

WeeKit - Note of intent

I. What is the problem we focus on?

Food is massively wasted throughout its production and consumption cycles. Globally, over a third of all food produced goes to waste. In fact, an area larger than the geographical size of China is used to grow food that is never eaten every year¹.

The dynamics leading to such a waste vary between countries and regions in the world, particularly between developing and industrialized countries. While in developing countries, the losses occur early in the food chain due to the lack of financial means, technique and appropriate infrastructure, in industrialized countries, “more than 40% of losses happen at retail and consumer levels”², according to the FAO.

When it reaches the cities of the global North, food is mostly sold in supermarkets, and some urbans lose access to information on where it comes from and how it was produced. The habit of cooking has also become inaccessible for a growing portion of the population, given that it is often often seen as too expensive, difficult and time consuming. This results in poor eating habits (overconsumption of processed and industrialized food with poor nutritional qualities, both in fast foods and in supermarkets, underconsumption of fibres, vegetables...), which thus leads to serious health issues.

Provided the extent of these problems, and the necessity to tackle them both, we defined the following problem: **how can we make people adopt better food habits and eco-friendly behaviours in supermarkets and at home ?**

We believe that these two problematics, being food waste (in supermarkets and in the home) and poor eating habits, can be linked and that a common solution can and should be found. The way we eat and waste food both stem from the symbolic importance we give to food. For the FAO, “the behaviour of consumers plays a huge part in industrialized countries.”³ The organization recommends “raising awareness among industries, retailers and *consumers* as well as finding beneficial use for food that is presently thrown away are useful measures to decrease the amount of losses and waste.” Following this guideline, we aim to accompany people in their transition toward eating more healthy food, and making sure that they don’t buy too much and throw away at the same time.

We are aware that this is not enough. To reduce the outstanding amount of globally waste food, we would need a complete change of the whole food system. But it is not a reason nor an excuse to do

¹ <https://www.mapleridge.ca/1776/Food-Production>

² <http://www.fao.org/save-food/resources/keyfindings/en/>

³ *ibid*

nothing. At our scale, we seek to create awareness and a positive dynamic, starting at the individual level (and why not scale up eventually!)

Our theme shall fully be in agreement with the course and more precisely the seventeen development goals of the 21st century since it is in link with the Sustainable Development Goals 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 14 and 15.

II. What can we propose as a solution?;

WeeKit: “No more, no less, thus no waste.”

So, in a nutshell, our solutions aims at encouraging people to cook more while wasting less food, by making cooking more affordable and trouble-free for them.

Inspired by the weakly fruits and vegetable deliveries (AMAPs in French), where consumers pick each week a food basket composed of seasonal and local items, we seek to provide a similar service that would take place in supermarkets. In fact our project would enable consumers to order specific boxes containing the ingredients it takes to cook a specific recipe through a phone application. “*No more, no less, thus no waste.*” Some personal suggestions, linked to the consumption habits of the person, would lead to an even more targeted offer (for instance by linking the app to the store’s fidelity card).

In addition, during the process of having these boxes be prepared by supermarket staff, the staff would scan all the products before putting them in the boxes. In this way, the app can then keep track of the expiry dates, to warn the user that a product is about to go bad, making sure that no food is forgotten.

Here is a proposed user scenario :

- I am a person that doesn’t know how or what to cook, or that doesn’t have time to think about what to buy (for instance if I work late, have kids...)

I download the app.

I complete the form, providing key characteristic that will help WeeKit target its offer

I select the recipe I want (I can search, I have suggestions that correspond to my profile

I order my box)

I go to the supermarket ; I take my box(es) ; I pay like regular groceries. If I have a fidelity card, I scan it (the information collected will make the recipe suggestions more relevant)

At home : I can cook with the recipes with the help of the WeeKit app, and the app warns me when food is about to go bad.

- I am a supermarket employee

I receive an order for a box.

I go through the shelves and I fill the box with the required ingredients.
I scan all the products (the app keeps track of the expiration dates and the exact content of the box).

III. What Impact could it have?

For the consumer, using WeeKit means accessing affordable food, because, by buying the right amount, no money goes unused. It allows us to offer a choice of quality ingredients. By cooking healthy and easy recipes, the user can (re)discover the satisfaction of @@@. Because the boxes are made in the supermarket, the consumer can do its regular shopping and integrate the box easily in its habits. This is what differentiates us from website such as Quitoque⁴, that deliver food boxes in kit. Associating the supermarket means that the user don't have to add another shopping platform to its routine.

For the supermarkets, using WeeKit could potentially mean new clients. But more important, it leads to an efficient allocation of the products and management of the stocks. It is a diversification in the services they offers as supermarkets need to reinvent themselves to seduce a more and more demanding clientele. Finally, they can create some special "last minute" boxes, with products that are about to expire and sold at a discount, meaning less food thrown away.

Beyond these direct effects, WeeKit seeks to create a healthy food movement. It does so by creating a target audience that extends from students to families, couples and retirees. WeeKit understands that in order to facilitate change we need not only the support of the youth but the entire generation. WeeKit takes the simple ideology of easy access to food and combines it with healthy life-choices. The customization options on WeeKit not only allow its users to have ideas about healthier food options but also reduce overconsumption, or in french terms "le sur-achat," of food and less consumption of processed food. In addition, WeeKit, in the long run, aims to create a awareness on hunger and malnutrition issues, as overconsumption in the North is linked to underconsumption in the South.

