

# **Christmas Tree Promotion Board Annual Report 2016**





# 2016 Campaign

## IT'S CHRISTMAS. KEEP IT REAL.

In an upscale shopping area near the financial district in New York City, a "pop up" event featuring a cozy living room set, a wise-cracking Nutcracker and a beautiful, 13 foot talking Christmas tree drew attention from passersby and engaged brave pedestrians willing to chat with a witty Fraser fir. The event went to a higher level in the afternoon when actor, Neil Patrick Harris joined in the fun as the voice of the tree and surprised participants by emerging through the set door bearing gifts!

This was all part of the effort to gain media attention for the Christmas Tree Promotion Board's "It's Christmas. Keep it Real." campaign.

The campaign included 40 days of individual "activations"; some small and some large, all featured on the campaign website that unlocked new images and content each day, starting on November 15. Much of the campaign was designed to be featured and shared on social media platforms such as Facebook and

Instagram, with a focus on garnering positive media coverage through on-line and traditional media channels and always with an eye to attracting a millennial audience.

In addition to the Big Event with Neil Patrick Harris, the campaign engaged consumers in a variety of ways:

### EVENTS AND OUTREACH

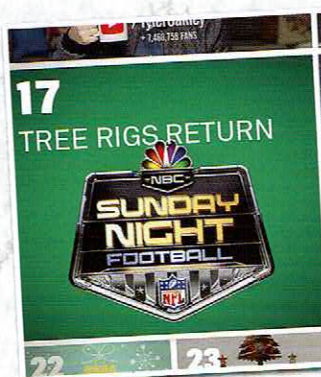
- The campaign became an official sponsor of the Trees for Troops campaign - providing additional signage for all pick up locations that included the "It's Christmas. Keep it Real." message.
- The real Christmas tree "dream team" donned specially designed tree-rig backpacks while engaging New Yorkers at two high visibility events; The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and Santa Con.
- In a partnership with Handy.com, Handy professionals shared the real tree message while offering a fresh Christmas tree set up service in a number of their service cities and featured the campaign in promotional videos.

### SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS:

- "Mommy Bloggers" with strong followings shared their real Christmas tree experiences and our messaging with their followers in their own words and photographs.
- Influencers on Instagram shared campaign messaging accompanying beautiful real Christmas tree photos with their followers.
- A popular video blog couple, "Justin and April," shared their family Christmas tree story with their large following.
- Mixed media artist, Quentin Jones, created an Avant Garde design that was printed on t-shirts and sold on Amazon with proceeds supporting Trees for Troops. The shirts were modeled by Victoria Justice and Tyler Oakley - both with huge Instagram followings.

### OUR OWN VIDEOS, SOCIAL REACH AND GROWER ENGAGEMENT:

- A heart-warming "Manifesto Video" was produced for the campaign, and effectively captured the heart of what it means to be a Christmas tree. This video was used to engage potential partners in the campaign, as well as to provide the industry a tool to show how it impacts families each and every year.



- Dozens of clever memes and gifs were created for industry members and real Christmas tree lovers to share with their friends and followers on Facebook and Instagram.
- A video, shared with the campaign by production company Shift, shared one family's choice to move away from artificial and embrace the real tree tradition.
- YouTube sensation, Michael Yung, the New York subway singer, supported the campaign with a special musical performance; this video was viewed more than half a million times.
- Printable designs and banners were made available for growers and retailers to download, print and use at their retail locations.

### UNEXPECTED SURPRISES

- Comedian, Joe Pera, filmed a Christmas special on selecting the perfect Christmas tree and unofficially connected with the campaign. The Promotion Board named him an Ambassador of Real Christmas Trees and Joe told Seth Meyers on Late Night all about it – he even showed off his official certificate!

