
IX.9 Increasing “H2IQ”: A Public Information Program

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Start Date: January 2006

Projected End Date: Project continuation and
direction determined annually by DOE

Objectives

The objectives of the project are to develop and disseminate resonant messaging that communicates to the general public basic facts about hydrogen as a fuel/form of energy, the coming hydrogen economy, the DOE Hydrogen Program and the Hydrogen Fuel Initiative. Parallel and supporting objectives are to generate interest and increase public requests for more information, give the Hydrogen Program a communications mechanism with a flexible framework for reasons of timing and budget, support the DOE brand, help position the Program and Initiative in the mind of the public, build recognition of hydrogen and government efforts to build the hydrogen economy, and make the most of DOE resources and provide a gauge of success.

Accomplishments (January–May 2006)

- Message development process completed
- Messaging and Strategic Media Plan completed and approved by DOE
- Management (including the Communications office)
- Initiated media market research
- Initiated radio script development

Introduction

This project is a communication program created to increase public awareness about hydrogen as a fuel, the Hydrogen Initiative and the coming hydrogen economy.

The program is composed of a phased communications and outreach effort using a mix of tactics, including print, radio, television and new media.

The program is phased to allow for greater choice of media and costs. Media tactics can be implemented either concurrently for immediate impact, consecutively to build awareness over time, or separately for budget consciousness. Implementation is based on timing, location or internally (DOE) generated events. Messaging is developed to introduce the concept of a hydrogen economy and hydrogen technologies.

All elements (messages, message delivery tactics) are developed with the general public in mind. Positive, simple, resonant messaging is the order of the day.

Approach

The overall approach is to coordinate closely with the Technology Validation key activity, and to focus initially on the Hydrogen Learning Demonstration project areas/locations. The primary target audience is the general public. The intent is to use simple messaging only—bites, not meals, of information—that is positive, has consistency of brand and message and is channeled using multiple media.

The implementational approach is to use print, radio, television, satellite media and new media tactics to reach our audience. The goal is to tie-in with DOE program educational targets, and diffuse DOE educational materials by leveraging DOE delivery mechanisms.

Results

The project has not begun as of the writing of this report.

Conclusions and Future Directions

For FY 2006, the future work includes continuing to build relationships with potential industry and government partners, beginning the program with radio outreach, and thus the development and testing of said radio spots. We will begin running the radio spots in up to three media markets.

Additionally in 2006, we will begin to plan, develop, and execute two satellite radio tours. Upon completion of radio and satellite actions, we will measure public response, including web traffic and use of the “information toolbox”. This includes web page usage (hits and time spent) and document and audio file downloads, as well as information center requests.

For FY 2007, the intent is to expand the program to include additional phases and markets, develop and produce a video news release, plan, develop, and execute a satellite media tour (TV). We will also consider implementation of print media outreach, the development and production of audio Podcasts, and the expansion of the program into new media markets.