

IMPACTS OF RELATIONSHIP- BASED ONLINE MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA) PROGRAMS

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CSA ARE

- **A philosophy/mindset for working with customers**
- **A set of relationship building practices**
- **A model for organizing last-mile supply chain**

SOCIAL MEDIA IS...

- **The next stage of the evolving internet infrastructure**
- **A model for engaging with customers**
- **A specific set of technologies for communicating and coordinating**

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- **How do the aspects of CSA models relate to CSA outcomes?**
 - Approach
 - Relational practices
 - Logistical arrangements
- **How do the aspects of social media relate to CSA outcomes?**
 - Technology
 - Relational capabilities
 - Transactional capabilities
- **How do the aspects of CSAs and social media interact?**

METHODS, SAMPLE, AND DATA

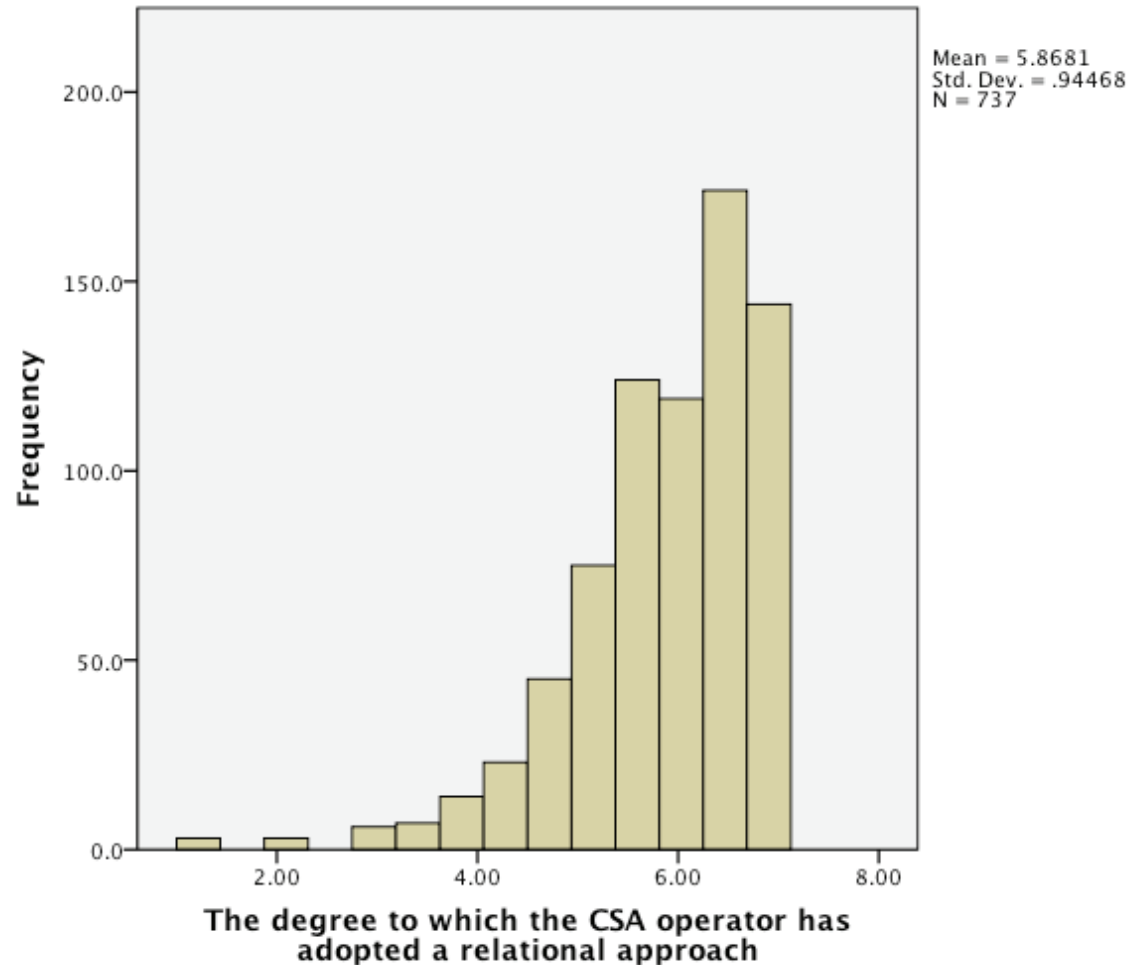
- **Survey of CSA operators**
- **Survey and measure development**
 - Draw from prior literature
 - Interviews and pretests
 - Pilot test (Sample: 100, Responses: 21)
- **CSA operators with an active listing in the LocalHarvest database (N = 4384)**
- **874 Responses (20%)**
- **After data cleaning, N=812**

