



metro vancouver **zeroWASTE** CHALLENGE



SUBMISSION FOR
Swana 2011 Communication Excellence Award
METRO VANCOUVER



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Zero Waste Challenge Social Marketing Campaign

Along with informational and community level communications, Metro Vancouver's Zero Waste Challenge social marketing campaign was developed to galvanize residents to reduce the waste they create, to find ways to get their unwanted items reused and to recycle those items that are end-of-life.

Our social marketing campaigns from Christmas 2009 to January 2011 focussed on the 3 Rs – reduce, reuse, and recycle, and included:

- Christmas 2009 – How much of what you give will end up in the garbage, emphasized reducing waste before it is even created, as typically 5% more garbage is created at this time.
- Spring 2010- Watch Your Waste, directed residents to our website for actions they could take, especially in reducing the largest categories of waste: food scraps, paper and plastic.
- Christmas 2010 - Create Memories Not Garbage, encouraged the region's residents to give lasting experiences or gifts that were recyclable or re-usable.
- January 2011 – Just Don't Trash It, encouraged residents to reuse items by either recycling, donating, giving away or re-gifting.

Post-campaign surveys confirmed that each Zero Waste Challenge campaign built on the success of preceding work. About 1/3 of those surveyed for all four Zero Waste Challenge social marketing campaigns reported doing something new to reduce the amount of garbage they created.

Title of entry: Metro Vancouver Zero Waste Challenge Campaign

Category: Communication Excellence

Time period: November 23, 2009 to January 20, 2011



STATEMENT OF INTENT

Metro Vancouver is applying for the SWANA Communications Excellence Award for 2011 by showcasing our Zero Waste Challenge social marketing campaign from 2009 to 2011.

Introduction

Natural beauty, access to resources and markets and a diverse civil society have converged in metropolitan Vancouver to create one of the world's most liveable regions.

However, this privileged position also requires responsibility for the immediate and long-term impacts of our actions both locally and globally. That is why in 2002 Metro Vancouver, the regional government responsible for the waste management of 22 municipalities, one Electoral Area and one Treaty First Nation, incorporated the Sustainable Region Initiative in its framework for decision-making and as a guide for translating sustainability principles into its practices and activities.

A key component of Metro Vancouver's sustainability framework envisages a zero waste region – no waste, only resources. This is a very ambitious initiative because today, residents and business recycle just over half of the 360 million tonnes of garbage, or solid waste, created in the region each year.

The Zero Waste Challenge adopted by Metro Vancouver's Board of Directors is a bold commitment to reduce solid waste in the region to the absolute minimum, divert 70% of its waste from disposal by 2015, with an aspirational goal of 80% by 2020, and extract the maximum practical benefits from discarded material. In keeping with that commitment to change social norms around waste generation and management, the Zero Waste Challenge campaign exemplifies the operating principles that guide Metro Vancouver: protect and enhance the natural environment; provide for ongoing prosperity; and build community capacity and social cohesion.



RESEARCH/PLANNING

The Zero Waste Challenge social marketing campaign looks to spur residents to reduce the waste they create, to find ways to get their unwanted items reused and to recycle those items that are end-of-life.

Research told us that:

- people would do more to reduce, reuse and recycle if they were told how to do it
- Metro Vancouver was a trusted source of information

In addition, baseline research for our campaigns also determined that when asked to rate Metro Vancouver's efforts to help people reduce, reuse and recycle on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 meaning excellent, 67.7% of respondents ranked our efforts between 4 and 7.

Up to this point, Metro Vancouver's communications activities consisted primarily of print advertising generated to inform residents of specific Metro Vancouver programs, often timed to take advantage of seasonal opportunities such as spring cleaning.

Target Audience

Residents of Metro Vancouver can be divided into four separate segments based on their views and attitudes towards environmental and conservation issues (Angus Reid, May 2000).

The most active segment, Self-Directed Greens, make up 28% of the population. People in this segment are the most active participants in environmentally responsible behaviours, paying close attention to their own actions. Mainly women, the Greens tend to be older, more educated and more affluent than people in other segments.

They are followed by the Uninformed Believers who represent 21% of the region's population. The oldest segment, Uninformed Believers are committed to being environmentally responsible, but lack the information of what they can do, and what programs and services are available. They need a gentle push from friends and neighbours to get involved.

Detached Convenience Seekers make up 34%, the largest segment. They exhibit moderate concern about environmental issues and are less inclined to pay attention to their own actions. People in this segment tend to be younger and more affluent than the general population.

