

2019 CHRISTMAS TREE PROMOTION BOARD CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

Presented to:

Marsha Gray
Christmas Tree Promotion Board
Executive Director
Email: mjgray1@charter.net Phone: 517-242-1630

Presented by:

Regina Luttrell, Ph.D.
TRACE Enterprises
Syracuse University
Email: rmluttre@syr.edu Phone: 315-443-3613

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report analyzes the effectiveness of the 2019 “It’s Christmas, Keep it Real” awareness campaign. Using foundational metrics found within public relations and social media, the assessment will utilize the Integrated Evaluation Framework developed by the International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC) and the PESO Model to assess the value and efficacy of the campaign.

IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Social media and public relations represent an opportunity for organizations to grow their audience using both engaging and cost-effective means. As such, the fundamental component of a successful campaign is the measure of engagement and reaction of the target audience. More importantly, organizations can strategically leverage the fact that much of the world’s population is using social media as a primary source of communication.

In 2019, an estimated 2.95 billion people worldwide engaged using social media, a number projected to increase to nearly 3.43 billion by 2023 (Statista). According to a Pew Survey, 65% of adults utilized at least one social networking site, and, for adults ranging in ages from 18 to 29, that figure rose to 90%. This vast and rapidly growing audience is scattered across numerous digital spaces and, not surprisingly, an organizations ability to reach them depends entirely on their social media strategy. Similar to social media, public relations is now essential for all organizations because, quite simply, PR is how businesses communicate with people. Additionally, PR efforts manage how organizations spread information with their target audience. The benefits of executing a social media and public relations strategy include (Sysamos):

- Increased brand recognition among a wider audience because social sharing provides opportunities for organic audience growth;
- Enhanced customer insights through comments and other interactive behavior;
- Improved brand loyalty with communication techniques tailored to the target audience;
- Amplification of social content through paid and earned media; improved SEO/SEM.

2019 CTPB CAMPAIGN EFFECTIVENESS

Awareness campaigns are measured using a variety of methodologies. The following table highlights key areas of evaluation – exposure, engagement, influence, impact and advocacy based on the use of paid media, earned media, shared media and/or owned media.

Core elements used in the 2019 CTPB campaign included all areas of the AMEC and PESO models.

	EXPOSURE	ENGAGEMENT	INFLUENCE	IMPACT	ADVOCACY
PAID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions • Reach • Frequency • Viewability • Digital Display • Video views • Completed Views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagements (paid social) • Click-through • Page views (page landings) • Interactions: expand, unmute, replay, enter data, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness • Purchase consideration • Purchase intent • Likelihood to Recommend • Brand attributes or equities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit website • Attend event • Sales conversion • Download coupon • Leads captured • Promotion redemptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentions in Earned channel • Recommendations • Review • Ratings
OWNED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique visitors • Visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return visits • Page views (per visit) • Interactions: clicks, views, use tools • Subscriptions • Links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration • Purchase intent • Tell a friend • Likelihood to Recommend • Brand attributes or equities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales • Leads • Information requests • Download paper • Download app • Cost savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations • Ratings • Reviews
SHARED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic Impressions • Organic reach • Number of followers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likes • Comments • Shares • Replies • Retweets • Etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration • Purchase intent • Tell a friend • Likelihood to Recommend • Brand attributes or equities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit store • Attend the event • Sales • Vote for issue • Satisfaction • Loyalty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratings • Reviews • Recommendations • Recommendations rate
EARNED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of posts • Impressions • Message delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hashtag use • Mentions • Contest entries/participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness • Consideration • Purchase intent • Associations with issues/topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit website • Attend event • Download coupon • Leads captured • Promotion redemptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations • Ratings • Reviews

ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

LONG TERM GOALS - Positively impact demand for cut Christmas Trees and increase opportunities for growers and others in the industry.

SHORT TERM GOALS - Grower support for the CTPB that translates into a grass roots movement to bring more growers into the program year-over-year.