CSA RELATIONAL APPROACH

- **Multi-item measure, 7 item Likert scale, Chronbach alpha = 0.864**
- **Items**
 - In our CSA, the focus is on building long-term relationships with specific customers
 - Our CSA marketing communications involve personally interacting with individual customers
 - Our contact with our CSA customers is personal
 - When a customer signs up for our CSA, we believe they expect one-on-one personal contact with us.
 - When we meet our CSA customers, our interaction is informal and social.
 - Our CSA activities are intended to develop cooperative relationships with our customers.
 - Our CSA planning focuses on issues related to specific customers we deal with.
 - Our CSA resources (e.g. people, time, money) are invested in establishing and building personal relationships with individual customers.

(Adapted Modified from: Homburg, Mèuller, & Klarmann, 2011)

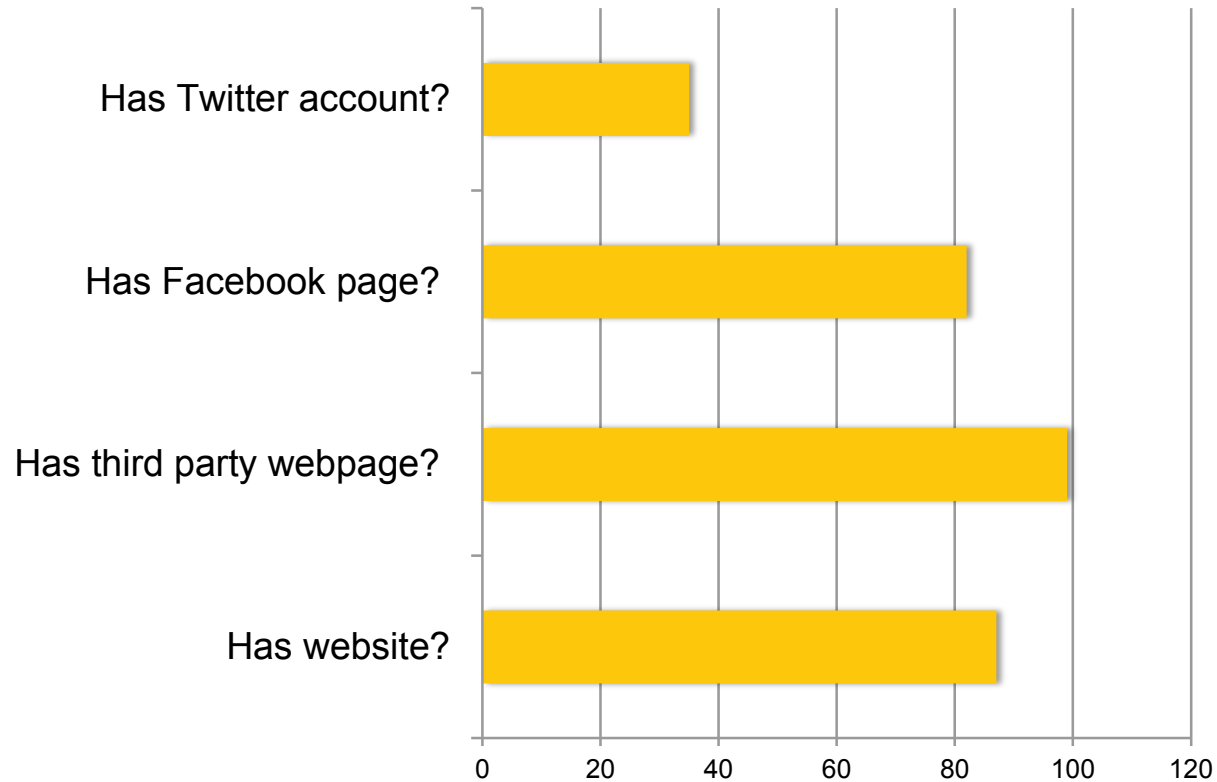
CSA RELATIONAL APPROACH



CSA RELATIONAL PRACTICES



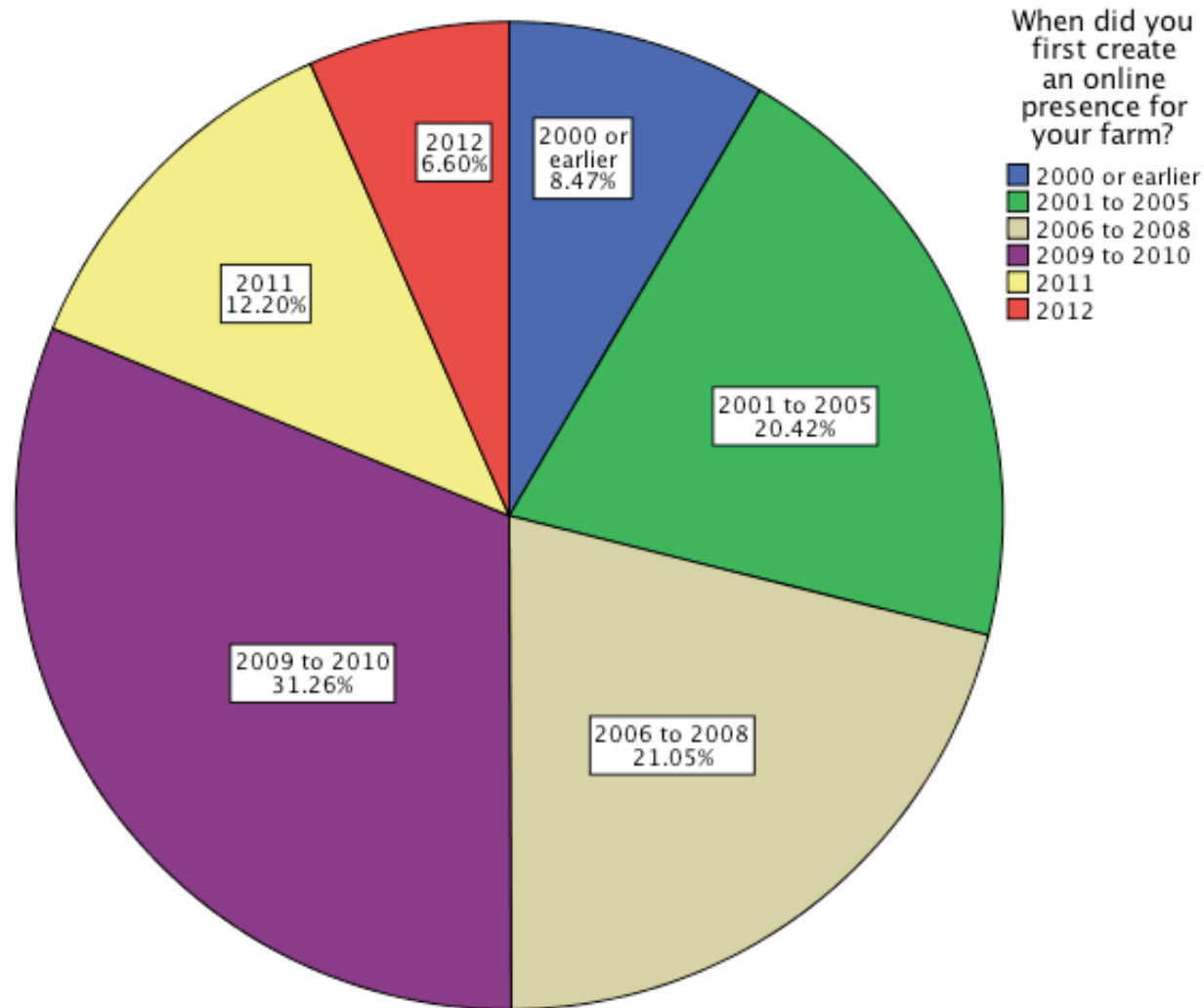
SOCIAL MEDIA INFRASTRUCTURE



SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

- How often is your website updated?
 - Mean Response: Between a few times a year and monthly
- How often is your third party webpage updated?
 - Mean Response: Less than a few times a year
- How often is your Facebook page updated?
 - Mean Response: Monthly – weekly
- How often is your Twitter account updated?
 - Mean Response: A few times - weekly