The Uninterested Polluters, representing 18%, are mainly young men. They express very low concern for the environment, and show comparatively little interest in being environmentally responsible. They do what is minimally required.

Accordingly, Metro Vancouver's Zero Waste Challenge campaign targeted Self-Directed Greens and Uninformed Believers, as those who would be most receptive to our key messages and with the belief that over time, Detached Convenience Seekers would "join the herd".



reduce
reuse
recycle

Program Goals

To reduce per-capita garbage volumes by creating a new social norm where residents:

- are more mindful of their consumption habits; specifically that they consider the full lifecycle of items purchased
- look for ways to reduce their overall waste
- ask if someone else can use their unwanted items
- find other ways to get items reused (resale, re-gifting, donation)
- inspect their waste streams, and divert recyclables for appropriate disposal

Anticipated Obstacles and Opportunities

Obstacles

- People are “too busy”
- Trash is not a top-of-mind issue
- Many people tell us “I don’t know how”
- Research indicates a key obstacle to more sustainable behavior is the sense that “I care but others don’t”
- Entrenched habits
- Perception by some that Metro Vancouver’s only garbage solution is incineration
- The Humbug factor; not making consumers feel bad for wanting to buy things

Opportunities

- To remind residents that reduce and reuse come before recycling in the 3R hierarchy
- To demonstrate that Metro Vancouver has specific programs and initiatives in support of all 3Rs
- To increase awareness of [Metro Vancouver Recycles](#), our online database with over 1300 locations to donate or recycle unwanted items.
- To build the campaign’s reach by sharing materials with the region’s local governments for their waste reduction campaigns



IMPLEMENTATION/EXECUTION:

Christmas 2009

The holiday gift giving season provided the basis for our 2009 Christmas campaign that emphasized reducing waste before it's created, as we typically create about 5% more garbage during the holiday season. Additionally, the campaign allowed Metro Vancouver to discuss its efforts to promote "design for the environment" or cradle-to-cradle products as part of a full-circle economy where there is no waste, only resources.

To help ensure the region's retail sector did not perceive the 2009 campaign as an anti-shopping campaign, Metro Vancouver met with the sector's association, Shelfspace, to explain our reduce campaign, its intent and to share key messages. Shelfspace supported our objectives and agreed to notify its membership of the campaign launch and content.

Along with a comprehensive print media buy, we wanted to ensure residents of the entire region (particularly ages 25-55) would repeatedly see the gift/garbage image.

Transit was the most cost-effective medium and at the outer reaches of the transit system, bus exteriors were identified as creating the most impressions. As commuters made their way to the high-use rapid transit elements of the system, we transitioned to platform posters, images on platform LCD screens, as well as interior posters to maximize the campaign's exposure. We used external bus posters to ensure the campaign had visibility in the region's most outer reaches.

We worked with waste reduction staff from the region's municipalities to identify the most visible campaign opportunities, including parades and other holiday-related events. Municipalities were also provided the graphics and messaging for their web pages, and other waste reduction materials to maximize the exposure of campaign materials.

Our 2009 Christmas campaign was launched with a major print media buy consisting of "wraps" covering the front sections of the region's two major dailies, The Vancouver Sun and The Province, with the tag line "How much of what you give will end up as garbage?".

The two dailies were utilized because age and ethnic demographics were very similar, but the readership size varied from municipality to municipality within the region.

'Tis the season to think about garbage.



→ The Zero Waste Challenge.

Reducing the amount of garbage we create is a priority.

Introduced in 2007, Metro Vancouver's Zero Waste Challenge helps families and businesses create less waste, reuse as much as possible and recycle more.

→ Local governments are leading the way.

Our member municipalities are working with us to achieve 70% waste diversion. See examples on the back page.

→ Residents and businesses in the region create 3.6 million tonnes of garbage a year. And guess what else? Over the holidays, we make more garbage than usual!

Currently, "garbage" in the Lower Mainland is divided into two streams: stuff that we "dispose" (landfill or incinerate) and stuff that we "divert" (recycle, compost, etc.) Residents and businesses already divert about 55% of our waste. That's pretty good, but not good enough because our landfills are filling up at an alarming rate. So we've set a target – 70% waste diversion by 2015.

HERE ARE SOME PILOT PROGRAMS WE HOPE TO TAKE REGION WIDE:

ZERO WASTE CHALLENGE INITIATIVE:

A food scrap recycling system for the region's 450,000 single-family homes.

HOW MUCH WOULD THAT KEEP OUT OF THE LANDFILL EVERY YEAR?

80,000 tonnes

THAT'S ENOUGH TO FILL THIS MANY GARBAGE TRUCKS.


































