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PRL 425

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Case Study Assignment: Highly EVolved

Description of the nature and focus of the campaign.

The Highly EVolved campaign is an initiative aimed at promoting electric vehicles (EVs) and raising awareness about their benefits and the realities of owning and operating them. The campaign is a joint effort between several organizations, including the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Sierra Club, and the National Wildlife Federation. Its main goal is to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles by educating the public, policymakers, and businesses about the benefits of EVs, including lower emissions, lower fuel and maintenance costs, and increased energy independence.

The campaign uses a variety of tactics to reach its audience, including advertising, social media, and events. It also provides resources and information for people who are interested in learning more about electric vehicles, including information on available models, charging infrastructure, and financial incentives.

In addition to its focus on consumer education, the Highly EVolved campaign also advocates for policies and regulations that support the growth of the electric vehicle market, such as incentives for EV adoption and the development of charging infrastructure. Overall, the Highly EVolved campaign is an important initiative that seeks to accelerate the transition to a

more sustainable and low-emission transportation system. The campaign aims to provide accurate information about EVs to help dispel common myths and misconceptions about them.

Overall, the Highly EVolved campaign is focused on promoting the benefits of EVs and encouraging the public and policymakers to take action to support their growth and adoption. By doing so, the campaign aims to contribute to a more sustainable and low-emission transportation system that benefits both the environment and public health.

Description and critique of each element of the four-step public relations management process:

a. Defining the problem through a problem statement and situation analysis. What did they learn about the problem and how well did they state it? What research methods did they employ?

The problem is the emission of carbon from fossil fuels produced by fuel gas cars. The City of Indianapolis's Office of Sustainability found that sustainability begins with proactive actions by all. While the objective was very clearly stated, the problem was not explicitly stated, resulting in me making a conclusion based on the campaign's initiatives and objectives. The research methods included "distributing city-wide e surveys, reviewing existing research on EV adoption, resources, barriers, media audits of EV coverage, examining best practices, and interviewing key EV adopting stakeholders, including city fleet services, businesses with fleet services and environmental initiatives, EV owners, and environmental organizations.

The Highly EVolved campaign identified low consumer adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) as the problem and conducted a situation analysis through research methods such as a review of existing research, focus groups, and surveys to better understand the problem and the

barriers to adoption. The team learned that many consumers have misconceptions about EVs, lack access to accurate information, and may not be aware of the benefits of EV ownership. The campaign's strategy focused on providing clear and accurate information about EVs, highlighting the benefits, and promoting charging infrastructure. Overall, the campaign was successful in defining the problem and using appropriate research methods to inform its strategy.

b. Planning: Did the goals, objectives, strategies and tactics follow the guidelines you learned in class? Did they emerge from research findings? Were they sensitive to the need for post-campaign evaluation of effects?

Though the objectives and strategies were included in the report, there was no mention of tactics implemented. The five stated objectives were both realistic and consistent with the problem being combated. The objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART), which is important for developing effective campaigns. One thing that was confusing was the repetition for objectives one through four. While objective one and three replicated each other in wording, objective two and four do the same as well. On the other hand, the strategies provided vary in diversity and action. Target audiences of potential customers, auto intenders, curious commuters, urban dwellers, and advocates were suggested as part of the campaign's efforts in the city. The campaign used a mix of channels and techniques, including digital ad buys, strategic communications, engagement with high-impact partners, and interactive and experiential events.

The campaign appears to have been sensitive to the need for post-campaign evaluation of effects. The evaluation section of the campaign report indicates that the programmatic ads received 3.94M impressions and 3,798 clicks, while the billboards received 14.95M impressions

combined. The website had 23,160 page views and 8,943 unique users within four months of the campaign, and electric vehicle sales grew from 1,058 in October 2020 to 1,320 in July 2021.

These metrics suggest that the campaign was effective in achieving its objectives, and they provide a basis for further evaluation and refinement of the campaign in the future.

c. Implementation: What communications channels and techniques were used? Did they pre-test or evaluate the effectiveness of messages before or during the campaign? Were the methods creative? What tactics were used that did not rely on mass media?

