

WORKING WITH CORNER STORES IN BALTIMORE

CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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Topics

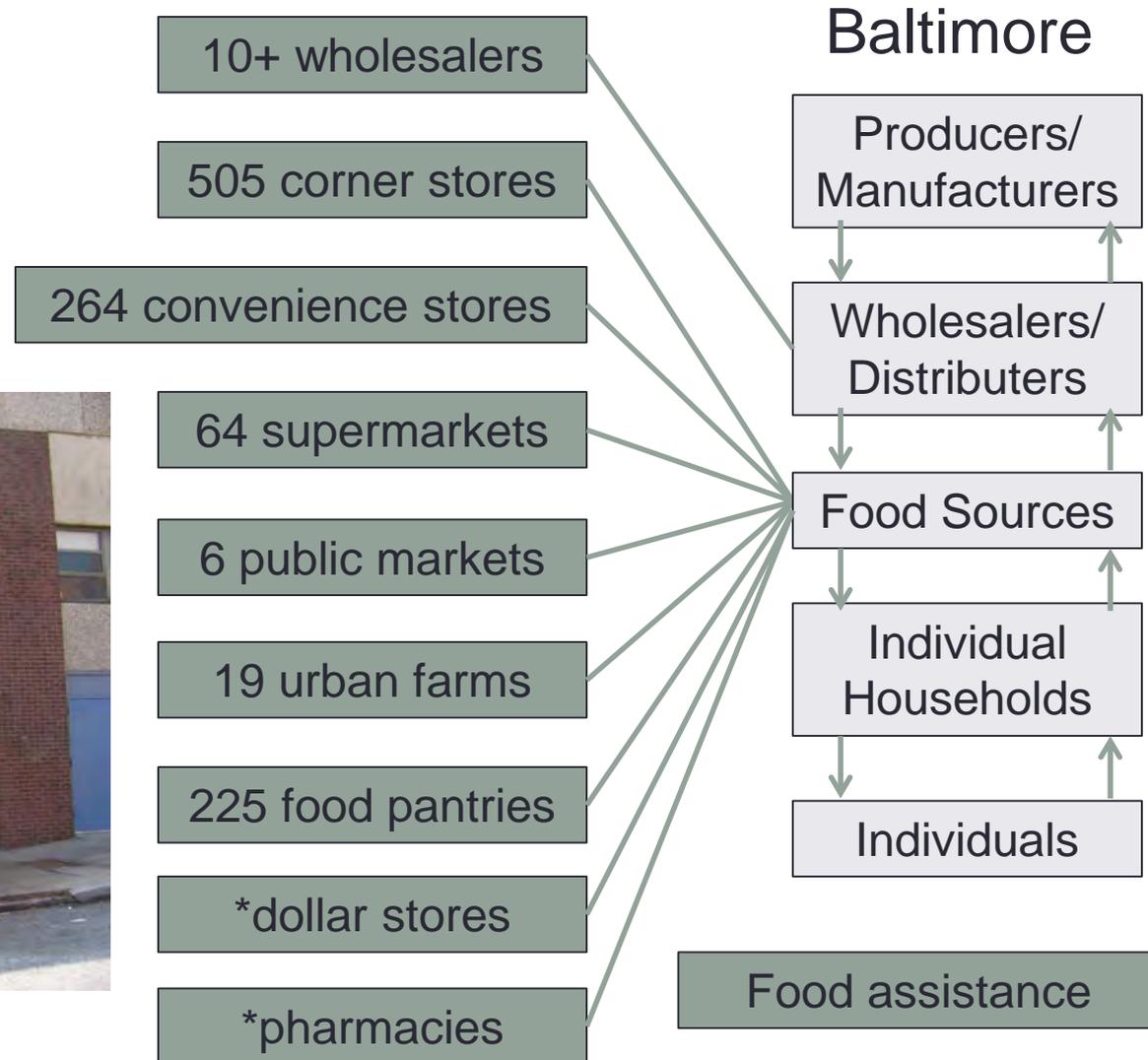
1. Summary of our work with corner stores
2. Characteristics of Baltimore corner stores, store owners, challenges faced
3. What we've learned: Approaches for creating change in local food stores
4. Opportunities, challenges and moving forward



History of Healthy Stores Trials in Baltimore City



Characteristics of the Baltimore Food System



Baltimore Corner Stores

- Mostly family owned
- “Mom and pop” operations
- Usually only one store owned
- Most common food source in Healthy Food Priority Areas



Baltimore Corner Store Exteriors

- Often located nearby carryouts that supply fried and fast foods



Baltimore Corner Store Exteriors

- Windows are commonly covered with metal bars, plywood, and signs for security



Baltimore Corner Store Interiors

- Closed type:
 - Two sets of doors. The inner set can only be electronically unlocked by the store owner using a buzzer
- Open types as well
 - Store owners commonly sit behind bullet proof plexiglass for security
- Video cameras and mirrors help store owners monitor customer activity