Competing for the public's attention during the holiday buying season posed a challenge. We chose to "shock" people by depicting per-capita waste after recycling by constructing a Christmas tree made of 110 garbage bags. The first installation was filmed to provide a Youtube video. Our desire was that the Youtube link would be passed on through social media circles. Additionally, the [YouTube link](#) was shared with environmental NGOs and sustainability Blogs with the hope that they would help our video go viral.

Metro Vancouver participated in the 2009 and 2010 Rogers' Santa Claus Parade, the region's largest annual parade, which each had an estimated attendance of 300,000. Working with the City of Vancouver, we decorated a garbage truck and a recycling truck with campaign images and messages. Participation also included a live interview with the host television station.





SPRING 2010

The Watch Your Waste campaign, launched in May 2010, built on our reduce message from the December 2009 Christmas campaign.

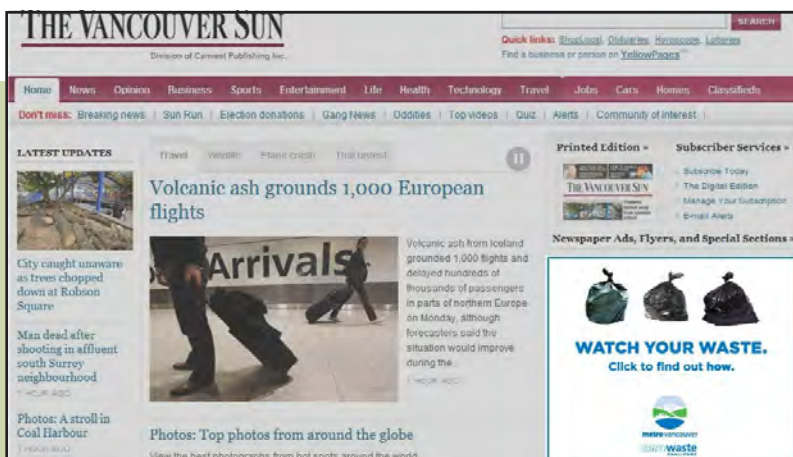
The Watch Your Waste campaign aimed to trigger behaviour change by:

- Gaining attention and building awareness of the need to reduce waste
- Depicting the desired behaviours in support of new social norms
- Using advocates to generate broader public support of the Zero Waste Challenge waste reduction initiatives, and
- Challenging residents to take personal actions.

The Watch Your Waste campaign had four primary streams of activities:

- Paid advertising
- [Online](#)/social media engagement.
- Coordination of materials for local government participation
- Earned media

The essence of the campaign was sharing, as widely as possible, imagery that demonstrated the enormity of the volume of waste we generate as a region, and the per-capita share of that aggregate waste – 156 garbage bags for every man, woman and child in the region. Residents were directed to our website for actions they could take to become part of the solution. Our campaign used humour and positive messages, where possible, to maintain attention and stimulate action.

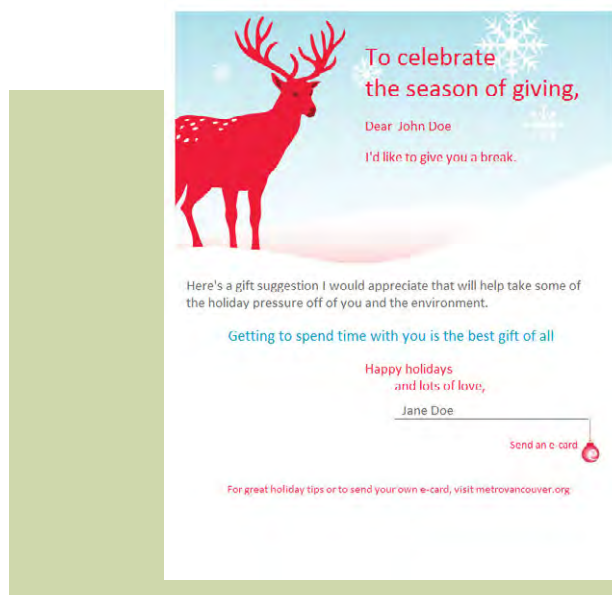


Advertising again included transit and community papers. Media events were staged at major transit hubs depicting per capita waste generation in the form of a giant tower of garbage bags in the bed of a pick-up truck. Regional politicians were invited to these events, which garnered earned media in community papers.

The web-based elements of the Watch Your Waste campaign were designed to address the largest categories of waste, namely food scraps, paper and plastic. The Watch Your Waste website encouraged residents to take a good look at their own garbage and then challenged them to figure out how to reduce one or more of the items contained in their household waste.