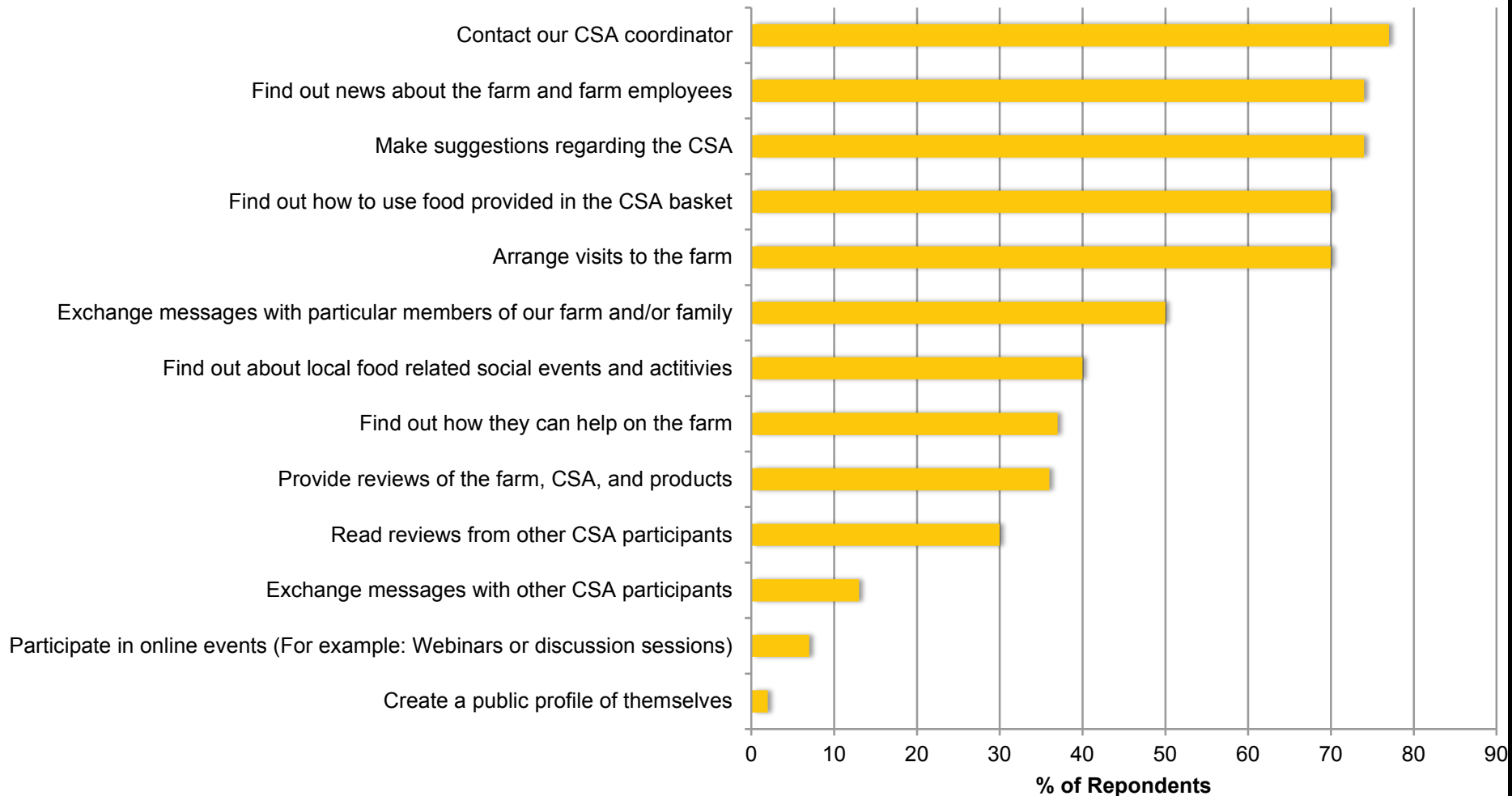
ONLINE PRESENCE – HOW LONG



TRANSACTIONAL CAPABILITIES ONLINE



RELATIONAL CAPABILITIES ONLINE

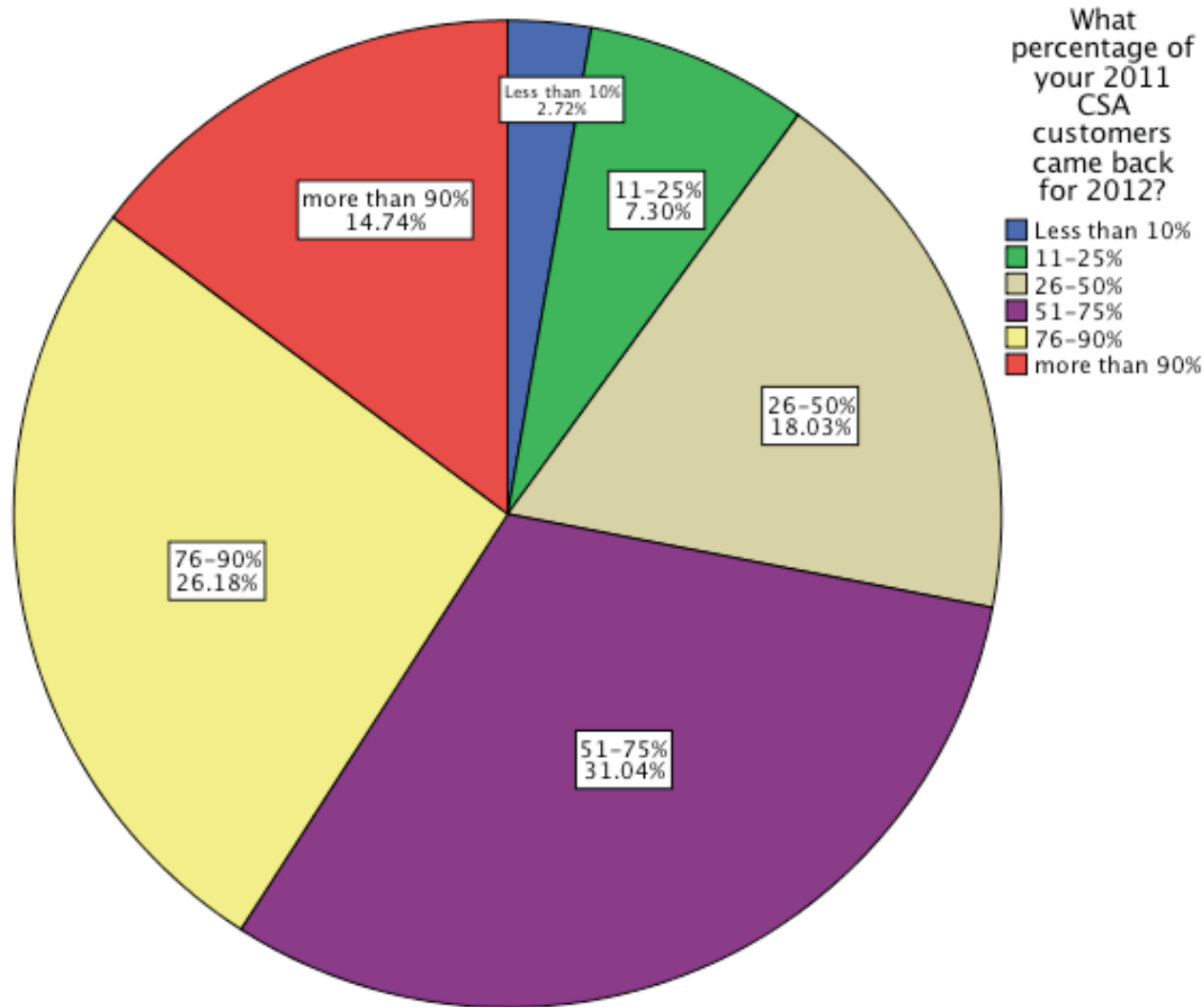


CSA OUTCOMES

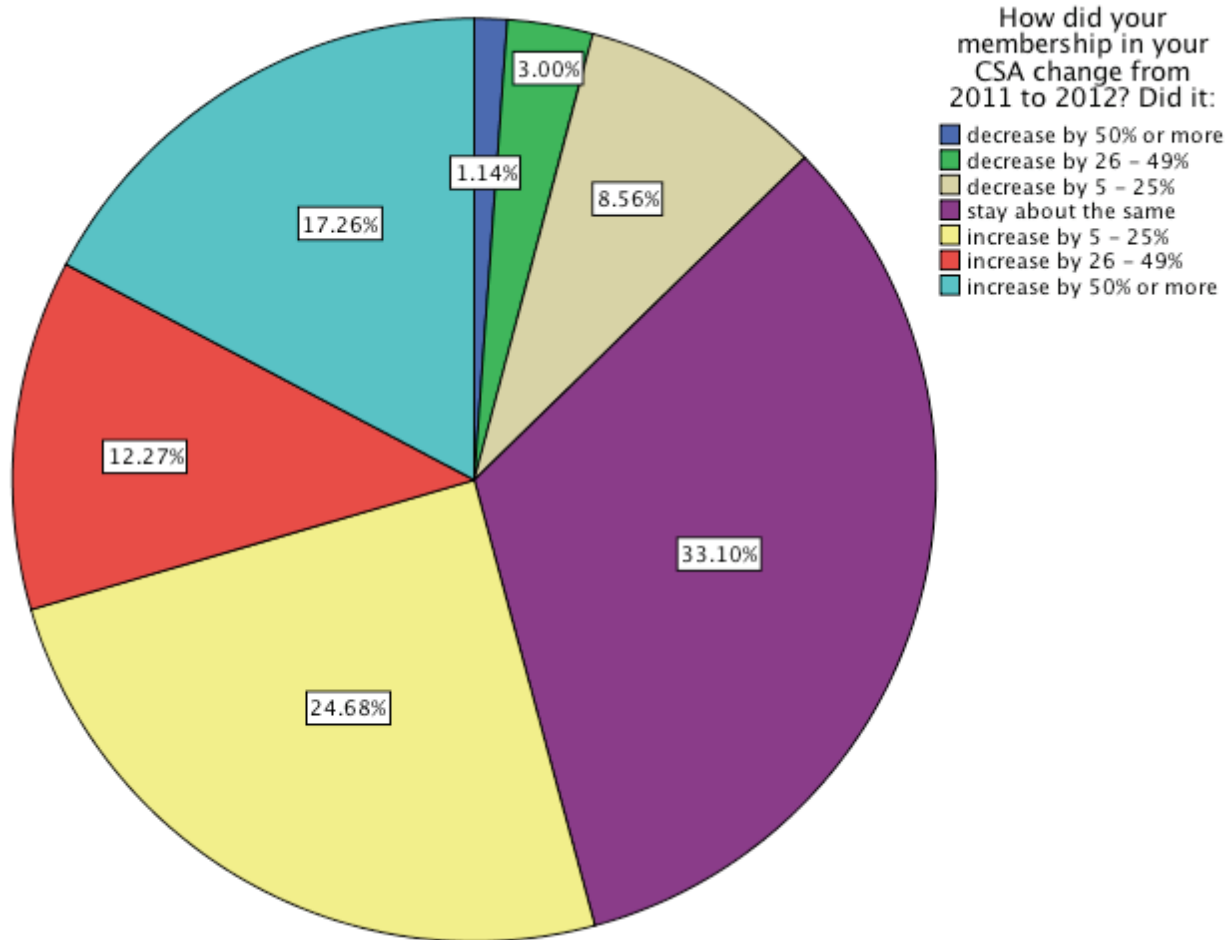
- Financial outcomes
- Participant growth/acquisition [single item]
- Participant retention (i.e. turnover) [single item]
- Participant Satisfaction
- Product and Process efficiency
- Revenue, demand, and price uncertainty
- Farmer satisfaction with the CSA

(Multi-item measure, 7 item Likert scale, unless otherwise noted)

PARTICIPANT RETENTION



PARTICIPANT GROWTH/DECLINE



FINANCIAL OUTCOMES

My CSA is profitable.

My CSA contributes to the overall viability of my farm.

My CSA allows me to sell products I would otherwise throw away.

In general, I receive a higher selling price for products distributed through my CSA

(First 2: Chronbach alpha: .71)

PRODUCT OUTCOMES

Because I have a CSA:-I am able to provide fresher products to my customers.

Because I have a CSA:-I can offer higher quality products.

Because I have a CSA:-I am able to provide a larger variety of products to my customers.

Because I have a CSA:-I am able to offer more specialized products to my customers.

Chronbach Alpha: 0.866

PROCESS OUTCOMES

Because I have a CSA:-The efficiency of my farm has improved.

Because I have a CSA:-My planning has become more efficient.

Because I have a CSA:-I am more efficient at product distribution.

Chronbach Alpha: 0.863

PARTICIPANT: AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT

Based on your experiences with your customers, indicate your agreement with the following:-The CSA at your farm has a great deal of personal meaning for your customers.

Based on your experiences with your customers, indicate your agreement with the following:-Most CSA customers feel a strong connection to your CSA.

Based on your experiences with your customers, indicate your agreement with the following:-Most CSA customers feel like they are a part of the CSA at your farm.