Baltimore Corner Store Interior Organization

- Signs, labels and price tags are often hand written if present
- Unmarked white freezers for healthier foods (off-putting?)
- Refrigerator space is expensive, limited and often owned by brand name companies (e.g. Dr Pepper Snapple group)



Corner Store Interiors in Baltimore

- Space, Stock & Storage
 - 1-3 Aisles
 - 1 Cash register
 - 1-2 lottery machines
 - Limited storage and back stock
 - Limited fresh fruits and vegetables
 - Lots of sugary snacks and drinks



Baltimore Corner Store Owners

- Ethnicity: Korean, Chinese/Mandarin, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Black, White
- Languages: Korean, Chinese/ Mandarin, Spanish, Arabic, English
- English is often a second or third language



Baltimore Corner Store Owners

- Work long hours
 - 12-14 hour days
 - 6-7 days a week
 - Shop for the store during hours and days off
- Many live outside of the city and the communities they serve



A few cultural matters

- In Korea, being a small store owner is a low status occupation
- Education highly valued (doctors, lawyers, professors)
- Why do they do it?
For their children!
- How did they do it?
- Collective loan system
- In some cases, selling off their less desirable location to a new incoming family

Corner Stores Owners & Communities Served

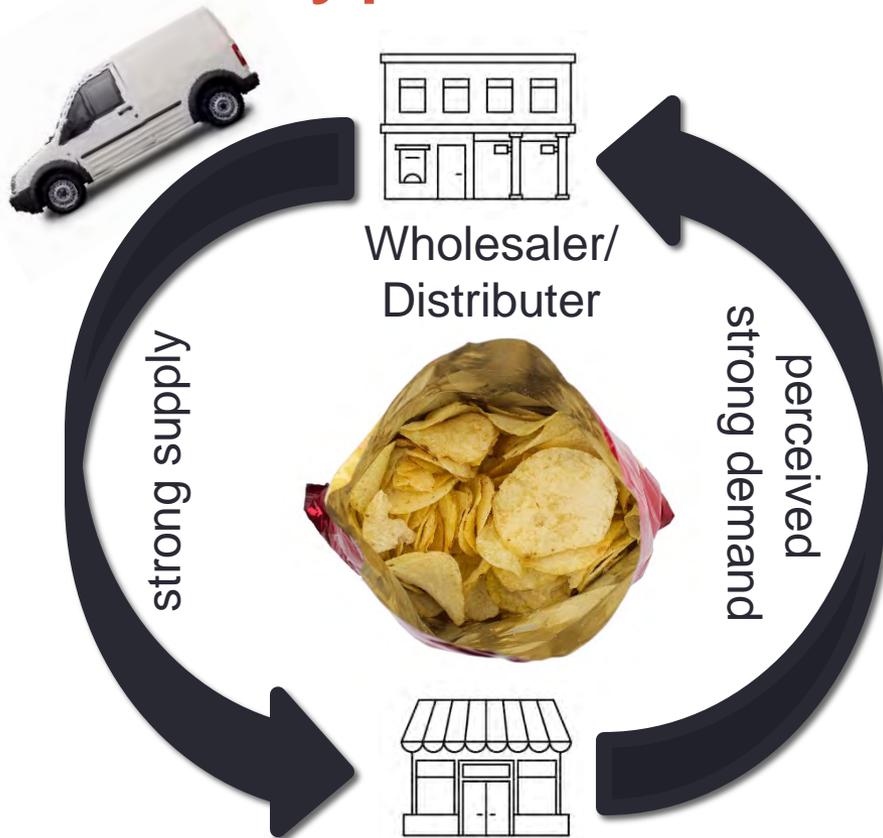
- From Store Customers: *“I would love to buy/eat healthy foods but they are...”*
 - Too expensive
 - Not available in the stores I shop in
 - Are of poor quality in the stores I shop in
- From Store Owners/Managers: *“I would love to stock healthy foods but ...”*
 - No one buys them, nobody wants these foods
 - The last time I stocked (xxxxx) it just sat on the shelves

