

# Green Plate Product Requirements Document

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## Product Overview

Green Plate is building a next-generation frozen meal experience designed to close the gap between convenience and fresh, premium quality. Today's flexitarian consumers increasingly seek meals that feel fresh, customizable, and aligned with their wellness goals, but the frozen aisle continues to underdeliver, offering standardized, heat-and-eat bowls that lack both flavor elevation and emotional value.

Green Plate addresses this market friction with an assemble-style frozen meal format that breaks components into distinct, high-quality elements (proteins, vegetables, grains, sauces, garnishes) allowing customers to plate, layer, and finish their meal in a way that feels closer to real cooking. This added micro-effort drives a stronger sense of freshness, ownership, and quality while maintaining the speed and reliability of frozen convenience.

At a high level, the product is designed to achieve three strategic outcomes:

1. **Capture flexitarian demand** by aligning the product experience with plant-forward eating habits and broader lifestyle preferences.
2. **Elevate quality perception** by delivering a near-fresh experience through separate, premium components.
3. **Expand willingness to pay** by positioning the product as a step above traditional frozen meals.

This PRD outlines the problem space, target user needs, and required product capabilities to bring this new category-defining meal experience to market.

## Scope and Objectives

### Scope

#### In Scope

- Plant-forward rebranding (without removing vegan compliance)
- New assemble-style frozen meal format with separated components
- Updated packaging, messaging, and on-pack education
- Retail-first launch in San Francisco
- Lifestyle-centric brand campaign with influencer partnerships, in-store trial, and on-pack promotions

#### Out of Scope

- Fully abandoning vegan certification
- Competing on low price (\$5–6 frozen meals)
- Nationwide rollout prior to retention validation
- Complex D2C subscription infrastructure in MVP

## Objectives (OKRs)

### Objective 1: Capture Flexitarian Demand

- KR: Achieve a 20–30% lift in first-time trials in stores with demos
- KR: Improve non-vegan NPS from 34 to  $\geq 50$

### Objective 2: Increase Retention & Perceived Value

- KR: Achieve  $>15\%$  repeat purchase rate within 60 days
- KR: Improve 6-month retention from 30% to  $\geq 40\%$
- KR: Reduce cart abandonment from 68% to  $\leq 60\%$

### Objective 3: Maintain Favorable Economics

- KR: Maintain  $>40\%$  gross margins
- KR: Validate \$10–12 pricing without broad discounting

## User Personas

- 1) The **“Health Enthusiast”**: This customer is dedicated to maintaining an active, balanced lifestyle and views food as a key contributor to their overall well-being. They regularly work out, stay informed about nutrition, and pay close attention to the quality and purpose of what they eat. They are most commonly adults in their 20s–50s who are comfortable with both plant-based and non-plant-based options but prioritize choosing healthier alternatives. They seek meals with high protein, fiber, and essential macronutrients, with clean ingredients and minimal additives. Their pain points include meals that look healthy but lack real nutritional substance, or options that don’t provide the energy they need for workouts, busy schedules, or recovery. Their goal is to maximize nutritional value in every bite so they can feel strong, energized, and aligned with their health-focused lifestyle.
- 2) The **“No-Fuss Nourisher”**: This customer values eating well but refuses to let food add complexity to an already packed schedule. They are often busy professionals, students, or young adults juggling work, school, social commitments, or caregiving responsibilities. Typically in their 20s–40s, they don’t have time for elaborate grocery shopping to find high-quality ingredients, long cooking prep, or complicated clean-up. Their top priority is convenience without compromise. They want meals that are quick to prepare, consistently tasty, and require minimal decision-making. Their pain points include lack of time, burnout from daily planning, and frustration with healthy meals that demand too much cooking effort. Their goal is to maintain a reasonably nutritious diet with as little friction as possible—ideally something they can heat, eat, and move on with their day. They appreciate simple packaging, clear nutrition info, and reliable flavor profiles that make mealtime effortless.

