Compost Cats: A Five Year Business Plan for Sustaining Profits and Community Impacts

03/09/2014
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II. Executive Summary

The UA Compost Cats is an award-winning, student-run program that transforms organic waste into a community asset, improving productivity for southern Arizona farms, gardens, and landscapes while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing local food security. For our recent efforts, Compost Cats received a 2013 Recycler of the Year Award from the Arizona Recycling Coalition in 2013. In only 3 years, Compost Cats has already transformed over 1,500,000 pounds of waste materials into valuable soil amendments, and both our operations and sales potential are growing exponentially.

Compost Cats also provides innovative environmental education and green job training to student staff and volunteers in areas such as waste management, sustainable agriculture, and product marketing and sales. Through recently formed partnerships with the City of Tucson, Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona, San Xavier Co-op Farm, and Tucson Meet Yourself Festival, Compost Cats has secured a long term operating site and new sources of material that will allow us to turn garbage into gardens on a scale that magnifies the project’s environmental and social impacts while also providing us a clear view of financial profitability in the near future. This document maps out just how we will build on our success.

III. General Business Description

Vision:
The UA Compost Cats will be an economically and environmentally sustainable business model for southern Arizona, building local food security through the transformation of organic waste into soil fertility and providing public education on composting, food waste, and their relationship to food security and environmental concerns.

Mission:
The UA Compost Cats work to reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions and increase local food security by diverting food scraps, landscape trim, and paper from landfills and turning it into a high quality soil amendment for local agriculture and landscaping use. Compost Cats partners with local governments, businesses, nonprofits, and schools to create hands on training for students of all ages and a green business model for a sustainable southern Arizona.
Core Values

- waste reduction and recycling
- environmental and agricultural education
- green business model
- environmental and economic sustainability
- student-run
- food security
- campus and community partnership
- green job and leadership training

Elevator Pitch:

Compost Cats is a student run program at the University of Arizona that keeps food scraps and landscape clippings out of the landfill and turns them into soil fertility for local farms and gardens. We sell compost and donate to local school gardens and the Community Food Bank’s backyard gardening program for low-income families. We partner with local governments, schools, businesses, and nonprofits to educate the public on waste reduction, food security, and related environmental issues.

IV. Sales

A) Past and current state of sales:
Compost sales have mainly consisted of bulk sales up until this year. In 2013, we sold over 100 cubic yards to individuals, schools, and community gardens. We are currently exploring retail opportunities, as bagged compost has a much higher profit margin than bulk. The Tucson Community Food Bank receives rice and beans in strong plastic bags, which they have been donating to us for sales experimentation. We have been using these bags to sell compost by the cubic foot at the Loft farmers’ market, for ten dollars per bag.

B) Goals for the near future:
We expect a dramatic increase in compost production and sales within the next year upon implementation of the intergovernmental agreement between the City of Tucson and Compost Cats. To prepare for this, our goals for 2014 are to:
• Develop a bagged product for retail sale.
• Sell compost at a minimum of two local farmers’ markets.
• Establish our product in Whole Foods Tucson stores in exchange for composting services.
• Provide UA Facilities Management with a consistent supply of compost for UA grounds.
• Establish our product in at least three local nurseries. Our target nurseries include Eco-gro, Desert Survivors, and Native Seeds/SEARCH.

C) Long-term goals:
Three to five years from now, Compost Cats will be a top competitor in the compost market in Southern Arizona. We expect to:
• Gain new business partnerships with major grocery chains such as Safeway and Albertson’s, which discard high volumes of food waste.
• Gain new customers by social networking, increasing community outreach programs, and collecting food waste at public events.
• Sell our product in over 60% of local nurseries in Tucson.
• Sell our product in major home improvement stores such as Ace Hardware and Home Depot.
• Make our product available for online purchase through our website.

V. Outreach

A) Past and current outreach efforts:
Compost Cats has had many opportunities to interact with the public at various levels. We have interacted with the general public while providing composting services at big events like Tucson Meet Yourself and UA homecoming. Compost Cats has also interacted with more specialized audiences while giving presentations about our composting efforts. We have presentations fit to accommodate all types of audiences, from elementary to college level, as well as for more formal audiences. Though Compost Cats has had success in educating the Tucson community about composting and the work we do, our lessons have had no monetary profit. For example, Tucson Meet Yourself required Compost Cats employees to put in many hours, resulting in $2100 in labor costs and $35 in fuel. The 3411 lbs collected at Tucson Meet Yourself produced approximately .68 cubic yards, which results in a $24 sales profit. These net losses at events mean Compost Cats will begin implementing service fees.

