Increasing “H2IQ”: A Public Information Program

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A Broadcast & Social Marketing Company

Overview

Timeline
- Project start date: January 2006
- Project end date: Ongoing

Budget
- Total DOE Hydrogen Program funding to date FY06-FY08): $200K
- Initial seed money for project planning provided by DOE EERE Office of Technology Advancement and Outreach

Barriers addressed
- (Barrier A) Lack of Readily Available, Objective, and Technically Accurate Information
- (Barrier B) Mixed Messages (Barrier E) Regional Differences

Partners

Currently negotiating with potential state and industry partners

Overview, continued

A Public Information Program Using Strategic Messaging and Media

- A phased communications and outreach effort using a mix of tactics including radio and new media
- 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 based on timing, location or internally generated events
- Messaging developed to introduce hydrogen and fuel cell technologies
  - De-mystify a complex subject for the general public
  - Engage the public to learn more

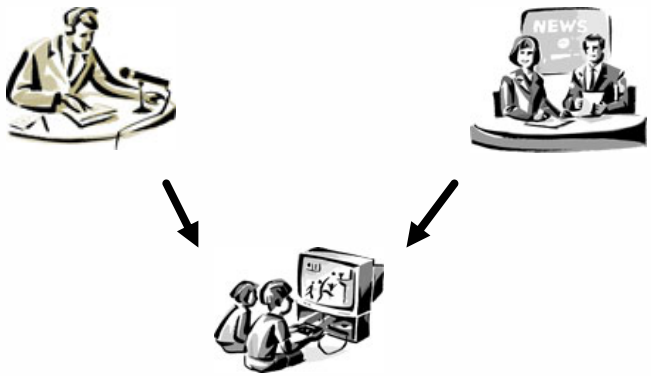
Weaving “Engagement” with “Brand”

- **Engagement:**
  - Information is nothing if it doesn’t engage…if it doesn’t tell a story…
  - The most successful public communications efforts tell powerful stories.
  - They make their work easy to understand and leave a lasting impression on the imagination of their audience.

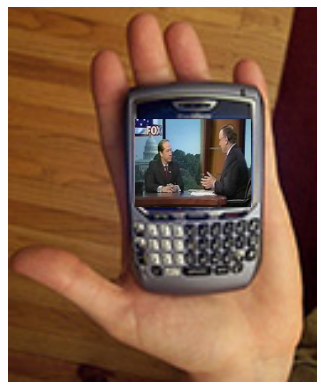
- **Brand:**
  - Distinction, authenticity, and reliability are the promise of a brand
  - Brand implies trust today, and trust in the future
  - YOU HAVE TO START SOMEWHERE!
    - We are building…and building on.. the Hydrogen Program brand by crafting an engaging communications program
    - We are establishing the brand in the mind’s eye of the general public

Perpetuating Our Message to Build Brand

The old way of communicating:



Today: Anywhere/Everywhere Media



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Objectives

- Transmit our message via communications channels audiences use
- Develop and disseminate resonant messaging that communicates to the general public basic facts about –
  - Hydrogen as a fuel/form of energy
  - Fuel cells as an alternative to traditional power technologies
- Generate interest, increase public requests for more information – help raise knowledge levels to show progress toward Education targets
- Give the Hydrogen Program a communications mechanism with a flexible framework for reasons of timing and budget
  - Build recognition of hydrogen and fuel cell technologies
  - Support the DOE brand
  - Help position the Program in the mind of the public
- Make the most of DOE resources and provide a gauge of success

Overall Approach

- Coordinate with Hydrogen Program's Market Transformation and Technology Validation efforts
  - –Focus on early markets
  - –Look for opportunities to support hydrogen learning demonstration project areas/locations
  - –Identify and coordinate efforts with state initiative partners
- Primary target audience is the general public
  - –Simple messaging only - bites, not meals, of information
  - –Positive messaging only
  - –Consistency of brand and message
  - –Multiple media
- Educational material fulfillment

The Communications Blueprint

Objective: Communicate basic facts, raise awareness, dispel myths, increase info requests