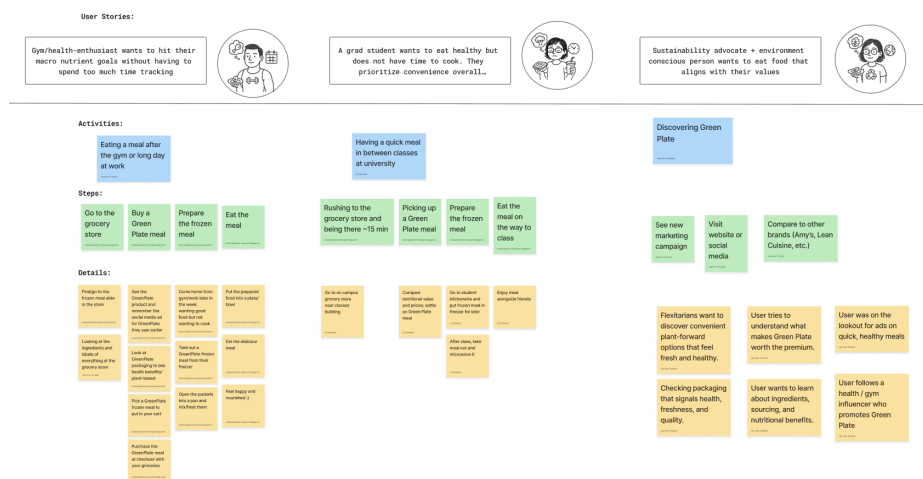
3) The **“Ethical Eater”**: This customer segment is motivated by sustainability, ethics, and environmental responsibility. Often in their mid-20s to mid-40s, they include young professionals, mission-driven consumers, and individuals who factor the impact of their purchases when making shopping decisions. They are most likely vegan/vegetarian and seek meals that reflect eco-friendly practices: plant-based ingredients, low-waste packaging, transparent sourcing, and brands with clear sustainability commitments. Their pain points are a lack of food options that are convenient and taste good but also align with their ethics. Their goal is to support brands that minimize environmental impact while providing food that is wholesome, responsible, and easy to trust. This customer feels proud when their purchases help contribute to a healthier planet, and they want their daily meals to match the principles they live by.

## User Stories

Below is a visual representation of our user story. We’ve highlighted the user journey of three different types of users.

- 1) As a gym/health-enthusiast, I want to hit my macro nutrient goals without having to spend too much time and energy tracking what I eat.
- 2) As a grad student, I want to eat healthy but I don’t have time to cook. In my meals, I prioritize the convenience of the overall experience.
- 3) As a sustainability advocate and environmentally conscious person, I want the food I eat and the brands I support to align with my values.

## User Story Map



## Functional Requirements

- Feature: Assemble-Style Meal Format

- Description: Separate frozen components (grain, veggies, protein, sauce, toppings, etc.)
- Purpose: Increases implied freshness and reduces production costs
- Priority: High
- Feature: Plant-Forward Messaging
  - Description: Health-first messaging with vegan labeling that is secondary
  - Purpose: Targets health-focused individuals without seeming too “vegan” for those who are not vegan
  - Priority: High
- Feature: Clear Preparation Instructions
  - Description: Simple 2-3 step assembly process with instructions
  - Purpose: Enables assemble-style meal format in a simple way
  - Priority: High
- Feature: QR Code Prep Videos
  - Description: QR codes linking to 20 second tutorials of assembly
  - Purpose: Increases simplicity of assembly and increases brand image
  - Priority: Medium
- Feature: On-Pack Health Callouts
  - Description: Callouts for protein, fiber, whole ingredients
  - Purpose: Appeals to health driven audiences
  - Priority: High
- Feature: Limited SKU Launch
  - Description: Limited-time “2 for \$20” drops
  - Purpose: Increases brand image and drives demand
  - Priority: Medium

## **Non-Functional Requirements**

- Compliance with Standards and Regulations
  - Full adherence to FDA food safety regulations, FSMA requirements, and USDA frozen food handling standards.
  - Maintain vegan compliance across all plant-based SKUs and ensure cross-contamination risk controls for mixed flexitarian lines.
- Quality Control and Safety
  - Rigorous quality checks for flavor consistency, texture retention after freezing, and freshness of individual components.
  - Strict protocols to ensure isolated compartments maintain product integrity throughout freezing, shipment, and consumer handling.

- Automated weighing and filling systems to guarantee accurate component ratios across batches, supporting the assemble-style experience.
- Packaging, Sustainability, and Environmental Impact
  - Use recyclable, compostable, or reduced-plastic packaging where feasible while preserving durability and freezer performance.
  - Implement lean production practices to reduce food waste, packaging waste, and excess energy consumption.
- User Experience & Brand Consistency
  - Components must be easy to open, pour, and plate, with intuitive sequencing supported through on-pack instructions or QR-based guidance.
  - Packaging and instructions must follow accessibility best practices, including high-contrast labeling, large-print cooking steps, tactilely distinguishable component pouches, and optional audio/video instructions accessible via QR code for users with visual or cognitive impairments.

