

American Millennials: Cultivating the Next Generation of Ocean Conservationists

Follow Up Communications Research:
Fall 2016



Goal

Test a spectrum of communications materials with Millennial audience segments identified in previous research

Objectives

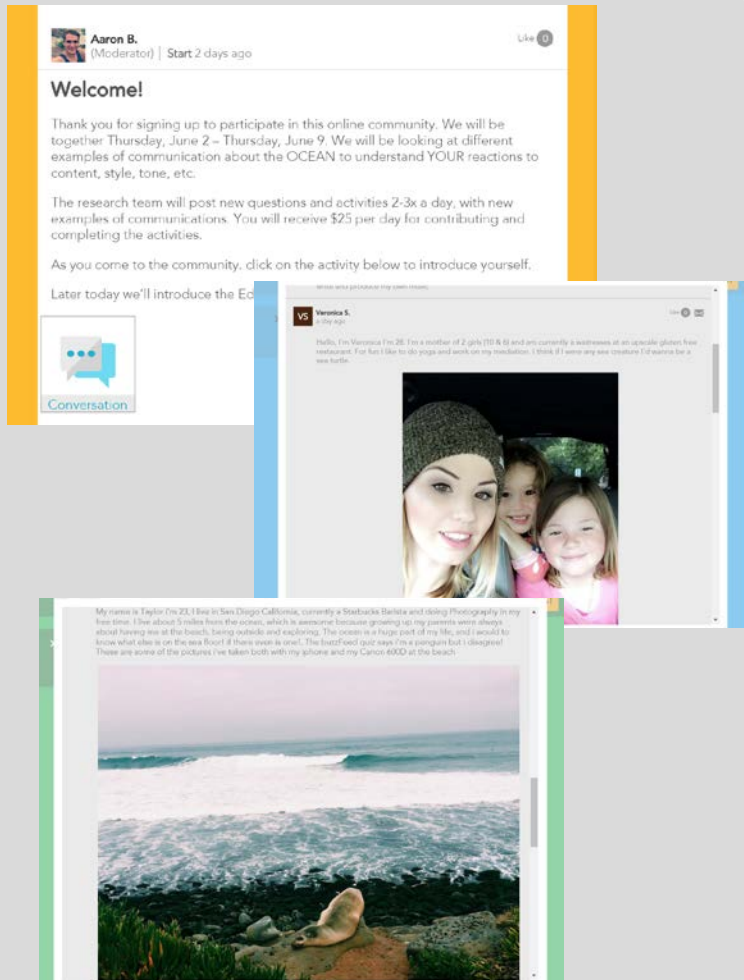
- What gets attention?
- Which topics and formats rise to the top?
- What elements are effective and what are not?
- Which communications generate engagement?
- How do Millennials want to engage with groups?

Who

3 Discussion Groups recruited to fit segment profiles

- Global Greens
- Coastal Concerned
- Waiting in the Wings

Segments True to Form



"The ocean is like that person you don't see everyday but if you hear something happened to her you would be heartbroken. It's that type of relationship that no matter how far apart you are, distance can not tear it apart. The ocean is that person you rely on." WW

"For me the ocean is like the neighbor that you always seem to let slip your mind until you're back home and you couldn't imagine growing up without them there. I've always been close to the water and as a result I think I take it for granted." CC

"I think people need to become more aware of the danger that is being brought upon the ocean and marine life. I think people get so caught up in 'regular' everyday things." GG

What & How

- Online discussion boards running for 1 week
- Materials grouped by topic/subject matter
- Showed in randomized order across the 3 groups
- Review, feedback, discussion
- Follow-up in-depth interviews with select respondents



A Variety of Materials

Topics:

Ocean PR
Eco-Tourism
Animals
Fishing/MSA/EBFM
Clean Water/Quality
Arctic/Oil/Energy
Ocean Noise
Plastic
Seafood
Climate-Related

Formats:

Video
Social Media
Websites
Op-Eds
Direct Appeals
Petitions
Seafood Guides
Edu-tainment
+ BuzzFeed, advertising,
and more

Key Questions

Do communications convey the message intended?

- Not confusing or skeptical, but not generally inspiring
- Some of these issues are old news – the question is what is next or what is the solution that will actually work?

What cuts through?

- High production value
- Animals, the unusual, the unknown tidbit
- Scalable or innovative solutions

Do communications generate engagement?

- More willing to engage personally than to share – issues can be hard to explain to others
- But, across a variety of issues there was willingness to do both



Trends & Insights

- **ISSUES & CONTENT**

- New – never thought about it, never heard about it but a new tidbit I can tell others about
- New and unusual animals also move the needle – not just the cute stuff – Some evidence that animals are more likely to get shares and less is more – don't need a laundry list, just one really good one
- Old news doesn't excite – most agree with Arctic piece but all the examples were of the BP Deepwater Horizon spill
- Like information coming from different places – multiple paths to engage fully
 - Some looked beyond what we gave them to decide how they felt
- Scalability – action is directly connected to problem and it's plausible that enough people doing it would make a difference
- Fisheries are a tough sell – like the people over policy.
 - Illegal shark fishing is very moving, but concern is more about the critters. Focusing on waste and by-catch might be more engaging; but inside strategies are focusing on policy
- With Plastics – it is where do we go from here?





