

Clients Drive the Supplementary Food Program for HIV+ Community

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the study referred in this presentation.

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that our work is occurring on unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the x^wməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwítlh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Organization Background

AIDS Vancouver started in 1983 as the first AIDS service organization in Canada and in response to the growing need for community health organizations to support individuals vulnerable to the epidemic.

Today, over 7,000 people from all over the world are annually accessing some form of service provided by AIDS Vancouver. AIDS Vancouver strives to keep our programming innovative and relevant.

Mission Statement:

AIDS Vancouver exists to alleviate individual and collective vulnerability to HIV and AIDS through support, public education and community-based research

Objectives of the Study

The project was set up to improve the participation of clients in the Supplementary Grocery Program (SGP). The goal is to extract client knowledge, experience and partner with the clients to apply the knowledge to improve the Grocery Supplementary Program.

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Introduction

AIDS Vancouver is a non-profit organization supporting people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA). The Supplementary Grocery Program at AIDS Vancouver distributes 450 bags of high protein, fresh vegetables and fruits, dairy items, and other nutritious foods free every distribution week. The main challenges are cost-effectiveness, maintaining high-quality service, and connecting with clients that are most in need. In the last three years, the program has shifted from a provider-driven to a client-driven program.

Methods

An annual client survey determines the base satisfaction level and identifies areas of improvement for the program. For three years, follow-up consultation sessions take place with clients, volunteers, and staff on methods to address issues raised in surveys. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and Social Constructivism (SC) theories are guidelines for client engagement. AI was selected to encourage participants to use the strengths and resources around them to improve the program. Social Constructivism was selected for its ability to combine individual perspectives in constructing meaning that is acceptable to all participants.

Results

The monthly client consultation sessions have generated 41 proposals over 3 years and 26 have been implemented by the client dominated Grocery Improvement Forum. Client satisfaction was raised by 16 percentage points after one year. Information sharing between clients and management is improving. Ownership by clients on implementing suggestions has greatly improved. Client participation continues to grow. The cost implications are minimal, yet the benefits are significant. .

