

Surveys & Visitor Counts

Gathering Customer Data at Your Market

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**NOFA-VT / VTFMA Annual Farmers Market Conference
March 20, 2019**

Rapid Intro Round!

- Your Name, Market & Role at Market
- Do you count visitors?
- Do you survey customers?
- Can you make better use of your data?

Visitor Count



Counting Visitors at Markets

By Dar Wolnik, Farmers Market Coalition

Farmers markets across the U.S. use many different methods of counting their visitors. Some of these methods are best used for planning programmatic activities at different points of the day, while others are more reliable ways to estimate an average number per market day.

The current methods most researchers accept as accurate use strategically placed staff (paid or volunteer) to count those entering or everyone within the market at a set time. These methods require defining entrances, the time span to count and who should be counted or not, such as children or groups of people. The entry count method may be difficult at those markets that stretch for blocks or have many entrances; for those there are also new methods such as capturing the number of mobile phone "pings" within a market space or using drones to snap overhead photos to count quadrants that may offer accurate data.

In order to satisfy researchers who need credible data while still acknowledging the collection capability of low-capacity markets, Farmers Market Coalition's materials currently recommend the 20-minute timed entry count offered by the [Rapid Market Assessment \(RMA\) toolkit](#).

Markets expand the reach of healthy food, stabilize small businesses, and encourage responsible ecological practices. However, without the ability to gather and share accurate data on those impacts, most markets struggle to find sustained support. To address that need, Farmers Market Coalition (FMC) and its partners have begun to collect and test grassroots evaluation resources through its Farmers Market Metrics (FMM) program. These resources respond to the needs of "DIY" farmers markets by offering simple instructions on collecting data for a set of refined metrics, with a website for collecting, managing, and reporting that data.

There is no more obvious example of how difficult data collection can be at markets than the task of counting the number of visitors each attracts. Markets' attendees spill in from all sides, brought by every type of transportation method. Some shoppers re-enter the market multiple times after dropping off items to a cooler in the trunk of their car. Others use the market as a base to shop the surrounding area and then camp out on the grass to soak up the community vibe or to visit with neighbors. Some markets have pedestrians who may use the market only as a shortcut to their final destination. Because of these and other reasons, getting a precise number of unique visitors can be a challenge.

Visitor Count

Count totals

<u>10 minute count</u>	<u>20 minute count</u>	Full Count	Walkthrough (every 30 min)
1014	1089	1237	709

Full count totals by entrance

Zone 1: University - tent pole	Zone 2: University tent pole - tree	Zone 3: Tree - Wall	Zone 4: Driveway + back entrances
101	252	567	210

Adding in visitors counted in mkt before 11 am (107)