B) Goals for the near future:
In the very near future, Compost Cats will seek to provide paid composting services at 6 to 8 Tucson events. We will determine a quoting system for events that will largely be based on how long the
events last and how many workers are needed. How successful Compost Cats is in making a profit at events will be determined by:

- How many events Compost Cats schedules
- If Compost Cats makes a net profit for the labor provided
- If after the event the producers would like to have the Compost Cats return, making events more consistent

Compost Cats is hoping to establish a compost club at the UA in the next year. This club will allow for fundraising opportunities, as well as for more student outreach opportunities. To establish a club at the U of A Compost Cats must:

- Be recognized by ASUA
- Complete a club constitution
- Determine faculty advisor
- Complete orgsync application
- Request ASUA bank letter
- Create club bank account (entirely separate from CC account)

To become profitable, the compost club needs to take into account the following expenses and possible income:

- ASUA club membership fee: $30 expense
- Manufacturing compost merchandise
- Student membership fee: $5 per semester
- Sales of compost merchandise
- Donations from CALS alumni

C) Long-term goals:
Compost Cats seeks to establish a stronger presence in the Tucson community. In upcoming years, Compost Cats hopes to turn our compost site at the San Xavier Cooperative Farm into a learning hub for the community. By giving tours of our site and demonstrations on different composting methods, Compost Cats’ farm can become a resource for learning about compost.
Compost Cats anticipates becoming a staple in student curriculums. By providing students the opportunity to see our presentations and ask questions, we hope to encourage an interest in composting and the environment. We also hope to work closely with JTED, establishing a curriculum to teach composting and sustainable agriculture to high school students by 2017. Possible integration of Compost Cats into an already existing JTED agriculture course could speed up our involvement.
VI. Maintenance and Operations

Through November, 2013, our daily operations mainly consisted of:
- Total monthly labor cost of $6000 in November and $5,500 in December (includes farm and other labor expenses, but is largely based on run labor)
- 1-2 runs to the farm, 6 days per week
- 50 minutes and 2 gallons of fuel used to drive from the UA to San Xavier Farm 11 times per week (costing approximately $300 monthly in fuel, and at least $250 monthly in labor)
- Income of $240 per month in waste collection fees
- Tote systems at the River and Speedway Whole Foods locations (requiring dumping and cleaning of at least 40 totes per day)
- Post-consumer bins in four Student Union restaurants, with staff and volunteer coaches monitoring the bins 2 weeks per semester
- High contamination rates of post-consumer waste
- Limited Union staff support for both pre- and post-consumer composting (some restaurants much better than others)
- Very high truck maintenance costs

We made many recent changes, to decrease cost and increase income from December through February 23rd:
- Developed a more efficient pickup route
- 7-8 runs to the farm per week, resulting in a labor cost of only $3,600 in January (also lower because of winter break)
- Instituted pickup fees to all businesses, and dropped those who would not pay
- Income increased to $510 per month in pickup fees
- Fuel costs dropped by about 40% in December and January
- Changed both Whole Foods locations to bin systems, greatly reducing labor requirement
- Began working with Scraps on Scraps to process residential food waste
- Approved new signs for Student Union post-consumer compost bins
- Met with Jon Levengood and Larry Jones to discuss instituting required staff trainings at the Student Union and the prospect of eventually increasing the number of businesses who participate in post-consumer composting

As of February 24th, our operations and related costs have been significantly altered:
- Now dumping food waste and rat bedding collections at the zoo, taken by the City to San Xavier every 5 days
• Estimated labor cost of $2570 per month for waste collection labor
• City now bringing approximately 7 tons of zoo doo to San Xavier every 5 days
• Meeting on 3/14 to discuss the City bringing park landscape trimmings to San Xavier
  o Likely to begin week of 3/17
• Facilities Management scheduled to use their chipper to chip larger landscape waste from the City and San Xavier
• Meeting the week of 3/17 to discuss installation of City compost pickup service for businesses
  o Hopefully will begin receiving food waste without collection labor cost in 2-3 months
  o Have several businesses on a waiting list, and have contacts with Sprouts, Fry’s, and Safeway to potentially add to City collection route
• New Post-consumer signs to be installed on 3/12
• Compost coaching volunteer trainings taking place the week of 3/10
• Compost coaching and coordinated marketing efforts taking place 3/24 - 4/4
• Expect lower truck maintenance costs after all of the needed repairs that were performed last year