Building upon the momentum from the previous four-year period, the 2019 awareness campaign executed by Fleishman Hillard and Concept Farm has been money well spent for the CTPB. In examining the results and outcomes from this campaign, it is clear that the, “It’s Christmas, Keep it Real” awareness campaign yielded:

1. Positive conversations among influencers (Kelly Clarkson and Taylor Swift) as well as consumers related to the benefits of purchasing fresh cut Christmas Trees.
2. An informative, consumer-facing campaign inspiring and empowering the target audience to not only create new Christmas time (holiday) memories with their families, but also recall fond childhood memories.
3. High impact and widespread awareness through extensive media coverage communicating campaign key messages.

4. Engagement by Christmas Tree farmers within the campaign, encouraging them to carry campaign messages forward to their customers, thus amplifying the overall efforts of Fleishman Hillard and Concept Farm.

Drawing from original research conducted among 2000 sets of parents, both Fleishman Hillard and Concept Farm developed content for dissemination across paid, earned, shared and owned media channels. This content was received by customers as both compelling and illuminating to the benefits of buying fresh trees from local Christmas Tree farmers. It is clear that the campaign, its strategy and messages were built upon comprehensive values-based research, providing CTPB insights into consumer attitudes toward Christmas. Outcomes of this research supported a comprehensive awareness campaign with messaging targeting CTPBs key demographic audiences of Millennial families, as well as two secondary audiences - environmentalist and Veterans. Communications reinforced three significant ideas: the importance of fresh cut Christmas Trees, support for North American Christmas Tree farmers, and the overall benefits of fresh trees on the environment.

PAID MEDIA (EXPOSURE, ADVOCACY)

- Executed multi-platform, integrated media partnership with high-profile outlets.
- Delivered campaign messaging to a broad audience in a credible editorial environment, demonstrating the benefits of fresh cut Christmas Trees. The media exposure offered a unique opportunity to zero in on the target demographic and deliver campaign messages directly through both television, print, and social media channels.
 - Created rich long- and short-form content, including custom videos.
 - Implemented both Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) initiatives.

EARNED & SHARED MEDIA (EXPOSURE, ENGAGEMENT, INFLUENCE)

- Conducted proactive and reactive outreach to print and online editors and television producers, maintaining a regular stream of news about the benefits of fresh cut Christmas Trees.
- Appeared on the nationally syndicated Kelly Clarkson show with cross promotion on the show's social media channels garnering even more reach and awareness.
- Capitalized on the release of Taylor Swifts single "Christmas Tree Farm." Swift boasts an impressive 68,564,582 million Facebook followers and 110 million Instagram followers. Some consider her social media prowess unstoppable. This was a remarkable pairing for the CTBP because Swift's fan base is fierce and loyal. The CTPB clearly benefitted from Swift's following to help increase awareness of the organizations campaign while also spreading key messaging.
- Built a Facebook and Instagram community of target consumers to educate and engage with campaign messages.

- Engaged consumers to help spread campaign messaging within existing conversations. Developed hashtags to #KeepItReal365, #EcoMonday, along with Real Trees. Real Memories., Ask a Farmer, and Tree Care Tips. The campaign further spread the message via user-generated content (UGC) alternatively known as user-created content, which was posted and shared by users via their own social media platforms.

OWNED MEDIA (IMPACT)

- Created and launched online hub <https://itschristmaskeepitreal.com/>, bringing both the fresh cut Christmas Trees, as well as the farmers that plant them, into the contemporary conversation about sustainability, crafting of memories, and supporting tree farmers.