Additionally, Metro Vancouver sought opportunities to implement a Community Zero Waste Challenge program based on the success of a 2009 pilot project. Two compact communities in the municipality of New Westminister, Glenbrook North and Sapperton, agreed to measure their entire waste stream for 30 days to establish a baseline and then spend the subsequent 60 days trying to generate as little garbage as possible. Through rethinking their purchases, getting unwanted items reused and by recycling beyond the blue box, both groups cut their garbage output in half. Metro Vancouver hopes to eventually stage one such challenge within each municipality in the region.





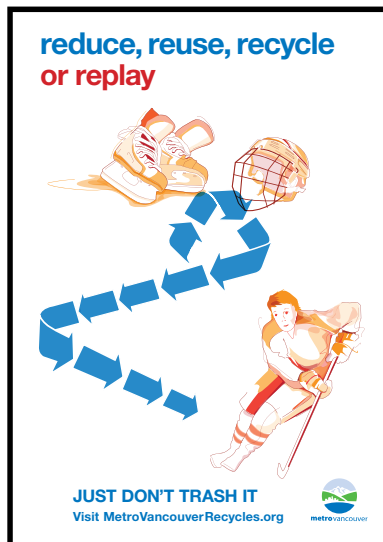
CHRISTMAS 2010

In addition to newspaper and transit advertising, the 2010 Christmas campaign built on the success of the 2009 campaign by also utilizing online advertising, radio and television. The focus was again the first "R", reduce. The region's residents were encouraged to "create memories – not garbage" by giving lasting experiences or gifts that were recyclable or reusable.

Online resources for the 2010 Christmas campaign included [videos](#) underscoring the joy of creating lasting memories with family and friends. Metro Vancouver also created an [e-card](#) people could send to friends and loved ones with the intent of liberating recipients from the need to buy gifts, instead asking for the gift of time with one another.

To further extend the reach of the 2010 Christmas campaign, graphics and other campaign elements were made available to the region's municipalities and beyond.





JANUARY 2011

The January 2011 reuse/recycle campaign was designed to prompt residents to think about the amount of excess items at this time of year and how to deal with them in a sustainable fashion. As with the Christmas 2010 campaign, elements included transit, print, radio and online advertising, as well as social channels including Tweets and messages to sustainability Blogs. Our tag line for all media was "Just don't trash it".

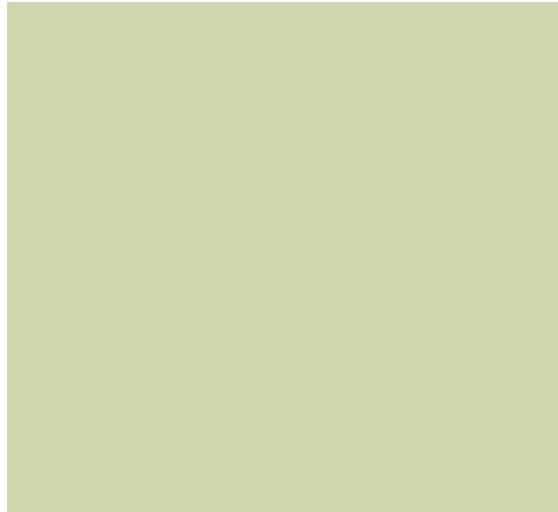
The message also related to Metro Vancouver's online reuse/recycle database, [Metro Vancouver Recycles](http://MetroVancouverRecycles.org). Here residents can find ways to get those items that were no longer wanted into the hands of someone who could use them, or find appropriate recycling facilities for items that were not deemed appropriate for donation or regifting (end of life).

ZERO WASTE CHALLENGE CONFERENCE (MARCH 2011)

On March 10th, Metro Vancouver hosted the very first region-wide conference on the Zero Waste Challenge.

The [conference](#) featured a collaboration of hundreds of residents from across the region, representing government, private sector, non-profit groups and the community. Participants listened to keynote speakers, shared regional success stories, and discussed how to work together to reduce our impact on the environment through better waste management.

