



GREEN ISSUE

Actions Louder with Words

“Sustainability” is on the agenda of corporate boardrooms and executive suites across America and around the world. Simultaneously, brands are wrapping themselves in green for external and internal promotion.

What is motivating this green trend? While the World Economic Forum and other business associations have expressed a growing understanding that the world’s natural resources are diminishing, the most compelling motivation seems to be how consumers have voted with their purchases. The trend is increasingly to choose products promoted as “green” over others. It’s become a “bottom line” issue.

As companies are rewarded for “appearing green” with young consumers demonstrating a commitment to a green planet and lifestyle, this could be more than a fad. The challenge for marketers is to “walk their talk”. The challenge for consumers is to sort through the ads, publicity and products to determine which marketers are delivering on their green brand promise.

“Green is Universal”

NBC Universal has made the greening of its company a business and cultural priority. Launched the fall of 2007, NBCU announced that “as a leading media and entertainment company, NBC Universal has a responsibility, both in our own operations and in driving awareness,” according to President and CEO Jeff Zucker. “Green is good for the world and the bottom line.”

NBCU has committed to make “green” a color of the peacock’s brand. There are numerous sustainability initiatives companywide. Company foundation funds have been redirected to support non-profits that are environmentally focused. This initiative was launched with all of the NBC networks airing their logos in green.

Marketing and beyond: Starting with November 2007 sweeps, when networks compete for ratings, NBCU wove green content throughout its programming to “engage the audience and provide a positive social message,” Ben Silverman Co-Chair of NBC Entertainment and Universal Media Studios.

Storylines had green themes:

- The Office, ER, Deal or No Deal, Days of Our Lives, 30 Rock, My Name is Earl, Bionic Woman all went green!
- Telmundo’s “Cuido lo Verde”: Take Care of Green theme was infused into programming.
- News properties had guests with topics about green lifestyle and the value of green.
- Late night hosts had “Green Week” with guests known for green activism and stunts to promote green life styles; Jay Leno even drove environmentally sound vehicles daily.
- NBCU’s PSA campaign “The More You Know” produced new eco-friendly spots with talent providing messages and tips about global warming, pollution and recycling.

Stay tuned to see how NBCU sustains their green commitment as their audiences, advertisers and investors respond and connect with the brand. To see what integrated marketing, product, and corporate social responsibility looks like in green, visit www.greenisuniversal.com.

Can Gas and Gas Guzzlers Be Green?

Talk about green branding! I can’t think of another company that has been as effective at promoting its green affinity than BP. We start with British Petroleum’s brand transformation to BP (Beyond Petroleum) and its tag line: *dedicated to diversifying domestic energy solutions that will power our future.*

BP has infused this message into its brand identity, advertising, website, and other communications. It appears that someone made a decision to stake out a green positioning in a field known for darker environmental experiences. The company Press Office did not see marketing as the driver of this strategy saying that “We don’t have ‘green’ marketing strategies as such, but our marketing does try to convey the fact that we acknowledge the consensus on climate change and have already started (in fact since 1997) to respond in the way we run our operations and in the energy products we supply.”

Automotive companies on the green bandwagon. BMW promotes its next-generation, hydrogen-powered vehicle with near-zero emissions and its commitment to “reinvent diesel” as key elements of their “ultimate driving machine” brand positioning, which emphasizes innovation and performance.

General Motors’ recent Chevy print ads claim that “Chevy offers more vehicle choices than any other brand that can run on cleaner-burning, mostly renewable alternative fuel source – E85 ethanol. And we have over 2 million FlexFuel vehicles on the road today.” They boast that their Tahoe Hybrid was named “The Green Car of the Year” by the *Green Car Journal*.