### RESULTS

The campaign had great social engagement:

### ONLINE PRESENCE

**4,404,747**

### MEASUREABLE REACH

**PEOPLE SAW THE CAMPAIGN ONLINE**

**1,869,989**

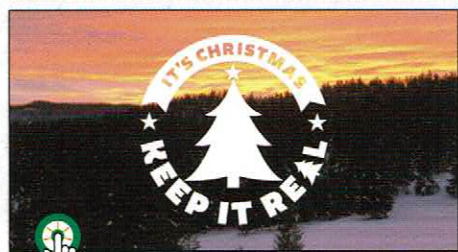
### ENGAGEMENTS

**LIKES, COMMENTS, SHARES, TWEETS, VIEWS**

**1,031,435**

### VIDEO VIEWS

**FACEBOOK, YOUTUBE, INSTAGRAM**



Check out this great video that shares highlights of the 2016 campaign at [bit.ly/ItsChristmasKeepItReal2016](http://bit.ly/ItsChristmasKeepItReal2016)

## CTPB Consumer Research Results

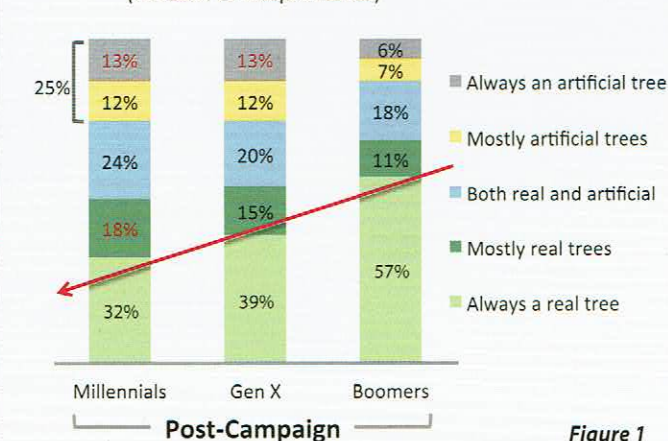
The Christmas Tree Promotion Board conducted two rounds of consumer research, each with a sample of 1,019 adults balanced by gender, age, income, ethnicity and region to represent the US population. The first round was done prior to our 2016 promotional campaign to understand consumer attitudes about Christmas trees and identify opportunities for the campaign; the second round was done after the 2016 campaign to measure the results of our campaign messages.

The goal of the CTPB's consumer advertising campaign is to build long-term demand with Millennials (young adults born between 1977 – 1995), Gen Xers (born 1965 – 1976) and families with children at home. Millennials are a critical target for the industry's future; they are the largest generation ever but are inclined to choose artificial trees. We must win them over. Families with children are our core customers today; we need to reinforce to them the real tree is the best choice for their family.

Our consumer research shows significant barriers exist that the industry must overcome to win over Millennials to real Christmas trees:

- Only 32 % of Millennials grew up with a real tree in their home every Christmas (Fig. 1)

### Growing up: Real Tree vs. Artificial?



### Type of Christmas Tree (Post-Campaign Only)

(Percent of Respondents)

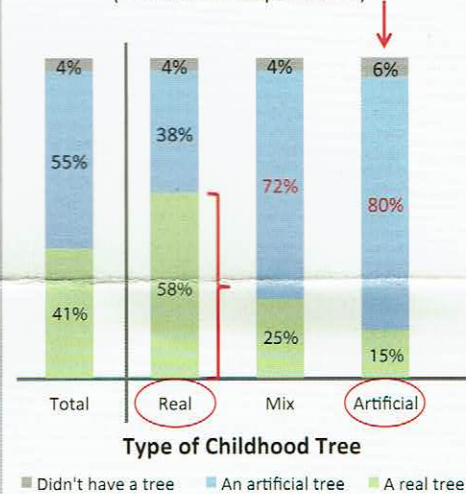


Figure 2

- 80% of those who had an artificial Christmas tree in 2016 grew up with an artificial Christmas tree as a child (Fig. 2)
- 58% of those who had a real Christmas tree in 2016 grew up with a real Christmas tree as a child (Fig. 2)
- 65% of adults who believe an artificial Christmas tree is better for the environment had one in 2016 (Fig. 3)
- 64% of adults who believe a real Christmas tree is better for the environment had one in 2016 (Fig. 3)

The campaign effectively reached our

Figure 1

## Type of Christmas Tree (Post-Campaign Only)

(Percent of Respondents)

