

The Talking Farm Case Study

Background

The Talking Farm, a small but active nonprofit in the Evanston/Skokie area, is an organization aiming to promote healthy, organic, and locally-grown food within the community through education, job creation, and ultimately, the production of organic foods grown in-house on their local farm. The cC team was commissioned to brainstorm a way to measure the impact of The Talking Farm on community beyond simply compiling anecdotal feedback.

Business Issue

The Talking Farm sought answers to the following questions:

- How can The Talking Farm better measure its impact?
- What are viable options that The Talking Farm can take to further its mission?

Service Overview

The campusCATALYST Community Analyst team worked to complete the following:

- Analysis and Research on the feasibility of undertaking a Comprehensive Food Assessment
- The creation of a personalized “Organizational Impact Assessment,” designed to measure the direct impact that the organization has made on the community
- The compilation of information on local nonprofits that may be open to collaboration
- The design of a visual guide-map of 2-Year strategic possibilities that the Organization could achieve

Project Outcomes & Recommendations

The cC Team found that The Talking Farm could measure its impact by utilizing metrics that quantify the impact of its current projects. It thus went forward with a customized assessment with relevant metrics which would assess the impact, and ultimately the health, of The Talking Farm. The Comprehensive Food Assessment (CFA), one of the team’s potential recommendations, was determined too large an undertaking for both the scope of our engagement, and the current size of The Talking Farm. The team thus focused on providing relevant information about the CFA to prepare for future possibilities, and recommended several steps that should be taken before embarking on the endeavor.

Future Benefits

The Talking Farm will walk away from this engagement with a document which, if utilized, outlines the impact of the organization on its community. This information can be used for an organizational restructuring which could streamline The Talking Farm and better align it with its original mission. It can also be used as the first step for collaboration efforts between both governmental and non-governmental entities that will ultimately lead to the implementation of a Comprehensive Food Assessment (CFA). The team also provided a “2-Year Possibilities Map,” which visually communicates the feasibility and effectiveness of each strategic direction that The Talking Farm can take. These tools will help guide the organization to a more vibrant future.