Executive Summary

Mission Statement and Goals

Team

The App

Marketing

Looking Forward
Executive Summary

CalgTech is a startup company based in Calgary, Alberta. Our team currently consists of five executive members: Danvy Tran, Linda Zhao, Christine Cao, Megha Chopra and Shining Chen. Our debut application is Crop2Community, an information center that allows Calgarians to easily access the various opportunities to buy locally produced foods in the city of Calgary.

We have determined that the local food industry is flourishing and the interest in buying local continuously increasing. The benefits are wide and varying, from sustaining the local economy to reducing environmental impact. Yet there are still many Calgarians who do not know the extent of local food available, and because of this, the consumer base for local producers is limited. Our mission is to support local economic growth in Calgary by providing an easy-to-use product, which enables local food producers and consumers to conveniently connect.

Crop2Community’s main function is to increase the accessibility of local food in Calgary by being an all-in-one source of information for local food. We have lists of venues where local food can be purchased, the times these venues are open, and information about the various vendors and farmers selling at these venues. A map feature will allow consumers to find their nearest local food venue and a search by food and shopping list feature will allow the consumer to focus on the food they need.

Our target market is divided into two main segments, consumers and local food producers in Calgary. Local producers will be able to use the promotions feature on Crop2Community in order to increase their customer base and advance their business. Consumers will be able to easily discover new places to buy local food as well as enhance their local food shopping experience.

Our competitive edge arises mainly from the fact that this app is original for the Calgary area. We are able to tap into a growing industry and as the industry grows, demand for our app will as well. We are able to offer benefits to both the producer and consumer and have a wide audience in terms of age and gender.

Our marketing strategy involves aggressive social media promotion, as well as ensuring continued interest in Crop2Community. The shopping list feature can be used again and again, and the promotions feature will keep consumers engaged and connected. As availability of local food venues increases, so too will our database, leading to enhanced knowledge and awareness of local food.
Mission Statement and Goals

Our mission is to support local economic growth in Calgary by providing an easy-to-use product, which enables local food producers and consumers to conveniently connect.

Our Objectives Are:
1. To connect 100,000 Calgarians to local food products.
2. To raise awareness about 6 venues where local food can be purchased.
3. To promote over 30 vendors and local food producers.

Calgary is a vibrant city with a booming economy, yet the downtown skyscrapers often obscure the tightknit local communities from view. As active members in our local community, our group, CalgTech, both loves our local community and sees an issue within the community, with the lack of awareness about the local food market.

We define local food as food produced within Alberta and British Columbia. This can be extrapolated as food produced within 500km of purchase, a significant decrease in the approximate 4000km that food has to travel to the average Canadian home. [3] Crop2Community itself focuses on venues to buy local food in Calgary. It is evident that there are multiple benefits to eating local. In addition to sustaining the local community’s economy, eating local also leads to reduced air pollution occurring from the transportation of food and the fresher, preservative-free groceries are generally healthier for consumers.

Despite all these benefits, CalgTech has determined that one of the major problems preventing Calgarians from eating local is the lack of information surrounding where to buy local food in Calgary; many people simply do not know where the nearest farmer’s market is or what products are offered.

CalgTech’s mission is to enhance the networks between local food producers and consumers in Calgary by promoting awareness and increasing information accessibility through our app Crop2Community. This is a win-win for both producers and consumers. We believe that our app can demystify eating local by providing thorough information on where, when, and how to buy local food products. The consumers will know where to shop and the producers will have a venue through which they can quickly and easily reach their targeted audience. CalgTech strives to strengthen the information circulation around eating local, so that we, as a community, can work together for a healthier, more environmentally and economically sustainable lifestyle.
Team

CalgTech is a team of dynamic personalities and diverse skill sets. Hailing from the University of Calgary, CalgTech is comprised of three engineering students, one computer science student, and one computer science-software engineering double major student. The diverse skills of the team members, from business to programming to presentation, shines in this collaborative project, where each member is an integral part of this app start-up project. The one thing the team shares is their hardworking personalities and ambitious vision, and they are confident that CalgTech will create a community changing application.