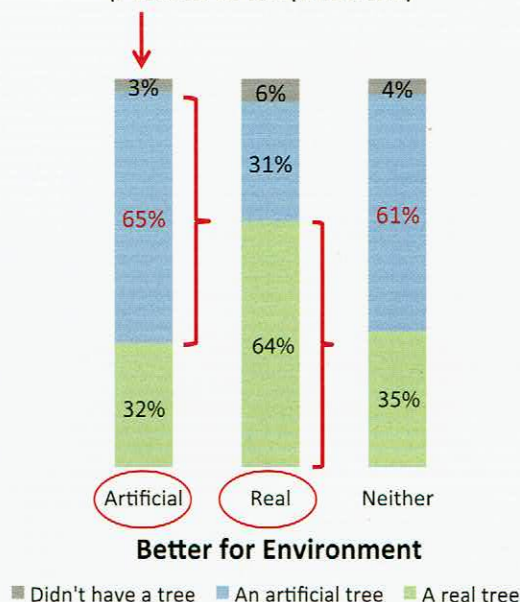


Figure 3

Millennial and Gen X targets through social media. 59% of Millennials and 49% of Gen X in our sample saw real Christmas trees promoted in social media. (Fig. 4)

79% of Millennials and 71% of Gen X were familiar with 'It's Christmas. Keep It Real.' following our campaign, confirming social media was the correct platform to reach our target audience. (Fig. 5)

Our campaign messages had impact. The message 'Real trees are better for the environment' caused 98% of real tree users to feel very good (81%) or pretty good (17%) about making a real tree choice and 87% of artificial tree users to consider a real tree a lot (50%) or a little (37%) (Fig. 6)

The campaign message 'Artificial trees will end up in a landfill' caused 92% of real tree users to feel very good (69%) or pretty good (23%) about making a real tree choice and 87% of artificial tree users to consider a real tree a lot (47%) or a little (40%) (Fig. 7) 🌲

## Where Saw/Heard Real Christmas Trees Promoted (Post-Campaign)

(If recall seeing promotional messages)

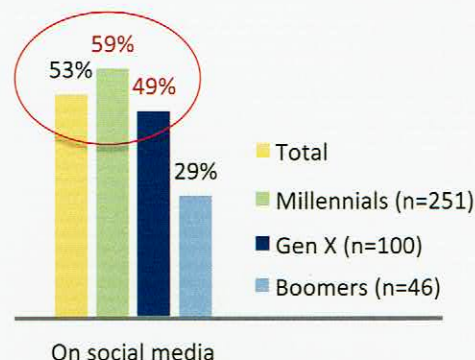


Figure 4

## Familiarity with 'It's Christmas. Keep it Real.' (Post-Campaign)

(If recall seeing promotional messages)

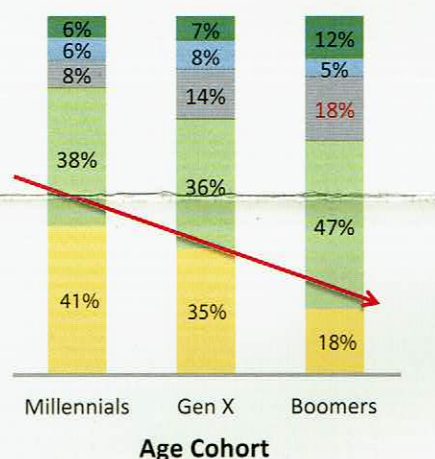


Figure 5

## Message: Real Trees Are Better for the Environment

### Affect on Choice of Real Tree

(If recall message)

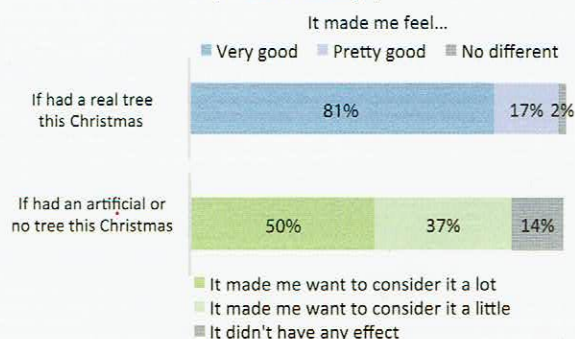


Figure 6

## Message: An Artificial Tree Will End Up In Landfill

### Affect on Choice of Real Tree

(If recall message)