Client Survey Summary Results

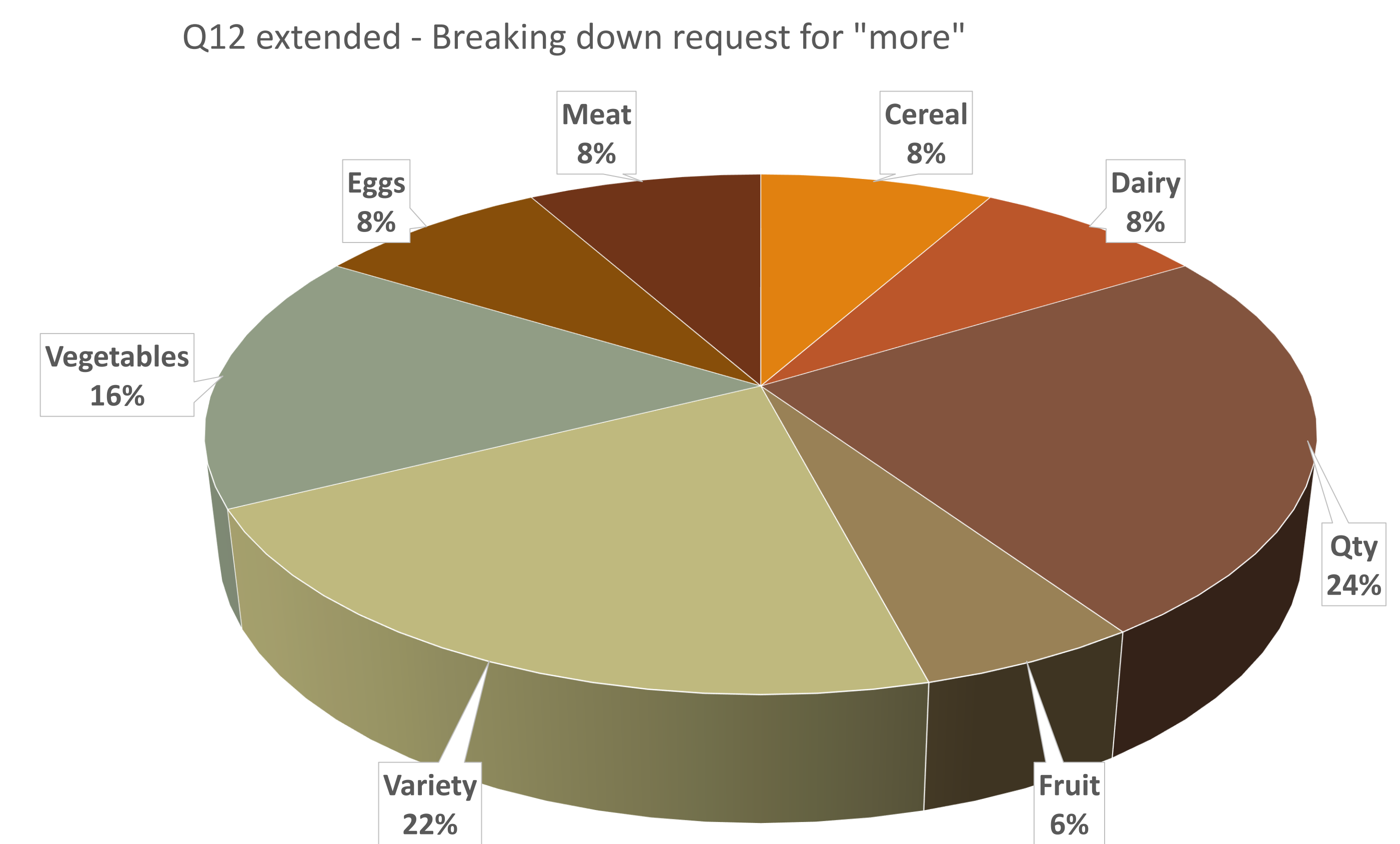
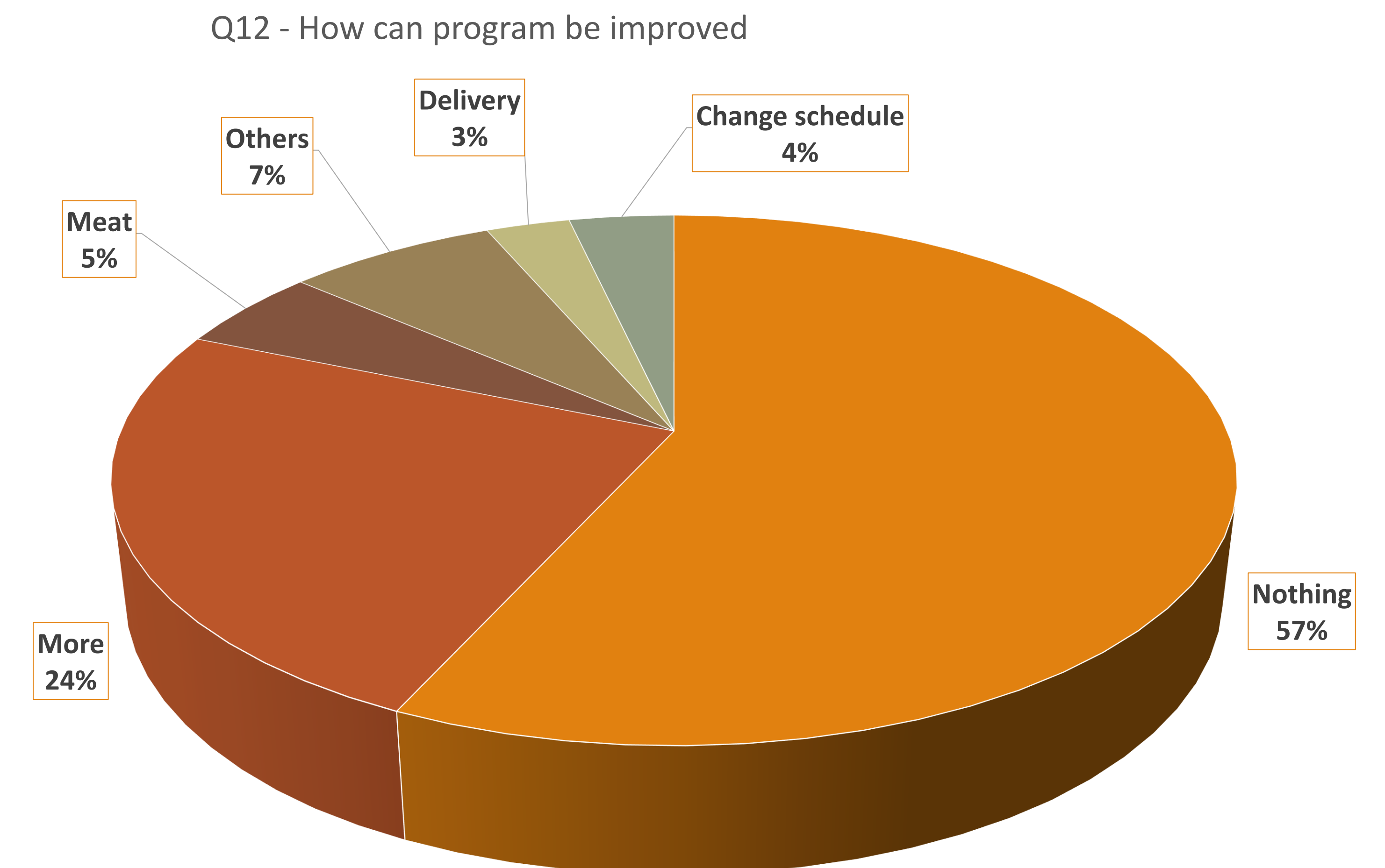
	2017	2018	2019
Number of responses	N = 118	N = 110	N = 152
% Satisfied	76	92	89
% Not Satisfied	24	2	2.8
% Neutral		6	8.2
Quality of products		91.8% - satisfactory, 8.2% - unsatisfactory	77% Satisfactory, 7% unsatisfactory 16% neutral
Grocery Pick-up Frequency	All grocery days 57% Twice monthly 31%	All grocery days 55.6% Twice monthly 25.9%	All grocery days 43.8% Twice monthly -39.6%
Gender	79.7% - male, 17.8% - female, 2.5% - other	79.4% - male, 19.6% - female, 0.9% - other	77.8% - male, 16.7% - female, 5.6% - Other
Age range	78.4% - 52.5M, 10.3% > 65, 9.5% - 30M, 1.8% < 20	81.4% - 52.5M, 9.3% > 65, 9.3% - 30M	74.8% - 52.5M, 9.1% > 65, 14.7% - 32.5M, 1.4% < 25