## Mockups/Prototypes

Link to Mockups & Physical Prototype Pictures

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAG4WiLKcS4/B7I6z-rJAeGNB6q72oz6PA/edit?utm\\_content=DAG4WiLKcS4&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAG4WiLKcS4/B7I6z-rJAeGNB6q72oz6PA/edit?utm_content=DAG4WiLKcS4&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)

For GreenPlate, the “UI” is literally the packaging. That’s the whole experience. Everything on it has to guide the customer without feeling misleading. We wanted it to feel premium and welcoming at the same time, something anyone can grab, even if they’re not plant-based. The branding hides the “vegan” part on purpose and leans more into the quality and the luxury associated with it.

### The Front of the Box

The front is designed very intentionally as consumers usually take no more than two seconds to pick a meal. So we designed our packaging in a way that produced instant gratification:

- ➔ The plant-based badge is subtle in order not to scare people off or make it feel like a niche diet meal.

- The gold outlines and botanical sketches give this soft luxury feel... like it's something curated, not mass-produced.
- The hero image is literally the plate you'd want to eat. It's centered, bright, and feels like you could be having dinner at a restaurant.
- The little benefit badges (23g protein, low calorie, etc.) act kind of like "quick reads," so even if someone is rushing, they still catch the important stuff.
- The 100% guarantee stamp makes the whole thing look trustworthy without us having to say much.

### **Back of the Box**

Once someone flips the box, the tone shifts. This side is softer and more emotional. The "From our family to yours" note is meant to feel like you're being let into a memory. The photo in the corner reinforces that, as it showcases an older woman that might represent anyone's grandma, which is meant to further pull on emotional heartstrings. The ingredient illustrations make everything feel handmade, not corporate or sterile.

### **Cooking Instructions — Simple on Purpose**

The steps are broken up so people don't freak out. It's supposed to look easy, because it actually is easy.

1. Heat the frozen ravioli with a little water.
2. Add the sauce and mix it in gently.
3. Finish with the garnish packet.

That's it. Nothing complicated. But the way it's written still feels elevated, like you're "assembling a dish" rather than microwaving dinner.

#### 4. The Overall Experience

- Everything about the box is working together to tell one clear story:
- It's premium, but not intimidating.
- It's plant-based, but not screaming it.
- It feels like something that should cost more.
- It's comforting and familiar.
- It's easy, but still feels elevated.

### **Constraints and Assumptions**

Our constraints, or hard limits, and assumptions, or risks to validate, are as follows:

## Constraints

- Manufacturing capabilities: most frozen food copackers are optimized for “single pour” assembly, and our requirement for separated components constrains us to a limited pool of manufacturing partners.
- Cold chain logistics: Our product is frozen, not shelf-stable. The requirement to maintain -10°F from factory to shelf is a constraint, and any temperature deviation ruins the “freshness” texture we are selling, meaning we can’t use standard, cheaper distribution networks without compromise.
- Acquisition budget: We are operating under a “time > money” constraint for marketing, and we don’t have the budget for mass media. Growth is mathematically constrained by how effectively we execute organic and influencer channels.

## Assumptions

- Micro-effort hypothesis: we assume our target flexitarian user perceives 2-3 minutes of assembly not as friction but as a value-add. If this assumption is false, our core differentiator becomes our biggest churn driver.
- Willingness to pay: We assume the perceived value of separated ingredients supports a \$10–12 price point. This is significantly higher than the category average (\$5–7).
- Influencer to retail conversion: We assume that seeing an influencer prepare the meal on TikTok/Instagram will motivate a user to physically drive to a grocery store to buy it. This is a much harder conversion path than a simple link.