Target Profile: General market adult (25-54) consumers and general media

The "What's In It For Me"/ "So What" Factor:
Hydrogen fuel cell technologies mean energy independence and a cleaner environment

Think Now
Target's Current Mindset:
- Unfamiliar with hydrogen and fuel cells
- May think hydrogen is dangerous
- Unaware of the DOE Hydrogen Program

→

Differentiating Propositions
- Clean, safe fuel; fuel cells convert hydrogen into electricity
- Hydrogen can be produced from diverse resources – and reduce dependence on imported oil/strengthen energy security
- Public/private partnerships at work
- DOE is a resource for information

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Think Future
Target's Future Mindset:
- ✓ Viable alternative
- ✓ Safe and clean
- ✓ Fuel cells use hydrogen to produce electricity
- ✓ Aware of the DOE Program/want to learn more

Deliverables: Audio Files (Podcasts), MySpace Page, Audio Files (Radio)

Strategic Approach

Strategy 1: New Media-MySpace

- Design, write and produce an engaging MySpace page to communicate to young people in the method they recognize and accept

Strategy 2: Radio

- Create radio spots for target markets (local/regional/national); paid and unpaid runs

Strategy 2: New Media-Audio Files (Podcasts)

- Write and produce series of Podcasts introducing hydrogen and fuel cell technologies and the DOE Hydrogen Program and addressing contemporary questions and concerns

MySpace

- Social networks, such as MySpace, are about individuality and connecting with others
- Kids on MySpace and other social networks are looking to belong, and for discovery, self-expression, recognition, and to build knowledge
- Young people on social networks who have defined agendas--strong interests--are trend-setters and they want to be the first to know or to spread something
- We are giving them a place to learn, express and share interests, and absorb and perpetuate our message and brand
- VERY different from general website

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Radio Spots

- :60 Second radio spots
- Written with engaging characters
- Easy concepts to grasp
  - Concise information
- Multi-advantage medium
  - Easily targeted to local, regional, national audiences
  - Inexpensive to produce, relatively inexpensive to run
  - Easy to re-edit per timing and messaging goals

Podcasts

- **Podcasts:** Syndicated audio files (Mp3)
- **Podcasting:** A way of publishing audio/video broadcasts via the Internet, allowing users to subscribe to a feed of new files.
- Allows automatic downloading of audio/video onto portable players or personal computers.
- You listen to a Podcast on a computer, Mp3 player, or SmartPhone/PDA.

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Accomplishments and Progress

May 2006 – June 2008

- Down-selected tactics based on
  - Budget
  - Highest-impact with lowest barrier to entry (budget/workload)
  - Broadest reach
  - Program needs
- Wrote and produced two 60-second radio spots
  - National broadcast quality
- Wrote and produced seven Podcasts
- Implemented our deliverables in the Orlando Market with a media buy tied to the Orlando Magic
  - Radio spots aired during gameday broadcasts and Stan Van Gundy radio show
  - Print ad ran in gameday program
- Developed a MySpace page – www.myspace.com/h2iq

Let's Listen

- Radio
  - The Hydrogen Assignment
  - Cars
- Podcasts
- MySpace
  - www.myspace.com/h2iq

Future Work

FY 2008 –

- Continue expansion of MySpace page elements and promotion
  - Add partner links to the page
- Perpetuate the MySpace page by tagging it at the end of the radio spots
  - This encourages partnerships and partner support
- Roll out radio in at least one more market with DOE funds
- Identify and engage partners to distribute radio spots
- Continue to build relationships with potential industry and government partners
- Measure public response
  - Web traffic and use of “information toolbox”
    - Web page usage (hits and time spent)
    - Document and audio file downloads
  - Information Center requests

Summary

- Project Relevance to DOE Hydrogen Program:

  Raising awareness by introducing the concepts of hydrogen and fuel cell technologies and applications to the general public.

- Approach:

  A phased communications and outreach effort using a mix of radio and new media tactics

- Progress:
  - Solid execution on initial research and planning.
  - Real-world roll-out and use of our messaging tools

- Collaborations:

  Coordinating with potential partners in industry and at the state level

- Future work:

  Implementation, deepen and broaden phases and markets