

In push to snare low income shoppers, Whole Foods to put cigarette-like warnings on GMO foods

Whole Foods' central conceit as a company is that it sells only the best, healthiest food—which sometimes requires paying more. The Detroit store marked the grocer's first big experiment testing whether lower-income shoppers would find that line of reasoning persuasive.

Whole Foods hopes to find customers outside the “college graduates and foodies” that make up its traditional market base. The Midtown Detroit store is the first of several that Whole Foods is opening in mixed-to-low income neighborhoods around the country; one opened in [New Orleans' Mid-City](#) earlier this year, and the retailer has planned stores for [Chicago's Englewood neighborhood](#) and downtown [Newark, New Jersey](#). There's a strong business imperative to expand the corporation's customer base: an expansion goal of reaching 1,200 stores—nearly triple its current count—by 2020.

As part of its initiative, Whole Foods is making a case that its stores are superior in part because of plans to label foods that contain genetically modified ingredients.

“Now I don't know if you guys know that genetically modified organisms are a concern,” said Amanda Musilli, who is with Whole Foods community partnership program designed to “sell” the chain to lower income communities.. “We can talk about that. By 2018 ... every product will be labeled and it's going to be similar to a cigarette label, that this product may contain genetically modified organisms.” There was more friendly silence.

This general argument—a soft-pedaled version of “You get what you pay for”—is at the heart of Whole Foods' marketing, especially its extensive new [“Values Matter” campaign](#). But it can be a tough sell for anyone whose finances are tight.

Read the full, original article: [Can Whole Foods Change the Way Poor People Eat?](#)