Furthermore, we have several goals within the next couple of years to help us move toward financial sustainability:
• By fiscal year 2016, Compost Cats will no longer do our own food waste collection
  o Labor can be diverted primarily to farm, sales, and outreach labor
  o We will provide consultation services and monitor the contamination of waste received
• Required Student Union staff trainings beginning Fall 2014
• A “Guide to Composting on Campus” by Fall 2014
• Expand to include 75% of Union restaurants in post-consumer composting by Fall 2015

VII. Farm

A) Past and current state of farm work:

Compost Cats moved operations to San Xavier Co-op Farm in June 2013. This location provides an ideal setting for mutually beneficial partnership and long-term growth, with the added benefit of providing compost to San Xavier that can be used to fertilize crops that are then sourced back to the UA Student Union. We own or have access to everything, machine and material, necessary to run a composting operation. It takes 3-4 months to compost new material in long windrows that produce 40-60 cubic yards of compost each.
B) Farm goals for the near future:

Compost Cats focuses on sustainability in multiple senses, including making our resource use more efficient. We are currently focused on developing new routines to handle the dramatic increase in raw materials resulting from our agreements with the City of Tucson and Borderlands Food Bank. We are currently reorganizing the site and experimenting with less labor intensive composting methods. We also continue to research other companies’ practices to find new ways to minimize composting time, space, and labor.

Compost Cats is also completing construction now of a bagging machine that will allow sales of bagged compost at plant nursery outlets, hardware stores, and farmers’ markets. Operation time for bagging compost will be longer than it has been for bulk sales, but much higher sales margins compared to bulk sales will more than compensate for increased farm time.

C) Long-term goals:

In the future, Compost Cats intends to work with San Xavier Co-op Farm staff to turn its farm site into a learning hub for sustainable processing of organic waste materials. We will provide demonstrations of composting best practices at multiple scales, from the household to the industrial. We will give educational tours of our site to local public schools and groups seeking to start or improve similar projects from across the country.

VIII. Human Resources and Leadership

As the only entirely student run, large-scale composting program in the nation, Compost Cats currently provides 11 green student jobs as well as waste management education across campus. Students who work for Compost Cats acquire a diverse set of employable job skills (see core competencies chart) and have multiple opportunities for leadership and presentation of their work.

Compost Cats have developed and begun implementing a new committee leadership system that outlines more specialized staff roles for increased efficiency and effectiveness. Student staff members can, over time, serve on more than one committee and thus gain a wider range of work experience. Below is a current organizational chart (fully developed and implemented in February, 2014):
We expect this basic committee structure to remain similar, and we also plan to encourage additional student participation in carbon sequestration research at the San Xavier site. In the future, we do hope to move to a model with a full time UA staff supervisor and an administrative assistant (who could be a student). We also hope to hire an additional employee at San Xavier Co-op Farm to facilitate the drop-off of materials at the farm, as well as to help with additional maintenance that student employees do not have the experience or time to handle.

**IX. Business Development**

Compost Cats is now positioned to rapidly become more efficient, proactive, and profitable. Over the next few years, we plan to become an industry leader in the regional soil amendment market. We have also begun discussions to collaborate on innovative carbon sequestration related research that benefits society as a whole and situates the University of Arizona as a leader in an emerging field. Here are some of the steps we’re taking:

- Transforming 1100 tons/year of food from the Nogales landfill, as well as 2600 tons/year from the City of Tucson, into saleable soil amendment products.

- Instituted monthly waste pick-up fees for all of our partner businesses in January 2014, providing an additional revenue stream.
• Eliminated small businesses that did not agree to pay monthly fees, decreasing our cost of production.

• Began increased marketing of paid consulting and event composting services to University of Arizona and Tucson events; these events offer enormous brand exposure and marketing value in addition to direct revenue.

• Exploring the possibility of contracting with companies that produce compostable dishware to provide affordable products to event producers, potentially reducing waste stream contamination for us while offering an additional revenue source.

• Agreement with the City of Tucson will add new commercial businesses for both waste materials and marketing sites without increasing student staff pick-up run time.

• Increasing direct revenue from client businesses added through the city partnership in return for our conducting staff trainings and regular monitoring of waste streams for quality control.

• Seeking additional investment through University of Arizona alumni and other potential benefactors interested in the development of an innovative, dynamic student-run business.

