This presentation premiered at WaterSmart Innovations

watersmartinnovations.com
LEVERAGING POP-CULTURE TO CUT THROUGH THE NOISE

BRANDING DROUGHT AND ENGAGING IN COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS
BACKGROUND

• COBB WATER
  • LARGE METRO ATLANTA SYSTEM
  • 175,000 ACCOUNTS
  • 700,000 POPULATION

• DROUGHT
  • EXTREME DROUGHT IN 2016
  • NO RAINFALL IN 62 DAYS FROM SEPTEMBER UNTIL THE END OF NOVEMBER (A RECORD FOR THE REGION)
HERE WE GO AGAIN

• State declared a drought response level 1 in May and then a level 2 response in November
• It is difficult in the best of times to get people’s attention
• Today there is even more noise we need to get past
• The idea of dragging the same old messages/methods out just wasn’t going to do it.
WHOSE ATTENTION DO WE NEED
HOW DO WE LEVERAGE WHAT THEY KNOW AND USE?
HOW CAN WE PROVIDE INFOTAINMENT?
#DROUGHTBUSTERS WAS BORN

• ALL FEMALE VERSION HAD BEEN RELEASED
• IT WAS OUTSIDE THE BOX FOR US SO SHOULD GET CUSTOMERS’ ATTENTION
• IT WAS CHEAP BUT CONSISTENT
• ALL MATERIALS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POST COULD BE BRANDED
• TIED THE WHOLE EFFORT TOGETHER WITH THE VIDEOS
THE VIDEO SERIES

• HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=QBIGQLUCMXY&LIST=PLEFJXSZMHGCXKLUWGN
  GRHUJMVA5BXT08S&INDEX=2
SHOWER TIPS

HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=7H-19HAV4HS&INDEX=3&LIST=PLEFJXSZMHGCXKLWGNORHUJMV5BXT08S
KEY TAKE AWAYS

• HAVE FUN BUT BE APPROPRIATE TO YOUR AGENCY’S IMAGE
• THIS CAN BE A COST-EFFECTIVE WAY TO ENGAGE
• MAKE SURE WHATEVER YOU ARE RIFFING OFF OF IS AVAILABLE IN THE PUBLIC SPACE
• IT ENGAGES A DEMOGRAPHIC THAT TYPICALLY IGNORES DROUGHT MESSAGING
• KIDS ARE USING YOU TUBE IN PLACE OF TV.
• GOT TO HAVE STAFF THAT IS WILLING AND ABLE TO DO THIS
• ALL IT TOOK WAS SOME DESIGN, AN I-PHONE, AN AWESOME STAFF, AND SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE
INSERTING OURSELVES IN COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS
KEEPING IT LOCAL

• STARTED A NEXTDOOR AGENCY ACCOUNT FOR COBB WATER
• BEGAN POSTING ABOUT THE DROUGHT AND HOLDING LIVE Q&A SESSIONS
• THE DISCUSSIONS STAY AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE
• CUSTOMERS COULD GET IMMEDIATE ANSWERS
• SO MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE THAN OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA
• OUR SERVICE AREA HAS 88,000 HOMES PARTICIPATING ON NEXTDOOR
• ‘THE COMMUNITY’ WATER SYSTEM - ENGAGING
Nextdoor Effect

• It is more self-policing than other social media

• Nextdoor is the 21st century version of that old commercial “I told two friends, then she told two friends, and so on and so on.”

• For an agency you have a lot of control over the conversation and when to close a discussion or remove a comment

• Primarily positive feedback – people thanking us for engaging, honest comments, nuanced questions about river and lake management

• Once we went on Nextdoor our calls about the drought dropped dramatically
KEY TAKE AWAYS

• CITIZENS ENGAGE ON THIS PLATFORM.
• THIS IS WHERE NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL DISCUSSIONS ARE HAPPENING.
• IT IS ALSO SEEN AS AN ARENA TO AIR GRIEVANCES.
• IT IS GOOD TO KEEP THE DISCUSSION OPEN WHILE YOU CAN ACTIVELY MANAGE IT.
• WHEN YOU CLOSE IT POST THAT YOU ARE AND THAT THEY CAN STILL PRIVATE MESSAGE
• TEACH ALL OF YOUR NEXTDOOR MANAGERS ON THE STAFF HOW TO TURN OFF NOTIFICATIONS IF IT IS NOT THEIR POST
• THE PERSON ENGAGING THE CITIZENS HAS TO HAVE BOTH THE KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS.
QUESTIONS?

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