Total: 1237

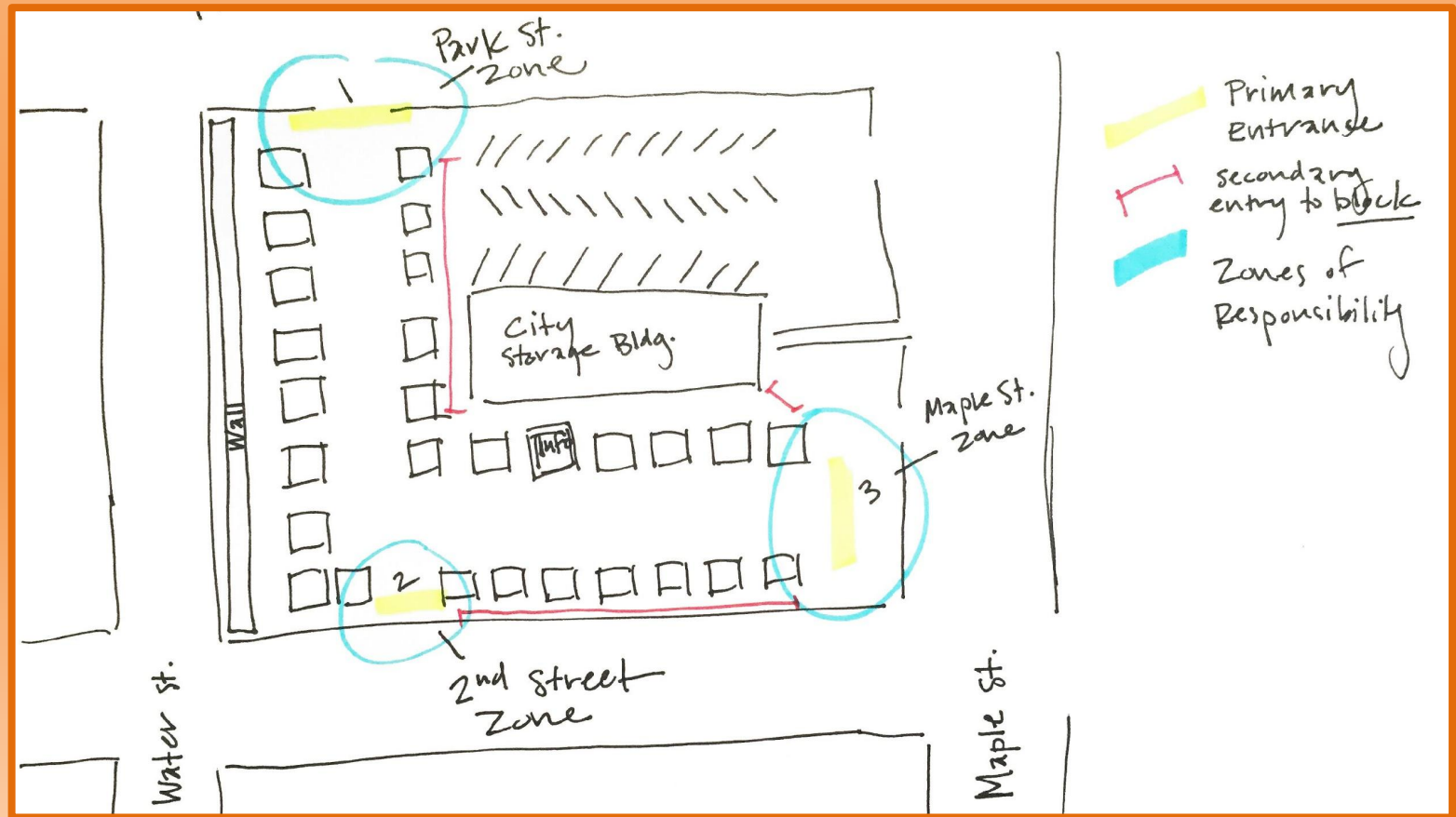
Comparison of 20-minute intervals

Hour	1 st 20 min interval	2 nd 20 min interval	3 rd 20 min interval
11-12	181	127	133
12-1	131	83	75
1-2	88	84	36
2-3	65	69	58
Totals	465 (x3) 1395	363 (x3) 1089	302 (x3) 906

Comparison of 10-minute intervals

Hour	1 st 10 min	2 nd 10 min	3 rd 10 min	4 th 10 min	5 th 10 min	6 th 10 min
11-12	96	85	67	60	72	61
12-1	75	56	28	55	39	36
1-2	43	45	40	44	20	16
2-3	30	35	34	35	29	29
Totals	244 (x 6) 1464	221 (x 6) 1326	<u>169</u> (x 6) 1014	<u>194</u> (x 6) 1164	<u>160</u> (x 6) 960	142 (x 6) 852

Visitor Count



Visitor Count



Visitor Count Report

{Enter Name of Your Market}

Zone:

Date of Count:

Name of Data Collector(s):

Instructions:

- Count only adults.
- Count individuals.
- Do not count visitors that re-enter.
- Do not count vendors.
- Record the total from each 20-minute counting period below.
- If you can, set an alarm on your phone or watch for 5 minutes before the start of each period and 5 minutes before the end of each period, to help maintain accuracy.

Count Period 1: {XX:20 to XX:40am} _____ visitors

Count Period 2: {XX:20 to XX:40am} _____ visitors

Count Period 3: {XX:20 to XX:40am} _____ visitors

Count Period 4: {XX:20 to XX:40am} _____ visitors

Count Period 5: {XX:20 to XX:40am} _____ visitors

Count Period 6: {XX:20 to XX:40am} _____ visitors

Count Period 7: {XX:20 to XX:40am} _____ visitors

Count Period 8: {XX:20 to XX:40am} _____ visitors

{Insert your Market Map here}

Visitor Count



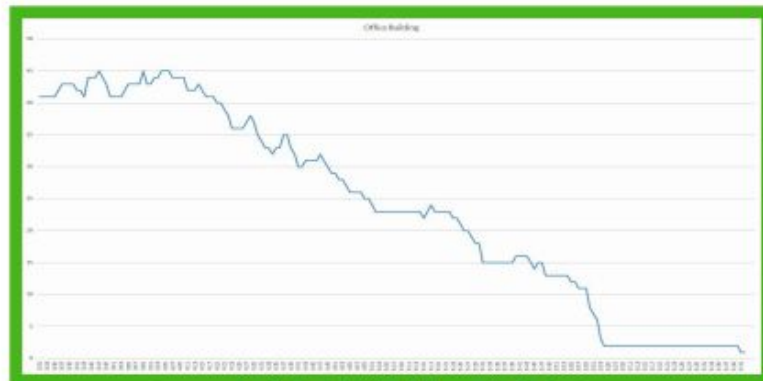
Counting Case Study 4: FRESHFARM Ping Counting Method, Washington, D.C.