Linda Zhao
Linda is a first year engineering student at the University of Calgary interested in electrical engineering. She started programming in September 2013 in one of her first year engineering courses. As a part of the Fair Trade Team of Engineers ‘Without Borders’, Linda has been involved in promoting sustainability and fair trade on campus. In her spare time, Linda enjoys watching Japanese anime.

Danvy Tran
Danvy is a first year engineering student at the University of Calgary. Her passion for entrepreneurship developed after her successful inception and liquidation of two small businesses during her high school years. In addition, Danvy is an avid environmental advocate and supporter of women in engineering. She is excited to combine all her interests in developing an app through Technovation and hopes her enthusiasm and expertise will help lead ‘Crop2Community’ to the top.

Megha Chopra
Megha comes from Tripoli, Libya and has lived in 7 different cities before she decided to move to Calgary. Megha is currently majoring in Computer Science at the University of Calgary. She is set to graduate in 2016 and hopes to also complete a minor in Software Engineering. Megha loves to travel; she has been to over 14 different countries. She is passionate about acquiring new knowledge about computers and photography.

Christine Cao
Christine is a first year engineering student at the University of Calgary, pursuing a degree in Geomatics Engineering starting next year. Her love for all things technology has lead her to where she is today, developing an app with her friends using her skills in programming and presentation. Outside of school, Christine advocates for scientific education in youth and diversity in engineering through her work as a council member on the Engineering Students’ Society. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, photography, travelling, and eating.

Shining Chen
Shining is a first year undergraduate at University of Calgary doing a double major in computer science and physics. She participated in Junior Achievement in Grade 12 where
her team made it to the top three company of the year. Initially, she planned to pursue a fine arts degree after high school, however she slowly found interest in computer science and physics. Currently, she dreams of researching quantum computers while painting and drawing on the side. This coming summer, Shining is going to be in Uganda for a missionary trip to engage students in Kampala Uganda in faith and spiritual conversations and doing humanitarian works.

Our Mentor

Camille Kotke
Camille is a former graduate of the University of Calgary, with a degree in psychology. Having worked in different levels of government for 10+ years with employment and training initiatives, she is passionate about career development, lifelong learning and helping others to achieve success. She was excited to become involved in this project as a mentor to help support the success of young women in their learning and development.
The App

According to the Restaurants Canada Chef Survey, local food has topped the list for food trends for the last four years. (1) Supporting local food and avoiding food that has been shipped in from other nations not only lessens our environmental impact but also gives consumers access to fresh, tastier food with no added preservatives. Buying local food also helps local farmers and stimulates the local economy. With growing awareness about environment and sustainability in our food supply, consumers are showing an increasing interest in supporting locally produced food. (2) People want to know more about where their food came from.

Crop2Community provides a centralized and accessible database to help consumers find local food products in Calgary, raising awareness of the available local food market. Food producers who are less technologically inclined can also bring their business to more local food lovers through Crop2Community. By providing this platform, Crop2Community hopes to connect local food producers and consumers through a common network.

Crop2Community will benefit shoppers by offering a quick and easy way to find all types of local food products, from vegetables and fruits to dairy products and meat. With the choice of searching by food type or searching by location, one can easily navigate Crop2Community and find their desired product or store location. A second group of users that will benefit are the local food producers. Crop2Community helps local food producers promote their business by providing a technical service of updating their product list, promotional offers, locations, and operation times on a centralized database.

The app gives details about where and when an individual can purchase a particular product. Our map feature helps one to easily find close-by stores for a local product as well as the fastest route to a store from their current location. The user can also choose to browse by food type and find suitable stores for the particular product they are looking for.

In addition to the conveniences of finding local food products using Crop2Community, users can also find special promotions under the promotions tab. The discounts give an additional incentive for one to shop locally and bring in more customers for local food producers.