## Milestones and Timeline

- **2026 Q1**
  - Packaging redesign + focus group validation
- **2026 Q2**
  - SF retail pilot (50 stores)
  - Influencer wave 1
  - In-store demos
- **2026 Q3**
  - Pilot analysis + iteration
  - MVP launch for assemble-style meals
- **2026 Q4**
  - Bay Area expansion
  - MVP improvements
- **2027**
  - Begin launch of developed products across California

- **2028**
  - Begin nationwide expansion after proof of strong economics and retention

## **Resource Requirements**

- **Human resources**
  - Culinary R&D team, Food Scientists & QA Consultants, Packaging Design Agency & Engineers, Supply Chain Manager, Manufacturing Line Workers, Retail Support Staff, Marketing Leads, Content Creators
  - These resources will ensure the development of the line of health-focused, flexitarian frozen foods and ensure that they are properly manufactured and delivered to the stores in good condition
- **Physical resources**
  - Production facilities (existing or additional), ingredient suppliers, frozen storage capacity, refrigerated transportation
  - These resources are instrumental to ensure the raw materials, logistics, and transportation are in place
- **Operational resources**
  - Inventory management software, CRM software
  - These resources enhance the end customer experience by augmenting the abilities of operational staff
- **Quality resources**
  - Taste testing, On-pack surveys
  - These resources are vital for developing high quality products and ensuring this quality through the product lifecycle

## **Testing and Quality Assurance**

Because Green Plate is introducing a new behavior (assemble-style frozen meals) alongside a rebrand, our QA strategy will go beyond standard food safety. We need to validate two distinct pillars: product quality (the food itself) and user experience (the assembly process). We are using a mix of qualitative versus quantitative testing to ensure we get both the numbers and the insights behind them.

## **User Experience & Usability Testing**

We need to verify our hypothesis that users are willing to perform “micro-effort” assembly. To do this, we will run Concierge tests where we manually observe participants preparing the meals. These tests will be as follows:

1. **Packaging UX:** We will conduct “unboxing” tests with 50 participants to validate the ease of separating and understanding the context of components. We are looking for observable behavior here, rather than what their verbally stated preferences may be.
2. **Instruction Validation:** We will A/B test our on-pack instructions, experimenting with text versus diagram versus QR code accessible instructions. Success is defined as a “time-to-plate” variance of less than 30 seconds across users.

## Product QA

We need to verify our “freshness” claim holds up against competitors.

1. **Blind Sensory Testing:** We will compare the Green Plate MVP against top competitors, such as Amy’s, and a freshly prepared equivalent. We are looking for quantitative scores on “Texture” and “Freshness” attributes.
2. **Stress Testing:** We need to account for real-world settings, specifically microwave variability. We will test cooking the product in low wattage vs high wattage microwaves to ensure food safety temperature is reached without texture degradation.

## Supply Chain & Safety

1. **Cold Chain Integrity:** We will use data loggers to track temperature variance during distribution to our pilot stores, to ensure temperatures during transport are maintained at safe levels for human consumption.
2. **Shelf Life Validation:** We will run tests using specialized test chambers to simulate the degradation of the product over time; these chambers will stress the product and simulate the passage of time by elevating the temperature or humidity. We will evaluate whether or not the product has degraded in flavor or texture quality after these accelerated aging tests.

## Metrics and Success Criteria

To measure the health of the Green Plate rebrand, we will define KPIs via the Pirate Metrics framework to track progress across the user lifecycle. These KPIs directly align with our previously established OKRs to effectively operationalize them.

**Our North Star Metric is 60-day repeat purchase rate.** In the frozen food aisle, trial is easy, but habit formation is difficult. Our primary measure of value is the percentage of customers who purchase a Green Plate meal a second time within 60 days. We have also established KPIs across the funnel stages.

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) by Funnel Stage

### 1. Acquisition - Awareness & trial

- a. In-store demo conversion rate: we are targeting >20% of customers who sample in store to buy a unit. This is a Strong Indicator because it involves a high friction action (purchase).

### 2. Activation - User Experience

- a. Cart abandonment rate: we aim to reduce this to <60% as stated in our OKRs.
- b. QR Code Scan Rate: if we choose to implement a QR code for instructions, we want to see >5% of customers scanning the on pack QR code. If this is low, it might mean users are ignoring the assembly instructions, which puts our "quality" value prop at risk.

### 3. Retention - Habit

- a. Frequency of use: we want to move the user from an "emergency meal" use case to a "weekly routine."
- b. Net Promoter Score: we are specifically targeting >50 for non-vegans to validate our flexitarian hypothesis as previously mentioned, an improvement from the current score of 34.

### 4. Revenue - Business Viability

- a. Gross margin: we aim for >40%. We need to ensure the cost of the new separate packaging components does not destroy our unit economics.