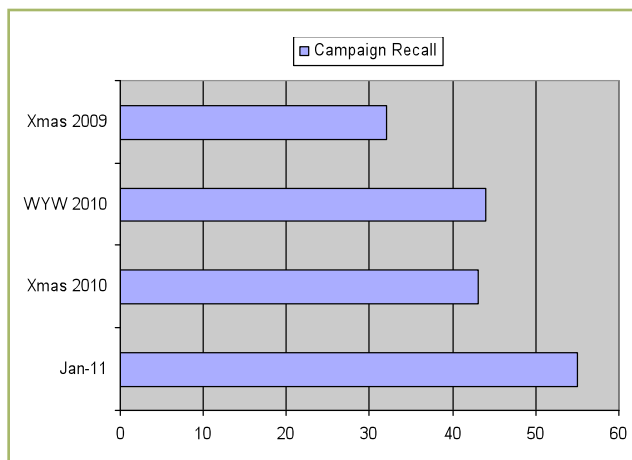




RESULTS/EVALUATION:

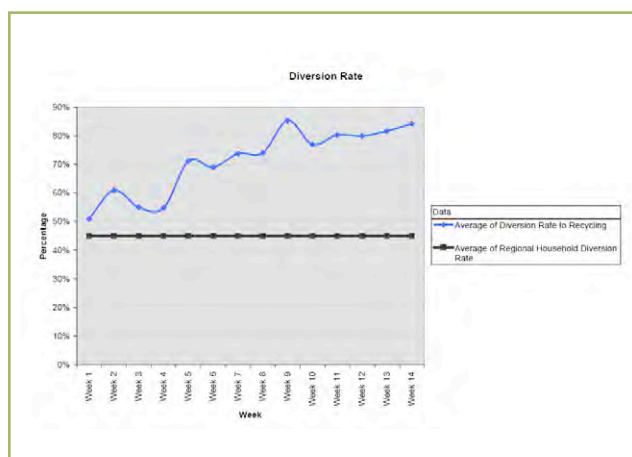
Post-campaign surveys confirmed that each Zero Waste Challenge campaign built on the success of preceding work.

About 1/3 of those surveyed for the 2009 Christmas campaign reported doing something new to reduce the amount of garbage they created over the holiday season, which equated to over 230,000 residents for a cost of approximately \$1 per resident.

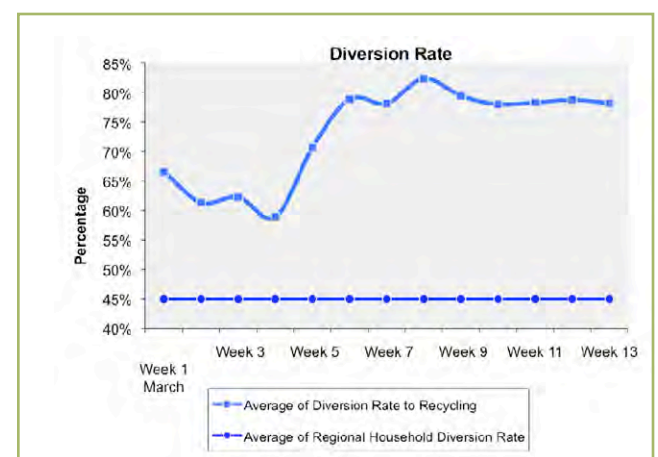


As with the 2009 campaign, about 1/3 of those surveyed after the 2010 Christmas campaign reported doing something new to reduce garbage, citing examples such as buying practical gifts, durable products and giving more experiences. The survey sample size (495) suggests that over 300,000 residents changed their behaviour at a cost of approximately \$1 per resident.

Participants in our two Community Zero Waste Challenges confirmed that households could divert 80% of the resources contained in their waste streams by taking the entire lifecycle of products and packaging into account when making purchases, by donating or selling appropriate unwanted items and by recycling beyond the blue box.



Sapperton



Glenbrook North



Municipal solid waste collected	2006/07 (tonnes)	2007/08 (tonnes)	2008/09 (tonnes)	2009/10 (tonnes)	2010/11 (estimate)
Week before Xmas	19,690	14,051	7,043	13,663	13,836
Xmas & New Year	15,175	17,465	15,112	12,924	12,616
1st week of January	18,547	18,625	18,446	17,142	14,515
2nd week of January	17,062	18,465	19,025	16,008	12,572

Garbage flows for the first week of January from 2007 through 2011 were compared to sense whether the campaign had any affect on tonnage collected. There appears to be a drop in actual tonnage collected in the weeks preceding and following Christmas week.

Tonnage collected at the curb-side is subject to many variables including the economy and the weather (a heavy snowfall in the week preceding Christmas in 2008 resulted in higher garbage volumes collected the following week).

While waste collection metrics are subject to a variety of external influences, the data is consistent with the public opinion research that shows increasing awareness and corresponding behaviour change based on our reduce, reuse and recycle campaigns.

Should "rethinking our purchases" become the norm as a result of our 2009-2011 social marketing campaigns, Metro Vancouver will have advanced residents toward the 10% per capita waste reduction identified in our Zero Waste Challenge.