App users will also find additional fun features for the application such as a shopping list function to help them enhance their shopping experience. With options to ‘like’ a product, check-in at a store, and rate the shop visited, Crop2Community provides a fun, interactive platform for local food lovers.
Marketing

Market Size:
As outlined previously, the trend of local food is increasing significantly. The number of Canadian farmers markets has doubled since the late 1980’s and cities all over Canada are seeing an increase in local food sales [3]. After in-depth market research of a diverse audience of Calgarians, we were able determine the demand for our app, as well as gauge the potential market.

Figure 1.1

Would You Download and Use an App that Promotes Local Food?

- Yes, regardless of price
- Yes, for a small amount of money only
- Yes, only for free
- Maybe, depends on the reviews
- No

Figure 1.2

Do You Know of Others Who Would Also Use This App?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe, if the app is good
Target Market:

We have identified two key target markets: Consumers and Local Producers.

Consumers:
CalgTech’s consumer target market applies to any group of people who have a general awareness of the benefits of eating locally produced food and any inclination of doing so. More specifically, our target market consists of three segments: Established local food buyers, occasional local food buyers and those contemplating moving towards buying local. Because Crop2Community is an application based on centralizing and creating easy access of the information about local food in Calgary, our target market spans across a wide age and gender base.

Established local food buyers: Those who already buy local on a frequent basis would enjoy the promotional materials on Crop2Community as well as the other interesting features, such as the in-season clock. It is likely this group would already have knowledge about the permanent locations to buy local food in Calgary, but would enjoy discovering other vendors and seasonal sellers.

Occasional local food buyers: Those who occasionally purchase local foods would be able to discover new places to buy local food and would find it easy to transition into more regular consumption of local food.

Considering buying local: Those who would like to start buying local, but are having difficulties finding out where and when they can buy local, can use Crop2Community to find the most convenient local food source near them at any time. As well, they can learn about all the benefits of consuming local food.

Local Producers

Any business would appreciate an expanded customer base. Thus, local food producers would enjoy the increased traffic that Crop2Community would bring to Calgary’s local food venues. Through the option of offering promotions on the app, vendors can increase their customer base, as well as monitor the value of partnering with Crop2Community. Our app would also allow local food producers to continue to stay in touch with their consumers and to update them on new products and new locations. We provide a guaranteed market for local producers, which allows for targeted marketing. For any local food producers who are less technologically inclined, we offer a venue through which their products can be displayed to a wide range of people who already are interesting in buying local.
SWOT Analysis:

**Strengths**
- Increasing interest in eating locally produced food
- Unique in terms of a Calgary based market
- Addresses a local community issue
- Taps into a growing industry
- Niche market
- Taps into a growing industry
- Difficult to globalize
- Numerous benefits
- Groundwork research needed
- Diverse audience
- Dependent on size of the industry
- Marketable as encouraging sustainable living
- Sponsorship with local companies
- Promotes local businesses
- Limited Cooperation
- Locational Expansion
- Other local food applications
- Addition of features
- Decline in local food interest

**Weaknesses**

**Opportunities**
- Marketable as encouraging sustainable living
- Sponsorship with local companies
- Promotes local businesses
- Limited Cooperation
- Locational Expansion
- Other local food applications
- Addition of features
- Decline in local food interest

**Threats**

**Weaknesses to Strengths:**

**Niche Market**
Although Crop2Community has a specific user base, this user base is increasing. In addition, within this niche, there is a wide range in terms of age and gender.

**Groundwork Research Needed**
Although extensive groundwork research is needed, this will allow us to make meaningful connections with both local consumers, as well as local food producers. Initial penetration of the market is key and groundwork research will aid in the establishment of our presence in the industry. In addition, further development of the application will allow for farmers to upload their information directly onto the application, thus reducing the amount of groundwork research needed.

**Competition:**
Sources of Competition:
Our competition includes other apps that centralize local food information. Research has indicated that these apps are in existence, although none of them are Calgary-based. Other forms of competition include outside forms of advertisement for local food, as well as non-application based information centers for local food in Calgary.