We are also establishing Counter Metrics to follow the golden rule of metrics, which is that if a metric does not change how we behave, it's a bad metric. These guardrail metrics will stop us from optimizing the wrong things:

## Counter Metrics

- Preparation complaint rate: if >2% of support tickets are "it was too hard to make," we must pivot the assembly format immediately.
- Vegan alienation rate: we will monitor sentiment in vegan communities. If negative sentiment spikes, we risk losing our core base while chasing flexitarians.

## Go to Market

### Overview

Green Plate's GTM strategy is designed to accelerate penetration into high-value retail channels while driving trials among flexitarian consumers, a fast-growing segment aligned with our plant-forward rebrand. Our approach integrates updated positioning, refreshed marketing activations, and an upgraded meal experience designed to stand out on crowded freezer shelves.

## Pre-Launch

### 1. Market Analysis & Segmentation

- **Year 1 Market:** San Francisco
  - Dense population of health-forward young professionals
  - High early-adopter behavior and strong retail partners
  - Ideal for controlled, data-rich testing
- **Market Opportunity:**
  - **TAM:** 33M vegans/flexitarians; \$18B annually
  - **SAM (California):** ~5M; \$2.73B
  - **SOM (San Francisco):** ~50k; \$27.3M

### 2. Value Proposition:

- Green Plate delivers a next-generation frozen meal experience that bridges **convenience and fresh, high-quality ingredients** through interactive, premium components that elevate perceived freshness and drive willingness to pay.

### 3. Distribution Strategy (Pre-Launch)

- **Channel:** Health-oriented + upscale grocery retail (Sprouts, Whole Foods, regional natural markets).
- **Rationale:**
  - Frozen meals are a habitual, in-store purchase. Flexitarians browse freezers for new, convenient, “healthy but quick” options.
  - Green Plate’s historical traction in grocery retail reduces risk and accelerates buyer acceptance.

### 4. Sales Strategy (Pre-Launch)

- Finalize buyer conversations ahead of category reset cycles.
- Deploy regional **food brokers** to secure multi-store pilots.
- Lock freezer placement in San Francisco for Year 1 testing.
- **Rationale:**
  - Buyers control freezer placement: selling through them is mandatory for category entry.
  - Brokers provide insights into competitor performance and pricing, as well as access to chains we cannot reach directly.

### 5. Marketing & Promotion Strategy (Pre-Launch)

- **Brand Refresh Execution:**
  - Roll out new plant-forward visual identity
  - Produce short-form prep videos for QR-linked on-pack education.
- **Influencer Pipeline:**
  - Secure micro-influencer partnerships (10k–80k followers).

- Pre-approve concept content (“What I Eat in a Day,” “Healthy Convenience Hacks,” etc.).
- **In-Store Enablement:**
  - Create demo kits and sampling workflows for retail partners.
  - Secure “New Item” freezer tags for visibility.

## Launch Phase

- 1. Launch Goal:** Drive **first-time trials** among target flexitarian shoppers and validate willingness to pay, perceived freshness, and repeat behavior.
- 2. Launch Marketing Activation**
  - **Lifestyle-Centric Campaign:**
    - Position Green Plate as a functional lifestyle upgrade: healthy, balanced, and fast. Ingredient-forward visuals + “3 simple steps” messaging to reinforce ease.
  - **Influencer Activations (Wave 1)**
    - Sponsored integration focused on:
      - “Healthy dinner in 3 minutes”
      - “Plant-forward without the prep”
    - **Why:** Flexitarians heavily rely on creators for food discovery.
  - **In-Store Trial & Demo Days**
    - Sampling at Whole Foods-style retailers
    - Interactive “Build-your-own bowl” demos
    - Limited-time offers (e.g., 2 for \$20)
  - **On-Pack Promotions**
    - QR codes linking to 20–30 second prep tutorials
    - Educational diagrams to reduce uncertainty around assembly
- 3. Sales During Launch**
  - Weekly broker check-ins to monitor performance.
  - Optimize Stock Keeping Unit (SKU) mix by using sell-through data, heatmap of freezer placement, and customer sampling feedback.
- 4. MVP / First Release**
  - **MVP Scope:** Three hero meals featuring premium, separately packaged components (such as sauces and toppings) launched in select San Francisco retail partners as part of the plant-forward rebrand rollout.
  - **Success Metrics:**
    - 20–30% first-time trial lift in stores with demos
    - 15% repeat purchase rate within 60 days
    - Reduced cart abandonment from 68% to under 60%

## Post-Launch

### 1. Marketing & Promotion Strategy (Post-Launch)

- **Influencer Activations (Wave 2)**
  - High-performing creators re-engaged to maintain momentum.
  - Test niche creators: runners, pilates instructors, meal-prep creators.
- **Content Pipeline**
  - “Fast, Fresh, Flexible” meal inspiration
  - Seasonal ingredient highlights
  - User-Generated Content reposting on social channels + discount codes

### 2. Expansion Strategy

- **Year 1:** Full San Francisco rollout → **Year 2:** Bay Area → **Year 3:** California state expansion → **Year 4:** Begin national rollout
- Scale is unlocked only after retention performance is validated.

