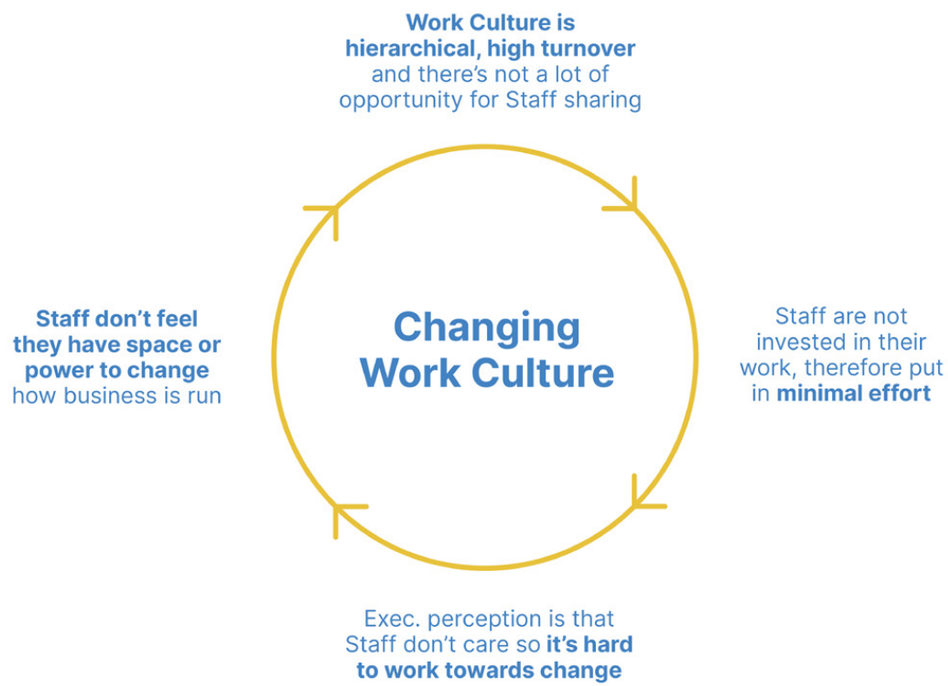
Feedback Loops

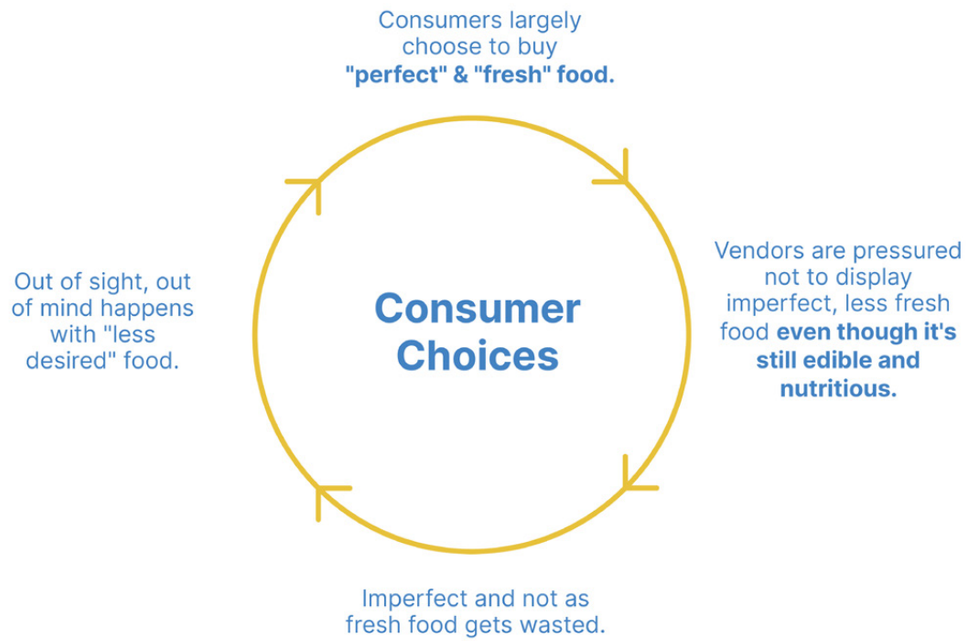
In CFIL I, lab participants used systems mapping iteratively and throughout the process to make sense of different systems dynamics at different points in time. In particular, we used Feedback Loops[12] to help us understand patterns and how they work to uphold the system that we were trying to change. While displayed separately for ease of reading, many elements of these feedback loops are interconnected and intersecting. Patterns occur at personal,interpersonal, organizational and broader cultural levels.