The Highly EVolved campaign used a variety of communication channels and techniques to reach its target audience. These channels included mass media advertising, social media, and events. In terms of mass media advertising, the campaign used television and radio commercials to reach a broad audience. It also used print ads in newspapers and magazines to reach specific demographic groups. Additionally, the campaign used digital advertising on websites and social media platforms to reach audiences online.

Social media was another key channel used by the campaign, with a strong presence on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The campaign used these platforms to share educational content, promote events, and engage with followers. It also used social media influencers and partnerships to reach new audiences and promote the benefits of electric vehicles.

Events were another important channel for the campaign, with a focus on community events, car shows, and ride-and-drive events. These events provided opportunities for people to experience electric vehicles firsthand and ask questions about ownership and operation.

It's unclear whether the campaign pre-tested or evaluated the effectiveness of messages before or during the campaign. However, it's common for campaigns to conduct research to inform message development and evaluate effectiveness through surveys and other metrics.

The methods used by the Highly EVolved campaign were creative and varied. For example, the campaign created an interactive online quiz to help people learn about electric vehicles, and it produced a humorous television commercial that highlighted the benefits of electric vehicles. The campaign also used eye-catching visuals and infographics to convey complex information in a simple and engaging way. In addition to mass media channels, the campaign used other tactics that did not rely on traditional advertising, such as community outreach and partnerships. The campaign partnered with local organizations and businesses to promote events and educate the public about electric vehicles. It also provided resources and information to dealerships and automotive professionals to help them educate customers about EVs. Overall, the Highly EVolved campaign used a range of creative and effective communication channels and techniques to reach its audience and promote the benefits of electric vehicles.

d. Evaluation: How was the campaign or program evaluated? Did the process suggest areas or issues for further campaign initiatives?

The Highly EVolved campaign was evaluated through a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures, including tracking website page views and unique users, monitoring EV registrations in Marion County, and measuring the reach and impact of various campaign elements such as programmatic ads, billboards, and local events. The campaign achieved impressive results, including a 265% increase in electric vehicle registrations in Indianapolis

since the campaign's launch in April 2021, and a 220% growth in EV registrations in Marion County from March 2019 through July 2021. The campaign's success suggests that it effectively met its objectives, and it provides a model for future campaigns seeking to promote sustainable transportation solutions. However, the evaluation did not explicitly suggest specific areas or issues for further campaign initiatives.

State your reactions to the campaign or program and offer any recommendations for improvements or changes. What did you learn?

- Address range anxiety: One of the main concerns that consumers have about EVs is the limited driving range compared to traditional gasoline-powered cars. The campaign could benefit from addressing this concern more directly by providing more information about the range of different EV models and highlighting the growing availability of charging infrastructure.
- Leverage influencer marketing: To reach younger and more socially connected audiences, the campaign could leverage influencer marketing by partnering with social media influencers and EV enthusiasts to promote the benefits of EVs. By tapping into the social networks and influence of these individuals, the campaign could expand its reach and credibility with younger and more digitally-savvy audiences.
- Highlight environmental benefits: While the campaign does mention the benefits of EVs for the environment, it could more prominently feature this aspect of the technology. By emphasizing the environmental benefits of EVs, the campaign could attract and engage more environmentally conscious consumers who may be more likely to adopt EVs.

- Address charging infrastructure disparities: While the campaign does mention the importance of charging infrastructure, it could also address disparities in charging infrastructure across different regions and demographics. By highlighting the need for more equitable access to charging infrastructure, the campaign could appeal to a wider range of consumers and address concerns about the feasibility of EV ownership for certain groups.

Citation:

2022, Public Relations Society of America, Inc., Silver Anvil Awards, *Highly EVolved Campaign Steers Drivers away from Fossil Fuels*, Submitted By: Indianapolis Office of Sustainability with Pivot Marketing