• Began talks with University of Arizona faculty and other experts on the potential for conducting innovative, fundable research at San Xavier Co-op Farm on carbon sequestration through the addition of compost and biochar to agricultural and rangeland soils.

X. Finances

A) Historical Income Statements - see attachment

B) January 1st, 2014 Balance Sheet - see attachment

C) Five Year Pro Forma (see attachment for detailed spreadsheet). Note that this graph represents a cautious projection of financial growth, and increased marketing and other more aggressive approaches to business development could lead to faster profitability.
Note: Funding shown here as “Green Fund” provided could also come from other grant or investment funding.
XI. Appendices

Appendix A: Marketing Plan

Target Markets:

- 1a. Compost - Retail/Wholesale (Product)
  Wholesale/retail sales market (nurseries and farmer’s markets). This type of compost sale will require extensive marketing in the form of brand foundation, development of sales talent, customer service support and advertising.

- 1b. Compost - Bulk (Product)
  It should be noted that 30% of all compost produced is already allocated to our business partners (the Community Foodbank = 10% and San Xavier Co-op Farm =20%) in exchange for use of equipment and land, respectively. Advertising to gardens, farms and other large organizations will be focused on.

- 2a. Composting - Food/Green Waste Pick-ups (Service)
  With a commercial composting service, provided by the City, being developed, the focus for this service will shift to larger volume businesses (grocery stores, produce warehouses, etc.) and providing advantageous dumping fees.

- 2b. Composting - Large Events (Service)
  Compost Cats has provided composting services for single large-scale events, including Tucson Meet Yourself and Gem & Jam. Other city-wide events have shown interest in having a composting service, however in order to maintain financial stability these events must provide a service payment and the opportunity for marketing or compost sales. Targeting both the organizers and attendees of these events is important for a greater presence in the city.

- 3. Education (Service)
  The market audience for education has historically been schools of all levels, however education of the general public is also very important. This education would focus on the issues that have inspired the creation of Compost Cats, as stated in both the Mission Statement and Vision Statement below. Development of outreach personnel will be initiated
• 4. Consultation (Service)
Consultation would be primarily reserved for those who wish to compost their organic waste internally, either for structural or geographic purposes. The members of Compost Cats believe in cooperation amongst businesses and organization instead of outright competition. Thus, consultation services would be used as a means of encouraging similar composting operations in areas outside of southern Arizona. A fee structure for this service billed by the hour will be developed.

Marketing Goals:

The goal for developing and implementing a marketing plan is to grow the Compost Cats’ brand and foster a financially sustainable business model.

To Include:
• awareness and usage of our products and services
• long term revenue generation
• partnerships with organizations working towards the same social and environmental goals
• agreements with local businesses and organizations to increase our production capacity
• maintenance and growth of our partnership with the local/regional government, and
• fostering of similar operations in other regions.

Marketing Messages:

The following messages will be tailored throughout all marketing materials for specific audiences:
• Environmental benefits: Instead of using more space in landfills where these wastes would remain for thousands of years, composting allows the nutrients in organic waste to be used again for growing new crops and returning soil fertility organically.

• Social benefits: Producing an organic (as opposed to chemical) means of increasing lost soil fertility allows people the choice to grow their own food without worry of detrimental health effects.

• Student involvement and leadership: Compost Cats has always drawn passionate people with strong and ethical leanings. The future financial stability will allow for the hiring of many more impassioned students.

• University of Arizona organization: Compost Cats is a true University of Arizona organization, solely populated by UA students (undergraduate to PhD). Many UA staff, faculty, students and
alumni have helped it to grow, and although it will likely become a financially self-sustaining organization, Compost Cats will always be dedicated to its presence in and representation of the UA.

• Strengthening local businesses/organizations: Two invaluable partners include the Community Foodbank of Southern Arizona and the San Xavier Co-op Farm, while numerous schools have received donated compost and consultations for starting gardens.

