

foodconscious

What if the consumer and the overarching food system *worked with each other* so that, over time, they could achieve Sitopia** *together*?

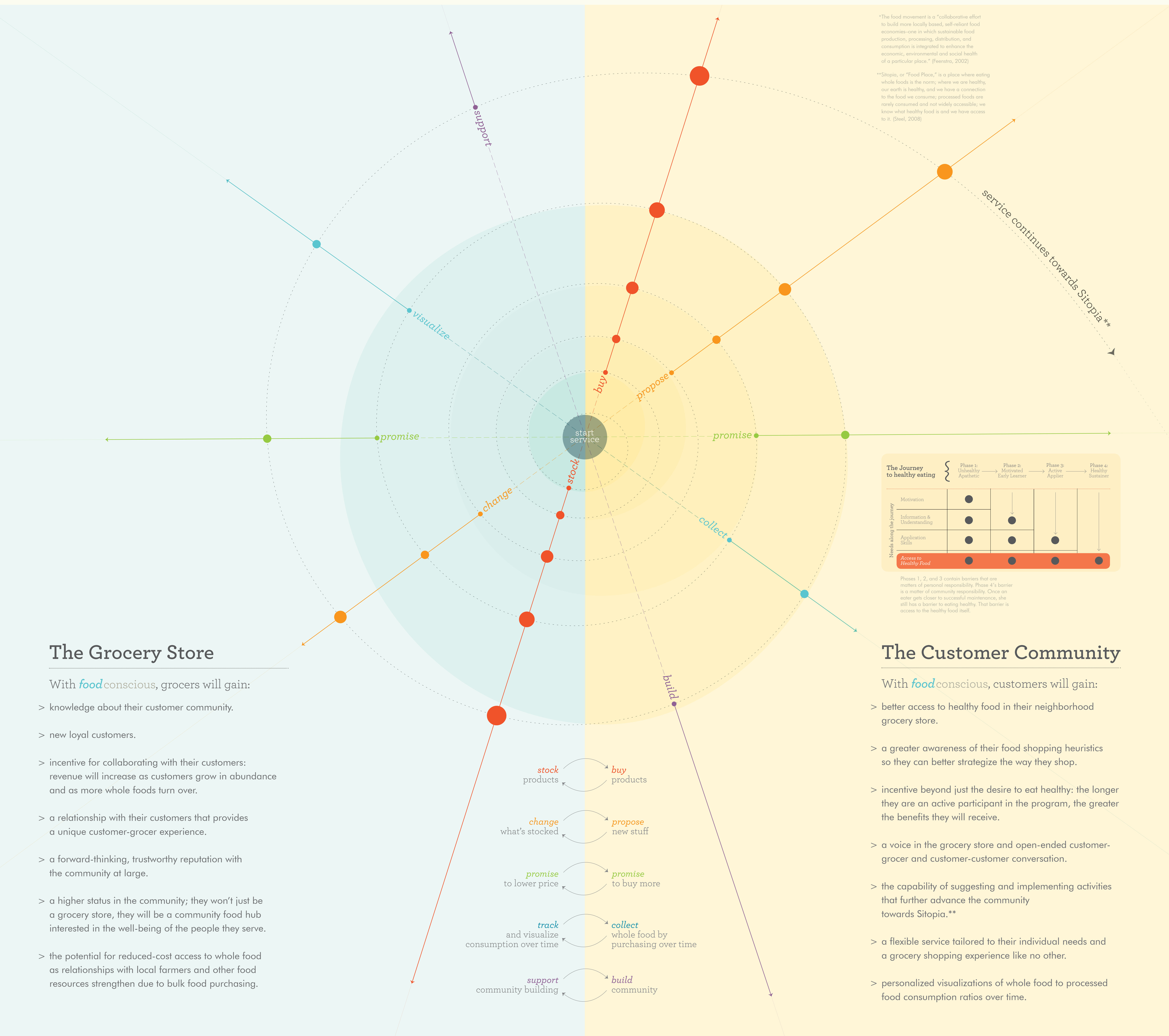
What if there was a *collaborative relationship* between food provider and food consumer focused on *community well-being*?

What if your neighborhood grocery store asked *you* what healthy food *you want* to buy, and then provided those foods for you?

foodconscious is a service dedicated to facilitating positive change in food availability to local communities—and hence, individuals—by influencing the supply and demand cycle of the conventional grocery store. By intervening on the current state of the industrialized food system we have today, it slowly furthers communities and their local grocery stores, towards Sitopia.**

"The food movement is a "collaborative effort to build more locally based, self-reliant food economies—one in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution, and consumption is integrated to enhance the economic, environmental and social health of a particular place." (Feenstra, 2002)

**Sitopia, or "Food Place," is a place where eating whole foods is the norm; where we are healthy, our earth is healthy, and we have a connection to the food we consume; processed foods are rarely consumed and not widely accessible; we know what healthy food is and we have access to it. (Steel, 2008)



The Grocery Store

With *foodconscious*, grocers will gain:

- > knowledge about their customer community.
- > new loyal customers.
- > incentive for collaborating with their customers: revenue will increase as customers grow in abundance and as more whole foods turn over.
- > a relationship with their customers that provides a unique customer-grocer experience.
- > a forward-thinking, trustworthy reputation with the community at large.
- > a higher status in the community; they won't just be a grocery store, they will be a community food hub interested in the well-being of the people they serve.
- > the potential for reduced-cost access to whole food as relationships with local farmers and other food resources strengthen due to bulk food purchasing.

The Customer Community

With *foodconscious*, customers will gain:

- > better access to healthy food in their neighborhood grocery store.
- > a greater awareness of their food shopping heuristics so they can better strategize the way they shop.
- > incentive beyond just the desire to eat healthy: the longer they are an active participant in the program, the greater the benefits they will receive.
- > a voice in the grocery store and open-ended customer-grocer and customer-customer conversation.
- > the capability of suggesting and implementing activities that further advance the community towards Sitopia.**
- > a flexible service tailored to their individual needs and a grocery shopping experience like no other.
- > personalized visualizations of whole food to processed food consumption ratios over time.

The Journey to healthy eating	Phase 1: Unhealthy Apathetic	Phase 2: Motivated Early Learner	Phase 3: Active Applier	Phase 4: Healthy Sustainer
Motivation	●	↓	↓	↓
Information & Understanding	●	●	↓	↓
Application Skills	●	●	●	↓
Access to Healthy Food	●	●	●	●

Phases 1, 2, and 3 contain barriers that are matters of personal responsibility. Phase 4's barrier is a matter of community responsibility. Once an eater gets closer to successful maintenance, she still has a barrier to eating healthy. That barrier is access to the healthy food itself.



Key Research Findings

Through surveys, interviews, shadowing, card-sorting, speed-dating, and prototype testing, I found that:

- > To sustain a healthy diet, people don't need consistent feedback on how to eat healthy—they need a tool that makes eating healthy more practical, affordable, and convenient.
- > Tools that involve tracking, counting, negative feedback, etc. are not well-received because they involve extra work or make people feel guilty.
- > Using game mechanics as a motivator for healthy eating is popular when competition is about leveraging social community with a common vision; not when competition is between peers.
- > Conventional grocery store owners aren't necessarily on a mission to promote the health of their community—unless it will benefit the growth of the business.

Research Insight

To sustain a lifestyle of healthy eating within the current state of the US Food System, one must not only surpass the hurdles of motivation and self-discipline, understanding information about food, and applying the skills needed for behavior change, but one must also surpass the barrier of access to healthy food itself. This barrier is the greatest of all not only because it affects everyone, but because the difficulty of surpassing it is outside the control of the individual—it takes a systemic change in the way that food gets from the farm to the local community, and then from the local community to the plate.

A healthy eater can know everything there is to know about eating right and be motivated to do so, but if she has to drive across town, shop at two grocery stores to get healthy food, pay double the cost, or simply settle for lower quality foods, she's likely not going to sustain her healthy diet.

