

AMEC COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS AWARDS 2012 ENTRY

BEST USE OF COMMUNICATION MEASUREMENT: NOT-FOR-PROFIT/SINGLE EVENT

ENTERING COMPANY: 360^m (A SENTIA MEDIA COMPANY)

CLIENT: GREENPEACE AUSTRALIA PACIFIC

CAMPAIGN: GM WHEAT, JULY 2011

ANALYST: WADE FEATHERSTONE

OBJECTIVE/BRIEF

One of Greenpeace's key campaigns is to highlight concerns about genetically modified (GM) food, and in Australia it campaigns against the widespread use of GM products in both food and agriculture. Greenpeace has been particularly vocal about research being undertaken to develop new GM variants of traditional grain crops such as wheat, barley and canola. On 7 July 2011, Greenpeace Australia Pacific released a report titled *Australia's wheat scandal: The biotech takeover of our daily bread*. This report included strong criticism of the Australian Federal Government and its national science body, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), for allowing Australian GM wheat trials to be supported and (allegedly) financed by various international biotech companies, particularly Monsanto. The report was harshly criticised by key grain-grower stakeholders, including Australia's peak grower and government-funded research body, the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC).

On 14 July, Greenpeace conducted its key element of the anti-GM campaign: a controversial, unannounced direct action at the CSIRO trial GM wheat crop in Ginninderra, near Canberra. Greenpeace activists – wearing bio-protection suits to convey their concerns about GM contamination and safety – used motorised weed cutters to destroy the entire crop. There was a strong media response to this action, which clearly reflected the polarisation of opinion and feelings about GM crops. Subsequently, the media reported on the Australian Federal Police's response to this action, which included its raid on Greenpeace's Sydney headquarters on 21 July.

360^m/Sentia Media provides ongoing quarterly media analysis reports to Greenpeace Australia. To more closely study the media response to this anti-GM campaign, Greenpeace commissioned 360^m to analyse media coverage over the period that specifically discussed this campaign, from **4 to 30 July 2011**. The objectives of this research project were to:

- (1) Measure and evaluate** how successful Greenpeace's campaign was in delivering its key messages, through the media, to the general public, grains industry stakeholders and the government nationally.
- (2) Determine** the effectiveness of the media campaign in conveying and promoting Greenpeace's agenda on GM overall.
- (3) Identify** the key aspects of opposition to the campaign, in order to help Greenpeace counter them.

STRATEGY

360^m provided guidance and closely consulted with Greenpeace to ensure the best strategy was employed to meet the organisation's needs and deliver the brief. The consistency of Greenpeace's messages is a key component of its media strategy and tracking these was a major consideration in the analysis process. 360^m worked with Greenpeace to ensure all messages were tracked and identified throughout the period to reflect Greenpeace's communication strategy, including those present in its media releases. Other messages relating to concerns raised in the media were also tracked. 360^m additionally recommended full analysis of broadcast media coverage to ensure the consistency of the analysis across media types.

Another essential element of Greenpeace's media strategy is the use of visual imagery such as photographs and slogans on banners to enhance its verbal messages, and so it was essential for 360^m to track this aspect of the coverage in both television and press outlets.

EXECUTION/IMPLEMENTATION

360^m used the CARMA methodology (see **Appendix B**) to analyse the collected media coverage quantitatively and qualitatively; all monitored press and broadcast media reports were analysed in full. 360^m analysts devised a research matrix that was framed by Greenpeace's key awareness activities (**OBJECTIVE 1**). These cues included the strategic protest at the CSIRO facility; related comments from the organisation (either from pre-prepared statements, media releases or spokespeople); publications and research material; and visual cues (such as banners and photographs).

Reporting on the outcomes of Greenpeace's awareness activities often provided further opportunity for the organisation to communicate its messages through the media, and this coverage was also analysed for messages and favourability of discussion. These outcomes included the reaction to the campaign by grains

industry stakeholders, the research establishment (including the CSIRO), and the public (particularly in letters-to-the-editor and talkback radio programs). Media coverage of the legal action taken against Greenpeace (such as the police raid on its headquarters) and court appearances by activists was additionally analysed for messages and tone (**OBJECTIVE 2**).