Competitive Edge:
Crop2Community presents a competitive edge in the fact that it is the first of its kind in Calgary. In addition, the nature of the application allows for convenient access to the location and opening times of various local food sources in Calgary. Our mapping feature allows for local food consumers to find local food wherever they are in the city. Essentially, our app makes it easier for consumers to find local food venues in Calgary, and provides a more streamlined approach than simply “googling” local food in Calgary. Other additional features, such as promotions and a shopping list function will allow for continued user interest. Crop2Community also has a competitive edge in terms of local producers engagement because through Crop2Community, they will be able to market to a group of people who are already interested in buying local food.

Marketing Strategy:
Crop2Community revolves around the goal of connecting local food consumers to local food. Thus, our marketing strategy will be directed to both audiences. In order to appeal to both the consumer of local food, as well as the local food producer, we have developed the following marketing funnel.
Website and Social Media Use:
Social media has been proven to be an instrumental way of marketing and CalgTech has made it an integral part of our marketing strategy. We will ensure our Facebook page, website and Twitter are continuously being updated. We will not only utilize social media to market Crop2Community, but to access local food communities to keep up with local food trends and demands. With aggressive social media marketing, we will be able to connect with our younger aged audience, especially those who are eager to make sustainable choices. Eating local is a trend for many young adults and we will market to them through social media.

Education:
We are well aware of the importance of keeping our app updated. Thus, it is vital that we educate ourselves about new local food opportunities in Calgary. For local food consumers, we hope to provide education in terms of benefits and opportunities. We also hope to educate Calgarians, especially those contemplating making the transition into regular purchase of local foods, about the various benefits of buying local and to educate them on where and when they can buy local.

Inbound Marketing:
It is vital that CalgTech make a physical presence in the local food community and this will be done using the two previous tiers. With an increasing database, we hope to build customer rapport and draw other stakeholders in. In addition, we will use physical presence to connect with local food producers and plan on partnering with various vendors and markets in order to promote our app. We also plan on aggressively marketing our app at various local festivals and seasonal markets.

Client:
Our clients include both the local food consumer as well as the local food producer. In the end, we hope to make local food more easily accessible. A measure of our success will be determined from user reviews for Crop2Community, as well as the number of downloads. We will also measure our success as more local food producers express interest to be featured on our app, indicating the increased connection between consumer and producer.

Milestones:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date of Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Plan Complete</td>
<td>May 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beta Version Complete</td>
<td>August 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Hiring Complete</td>
<td>August 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Release of Application</td>
<td>September 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looking Forward

Our first step in bringing Crop2Community to the general public is to further develop our app from our existing prototype to include features that promote more user interactions. With financial support, we can purchase a cloud space that allows food producers to directly update information about their business if they wish to.

To start up Crop2Community, we will need legal services for company inception. Crop2Community requires two administrative staff to contact local food producers and collect data (crops availability, current promotions, etc) to update our database. We will also need two to three programmers to complete the app development, implement future functions, improve our app quality, and update our database on a regular basis. Three marketing and management staff members will prepare promotional materials as well as coordinate internal affairs.

It is our hope that we are able to keep Crop2Community free of charge for downloading, but we plan to implement a small maintenance fee from local vendors and farmers who would like to promote their business on our app. With the needs of our market fluctuating, however, we may have to implement a small fee for the application. The optimal price will be determined with further development.

In the future, we wish to expand Crop2Community’s concept and philosophy beyond Calgary and connect consumers and local food growers in other cities. This can be accomplished by selling our program code to local organizations that will be responsible for updating and maintaining the Farm to Farm App for their municipality.

Conclusion

Despite Calgary’s flourishing local food market, there remains an issue in the community with easy information accessibility of the various venues where locally produced food can be purchased. Crop2Community solves this by centralizing information about where, when and how Calgarians can integrate local food into their everyday life.

After thorough market research, we have determined how our target audience is segmented into consumers and local food producers and have developed the features in Crop2Community accordingly. Local food producers can utilize this app to promote their products to a network of Calgarians willing to buy local food, and those who are inclined towards eating locally produced food can easily access convenient locations and times for which they can make these purchases.

In the end, CalgTech hopes to support our local food economy and providing the means for consumers to connect with local food producers. We strive to make it easy to buy local food so more people will do it more often.
References:
