Environmental Defense Fund

Community Supported Fishery (CSF)

During the course of this project we worked with the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), New England fishing community, and numerous other organizations to develop a business plan for the Scituate Community Supported Fishery (CSF). Our work aims to help the EDF identify key strategies to poise fisheries around the globe for growth and business development through a CSF model.

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Project Scope and Objectives

Our objective is to increase revenues for Sector 10 fishermen, such that their livelihood is restored in the face of quotas on popular species (haddock, cod, and flounder). In order to do so, we will focus on a marketing plan for underappreciated species, such as dogfish, using the South Shore Seafood Exchange (SOSSEXI) community-support fishery (CSF) as our pilot audience.

Both SOSSEXI and Sector 10 fishermen are interested in driving demand for new species. We have worked directly with the fishery and CSF to provide concrete recommendations on SOSSEXI’s marketing strategy, though we did not have enough time to completely rebrand fish species.

In this vein, we have presented two, related deliverables: 1) A marketing plan for dogfish in Sector 10; 2) Discrete recommendations for how to implement each aspect of the plan, using a $10,000 budget (the value of a grant recently received by SOSSEXI).

The marketing plan, detailed below, includes recommendations and connections related to public relations, a new website, and CSF events.

Background

Client

Our client is the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), which is a conservation-focused non-governmental organization whose mission is to preserve the natural systems on which all life depends, focusing on the most critical environmental problems. In collaboration with the EDF, our project is focused on the Scituate fishing community and specifically the South Shore Seafood Exchange. The South Shore Seafood Exchange is a non-profit community-supported fishery (CSF) in the early stages of growth. The fishery is located in Scituate, Massachusetts, a community with a long history in the fishing industry.

The South Shore Seafood Exchange was founded by a Scituate resident, Marj Bates, in response to significant government regulation of New England fisheries. In 2013, the New England Fisheries Management Council substantially cut fishing quotas on most groundfish, which regulate how much fishermen are allowed to catch. As the Scituate fishing community faces record low quotas it is more important than ever that fishermen find ways to protect their livelihood. The South Shore Seafood Exchange, self-branded SOSSEXI, connects local fishermen with the community to sell fresh fish. Community members can purchase a 10-week program where they receive 0.5, 1.0, or 2.0 pounds of locally caught fish per week. Prices range from $75 to $250 and nine pickup locations are currently available to members. Fish are caught, cleaned, fileted, and finally distributed to the CSF’s members.
The South Shore Seafood Exchange’s primary goal is to re-establish a strong connection between local fishermen and the community. We recommend the CSF build relationships with local restaurants in addition to community members to increase demand and secure purchasing decisions made inside and outside the home.

Supply for the CSF program depends on what local fishermen caught that week, not on demand or what can be imported from other fisheries. The system is still working out kinks since it is in the early stage of development, so there is a chance members receive slightly more or less than the purchased share. That said, the CSF hopes to offset this imbalance by providing additional value, such as recipe exchanges and cooking classes.

**Industry**

Within EDF, we are working with the Oceans Program, which is focused on reviving fish populations and preserving critical habitat. EDF’s fisheries work is largely focused on the development and promotion of catch shares in fisheries, a type of management system that dedicates a secure share of fish or fishing area, to individual fishermen, communities or fishery associations. With a secure privilege of the total catch and clearly defined access to resources, fishermen have the ability to catch a certain amount of fish each year and are responsible for not exceeding that amount. And with this privilege, fishermen are afforded great flexibility in planning their business operations. Often, fishermen have the opportunity to buy and sell shares, which improves flexibility and increases economic efficiency by allowing fishermen to specialize in catching specific species. Fishermen are also able to coordinate harvests to meet market demands, resulting in higher prices for their catch, and overall, resulting in improved levels of the fishery’s profitability.

A key component of the CSF program is sharing information between local fishermen and the community. Educating fishermen on sustainable practices and encouraging the community to support such practices will enable the fishing industry to remain both profitable and robust for years to come. In order for fisheries to maintain healthy fish stocks demand must change. A CSF has the unique opportunity to educate consumers on less known, but abundant native species. This is uniquely different from what consumers would find at a grocery store, where supply is driven by large scale supply chains, demand, and profit margins.

**Sustainability**

Fishery management is particularly complicated as it involves numerous government and private enterprises. It is also complicated because there is imperfect information. While fishery managers might have a hypothesis about why stocks are down, it is not clear that their metrics are correct. Furthermore, it is unclear that the biomass targets are sufficient or insufficient. What fishery management attempts to do is ensure that the ocean’s renewable resources are used at a rate that they can regenerate. By managing the fisheries responsibly, government regulation is attempting to increase, or at least maintain, the carrying capacity of the ocean. Fishermen in the
Gulf of Maine are concerned with the amount of biomass they are able to remove from the ocean as mandated by the New England Fishery Management Council. Even with the quotas in place, biomass is far less than the fishermen are accustomed to removing from the ocean. This could be the result of a capability trap and the “worse before better” phenomenon or this reduction in biomass might be due to other environmental issues, like pollution, acidification, or anthropogenic global climate change. Two years ago, the Gulf of Maine was significantly warmer than its historical average, which might also be changing the habits of the fish in the Gulf of Maine. Fishery management also addresses the “governing the commons” problem. The fishery management system in New England aligns quite nicely with Ostrom’s Eight Principles for governing the commons and we believe, by and large, the New England Fishery Management Council is governing this common pool resource very well.2

The primary sustainability issues fisheries around the globe face are declining fish stocks. Experts believe 53% of the world’s fisheries are fully exploited and 32% are defined as overexploited, depleted, or recovering from depletion. In addition, the process of distributing fish to non-local communities requires unnecessary resource and energy use.

A mismatch between demand and supply currently exists in the market because consumers have become accustomed to eating non-local species and are unfamiliar with what their local fisheries have to offer. As a result, local fishermen are finding new buyers of their catch to generate revenue, regardless of sustainability issues. For example, almost all Dogfish caught in New England is currently shipped and sold to European buyers and used in the traditional “Fish and Chips” dish.

The South Shore Seafood Exchange has taken several steps to address some of the sustainability challenges within the industry. Distribution for the CSF program utilizes biodegradable zip lock bags and preparation for distribution takes place onsite at the Scituate Harbor. The CSF works with the natural cycle of fishing. Membership packages are based on the number of weeks of locally fished seafood available, not on the demand. Since the type of fish caught cannot be controlled by the CSF, it offers members recipes on how to prepare and cook the seafood available in a given delivery. Through this process the CSF is introducing its members to new species of fish and helping drive demand by showing locals how tasty these lesser known species can be.

Analysis & Methodology

Our trip to the docks of Scituate
On April 5, we had a meeting in Scituate with Sarah Smith, our Environmental Defense Fund Engagement Manager, Marj Bates, the one employee of SOSSEXI, and Frank Mirarchi, a local fisherman of 50 years. During this meeting we discussed the CSF and its membership, quickly gaining an appreciation for the dire situation faced by Sector 10 fishermen as a result of the new ground fish quota. Frank stated that he needed to pull about 125,000 pounds of fish from the ocean to cover the expenses of his operation. With the new quota in place, his yield will only be 25,000 pounds of fish if all the boats from last year return to fishing this year. The fishermen are also very susceptible to fluctuating market prices due to demand changes and import competition. The market has a significant amount of volatility, which can significantly affect the profitability of a given day of fishing. Once the fishermen of Sector 10 use up their ground fish quota, which happened last year about four months after the new quotas were handed down, there is an opportunity to buy the leases of surrounding sectors on a secondary market. Because of the high demand for the leases, the prices can often be quite high making the cost of fishing greater than the price of the fish at the market.

Currently yellowtail flounder, cod, and haddock are under the quota system of New England. However, five other species—whiting, butterfish, silver hake, skate and dogfish—are not currently under a catch share agreement. Furthermore, dogfish is competing with cod and haddock for the same food sources.

While the majority of this paper is dedicated to a marketing plan to increase demand for dogfish, our visit to Scituate revealed several layers of related challenges faced by Sector 10 fishermen, for which we would like to offer the following brief recommendations:

1. An adjacent sector has recently become certified by the MSC and has subsequently cornered the market for European export of dogfish. Unfortunately, Sector 10 fishermen are excluded from this certification. This should be an area of focus for Sector 10, but it should also be a priority for the New England Fishery Management Council. Allowing Sector 10 to participate in the MSC agreement would take pressure off other species and would provide a much needed revenue stream for its fishermen.

2. We also encourage Sector 10 to continue to work with regulators on approval of new fishing techniques. Frank’s son has developed a unique net that deflects larger fish species at the opening of the net, while allowing into the net ground fish and other small species. This type of net reduces the bycatch and would allow Sector 10 fishermen to fish more efficiently. Currently this net is not approved, but gaining approval should be a priority for Sector 10 and the New England Fishery.

**A Case Study: The Chilean Sea Bass**

When designing our marketing plan for dogfish we looked at other cases of unknown species gaining popularity within the United States. Specifically, we found the history of Chilean Sea
Bass demand to be an excellent example of what a simple change in name could do for the species currently known as dogfish.

The Chilean Sea Bass was not well known outside the cold waters of Antarctica and Southern Argentina and Southern Chile until an America fish wholesaler, Lee Lantz, came across the species in 1977. At that time the fish was considered “accidental catch and the fish had little value at market. Lantz realized he needed a more marketable name and he drew inspiration from other species of sea bass because of the white flaky texture and triangular shaped tale. Initially, Chilean Sea Bass was made into fish sticks, and then Chinese restaurants started using it as a cheap alternative to black cod. After more than a decade, it became a favorite in the U.S. at top kitchens because “chefs discovered that it could hold up to any method of cooking and accept any spice, and that it was virtually impossible to overcook.”

The rising popularity of Chilean Sea Bass has placed intense pressure on the species and its overfishing prompted a “Take a pass on Chilean Sea Bass” campaign. While a successful example of a marketing campaign, there is also a lesson here about a species becoming the victim of its own success. One problem with the collapse of this fishery was an insufficient regulatory regime in the Southern Ocean. We believe underappreciated fish in the Gulf of Maine are already closely monitored by the various fishery management agencies and a significant decline in fish stock would likely be caught before it becomes dire.

**Consumer Preferences Survey Data**

In addition to working directly with the Scituate fishing community, we conducted a survey from potential seafood consumers to gain a better understanding for what drives purchasing decisions. The below data helps portray some of the obstacles the SOSSEXI CSF will continue to face when selling unfamiliar species to its local community. We found that 87% of respondents consumed fish at least once per month, which confirms there is a healthy market for fish consumption in the area.
Consumer familiarity with dogfish, however, was extremely limited, with only 6% ever having tried it.

Respondents claim to have a preference for locally-sourced fish, yet 5:1 would order salmon from Alaska over locally-caught dogfish. This could be interpreted with the above lack of knowledge as fear of the unknown overshadowing their stated preference for local fish. It could also mean that people’s actions are not consistent with their stated preferences. In Cialdini’s seminal work on persuasion and decision-making biases, a very strong principle is consistency: individuals align with their clear commitments, especially when they are active, public, and voluntary.⁴
A campaign for voluntary public commitments to eat locally-caught dogfish might be a good way to get people to follow through on their statements.

Taste and familiarity were still the most important factors when thinking about fish, with over half the respondents preferring a description including those characteristics over whether it was sustainable or local. A further analysis breaking down importance between familiarity and taste might be warranted, but from the data collected it seems that familiarity plays a pivotal role in consumer decisions.

A survey was also conducted by the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Center for Marketing Research in conjunction with the Environmental Defense Fund in the fall of 2012. The table below summarizes some of their findings. In particular, their results on the importance of taste corroborate our own results, with 91% of people responding that taste is very important when deciding what fish to eat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deciding Factor</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Unimportant</th>
<th>Very Unimportant</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additionally:

- Sixty percent of respondents are very likely to purchase or try new types of fish if they receive a recommendation from friends/family, 32% are somewhat likely, 6% are somewhat unlikely, 3% are very unlikely and 1% had no response.
- Twenty-two percent of respondents are very likely to purchase or try new types of fish based on television cooking shows or celebrity chef endorsements, 36% are somewhat likely, 24% are somewhat unlikely, 17% are very unlikely and 1% had no response.

A look at the survey reveals important insights as SOSSEXI and the fishermen of Sector 10 move forward:

- Taste is a key driver in consumer preference. Taste is not a major concern when discussing skate, silver hake, and whiting, but it is a significant challenge to deliver a constant tasting dogfish to consumers.
- If dogfish is to become something consumers desire, it will be important that the fishermen kill the fish appropriately, that the processor prepares the fish correctly, and that consumers are trained sufficiently to prepare the fish for consumption at home.
- Not surprisingly word-of-mouth is a powerful tool to get consumers to try a new species.
- There seems to be a thirst for “local over sustainable” which is great for a Sector 10/SOSSEXI marketing campaign focusing on the power of truncating the supply chain by consuming local.
- Additionally, there is a consumer preference to eat fish that come from a healthy fishery status, which is also an advantage for the underappreciated fish of Sector 10.

Recommendations

Growing the Market outside the CSF

Based on our survey data, local is the new sustainable, and Sector 10 should focus on this idea. There are seven restaurants in the Scituate harbor area, of which two serve a few “local” seafood dishes, however the seafood is not caught in Sector 10. The local food processor brings the fish down to Scituate from Boston. Most of the CSF members live in the greater Scituate area. The surveys suggest that people will try new fish if it is prepared correctly. The surveys also show us that consumers eat fish more frequently at restaurants than at home. As such, SOSSEXI needs to
engage local merchants to prepare and sell local “trash fish” in order to build demand for underappreciated fish within the CSF and to provide a stable revenue stream for the fishermen.

Sector 10 should also partner with Open Ocean Trading, a market place that facilitates forward contracts between buyers and fishermen. A forward contract is a set price and expectation scheme that provides predictability and transparency to buyers, but more importantly to fishermen. The fishermen of Sector 10 will know before they cast off the lines for a day on the water what their catch will be worth per pound, eliminating some of the variability of their catch. Open Ocean Trading is already aware of dogfish, and they are looking for ways to expand their offerings. Additionally, Open Ocean Trading is working closely with TraceAll, an international traceability company, to fully integrate traceability in their operations. Traceability allows the consumer to guarantee the seafood they are purchasing is the actual specie they are eating. Traceability can be used as a branding mechanism by reassuring consumers of the authenticity of the product. An additional benefit of traceability allows a consumer to use their smartphone and a QR scan to learn more about the origin of the seafood.

**Public Relations and Partnerships**

An important part of the marketing campaign is to change consumer perceptions about dogfish and other underappreciated species. We recommend targeting specific public relations outlets, such as, *The Boston Globe*, which is the most widely read newspaper in New England. Jenn Abelson and Beth Daley are two reporters very interested in seafood issues and wrote a two-part series on mislabeled seafood where cheaper imported seafood was being marketed as locally caught species. We met with Jenn Abelson and discussed the idea of writing an article on the benefits of locally and sustainably caught fish that do not put a strain on biodiversity and she was very open to it. Additionally, Frank Mirarchi is a very well-spoken and affable representative for the Scituate fishing community and would be a great interview subject for such an article. The MIT Sloan Sustainability Initiative is also planning on recording a short video of our next visit to Scituate and interactions with the fishermen to highlight this project.

In addition to traditional media, we recommend a focus on partnerships with local chefs be a key element of SOSSEXI’s marketing strategy. For example, Chefs Collaborative is a non-profit organization of hundreds of leading members of the food community dedicated to celebrating local foods and fostering a more sustainable food supply. Rob Booz has led their initiative to introduce underappreciated fish species to people across the country by organizing a series of ‘Trash Fish Dinners’. Based on the positive media attention, the dinner hosted in Boston was a huge success; SOSSEXI should move quickly to build on that momentum and partner with Chefs Collaborative. Following up the trash fish dinner with events co-sponsored and organized with Chefs Collaborative (and described in the next section) will be an important partnership for creating a new market for dogfish and other species.
Chefs who are particularly vocal and passionate about local and sustainable food sourcing would be especially important partners in getting commitments to feature underappreciated species in their restaurants. For example, Michael Leviton is Board Chair of Chefs Collaborative and recently published an article “Are Trash Fish the Answer?” Mr. Leviton is also the owner of Lumiere and Area Four, two very popular restaurants in the Boston Area. Getting Chef Leviton to feature dogfish on his menu, as well as get his colleagues to do the same, would be a big first step in creating such a partnership where Scituate fishermen could sell their catch directly to these restaurants.

**Community Events & Marketing**

Our survey results, as well as a survey completed by the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth Center for Marketing Research, revealed a resistance towards the purchase of unfamiliar seafood species. Our survey also indicated a lack of unawareness for dogfish, an abundant, yet underutilized New England shark species. In the survey completed by UMass Dartmouth, 67% of respondents ranked a familiar name as very important or somewhat important when making a purchasing decision. The public relations and partnership strategy outlined above will help community supported fisheries increase awareness, but we think a two prong strategy is needed to trigger the point of sale. We recommend a series of events to promote specific species that are locally abundant, can be sustainably caught, and offer attractive profit margins. For the South Shore Seafood Exchange we recommend a series of events to promote dogfish and skate.

Below we provide an example of a series of events that focus on educating consumers and driving demand for unfamiliar local seafood species. The main education objectives include:

- The benefit to the local economy of a CSF program
- How to prepare and enjoy the species provided through the CSF program
- The sustainability of fishing practices for specific species
- The health benefits of specific species
Example of schedule of events to promote dogfish and skate through SOSSEXI CSF:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Main Objectives</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2013</td>
<td>Cooking Class</td>
<td>Offer an at cost cooking class to the community hosted by local chef who will show part pans how to prepare, cook, and enjoy dogfish</td>
<td>Educate consumers on how to properly prepare and cook unfamiliar species. Provide opportunity for participants to ask questions</td>
<td>Local chefs and restaurants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2013</td>
<td>CSF Fair</td>
<td>Similar to CSA Fairs, provide an open venue for fisherman, restaurants, and small businesses to set up booths. This event would be free to the community, offer samples of products, and provide a fun family experience. Also, an opportunity for booth vendors to sell product.</td>
<td>Promote the CSF, educate consumers, create a business networking opportunity for the fishing industry</td>
<td>Other CSFs, local restaurants, chefs, and grocery stores, complimentary seafood products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2013</td>
<td>Back-to-School Family Learning Day</td>
<td>Family event where local fisherman show kids how fishing is really done. Allow children and parents to see fishing equipment and boats and ask real fisherman how things work out at sea.</td>
<td>Create a sense of community and loyalty to the fishing industry. Introduce children to new types of seafood.</td>
<td>Local schools and/or aquarium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2013</td>
<td>Cooking Class</td>
<td>Scary Halloween inspired cooking class to debunk myths about unknown species and reveal the health benefits and delicious taste of local seafood</td>
<td>Educate consumers on how to properly prepare and cook unfamiliar species. Provide opportunity for participants to ask questions</td>
<td>Local chefs and restaurants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2013</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Recipe Sharing</td>
<td>Similar to a book swap event, community members can come together and swap recipe ideas.</td>
<td>Create a community around local seafood</td>
<td>Community organizations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As outlined in our example we recommend four types of events to help SOSSEXI increase membership, drive demand for currently unfamiliar species, and stabilize profit margins for fishermen.

- **Cooking classes lead by local chefs**: The main objective of this event is to connect local chefs with the community and allow them to demystify unfamiliar species. The desired outcome would be increased demand for species that are currently unprofitable. Highlights should include start-to-finish preparation and cooking instructions, an overview of the health benefits, and a story telling of how the particular species at hand impacts the local fishing industry.
• *Recipe sharing events*: Similar to a book club, SOSSEXI can host recipe sharing events, which allow locals to come together and chat about their favorite dishes. Participants can bring samples, potluck style, or simply enjoy the company of others. This type of event can be hosted at a community venue or public school.

• *Family learning days*: We believe most food preferences are developed at an early age and children have an impact on family purchasing decisions we recommend that SOSSEXI leverage family days to create a first touch point with future consumers. Family learning days could be held several ways. One way to hold the event would be near a shipyard so children could interact with fishermen, have a hands-on experience with shipping equipment and vessels, and gain a better understanding for how seafood gets from the sea to their plate at home. Alternative options could be to host the event outdoors at a local park or indoors at a public school. The event would consist of educational games, fishermen sharing stories and experiences, and of course seafood samples.

• *New England CSF Fair modeled after CSA Fairs*: The primary purpose of a fair is to bring business and consumers together. For the South Shore Seafood Exchange the CSF Fair would serve as a way for consumers to learn about the sustainability, availability, and economic impact of their purchasing decisions. Through the CSF fair participants would have the opportunity to sample unfamiliar species, be directed on how to learn more about cooking seafood, and leave with a better understanding for the purpose and structure of a CSF.

For best practices we recommend looking at the Rhode Island Community Supported Agriculture, which hosts numerous events for its local community, including an annual fair, workshops, documentary screenings, and clam bakes. The below link describes some of the upcoming events and demonstrates the marketing strategy used to promote interest in the local agriculture industry.


The Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY) hosted 9 fairs over the last year and would be an excellent resource if SOSSEXI decided to partner with other New England CSFs and host a larger scale fair. We recommend hosting a small scale, local fair over the next twelve months, but see value in working with other CSFs, such as Cape Ann, to host a New England oriented fair and expand reach beyond the Scituate community.

• [https://www.nofany.org/csafair](https://www.nofany.org/csafair)
Website Redesign

Finally, we recommend that SOSSEXI use part of their recently received grant to redesign its website as a portal for members of the CSF and a source of information about Scituate’s local fishing resource. An RFP for this website redesign is included in the appendix for SOSSEXI’s use. Our team is also actively recruiting web designers and firms to apply for this project.

Conclusion

The challenges facing the fishermen of Scituate—and the community that relies on them—are acute and complex. The good news is that a solution to their revenue problem is within their reach: by taking steps to educate consumers about underappreciated species such as dogfish, as well as providing resources to introduce this “new” fish into their regular diets, SOSSEXI can increase demand and revenues for the local fishermen. Unlike many sustainability challenges that demand a technologically- or politically-impossible solution, the recommendations we have provided here can be implemented with current resources and connections. By focusing on driving demand for dogfish, SOSSEXI can support both the livelihoods of fishermen and the sustainability of fish species at the same time—a deal that too-often ends with a trade-off between the two.

Our team is grateful to EDF, SOSSEXI, and Frank Mirarchi for their time and commitment to sustainable fishing in New England. We stand ready to help SOSSEXI implement the recommendations included in this report, and look forward to our continued collaboration.
Appendix: Website Request for Proposals (RFP)

I. DESCRIPTION, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF WEB SITE

a. SOSSEXI is embarking on a new marketing strategy to increase its membership and help sustain local fishermen in Scituate, Massachusetts. The CSF envisions its website as a primary tool for engaging new and existing members. This RFP is for a redesign of the existing website, found at www.sossexi.org.

b. The redesigned website should serve two primary objectives: 1) attract new members, and 2) provide a platform for exchange among existing members of the CSF.

c. The site should be built on an intuitive, accessible content management system, using the existing service or a new system as determined through the redesign process.

II. BUDGET & COST ESTIMATES

a. SOSSEXI has a budget of $6,000 for the website redesign.

b. Work should commence immediately.

III. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

a. SOSSEXI must own or have full access to and have the right to customize site code.

b. Terms for proposal:

   i. Key dates
   ii. Proposals should be delivered to Marj Bates. Copies should be or received by June 1
   iii. Please provide 2 copies of any proposals submitted.
   iv. All proposals must include a statement of authorization to bid signed by a principal of the responding company.
   v. All proposals must use the proposal format outlined in this RFP.
   vi. Parties submitting separate proposals may not discuss pricing information or they will be ineligible to bid on the project.
   vii. Bidder status: bidder must disclose any relevant conflicts of interest and/or pending lawsuits.

IV. BACKGROUND OF COMPANY OR PROPOSED COMPANY

a. SOSSEXI (South Shore Seafood Exchange) is a nonprofit, community-supported fishery (CSF) in Scituate, Massachusetts, that provides fresh fish from the local fishermen from
our local waters. Our goals are two-fold: to re-establish a link between the local fishermen and the surrounding communities and to allow local restaurants and residents access to this freshly caught native resource. Our fresh fish is caught, cleaned, fileted and distributed in biodegradable zip lock bags in Scituate Harbor.

V. AUDIENCE

a. The website will have two primary audiences: potential members and existing members. Potential members should be enticed to spend time on the site and eventually be directed to a shopping cart to purchase their membership. The second audience is existing membership, who can visit the site to exchange recipes, share news affecting the local community, and organize events to benefit SOSSEXI and Scituate fishermen.

b. The site will be accessible to the public, with no firewalls or private communities maintained within. No logins are required, with the exception of admins for purposes of editing website content.

VI. TOOLS AND FUNCTIONALITIES

a. The website should feature a photo carousel or slideshow on the home page and posting/commenting tools for members to share information. The website should also have access to an online shopping cart, hosted externally, for member acquisition and other purchases.

b. The website may also have flash functionality for movies.

VII. AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES/INTEGRATION ISSUES

a. A map of the current website and content will be provided to the selected vendor for integration into the redesign.

VIII. STAFF RESOURCES

a. Point of contact: Marg Bates

b. SOSSEXI has a small staff and no in-house technical knowledge. The vendor should therefore be ready and able to work closely with the staff to educate them on website tools.

IX. PROPOSED TIMELINE:

a. Develop RFP process: May 15
b. RFP release date: May 23
c. Submission of questions on RFP: May 28
d. Notification of Intention to bid: June 1
e. Proposals due: June 1
f. Proposal award date: June 10
g. Initial meetings: June 10-15
h. Drop-dead Date (no new concepts/functionality added): June 24
i. Beta site launch: July 15
j. Proposed site launch: July 30

Sources

3 http://huntsman.usu.edu/alumni/htm/alumni-in-the-news/articleID=8213
5 The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Center for Marketing Research (Fall 2012); *Identifying New Market Opportunities for Groundfish Species in New England*.
6 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-leviton/trash-fish_b_2717900.html