Based on your experiences with your customers, indicate your agreement with the following:-Most of your CSA customers have a real emotional attachment to the CSA at your farm.

Based on your experiences with your customers, indicate your agreement with the following:-There is a strong sense of belonging to your CSA for most of your customers.

Chronbach Alpha: 0.935

PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION

Our customers are very satisfied with:-the CSA in general.

Our customers are very satisfied with:-the information we provide about the CSA.

Our customers are very satisfied with:-the delivery and pickup of their CSA order.

Our customers are very satisfied with:-the quality of the items in the CSA order.

Our customers are very satisfied with:-the number of different items they get in their CSA baskets.

Chronbach Alpha: 0.847

REVENUE STABILITY

Because I have a CSA:-I am certain of my revenue stream.

Because I have a CSA:-The revenue of my farm is reliable.

Because I have a CSA:-There is an increase in the stability of my revenue.

Because I have a CSA:-The farm's revenue is more predictable.

Because I have a CSA:-Unexpected events are not a threat to my farm's profitability.

Chronback Alpha: 0.847

DEMAND/PRICE STABILITY

Because I have a CSA:-I am certain of the demand for my products

Because I have a CSA:-Demand for my products is more stable.

Because I have a CSA:-I am more certain about the prices I will receive for my products.

Because I have a CSA:-The prices I charge are more stable.

Because I have a CSA:-Unexpected price changes from competitors will not affect my prices.

Chronbach Alpha: 0.89

FARMER SATISFACTION

Your Evaluation of your CSA:-I am satisfied with my CSA.

Your Evaluation of your CSA:-My expectations regarding the CSA overall have been fulfilled.

Your Evaluation of your CSA:-Having a CSA is a useful part of my business.

Your Evaluation of your CSA:-I'm glad I have a CSA.

Chronbach alpha: 0.848

OUTCOMES AND CSA RELATIONAL APPROACH

	CSA Relational Approach
Participant Retention	0.138**
Participant Growth	0.141**
Profitability of the CSA	0.142**
Product Quality Impacts	0.192**
Process Efficiency Impacts	0.185**
Participant Commitment (Affective)	0.542**
Revenue Stability	0.407**
Farmer Satisfaction with the CSA	0.201**

Partial correlation controlling for number of CSA participants.

** : $p \leq 0.001$

ONLINE PRESENCE AND CSA OUTCOMES

Has a website?

- Profitability (Higher) & Retention (Lower)

Has a facebook page?

- None significant

Has a twitter account?

- None significant

How often ____ is updated

- Website & Participation Satisfaction (positively associated)
- Twitter & Participant Satisfaction (negatively associated)

TRANSACTIONAL CAPABILITIES AND CSA OUTCOMES

Sign up on line

- Lower retention

Pay online

- Lower retention, higher growth

Change Contact info

- None significant

Notification of a pickup

- Higher product quality, Higher farmer satisfaction, Higher retention

Find out what's in the upcoming box

- Higher process efficiency, Lower retention

Select what is the upcoming box

- Higher affective commitment, Higher retention

Finding out pickup and location times

- Lower retention, higher growth

Results based on MANOVA analysis, N = 812

TRANSACTIONAL CAPABILITIES AND CSA OUTCOMES

- **Providing “set-up” activities online is associated with higher participant growth...and lower participant retention**
- **Providing information and options for individuals boxes is associated with higher participant retention**

RELATIONAL CAPABILITIES ONLINE AND CSA OUTCOMES

- **Contact the CSA coordinator**
 - Lower retention
- **Exchange messages with particular members of the farm/CSA**
 - Higher participant satisfaction and affective commitment
- **Find out about local food events, make suggestions about the CSA, arrange visits to the farm**
 - Not significant
- **Participant in online events**
 - Lower product, process outcomes
 - Lower revenue and demand stability
 - Higher affective commitment
- **Find out how they can help on the farm**
 - Higher product, process outcomes
 - Higher revenue and demand
 - Lower retention

CONCLUSIONS

- **Its not just a matter of having social media infrastructure – it's a matter of how you use it.**
- **Transactional capabilities**
 - Providing “set-up” activities online is associated with higher participant growth...and lower participant retention
 - Providing information and options for individuals boxes is associated with higher participant retention
- **Relational capabilities**
 - Non-trivial interactions with the logistical structures, relational practices, and CSA overall approach