Nony Dutton, the Deputy Director of the D.C. based non-profit FRESHFARM has begun to explore the use of this technology to count the attendees at the organization's 14 markets. He explains their pilot: "I learned that large retailers had been using phone tracking devices as a method for counting their customers and understanding traffic flow in and around their stores for years. Those commercial implementations were too expensive for a small non-profit like ours, so I began researching DIY alternatives. I discovered that the necessary equipment could be purchased for around \$70, with the key pieces being a Raspberry Pi computer and a USB wireless adapter capable of operating in "monitor" mode."



Dutton explains further:

"All cellphones with Wi-Fi enabled periodically (every few seconds) transmit "probe requests" which essentially announce their presence in an attempt to connect with nearby networks they are familiar with. Those requests carry with them a unique cellphone ID that can be logged and analyzed. We first tested the system in our office building and could clearly see the decline in nearby cellphones as it got closer to 5PM (quitting time) and dropping to nearly 0 cellphones by 6 PM" (see graph)."



Fresh Farm initial cell phone ping test

Visitor Survey

Data Collection Methodology: Visitor Survey

How to Prepare

How do I do it?

What should I expect?

Step 4: Implementation

Show the market map to your data collectors. Identify where they will administer the survey, how they will execute the selection interval (i.e., count adults that cross the 'survey line').

If possible, ask one of the data collectors to manage interval selection; they'll approach every Nth market visitor to cross the survey line, ask that visitor if they're willing to take a short survey, and direct them to a data collector with the surveys. This is especially important for larger markets.

Provide the data collectors with their materials, and go over the following instructions:

1. Ask every Nth adult visitor who crosses the survey line to take a survey. A good opener is "Do you have a minute to help the market?"
2. Ask the survey questions verbally, and record the answers on the survey form.
3. If a visitor outside of the interval count volunteers to take the survey, circle 'volunteer,' on the survey. If a visitor does not want to complete the survey, asking them to participate does not count towards your minimum sample size. Identify the next respondent through the selection interval. In other words, don't just ask the next adult to complete the survey.

Follow up with data collectors throughout the day to answer questions and hear about their experiences.

At the end of the market day, gather your data collectors together to review your success.

- What worked and what didn't?
- Did shoppers respond better to one request over another?
- Were there areas that you felt visitors were not getting surveyed?

Discussing these questions while they're fresh in your mind will better prepare you for your next visitor count.

After the market day is over, if you've collected paper-format surveys, be sure to input those into the FM Metrics website.



Download



Visitor Survey

Visitor Survey

{Enter Name of Your Market}

{Date of Survey}

Our goal is to receive (X) number of completed visitor surveys today. Please ask every (X) visitor who crosses the survey line if they'd complete the survey with you.

Circle one: Interval / Volunteer

1. How did you get to the market today? Circle one.

- a. Personal vehicle
- b. Walking
- c. Bicycle
- d. Two-wheeled motor vehicle
- e. Taxi / paid rideshare
- f. Bus or other public transportation
- g. Other

2. Was the farmers market a primary reason you came to (local neighborhood/area name) today.

Circle one: Yes / No

3. How much money have you spent or do you plan to spend at the market today? Money includes cash, credit/debit, and SNAP, WIC-FMNP, WIC-CVV, and Senior FMNP vouchers.

\$

4. Did you or do you plan on doing additional shopping, eating, or other activities in this area today (outside of the farmers market)?

Circle one: Yes / No

If yes, how much money have you spent or do you plan to spend in the area today?

\$ _____

5. What's your home zip code?

6. How often do you come to the market? (circle one)

- a. First time
- b. Weekly
- c. Every other week
- d. Monthly
- e. Every other month
- f. Rarely (2-3 times per year)
- g. Once per year

7. What's the primary reason you came to the market today?

- a. to buy groceries
- b. to attend a special event
- c. to pick up a CSA
- d. to eat a meal

- e. to visit with friends and neighbors
- f. I have a promotion, coupon or incentive to use
- g. Came with group or tour.