This is an Appendix excerpted from Peeling Back the Layers: Learnings from the Circular Food Innovation Lab





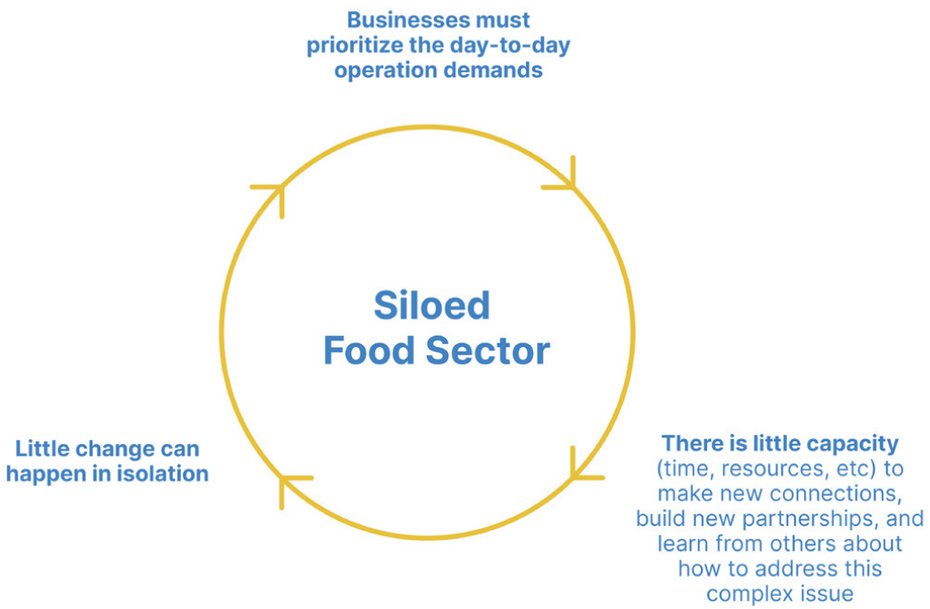
12 Omidyar Group (2017) Systems Practice Workbook. US: Omidyar Group. Retrieved from *https://oecd-opsi.org/toolkits/systems-practice-workbook/*

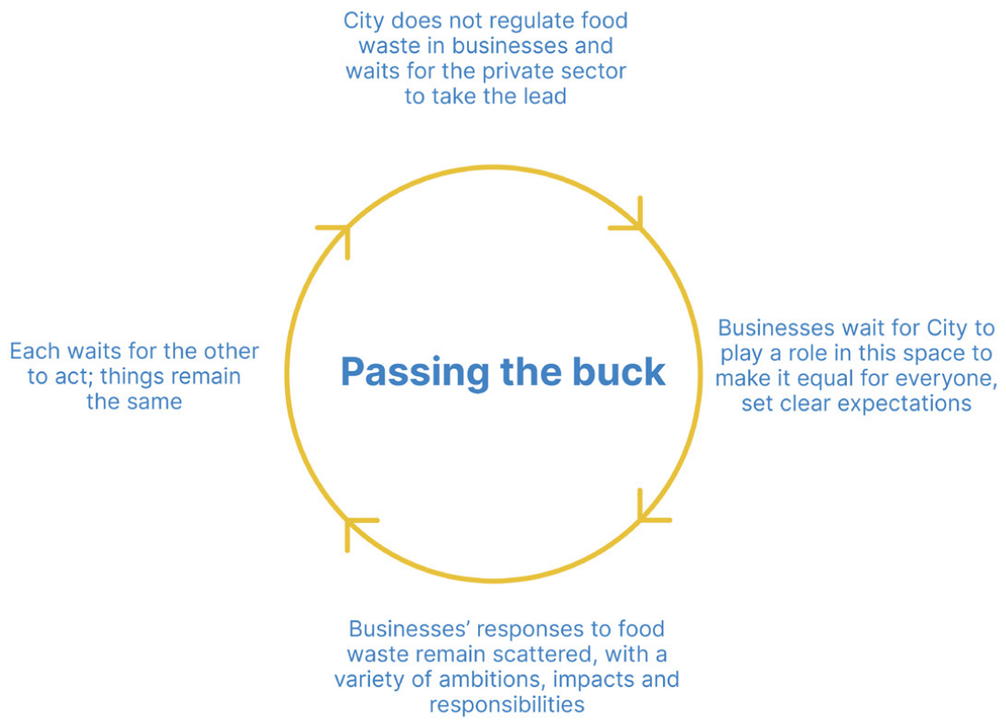

Consumers largely choose to buy **"perfect" & "fresh" food.**
Vendors are pressured not to display imperfect, less fresh food **even though it's still edible and nutritious.**
Imperfect and not as fresh food gets wasted.
Out of sight, out of mind happens with "less desired" food.
Consumer Choices


Famers practice circularity, as part of farming operations
Farmer's intimate knowledge + practices are **unacknowledged** because they aren't "labeled" circular
Exasperation when being asked to adopt "new" practices by those who aren't farmers
Priority for many farmers remains to regenerate soil and gorw fresh produce.
Under acknowledging Growers