To summarize, working with a budget of approximately \$900,000, the CTPB can be confident that Fleishman Hillard and Concept Farm executed a strategic, well thought out social and digital plan with clear, measurable goals. To that end, the most impactful elements from the campaign came from the following initiatives:

- **Excellent use of Resources:** Fleishman Hillard and Concept Farm invested in high-value content including videos, sharable images, and a comprehensive website.
 - Of all the areas used in the PESO Model, owned is the most important. Owned media can be content that appears on a brand’s website or social channels.
 - This type of content falls under an organization’s direct control in terms of creation, hosting and distribution. This means that CTPB can continue to use and cross promote well beyond the campaign dates.
 - Your PR firms were strategic in the types of content posted, resulting in impressive website analytics. In fact, CTPB saw growth in users 12k+, page views 12k+, users time on page, and the number of new users visiting the organizations website.
 - The CTPBs organic search results were most impressive, making up more than 2/3 of your total search. Organic traffic is important because it is targeted which means users visiting your website from a search engine have a specific intent. This indicates that your brand awareness is quite high.
 - *Areas for Growth:* To improve upon owned media initiatives, I suggest that next year adding elements that build upon the interactivity already established. This year your PR firms held contents. Next year, add downloadable items for children. These can easily be tracked and analyzed for clicks and downloads.
- **Far-reaching Brand Awareness:** There is no more effective way of increasing the number of eyes on your brand than with a targeted campaign. Fleishman Hillard and Concept Farm used paid, shared, and owned media efforts to build awareness and create loyalty.

- Impressions, reach, and engagement surpassed 3 million plus in metrics on the organizations Facebook and Instagram accounts. These were some of the most impactful elements of the campaign.
- *Areas for Growth:* Most of the metrics reported by your PR firms focus on reach and impressions. Reach is the total number of people who see your content. Impressions are the number of times your content is displayed, no matter if it was clicked or not. While these are important metrics to track, ask your PR firms to spend time and attention on interacting with users. For example, on the CTPB Facebook page I saw comments from users. These were left unanswered. In addition, on the organizations Instagram account, while there were numerous likes on each post – some beyond 600 – you will want to create conversations in the next iteration of the campaign. In addition to sharing your organizations message, photos, and videos, be sure to **interact** with your target audience. Social media is the epitome of two-way communication; meaning organizations have an opportunity to genuinely connect with their fans. This was a missed opportunity.
 - The CTPB could consider having a “Farmer” Instagram takeover. Takeovers are quite popular on Instagram. In the case of CTPB, this would mean your organization could identify a few social media savvy farmers to temporarily take over the official CTPB Instagram account to share content. An Instagram takeover would be an incredible way for CTPB to collaborate with their farmers and cross-promote content.
- **Extended the Life of Earned Media Stories:** Fleishman Hillard and Concept Farm were clearly on-message while achieving media hits with top-tier outlets. More impressive is that they were able to take the content and repurpose on CTPBs social media channels.
 - Exposure gained through news mentions and social media interactions/shares, allows for CTPB to increase their website traffic (owned media), gain third-party credibility, obtain greater reach and visibility, and help build SEO and authority.
 - *Areas for Growth:* Connect your earned media to better measurable outcomes. The appearance on the Kelly Clarkson show for example, when looking at the analytics faded quickly after the appearance. CTPB should look for ways to extend their media relations strategy throughout the year. In addition, beyond news outlets and television shows, look for ways to capitalize on earned social media. Look for influencers to partner with that can help spread your messages.
- **Targeted Specific Audience:** Fleishman Hillard and Concept Farm used a multi-channel approach to promote directly to CTPBs key demographics. The agencies leveraged UGC, influencers, and CTPBs owned created content to reach and exceed their goals.

PROFILE – REGINA LUTTRELL, PH.D.

Prior to entering the educational field, Regina Luttrell, Ph.D. spent the first portion of her career in corporate public relations and marketing. Her extensive background includes strategic development and implementation of public relations, social media, advertising, marketing, and corporate communications. She has led multiple re-branding campaigns, designed numerous web sites, managed high-level crisis situations, and garnered media coverage that included hits with the New York Times, the CBS Evening News, and the Associated Press. She is the author of multiple books including "**Social Media: How to Engage, Share, and Connect;**" **The PR Agency Handbook, Public Relations Campaigns: An Integrated Approach,** and "**The Millennial Mindset: Unraveling Fact from Fiction.**"