8. How did you hear about the market?

- a. I read something (an article, newsletter, social media, etc.)
- b. I heard something (from a friend/colleague/neighbor, etc.)
- c. I heard something (on the radio, from a public official, etc.)
- d. I saw something (a sign, banner, ad, etc.)
- e. I happened by
- f. I don't remember

Add a note:

Central Baltimore Farmers Market

DASHBOARD

[Dashboard](#)[Metrics](#)[Reports](#)[Profile](#)

2016

Change Year



Vendor Mix

83% Farm vendors
17% Non-farm vendors

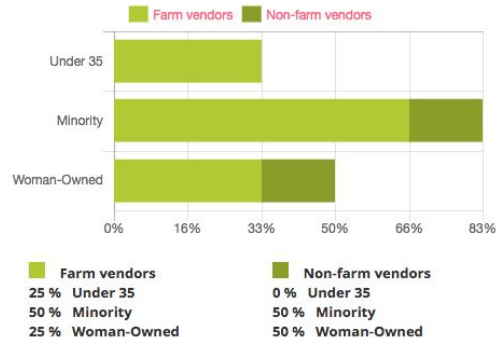
33% Produce
16% Meat & seafood
33% Value-added
16% Eggs

Market Sales



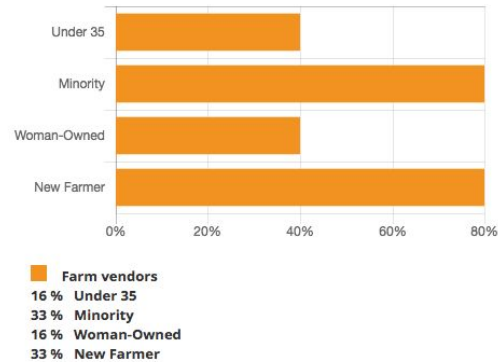
Total Vendor Demographics

of 6 total vendors.



Total Famer Demographics

of 5 total vendors.





\$35 per visitor

Average spent at neighboring
businesses on market days.

*Local businesses benefit from customers
drawn to the area by the market.*

Countryside Farmers Market Ohio

	Weekly Market Statistics		
Date	9/8/2018	9/9/2017	% Change
★ Customer Attendance	635	1859	-65.80%
Total Sales	\$ 17,192.65	\$ 28,842.27	-40.40%
Avg Sales per Customer	\$ 27.08	\$ 15.51	74.60%
Vendor Attendance	54	60	-10%
Avg Vendor Sales	\$ 318.38	\$ 480.70	-33.80%
Weather	60s, rainy	60s, cloudy	

2017

Seven City of Pittsburgh Farmers Markets

June, July and August of 2017

The following data represents a snapshot of the impact that the seven farmers markets managed by the City of Pittsburgh had during the summer of 2017. The markets included are Beechview, Carrick, East Liberty, Mellon Square, North Side, South Side, Squirrel Hill.



74 total vendors

were supported by the
City-managed markets.

*The market allows new and small
businesses to enter the marketplace.*



30 miles

average distance food travels
from farm to our market.

*That's fresh! Most food eaten in the
U.S. has traveled nearly 1,500 miles.*



48% of visitors

came to the neighborhood
specifically to visit the market.

*Our markets attract residents
from across the region.*



62% of visitors

come to the market at least
twice per month.

*Visitors enjoy 2.5 times more social
interaction than at a supermarket.*



29.5k visits

to our markets took place from
in June, July and August.

*Our market connects families
to farmers weekly.*



\$26 average

is spent by market shoppers at
neighboring businesses.

*Businesses benefit from customers
drawn to the area on market days.*



The farmers markets
accept cash, credit cards & SNAP
EBT through the **Just Harvest
Fresh Access** program. \$15,893
in 661 SNAP transactions were
redeemed at these markets in
the summer of 2017.