Media reporting was also evaluated by media type, region (national, regional, suburban and metropolitan media outlets) and audience/circulation to provide further insight on the overall success of Greenpeace's campaign in conveying its messages about GM (**Appendix A, Examples 1A & 1B**) (**OBJECTIVES 1 & 2**). The most frequently quoted spokespeople and most common bylines and broadcast comperes to report on the campaign were also tracked in order to identify key targets for Greenpeace to further focus its campaign media strategy (**OBJECTIVE 3**).

360^m analysts identified and tracked a total of 66 separate messages in the coverage, in order to evaluate which elements of the GM campaign were gaining the most traction in reporting. This included both messages that were communicated by Greenpeace and those conveyed by organisations opposed to Greenpeace's position (**OBJECTIVES 1 & 2**).

CONCLUSIONS

The media strategy employed by Greenpeace in July was successful in garnering media interest and igniting debate about GM, and GM wheat in particular. The analysed coverage clearly reflected the divergence in opinions on GM (**Examples 2A & 2B**). However, the success in generating interest also provided pro-GM stakeholders with a media platform that allowed them not only to condemn Greenpeace's actions in its Ginninderra strategic protest, but also to promote the benefits of GM research in direct contradiction of Greenpeace's own premise and associated messages. In fact, the analysis found that some key unfavourable messages about the campaign and GM (such as *CSIRO GM trials are researching the benefits of GM wheat*) were conveyed more frequently than Greenpeace's favourable messages (including *CSIRO GM trials are secret and will involve human testing*) (**Example 3**).

A key point of the analysis was that Greenpeace was accused of being hypocritical about the science of GM by attacking the CSIRO directly, given Greenpeace's continuing support of the science behind concerns about climate change and carbon reduction, which is also part of the CSIRO's remit (**Example 4A**). This accusation, raised in comments by various stakeholders in the agriculture and science sectors, undermined Greenpeace's anti-GM messages. The public's perception of the campaign was reflected in the analysis by the prominence of negative comments about the organisation on talkback radio and the unfavourable

Action 1: Greenpeace has since attempted to redress the scientific concerns raised by its opponents and the condemnation of the general public. This strategy has included a series of interviews in media outlets across Australia with Greenpeace scientist Janet Cotter, who has highlighted the scientific evidence that underpins the organisation's concerns about GM research.

Action 2: The analysis also identified one influential agricultural journalist who was clearly biased against Greenpeace (in all his 13 articles published in leading rural and regional newspapers). Greenpeace was able to make a complaint against this journalist to the Australian Press Council on the basis of biased and unbalanced journalism.

nature of the majority of letters-to-the-editor towards Greenpeace. Greenpeace appeared to have alienated public opinion to some extent by its actions at Ginninderra, and particularly by attacking an esteemed research organisation such as the CSIRO (**Example 4B**) (**OBJECTIVE 2**).

Greenpeace was most concerned about 360^m's findings that the organisation had been accused of being selective in its denial of the science that has underpinned research into GM wheat and grains, particularly since this accusation could also impede its other high-profile campaign agendas, particularly its work on climate change. Greenpeace was also concerned about the force of public opposition to the strategic protest at CSIRO, also revealed by conclusions drawn in the analysis (**OBJECTIVE 3**).

We were looking for a clear understanding of how effectively our messages resonated in different media spheres – particularly whether we were able to deliver nuanced messages while undertaking a visual and controversial piece of work. The media analysis report has proven extremely useful, and was shared among the communications and campaign staff across the organisation. It provided informed and insightful details which allowed us to clearly measure the impact of our campaign and media perception. The analysis identified key messages which had failed to cut through, which helped us to determine future media strategy around this campaign and also provided empirical evidence which confirmed our own feelings about the media coverage.

James Lorenz, Communications and Media Manager, Greenpeace Australia Pacific