Desired Results (by end of 2014):

• Increase gross revenue
• Wholesale/Retail Sales
• Bulk Sales
• Pick-up Services
• Large Events
• Consultation Services
• Achieve name recognition of at least 50% of UA staff, students, and faculty
• Collect at least 90% of non-contaminated organic waste from SUMC during Compost Coaching season, including post-consumer waste
• Collect at least 75% of non-contaminated organic waste from SUMC throughout the school year, including post-consumer waste
• Create standardized brand aligned with ethical and environmental goals
• Strengthen internet presence and generate customers in that medium
• Become a top search (i.e., first page) result for composting in Southern Arizona
• Increase viewership on Facebook by 150%
• Create sales support marketing materials

Implementation:

See full marketing plan (attached) for steps to achieve marketing goals.
Appendix B: Extended Timeline

Current Funding ends June 30, 2014. Compost Cats has received $56,000 in Green Fund money for Fiscal Year 2015

Feb 24, 2014 - Began dumping at Reid Park Zoo dumpsters, which the City will transport to San Xavier; the City began transporting green waste and zoo doo to San Xavier

Feb 7-9, 2014 - Gem and Jam Event (first public event for pay)

February, 2014 - Complete applications for farmers’ markets and stock some bagged compost at the San Xavier Coop Farm store (using repurposed bags from the Food Bank)

March, 2014 - completion of bagging machine

March-April, 2014 - Begin selling bagged compost to Whole Foods and at 2 farmers’ markets; evaluate the success of the static pile and whether to include them in our regular process

April, 2014 - Compost at UA Spring Fling

April-May, 2014 - Sell 100 cubic yards bulk compost to UA Grounds Services (1st sale to them)

April-May, 2014 - City begins collecting food waste from local businesses and delivering to San Xavier Farm; begin charging tipping fees from the public to dump manure and green waste at San Xavier

Summer 2014 - Begin selling bagged compost to retail nurseries

July-August - Review IGA contract with the City and decide upon a tipping fee, if appropriate

Fall 2014 - Compost training integrated into Student Union staff development training

Fall 2014 - Sell 200 cubic yards of compost to UA Grounds Services; increase bagged sales at additional farmers’ market locations as possible

Mid-Fall 2014 - Receive 1st $1000 of alumni funding

October 2014 - Compost at Tucson Meet Yourself Festival (may be unpaid, but significant marketing)
Spring 2015 - Expand post-consumer composting at the Student Union; set up the website to take online orders of compost; sell bagged compost to a minimum of 3 nurseries; sell 100 cubic yards to Facilities Management; start working with CALS professors to include Compost Cats in class curriculum (tours, presentations)

Fall 2015 - selling to 3-4 nurseries/stores; post- consumer composting at 75% of Union restaurants; transfer all businesses we currently pick up from to the City (ending all daily Compost Cats runs)

Spring 2015 - begin selling at highly travelled St. Phillips Sunday farmers’ market

Fall 2016 - selling to 4-5 nurseries/stores; offer two positions for non-students (one for the supervisor and one San Xavier position); achieve $4000 in alumni funding

Spring 2017 - begin selling at River/Craycroft Whole Foods store; work with CALS professors to implement research projects at San Xavier farm

Fall 2017 - selling to 5-6 nurseries/stores; increase wholesale price to $5/cubic foot; achieve $6000 in alumni funding; partner with JTED classes for agricultural and compost education

Fall 2018 - selling to 6-7 nurseries/stores; achieve $8000 in alumni funding; compost at 8 annual public events by this time;

Appendix C: Key Contracts/Partnerships

Formal community partnerships formed over the past year with the City of Tucson, San Xavier Cooperative Farm of the Tohono O’dham Nation, and the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona, and our ongoing partnership with Tucson Meet Yourself festival have dramatically expanded our community visibility, educational efforts, and overall environmental impacts (see attached Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Tucson and Memorandum of Understanding with San Xavier Co-op Farm and the Community Food Bank).

Our community partnerships guarantee that we can produce enough compost to provide the 300 cubic yards of compost we have agreed to sell UA Facilities Management in 2014, and our partnership with the City of Tucson also provides a built in market for bulk sales of compost to city golf courses and parks.
Good compost also means good, healthy, local food for people on campus through the Compost Cats’ partnerships with the UA Community Garden and MycoCats UA mushroom growing project. In addition, partnership with the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona provides built-in opportunities for student community service in the areas of food security and agricultural education, including opportunities for Compost Cats to reach local high school students who may become UA students through our presentations at food bank youth workshops. A key part of this formal partnership stipulates that 10% of Compost Cats’ output goes to the food bank’s backyard gardening program for low-income families, a direct student program impact on community food security.