Challenges

Creating productive relationship with clients so they feel comfortable to verbalize their preferences. This is important for clients to believe their suggestions are being taken seriously into consideration. Expectations of the community are high, but non-profit organizations have limited resources. Reducing management tendency to suggest solutions to problems and encourage client participation.

Key Learnings

There is vast amount of knowledge and creativity amongst clients that can be applied to improve services. When clients are involved in structuring and implementing improvement initiatives there is more commitment to make them successful. As the summary data from consultations shows, no-cost suggestions are increasing annually as the forum utilizes the organizational strengths. Clients use social aspects to evaluate the service. Utilizing social aspects in designing the program has resulted in higher levels of satisfaction.



Summary Data from Consultation Forum

	2017	2018	2019
Number of meetings	6	9	10
Number of proposals	14	15	12
Proposals implemented	10	8	8
Proposal category	Product related = 12 e.g. increase fruit juice Service related = 2 e.g. record allergies	Product related = 8 e.g. provide toothbrushes Service related = 7 e.g. improve food safety	Product related = 6 e.g. give Boost or Ensure Service related = 6 e.g. more volunteers
Cost implications	Adding cost = 7 e.g. replace spam with beef Reducing cost = 1 e.g. reduce portions of rice No cost = 6 e.g. provide bread	Adding cost = 6 e.g. Provide laundry detergent No cost effect = 9 e.g. More flavored oatmeal	Adding cost = 4 e.g. grow own food No cost effect = 8 e.g. invite nutritionist