Learn more at:

pittsburghpa.gov/events/farmers-market

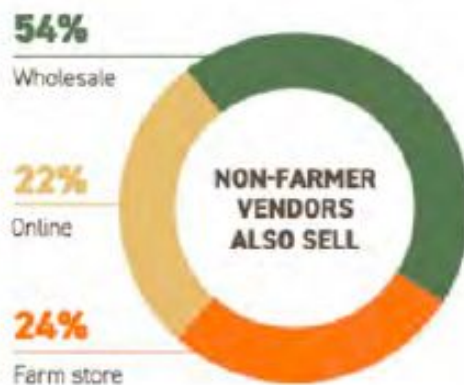
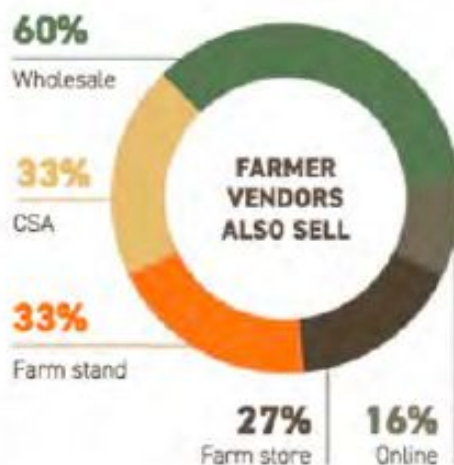
Stay in touch!

(412) 255-2499 Special Events Hotline

@PghEventsOffice

@PghEventsOffice

MAINE FARMERS' MARKETS BY THE NUMBERS



FOOD TRAVELS ON AVERAGE 22 MILES FROM FARM TO MARKET

(By comparison, some studies roughly estimate that food for the typical American meal made with supermarket goods travel **1500 miles** from original source to the kitchen table.)



OF VENDORS SURVEYED DURING SNAPSHOT WEEK

61%
were female

27%
were under 35



Maine farmers' markets have an average of
16 VENDORS PER MARKET



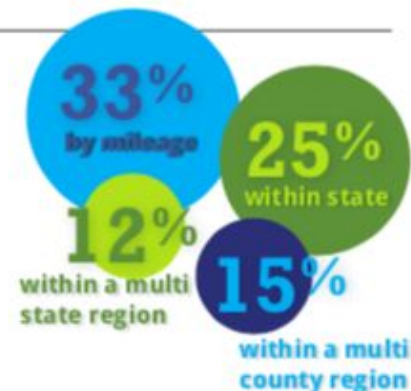
Markets are building stronger relationships with public officials, those who have the ability to make policy decisions that impact local food sales.



The culture of data collection has grown, putting market organizations in the position to analyze the impacts of their vendors and improve outcomes.



Markets are leading the way in defining what it means to be "local."



Markets are at the forefront of increasing access to healthy food.



<https://farmersmarketmetrics.guide/metrics-in-action/>

NOFA-VT FMPP Project

- Helping FMs collect data, part of 2016 grant
- Goal to develop resources to share that markets can use to implement data collection
- Counts & Surveys provide snapshots
- Recommend 2-3 at same time each year
- Combined makes each more meaningful

One part of the picture...

