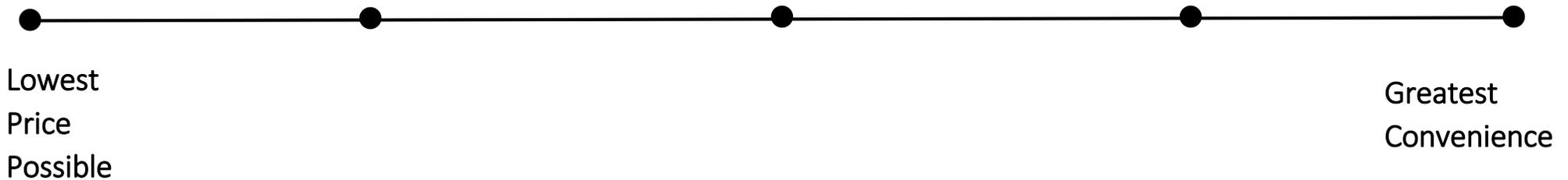


Increased access to, and purchase of, healthy foods.

One way that co-ops improve access to (and purchase of) healthy foods is to make the cost of those foods as low as possible for members. This can be done by having limited hours (or no permanent location), requiring pre-order of products, or only selling bulk items. People who may not otherwise be able to afford healthy food will have access, but the inconvenience will drive other potential shoppers away.

A different approach might improve access by making purchasing healthy foods as convenient as possible. Having stores in prime locations, with long hours, well stocked shelves, grab'n'go items (and grab'n'go locations), and even online ordering and delivery services all make it very easy to choose to buy healthy food from the co-op, for those who can afford it.

How should La Montañita balance these two models for achieving this end?



Growing regenerative agriculture sector that uses sound environmental practices & a thriving local economy

By working with micro farms and other small-scale producers that otherwise can't reach conventional supermarkets, the co-op can help expand the local agricultural sector while promoting community connections between growers and consumers. The small scale producers can be encouraged to follow sound environmental practices as they have less incentive for the environmentally degrading practices that result in low-cost high-yield foodstuffs.

By working only with larger agricultural enterprises, the co-op can help keep (or make) these full-time farms economically viable, thereby providing a positive influence over a larger segment of the agricultural sector, and ensuring healthy growth over the long term.



Work with larger enterprises to keep sustainable agriculture commercially viable.

Develop network of micro-farms and community growers for a more diverse and connected Ag community.

Increased access to, and purchase of, healthy foods.

Once upon a time, organic foods were not available in mainstream supermarkets. Food Co-operatives, like La Montañita, were able to fill this need and grow organic foods into a multi-billion dollar industry. La Montañita could embrace this role of visionary food pioneer, seeking out the healthy alternative foods that are not readily available to its members through mainstream markets, and helping to (once again) change the food industry from the ground up.

On the other hand, La Montañita could decide that it has outgrown that historic role – it is too big now to survive in the small pond of alternative foods – and that it can have more of an impact selling (relatively) mainstream foods that embody the values of an expanding membership. Once there is significant demand for an alternative food, the Co-op will stock it. Not before.



Sell what is popular.
We can have a big
impact through
volume of sales.

Sell what is
innovative. We have
the freedom to stock
foods before they are
mainstream.

A strengthened co-operative community.

A strong co-operative community is one built around a strong co-op. We'll always continue to provide our member/owners with opportunities to get involved, but if a large number of our shoppers (and even some of our members) doesn't know what a co-op is, no problem. You don't need to know or care about the co-operative model to reap the benefits.

To have any sort of true co-operative community, members need to understand and participate in that community. It is not enough to be financially secure as an organization, we need members who own, use, serve and belong to the co-op in real and meaningful ways.



Most of our customers should be true believers in the co-operative model.

It's fine if most of our members think 'Co-op' is just a word in our name.