Figure 7



## Get Engaged!

The Promotion Board would like all Christmas tree producers to get engaged in the campaign and want to keep you informed of all that is happening. Here are a few simple ways to stay up-to-the-minute:

- Be sure that we have your current email address – the Promotion Board often communicates electronically; it's fast and cost-effective.
- Look for our periodic electronic newsletters – You will see "Christmas Tree Promotion Board" in the "from" line when we send our newsletters. They have all the latest news about the campaign.
- Use the creative campaign materials that our team provides – the easiest way to use the campaign is to follow us on Facebook and share or repost our content. CTPB will be offering "training sessions" at many state and regional association meetings as well as on-line. These will be announced in the electronic newsletter.



## 2016 Financials

CTPB is required to have an independent Certified Public Accountant audit its accounting records each fiscal year. The first audit of CTPB was completed March 16, 2017 by Propp Christensen Caniglia, Roseville, CA. They issued a clean opinion of CTPB financial statement, also known as an "unmodified report" in accounting terminology. These excerpts from the audit provide an overview of CTPB's financial status at the end of its 2015-2016 fiscal period. Please visit the CTPB website to see the full audit report: <http://www.christmastreepromotionboard.org> (The audit is posted on the Industry Information page.)

## Research Commitment

The Christmas Tree Promotion Board solidified its commitment to Christmas tree research by allocating \$120,000 of 2016/2017 budget to industry research initiatives.

CTPB has agreed to fund five research projects, some currently in negotiation or pending USDA contract approval. All projects involve researchers who are well-known to the Christmas Tree Industry and include all growing regions. The five projects are:

- **Regional Adaptability of Turkish and Trojan Firs** – contract under negotiation, involving six universities
- **Impact of Elongate Hemlock Scale** - contract under negotiation, involving two universities
- **IPM Strategies for Slugs** - contract under negotiation, involving two universities
- **Cultural Options in Reducing Coning in Fraser Fir** - Conducted by Michigan State University
- **Cultural Options in Reducing Coning in Fraser Fir** – Conducted by North Carolina State University

### CHRISTMAS TREE PROMOTION BOARD STATEMENT OF ASSETS, LIABILITIES, AND NET ASSETS - MODIFIED CASH BASIS

July 31, 2016

ASSETS	
Current assets	\$ 1,033,506
Operating cash	\$ 172,930
Total assets	\$ 1,206,436
NET ASSETS	
Unrestricted	\$ 1,206,436
Total net assets	\$ 1,206,436

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

### CHRISTMAS TREE PROMOTION BOARD SCHEDULE OF CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS For the Period From Inception (February 1, 2015) Through July 31, 2016

RECEIPTS	
Assessments	\$ 1,729,302
DISBURSEMENTS	
Promotion committee	\$ 140,817
Research committee	\$ 37,328
Industry relations committee	\$ 14,777
Professional services	\$ 202,427
Board meetings	\$ 80,352
General and administrative	\$ 31,257
USDA fees	\$ 15,908
Set aside for reserve funding	\$ 172,930
Total disbursements	\$ 695,796
Excess of receipts over disbursements	\$ 1,033,506
Cash, beginning of year	\$ 0
Cash, end of year	\$ 1,033,506



## Christmas Tree PROMOTION BOARD

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### Meet the Staff:

The CTPB is managed by  
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Ann O'Connor – Compliance Director  
Rebecca Humitz – Accountant

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### Meet the Board

#### Eastern Representatives:

Bentley Curry, Louisiana  
Della Deal, North Carolina  
Charles Fowler, North Carolina  
Jim Rockis, West Virginia

#### Central Representatives:

Rex Korson, Michigan  
Beth Walterscheidt, Texas

#### Western Representatives:

Mark Arkills, Oregon  
Paul Battaglia, California

Jim Heater, Oregon  
Betty Malone, Oregon  
Mark Steelhammer, Washington

#### Importer Representative:

Chris Maciborski, Michigan

#### Executive Committee:

Chairman, Jim Rockis  
Vice Chairman, Rex Korson  
Treasurer, Paul Battaglia  
Secretary, Beth Walterscheidt