### 3. Customer Support Strategy

- **QR code videos** inside packaging for simple assembly guidance
- **Clear webpage FAQs:** prep time, portion size, allergen info, storage
- **Email support** for product issues, store finder help, and product questions
- **Social DMs** monitored to field product quality questions and feedback

### 4. Evaluation Criteria

- **Proceed If:**
  - ≥ 15% repeat purchase within 60 days
  - Strong sell-through supporting additional freezer placement
  - Positive feedback on assembly format and perceived freshness
- **Pivot If:**
  - Trial is high but repeat is low → adjust components, simplify steps
  - Confusion persists → redesign on-pack instructions
- **Perish If:**
  - Consumers reject assembly-style format even with education
  - Retailers refuse reorders after pilots
  - Margins fail to support scaled distribution

## References

### Customer Interview, Competitive Analysis, and Secondary Research

<https://highercommonsense.com/cs247b/greenplate-interviewing-competitive-analysis-secondary-research/>

- Customer interviews informed our product strategy and prototype development
- Competitive analysis (of four major competitors: Purple Carrot, Gardein, Amy's Kitchen, and Tattooed Chef) informed how GreenPlate differentiates itself and how customers user story will look like with GreenPlate compared to existing products
- Secondary Research informs how customers view plant-based and vegan products how to position Green Plate in a way that appeals to broader customer base

### Customer Feedback About Prototype

<https://highercommonsense.com/cs247b/phase-2-assumption-testing-part-2-testing-with-prototypes-2/>

- Customer feedback was incorporated in the latest version of our product prototype (included the updated packaging design and meal components). Also provides further insights into product assumptions

### Market Research

<https://highercommonsense.com/human-centered-product-management/project/gre-enplate-p1-markets-and-tam-sam-som/>

- Our market research (particularly our TAM/SAM/SOM, as shown below) informs product requirements, go-to-market strategy, and product timeline

| Total Addressable Market (TAM)   | Serviceable Addressable Market (SAM)  | Serviceable Obtainable Market (SOM)   |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● U.S. Flexitarian Population: 33M</li> <li>● Power Consumers: 5M Population x 3 meals/week = 15M meals/week</li> <li>● Typical Consumers: 20M Population x 1 meal/week = 20M meals/week</li> <li>● Flexitarian Revenue: 35M meals/week x 52 weeks/years x \$10/meal = \$18B</li> </ul> <p><b>Total TAM: \$18B annually</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● California Flexitarian Population: 5M</li> <li>● Power Consumers: 750k Population x 3 meals/week = 2.25M meals/week</li> <li>● Typical Consumers: 3M Population x 1 meal/week = 3M meals/week</li> <li>● Flexitarian Revenue: 5.25M meals/week x 52 weeks/years x \$10/meal = \$3.64B</li> </ul> <p><b>Total SAM: \$2.73B annually</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● San Francisco Flexitarian Population: 50k</li> <li>● Power Consumers: 7.5k Population x 3 meals/week = 22.5k meals/week</li> <li>● Typical Consumers: 30k Population x 1 meal/week = 30k meals/week</li> <li>● Flexitarian Revenue: 52.5k meals/week x 52 weeks/years x \$10/meal = \$27.3M</li> </ul> <p><b>Total SOM: \$27.3M Year 1</b></p> |

- Sources for data/financials that inform the market research and TAM/SAM/SOM
  - Frozen Food: [American Frozen Entree and Snack Consumption is Gaining Steam, Average number of times ready-to-eat foods and frozen meals or pizzas were eaten in the past 30 days](#)
  - Veganism/Vegetarianism: [In U.S., 4% Identify as Vegetarian, 1% as Vegan, Veganism and vegetarianism in the United States - statistics & facts,](#)
  - Flexitarianism: [The Continued Rise of the Flexitarian Diet, What is the Flexitarian Diet?](#)