



Alessandra "Aly" Stoffo

Executive Summary

April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Eat Well, Live Well: ASU's First Major Event for Plant-Based Diets and Sustainability

Project Partner: Aramark

Animal-agriculture is a resource intense industry and a major driver of greenhouse gas emissions, land degradation, and water pollution. In the United States, we largely have the ability to reduce GHG emissions by changing our diets without jeopardizing our health and well-being. This project was designed to target this sustainability issue by partnering with Aramark to foster the adoption of plant-based diets at Arizona State University (ASU).

Aramark is a 14.6 billion-dollar Fortune 500 company that runs 72 food operations across ASU's campuses including all Sun Devil Dining services. The company has internal commitments to sustainability, health, and wellness. In addition to these commitments, they are expected to meet the guidelines presented by The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) at ASU. In recognition of the negative environmental effects of animal agriculture, the AASHE guidelines have recently changed, which might influence Aramark to adopt more sustainability initiatives including sourcing more plant-based products at ASU.

Aramark's Sustainability Department at ASU is interested in promoting sustainable behavior change. Since they've used events as an outreach tool in the past, I approached Aramark with the idea to host an event themed around sustainability and plant-based diets in August of 2018. At this time, we agreed to put our resources together to plan Eat Well, Live Well. On March 14<sup>th</sup> of 2019 Aramark and I hosted, "Eat Well, Live Well," ASU's first large event to celebrate plant-based diets and sustainability. This event hosted 500-600 people (primarily students) at the Student Pavilion on ASU's Tempe campus. My primary duty was to plan and curate the Eat Well, Live Well event. This event was a component of a larger project.

The project's objectives were to:

- Educate, inspire, address perceptions, and change behavior within the ASU customer base by hosting ASU's first large event to celebrate plant-based diets and sustainability with Aramark

- Measure the effectiveness of the event’s mission using a survey
- Present a compelling case to Aramark on how they should adopt and offer plant-based diets on ASU campus, using evidence-backed findings collected during the duration of the project

Eat Well, Live Well was used as a tool to fulfill the first objective of this project. The event brought together over 30 participants and vendors to support the event’s mission. Aramark offered food samples from a variety of products offered on campus including food from Engrained, Real Vegetable Meat, Daiya, Rosie’s Bakery, Stern Produce, Kind Bar, Java City, Beyond Sausages, and more. The foods offered at the event were to give event-goers a taste of what is available in the realm of a plant-based diet, but a handful of other participants offered education, activities, sustainable giveaways, and more. These participants provided event-goers with the material to make this a rich educational event. They each brought a different perspective that supported the mission of plant-based diets, sustainability, or both. A short video on this event can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjFVZM7yk4A&t=15s>.

Pre and post-event surveys were used to fulfill the second and third objective of this project. 194 pre-event surveys were collected, which was approximately 30% of event-goers. A post-event survey collected 102 responses. Information captured in the pre-event survey was used to collect perceptions on the benefits and barriers to consuming a plant-based diet. These perceptions can be used to inform a community based social marketing approach to fostering the adoption of plant-based diets on ASU’s campus.

<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Barriers</i>
Stay Healthy	I need more information about plant-based diets
Help the environment and contribute to sustainability	I would (or do) miss eating lots of ‘junk’ (e.g. sugary) food
Have a better quality of life	It would be too expensive

**In descending order, this chart shows the results to the 3 biggest benefits and barriers revealed by the pre-event survey.**

The post-event survey was used to measure whether the event truly educated, inspired, addressed perceptions, and changed behavior. The findings from the post-event survey show that Eat Well, Live Well met its objectives. In addition to meeting objectives, the results revealed that event-goers received the event exceptionally well. The event was called, “the best event that ASU has ever hosted.” Detailed results from these surveys can be read in the full-length version of this report.

I believe that the following differences would have made the event and survey components of this project stronger:

- If the event attracted a broader group of attendees outside of sustainability circles, the survey could provide insight on whether this event truly educated about sustainability.

- The event's flyer was vague. Attendees were not aware of the body-building demonstrations, yoga activity, or the variety of giveaways offered through this event. Using images on the event's flyer might have been a more effective way to draw people into this event.

This project was considered a success. However, much more can be done to foster behavior change toward the adoption of plant-based diets at ASU. I've made four recommendations to Aramark that are in line with this mission. They are not included in this executive summary for proprietary reasons, but all recommendations outline a strategy and justification based on what I've learned throughout the duration of this project. This project was a catalyst for future projects to occur that aim to advance this mission.

### **Acknowledgements**

The Sustainability Challenge Grant from Changemaker Central at ASU made this project possible. Thank you to all participants and volunteers who dedicated their precious time to make this project come to life.