WeeKit is more than a mobile based application. It is actually a concept that by changing our lifestyle choices and fast food consumption we can make a positive impact. The main objective of the app is to reduce spending on unnecessary amounts and mischoices of food. But in doing so it also allows individuals to use food and vegetables in a sustainable manner. WeeKit may also stimulate conversations on ill-effects of processed food and on the flaws of our current global food system. Ideally, its long term objectives would be to invite its users to hold meetings, to ensure that that conversation around healthy lifestyle remains ignited beyond the borders of this application. But in that matter, our projects is part of a food movement bigger than us, reclaiming our sovereign right to eat quality, affordable and local food.

IV. What Risks would we face? What actions can we take to reduce them?

⁴ <https://www.quitoque.fr/nos-paniers>

Risks are a part of any venture. The bigger the venture, the bigger the risk. Therefore, WeeKit seeks to start at a small scale first and wants to then grow it into a larger movement at a later stage. One of the most prominent risks is the consumer behaviour. In order to ensure WeeKit's success, it is essential that we provide enough motivation in shifting consumer's behaviors. Given the number of supermarket chains that recognise the need for overconsumption of food, it is necessary for WeeKit to collaborate with them. Another risk is the lack of advertising. There are so many advertisements of fast food chains that it somehow becomes difficult for consumers to change the minds of people. WeeKit has to strategically come up with ads that tackle the issue of food consumption.

If WeeKit gains success, there is a possibility of replicas coming in the market so in order to eliminate competition it becomes important for WeeKit to constantly innovate and come up with more solutions to keep the target consumers hinged.

Another problem is making WeeKit more customer friendly. The long term plan is to launch WeeKit in various languages for instance, but right now, with the capital at hand, it might be a little complicated. So in-order to tackle that WeeKit depends on building a strong customer base and acquiring a tech team which can in turn be a great way to mitigate risk.

V. Deployment

"WeeKit is here to stay". It doesn't aim to be one of those apps which create a great buzz initially but fizzle down subsequently. It aims on becoming a movement towards sustainable food consumption habits. In order to achieve such aims, we have both short and long term strategies.

The most pivotal strategy is ensuring WeeKit has a widespread access. There is a need for WeeKit to build collaboration with as many players as possible specifically the supermarkets. A number of them already offer a "click and collect" service, where consumers can order online, and then pick and pay the food in the supermarket. So the resources –meaning the staff– are already available. As most "click and collect" services were launched around the year 2010, the stores have the experience to deal with such a service. Thus it won't be a "cultural shock", because the digitalization of shopping is already on the go. Indeed, the pick and drop service would only work if supermarket employees are willing to collaborate. Having concepts such as "WeeKit Star Supermarket Employee" would encourage employees to participate more.

After a year of launch WeeKit wants to take on college campuses. WeeKit aims at hiring student representatives at various colleges that talk about the app and how students can successfully reduce consumption and promote a healthy lifestyle. As word of mouth is a strong way of building a dialogue and brand name.

WeeKit also plans on coming up with innovative recipes and movements such as #NoMeatTuesdays which would make the consumption more organic and healthy. After first year

WeeKit wants to enter various markets and expand the recipe section. Possibly collaborate with cooking shows and have a section called Chef's special where you can also watch video tutorials from famous chefs

WeeKit's long term goal is more than an app, it wants to diversify and expand onto health and wellness. More product diversification in terms of having weekit nutrients and supplements in the near future. It also aims to create collaborations with different wellness brands and hopefully build organic supplements.

WeeKit aims to build a community of people who want to facilitate a change and incorporate healthy living in their lifestyle and motivate people around them. The first step to ensure this is to have weekly meetings of people who are interested in becoming food advocates for weekit. In these meetings they discuss the usage of food items in a sustainable manner and recipes. This can essentially target students, stay at home mothers and dad's who proactively want to be a part of this conversation. After some years of successfully running, weekit also wants to host monthly events and invite sustainable food leaders and give awards such as weekit correspondent of the month etc. It also aims to increase the range of supermarkets that it is collaborating with and not just be confined to one supermarket.

VI. ROI analysis: gross estimated costs and benefits

The cost of setting up the App is one of the main issues, this could easily be solved with the help of expert technicians. But another problem that WeeKit is likely to face is how would.

WeeKit essentially collaborates with super-markets and allows the consumer to have access to a wide range of places where the consumer wants to buy food.

In a long run WeeKit could collect royalties from supermarkets where the buyer is potentially looking to buy the product. WeeKit could have some advertisements of wellness brands and supplements in the app after it gains success so that it increases revenue. But the primary task currently is focusing on

VII. Organisation:

The potential partners for this project could either be supermarkets or food production houses. Another target audience could be NGO's as Weekit believes in reducing food wastage. The excess food can then be supplied to NGO's who are fighting hunger across the world. The aim of Weekit is to reduce food wastage and ensure that people adapt to healthier and more sustainable options. After the App has gained success it can collaborate with major wellness brands and have health camps where fitness enthusiasts talk about the positives of eating healthy and sustainable food.