DATE	Customers	+/-
11/18/17	653	
11/17/18	519	-20%
1/27/18	548	
1/26/19	449	-18%

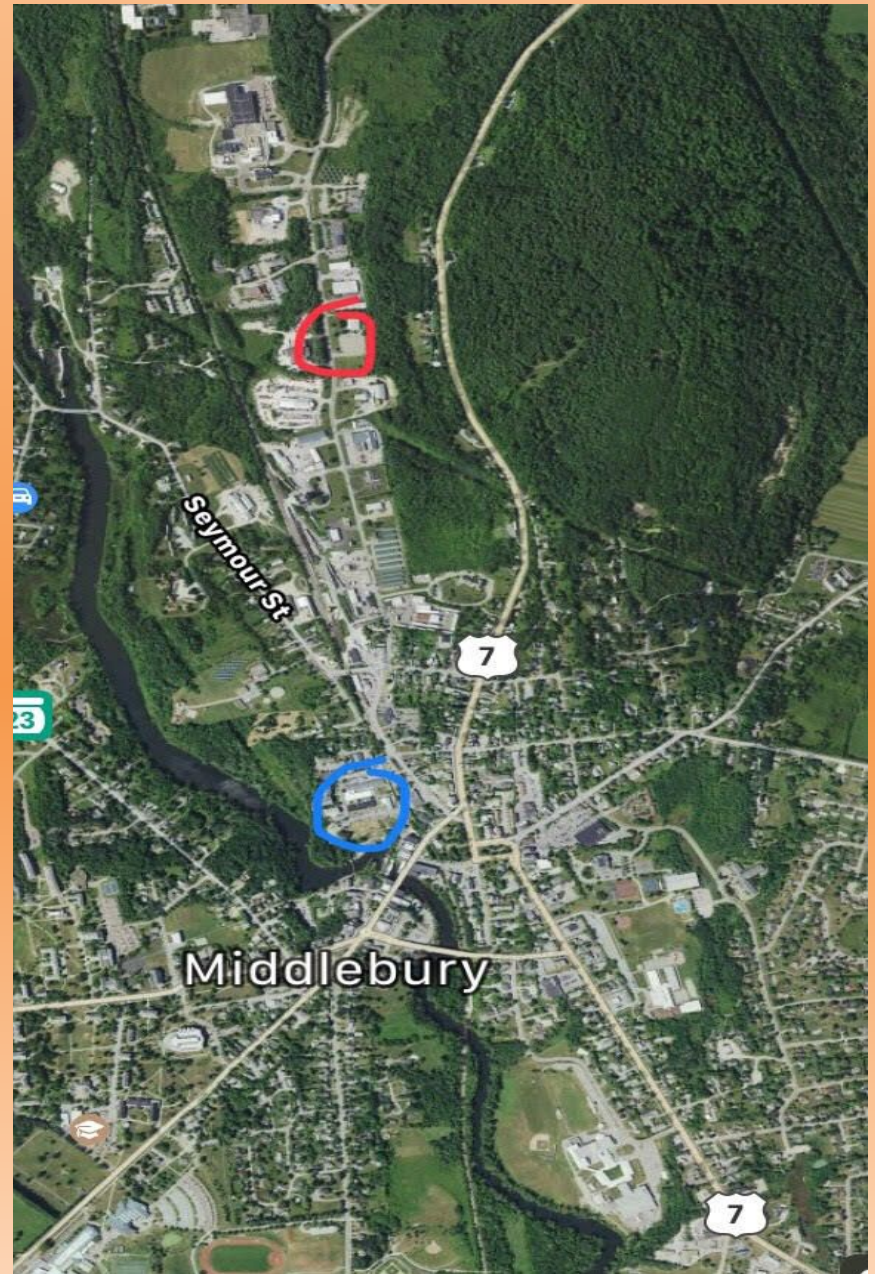
But more data changes everything

DATE	Customers	+/-	Gross Sales	+/-	Per Customer	+/-
11/18/17	653		\$9067.63		\$13.90	
11/17/18	519	-20%	\$10.906.35	+20%	\$21.01	+51%
1/27/18	548		\$6178.93		\$11.28	
1/26/19	449	-18%	\$7178.92	+16%	\$15.99	+41.7%

Middlebury Farmers' Market

Year 2 with counts, surveys while
tackling location challenges!

Middlebury Farmers Market's Moved for 2017





Counts & Surveys

1. What did you hope to learn?
2. Were there any challenges implementing either?
3. How did you recruit/reward volunteers?
4. Did you learn anything that surprised you?
5. How did you use the information gained?
6. Any tips you can share?

Zip code	Average shoppers per market %	Average \$ spent per shopper per market
05753 (Middlebury, includes Cornwall and Waybridge)	42.86%	\$27.78
05734 (Bridport, includes some Shoreham)	4.76%	\$46.67
05769 (Salisbury, includes some Ripton, Leicester, and Goshen)	4.76%	\$40.00
05443 (Bristol and Lincoln)	4.76%	\$38.33
05491 (Vergennes, includes some New Haven, Panton, Ferrisburg, Addison, and Waltham)	4.76%	\$23.33
05766 (Ripton, includes some Granville)	3.17%	\$42.50

Market Visit Frequency (see right)

Market Spending (see below)

*Note: # visitors (485) divided by avg. # per party (1.87) x average amount spent per shopper (\$29.24).

First time	12.7%
More than weekly	4.76%
Weekly	30.16%
Several times per month	15.87%
Monthly	12.7%
Several times per year	7.94%
Rarely	15.87%

Average amount spent per shopper at the market	\$29.24
Average number of people per shopping party	1.87
Estimated gross sales for August 18th*	\$7,583.64

Advertisement Type	Which advertisements seen?	Which advertisements most effective?
Addison Independent	33.3	16.7
Valley Voice	4.8	0
Facebook	11.1	3.7
Instagram	4.8	5.6
Banner over Main St.	61.9	35.2
Yellow signs on market days	87.3	70.4
Rack cards	4.8	0
Posters	14.3	3.7
Front Porch Forum	17.5	7.4
ACORN Summer Resource Guide	7.9	1.9
I haven't seen any	6.3	-

