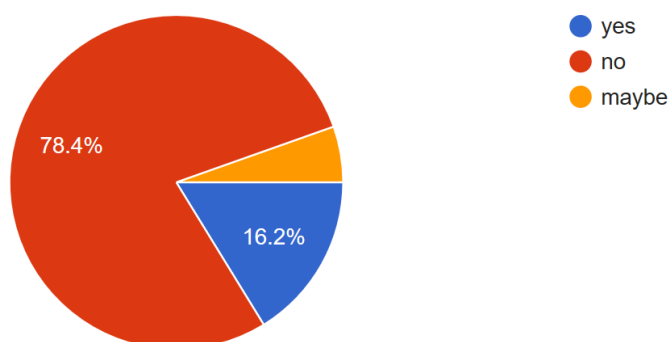
6. I am interested in learning about composting.



7. I would attend an event on composting.



8. Have you heard of Urban Roots?



9. If yes, explain where you heard about them (i.e. social media, in class, websites, etc)

in class
social
Student Senate
Website
Social media
N/A
In class

Appendix G



SAVE THE PLANET- ONE
BAG OF COMPOST AT A
TIME

URBAN ROOTS COMPOSTING PROGRAM

1316 Madison SE, Grand Rapids, MI.

**Composting programs for as little as
\$19/month**

Get involved today! Come by the store or
contact us at 616.228.4707

Appendix H

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 15th, 2019

Primary Contact:

Urban Roots

616-228-4707

info@urbanrootsgr.org

Composting Company Urban Roots Hosts Community Events For All

Grand Rapids, Michigan- Urban Roots is a locally built company whose goal is the encourage people to live a healthier lifestyle. Their way to achieve a healthier lifestyle is to eat organically and compost their food regularly. Getting more people involved with their composting programs will help not only grow their business but increase the quality of living experienced by those investing in the program while bettering the surrounding areas as well.

Urban Roots will be hosting monthly community events May-November. The exact dates and times are to be posted on their website and social media. These events are a way to get the community better involved with the employees of Urban Roots in order to establish a customer/client relationship to make it understood how much Urban Roots cares about their customers. By attending these events, members of the community and Grand Valley State University students will be able to get a better understanding of what composting is, why it is so important, and what benefits they might experience by investing in one of Urban Roots' composting programs.

Each month the events will vary. There will be events focused one educating the public about composting so that people are able to understand the importance of composting. There will also be events that are more farmer's market based that will allow community members and potential customers to see what sorts of foods they are able to produce just from composting and in turn live a healthier lifestyle.

The overall goal for Urban Roots is to increase the foot traffic that they see as a company, and these events will help them do that. The goal of the events is to establish Urban Roots as a community center who is welcoming to anyone who might want to join the family.

Appendix I

Dear M Live,

As I am sure you are well aware, the state of our planet has been and continues to dwindle nearly every day. Society as a whole has very little care for the environment, but there are a few ways to start combatting the issues we are facing. One of those ways is through composting. Composting is a great way to enrich soil and limit the amount of trash that we throw into our landfills to build up each day. I am writing to you today in hopes that you will publish a story regarding the new and exciting community events that are coming up courtesy of Urban Roots. Urban Roots is a Grand Rapids composting company who aims to get more people involved in the wonderful process that is composting. These community events are being hosted in hopes to better educate the public on composting and encourage them to become part of the Urban Roots cliental by purchasing one of their composting programs. These events will range from educational to food tasting and are a great way to get the community together in order to help combat the current environmental crises.

Sincerely,

Urban Roots

616-228-4707

info@urbanrootsgr.org

Digital Backup of Planbook

URL:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/bag98eq2tock8z/CAP%20220%20campaign%20book.docx?dl=0>

Contact Information:

Margaret McEvilly

mcevillm@mail.gvsu.edu