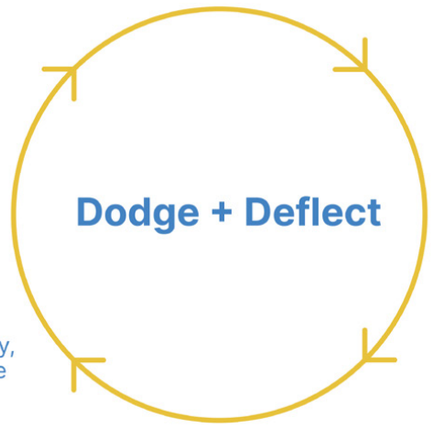

We feel guilty about the fact that food gets wasted in our business
We assume that it is just the responsibility of our business to fight the food waste problem individually and it increases the pressure on us to follow up on how much waste is happening to begin with
We don't measure the waste to understand where the waste is coming from or to understand the magnitude of the problem
We don't have the data to be transparent with other businesses and stakeholders about the wasted food in our location and collectively find solutions
Burdened with Guilt


We did not do the measurement and therefore we do not have the data to be transparent about our business.
We do not have the time/ resources/ staff to do the measurement task and staff are already overworked so it's hard for us to add this to their job responsibilities.
Since it's not a part of their job, staff are not motivated enough to voluntarily support the business by measuring their food waste.
The measurement task can not be done by staff, and since they do not do it, they won't understand the magnitude of the problem to change their actions.
Changing Actions to Change Value


Businesses must prioritize the day-to-day operation demands
Siloed Food Sector
Little change can happen in isolation
There is little capacity (time, resources, etc) to make new connections, build new partnerships, and learn from others about how to address this complex issue


City does not regulate food waste in businesses and waits for the private sector to take the lead
Each waits for the other to act; things remain the same
Passing the buck
Businesses wait for City to play a role in this space to make it equal for everyone, set clear expectations
Businesses' responses to food waste remain scattered, with a variety of ambitions, impacts and responsibilities

I feel shame, guilt, and hide/deny my own role in changing the system



I point to other actors and places in the system where change needs to happen

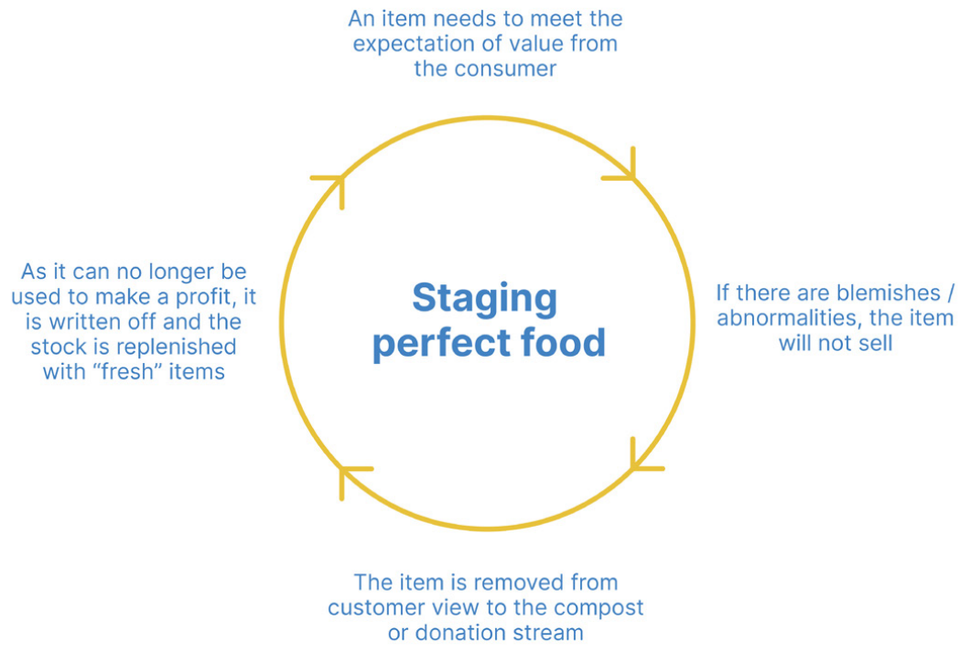
I'm able to wring my hands, worry, perform concern and care, while protecting myself from taking responsibility for making significant changes that I have agency over

Can't see the water that we are swimming in, so we then can't imagine that there is another river



Story, language, culture of linear embedded throughout system ("consumer", "waste", "spoiled", "supply chain")

Even when talking about, imagining and experimenting - still stuck with the same paradigm, language, system


An item needs to meet the expectation of value from the consumer
If there are blemishes / abnormalities, the item will not sell
The item is removed from customer view to the compost or donation stream
As it can no longer be used to make a profit, it is written off and the stock is replenished with “fresh” items
Staging perfect food


We have societal expectations that our human needs are central
We seek solutions based in terms of our human needs
Practices and approaches exhaust/deplete support for other beings
We fail to consider/measure those impacts when assessing how we’re doing something
Human exceptionalism