Counts & Surveys

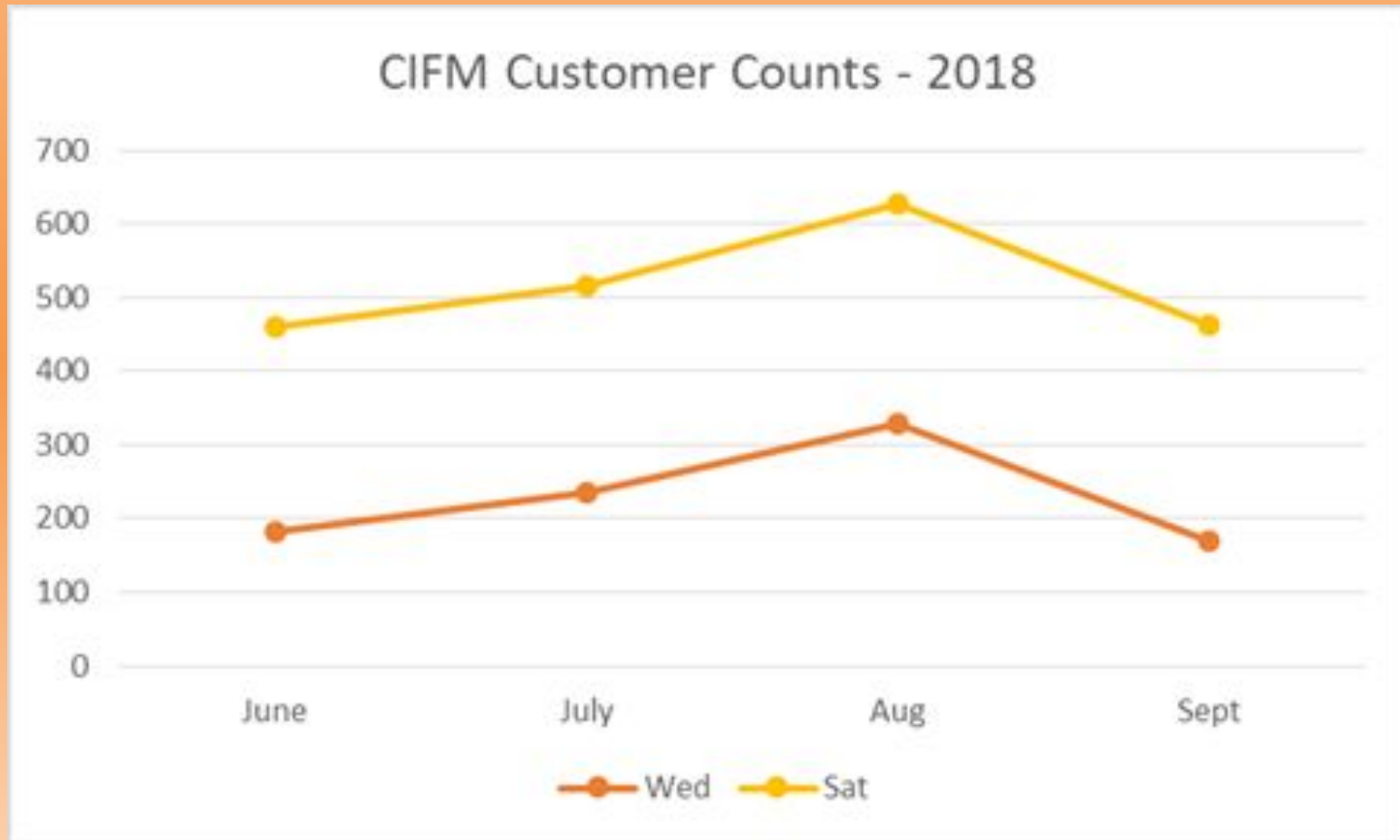
Champlain Islands Experience

1. What did you hope to learn?
2. Were there any challenges implementing either?
3. How did you recruit/reward volunteers?
4. Did you learn anything that surprised you?
5. How did you use the information gained?
6. Any tips you can share?

Who visits when?

Time	Number of Shoppers	Percent of Total	Percent more likely to attend with activities	Percent less likely to attend with activities	Percent uninfluenced by activities	Most popular activity	Most common type of shopper
10:00 am-11:00 am	174	33.7%	21.1%	10.5%	68.4%	None (10), Cooking demos (6)	Seasonal Island resident (47%)
11:00 am-12:00 pm	125	24.2%	15%	5%	80%	None (9), Cooking Demos (7)	Year round island resident (35%)
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	129	25%	33%	0%	67%	None (7), Music (5)	Year round island resident (39%)
1:00 pm-2:00 pm	88	17.1%	18%	0%	82%	None (4), Cooking demos (4)	Year round island resident (36%)

Snapshot of 2 Markets



Which promotions do they see?

Market posters	25%
Website	7.4%
Facebook	17.6%
Market newsletter	10.3%
Front Porch Forum	23.5%
Islands Agriculture Map and Guide	8.8%
Islander article or ad	27.9%
Roadside Sign	76.5%
None	19.1%

A Challenging Layout for Counts & Surveys



Using other ways to gather info
from your customers...

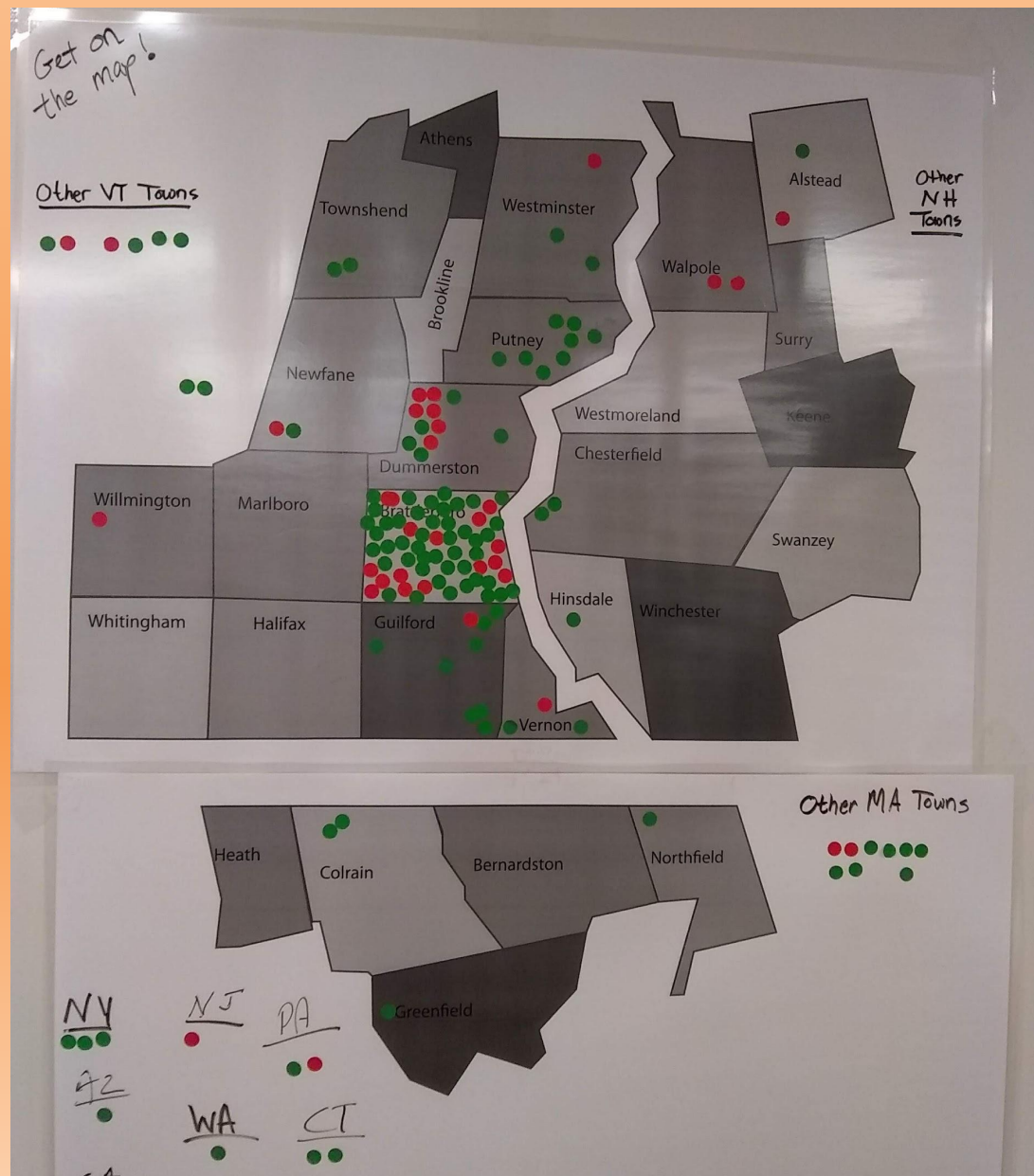
Use of an
easel to
invite
additional
customer
input



Get On The
Map!



Get On The Map!



Q & A

Gathering Customer Data

Successes

Challenges

Using Your Data

Lessons Learned

What would help you . . .