Corner Stores Owners & Your Community

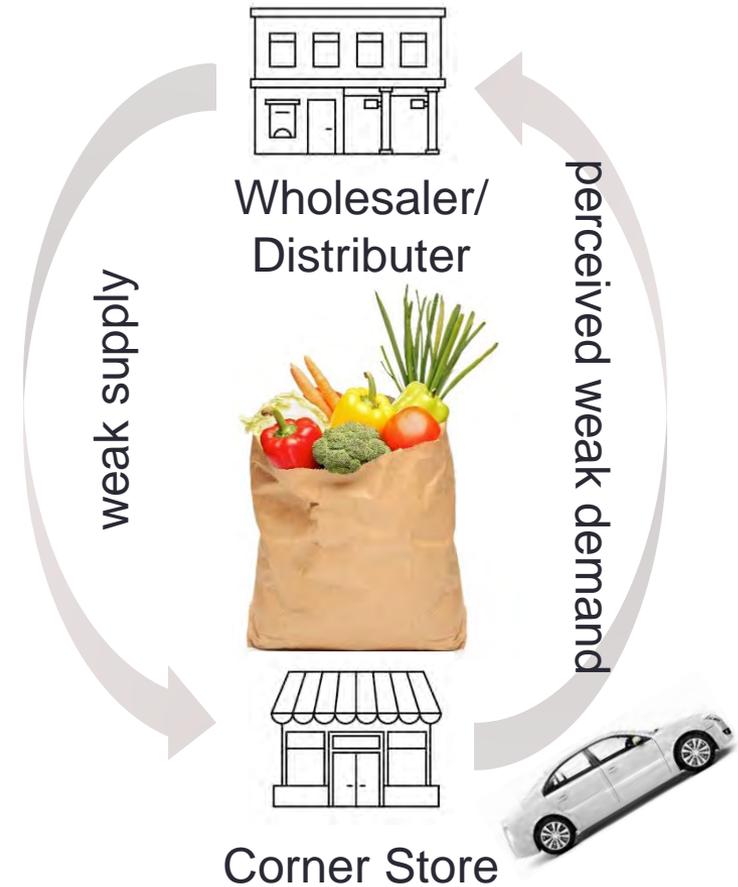
- Cultural Differences
- How is respect shown?

	Korean American	Your Community
Greetings	No handshake	
Eye contact	Divert eyes	
Giving change	Place on counter	
Departing	Slight head nod	

Supplying Corner Stores in Baltimore: The type of food matters



Formal and informal
agreements, free delivery,
incentives



Costly or no delivery,
minimum purchases

Formal and Informal Agreements

- In 4 cities, including Baltimore
- Savory snacks
 - 41% informal agreements
 - 43% formal agreements
 - Incentives: 98% displays, 40% free/discounted products, 26% slotting payments
 - Distributor expectations: 57% price control, 52% location control
- Sugary beverages
 - 37% informal agreements
 - 51% formal agreements
 - Incentives: 86% displays, 63% free/discounted products, 53% signage/marketing
 - Distributor expectations: 49% location control, 44% price control

What we have learned...

- What approaches work?
- By work, I mean feasible for store owner to implement, sales neutral or positive

Corner Store Interventions for Korean Store Owners

- Think of the store owners as both an audience and partner
- Use a phased approach
- Provide training
- Provide cultural guidelines



Cultural Guidelines for Korean Store Owners in Local Community

For the long term success of your store, it is important to build a strong relationship with local community. There are TWELVE guidelines to follow which can help:

1. Keep prices steady throughout the month.
2. Buy foods for your shelves that are not close to expiration. Check to see that all packaged foods are at least 1-2 months before expiration.
3. Contribute part of your profits back to the community and advertise it. (For example, donate food to needy residents, provide support for schools, recreation and public safety)
4. Greet your customers when they enter your store. (Hi, Hello, How are you?) In American culture, it is appropriate to greet.
5. Make eye-contact and small talk (jokes, comment on the weather, discuss personal experiences).
6. Do not ignore customers (it is considered a direct insult).
7. Do not watch customers constantly.
8. Do not put change on the counter; put it back into the customer's hand.
9. Say goodbye when they leave (Thank you. See you later, Take care, Have a nice day).
10. From time to time, ask regular customers what they would like you to stock and get those items.
11. Hire workers from the community.
12. Set-up a bulletin board for community members to post information.

Training

- Provide Store owners with:
 - Nutrition education
 - Guidelines and training
 - Incentive cards
 - Guidance on how to promote certain foods (e.g., WIC)



Point of Purchase Promotions

- Highlight and label healthier options with culturally appropriate posters and shelf labels



Grouped Displays

- Group healthier items together in the store using a display



Product Placement

- Work with corner store owners and managers to move healthier stock to eye-level, front of store, or near the register



Key needs for improving Baltimore's corner stores

- Need to make sure there is a way to build and sustain DEMAND
- Need to consider building rapport (store owners and community, store owners and city). This is a relationship.
- Consider phased approaches, to allow rapport
- Enforcement: Needs to be fully implemented



Opportunities and Challenges

- Food delivery problem to small independent retail food stores
 - Just making them stock foods doesn't make it easy for them to do it
- Possibility of unexpected consequences
 - Potentially avoided by planning with multiple stakeholders
- Getting local level health outcome data can be difficult
 - Role for University partnerships



Thank you!

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