At San Xavier Co-op Farm, 20% of Compost Cats’ total output goes to fertilize crops such as squash, peppers, melons, wheat, and beans. In December 2013, Compost Cats facilitated an agreement in principle between UA Dining Services and the farm to begin providing select San Xavier crops to Student Union restaurants, completing a circle whereby UA food scraps are turned into rich compost, and that compost then nurtures local crops that come back to nurture the campus community.
Appendix D: SWOT Analysis

**Strengths**
- Collaboration and communication with local businesses
- Established mission/vision
- Land usage and ability to expand
- Expertise
- Networking/resources
- Technical skills
- UA brand
- EPA Recognition
- Cornered market
- Consistent supply of resources
- Environment: poor soil means high demand for compost
- Cheap labor and large labor pool
- Basic business concept

**Weaknesses**
- Processing limited by equipment
- Long processing time (3-4 months)
- Difficulty timing production up with peak sales seasons
- Distance of farm from customers
- High turnover rate of staff
- Cost of equipment repairs
- Reliance on equipment
- Limited financial/business expertise
- Lack of credibility and professional experience
- Lack of interest and support from the University

**Opportunities**
- Composting with the City of Tucson through IGA
- City will donate highly marketable “zoo-doo” from Reid Park Zoo
- Strong UA spirit felt throughout Tucson benefits our brand
- Whole Foods offer to sell our compost in Tucson stores
- Community eagerness to work with and support students
- Contact with Borderlands Foodbank
- Development of nursery at San Xavier Co-op Farm
- Niche for local compost made from recycled food waste

**Threats**
- Local competition with Tank’s Green Stuff
- Contamination of trash decreases product quality
- Funding needed before we can expand
- Dependency on UA Green Fund
- Lack of political support within UA
- Approaching staff transition in May and loss of key staff members.
Appendix E: Competitive Analysis

Summary of Top Two Competitors: Tank’s Green stuff and Ecoscraps

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<th>Tank’s Green Stuff</th>
<th>Ecoscraps</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Features:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Features:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Made from locally sourced landscape waste, organic manure, and bactifeed</td>
<td>OMRI listed (Organic Materials Review Institute)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASCO certified (certified by National Organic Program for use in organic agriculture)</td>
<td>Made from recycled fruits and vegetables, emphasis on sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Quality Control- tests for pathogens, heavy metals, pesticide residues, nutrients</td>
<td>Branding: “No chemicals, no poop.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meets ADEQ Class 1 rating for soil amendment products</td>
<td>Strong outreach programs (partners: Feed America, Mind Gardens, The Kitchen Community, FarmAid, Global Citizen)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Value:</td>
<td>Value:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$8/50lb bag, $34/ cubic yard</td>
<td>$5/8 quarts, available online at ecoscraps.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free bulk delivery for purchase of 10 cubic yards or greater</td>
<td><strong>Targets:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environmentally conscious customers; home gardeners and small farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Product sold in Home Depot and Lowe’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Targets:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Strengths:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product sold at Ecogro, Ace Hardware, McConnel Nursery, Mesquite Valley Growers, Desert Survivors, Silverbell Nursery, Native Seeds/SEARCH Retail Store</td>
<td>Veganic compost, made from recycled fruits and veggies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers include landscaping companies, family farms, and backyard gardeners</td>
<td>Estimated to have diverted 60 million pounds of food waste from landfills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths:</strong></td>
<td>Certified organic (OMRI listed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong local presence in Tucson community, sold in several local nurseries</td>
<td>Website is hip, informative, and green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High quality control, ASCO certification, organically derived materials</td>
<td>Strong outreach programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulk and retail customers</td>
<td>Available for online purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available for wholesale pickup at three Tucson locations: Speedway Recycling and Landfill Facility (East), Drexel Land Reclamation Facility (South), and Ina Road Land Reclamation Facility (North)</td>
<td><strong>Weaknesses:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A portion of Tank’s proceeds are donated to the Tucson Community Food Bank</td>
<td>Customer reviews say product is inconsistent, reports of mold and trash in bags. Bags were sometimes hot, indicating that the composting process was not complete (Homedepot.com)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of bactifeed (effective microorganisms) to speed up decomposition</td>
<td>Process of recycling food waste can lead to high levels of contamination and an inconsistent product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informative website</td>
<td>Not local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weaknesses:</strong></td>
<td>Only available in one size (8 quarts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Non-veganic’ i.e., made from manure</td>
<td><strong>Marketing Strategies:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sold in major retail stores such as Home Depot and Lowe’s</td>
<td>Website is marketed toward young, hip, and environmentally conscious gardeners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing Strategies:</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://ecoscraps.com/">http://ecoscraps.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established website: Tanksgreenstuff.biz</td>
<td>OMRI certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Featured on Mrs. Green’s World</td>
<td>“No chemicals, no poop.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>