Trends & Insights

- **FORMAT & TACTICS**

- High production value. This is an Edutainment segment that grew up on Discovery Channel and IMAX

- Video has hits and misses; if using this medium it better be good
- Emotional vs. Chalk talk – chalk talk is good for taking emotion out of things and explaining
- Use of celebrities should be done thoughtfully – they can be a distraction

- Social and Activations

- Worked better when specific and directed at individual
- Too often there was let down – Who is responsible? *Society. What do I do? Recycle. Ride a bike. Things I do already.*
 - Example with Restore the Beach – engaging, people love beach but what is root cause? Why give \$ for testing? What is the problem we need to stop?

- On Social, don't forget to introduce yourself – they are landing on social sites with no idea who you are.

- They may find your content engaging but have no clue who you are so they don't stick with the organization

Top & Bottom Performers

"Fish Food Six Pack Rings"

format: activation, buy

topic: plastics

★★★★ (of 4) = Overall performance

13 of 24 = "Most engaging" votes

3 of 24 = "Least engaging" votes

H Edible Rings On Six-Packs Feed Marine Life If They End Up In The Ocean



COURTESY OF WE BELIEVERS

The rings are also 100 percent biodegradable and compostable, which just ups the product's sustainability game.

The brand says that the innovative design is as resistant and efficient as plastic packaging. The only drawback is that edible six-pack rings are more expensive to produce. But the company hopes that customers will be willing to pay a little more in order to help the environment and animal life.



- Millennials appreciated the creativity of this solution and a pay-off for the ocean
- Quick read, big visuals a plus
- This was the example most likely to share
- All communities responded positively (although CC & WW the most impressed)
- It makes buying beer a way to help (and is a new action to counter plastic)
- No villain, it's all on "us"

"The edible rings article was really interesting because it is an actual, tangible action that is bettering the ocean.... It is not simply advocating for a cause, it is making a change." CC

Source (Edge search): Saltwater Brewing, FL
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/saltwater-brewery-edible-six-pack-rings-beer-plastic-marine-life_us_573b796ce4b0ef86171c5fe4

"Vice Video: Overfishing"

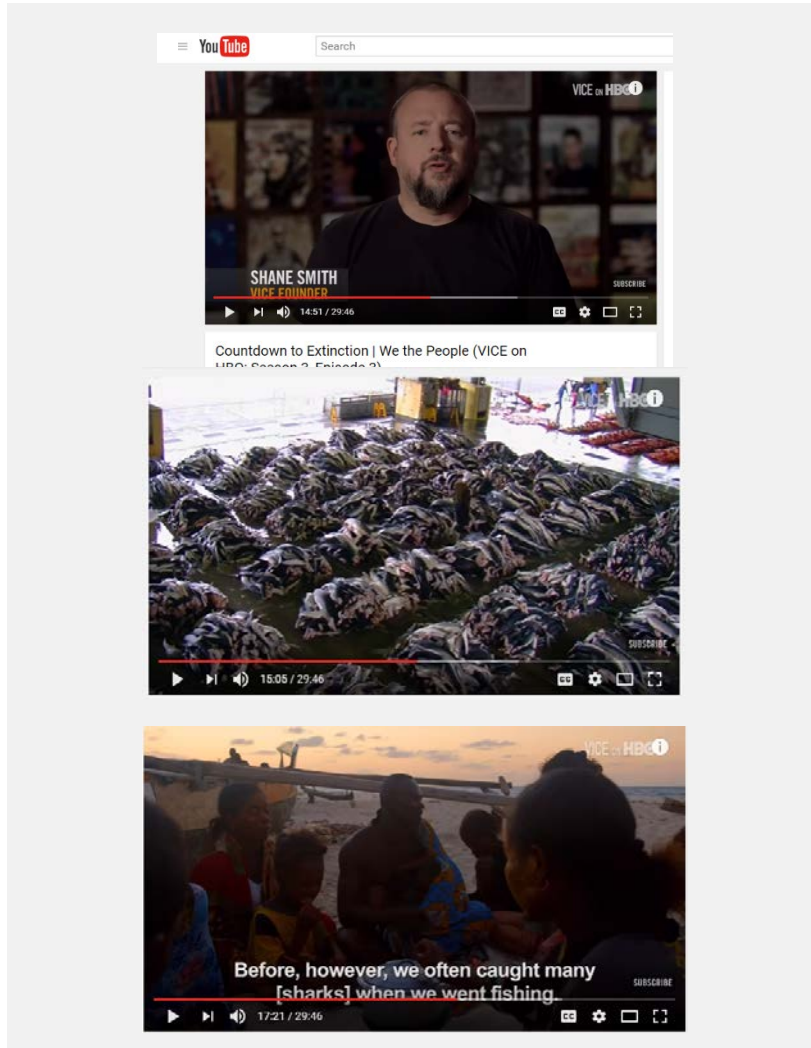
format: video +op-ed

topic: fishing

★★★★ (of 4) = Overall performance

14 of 24 = "Most engaging" votes

0 of 24 = "Least engaging" votes



- Tone and production quality intrigued
- Edu-tainment and learning about sharks made it engaging
- Emotional connections – participants "sad," "disappointed," "angry"
- Some appeal in the "HBO Vice" name
- High ratings for sharing and passing on

"Wow, the HBO vice overfishing video really got me. It broke my heart to see what they were doing to the sharks and it made me angry." GG

Source (Edge search): HBO Vice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOJJsZOgN14&feature=youtu.be&t=14m51s>

"Leave Arctic Oil"

format: op-ed

topic: energy/oil

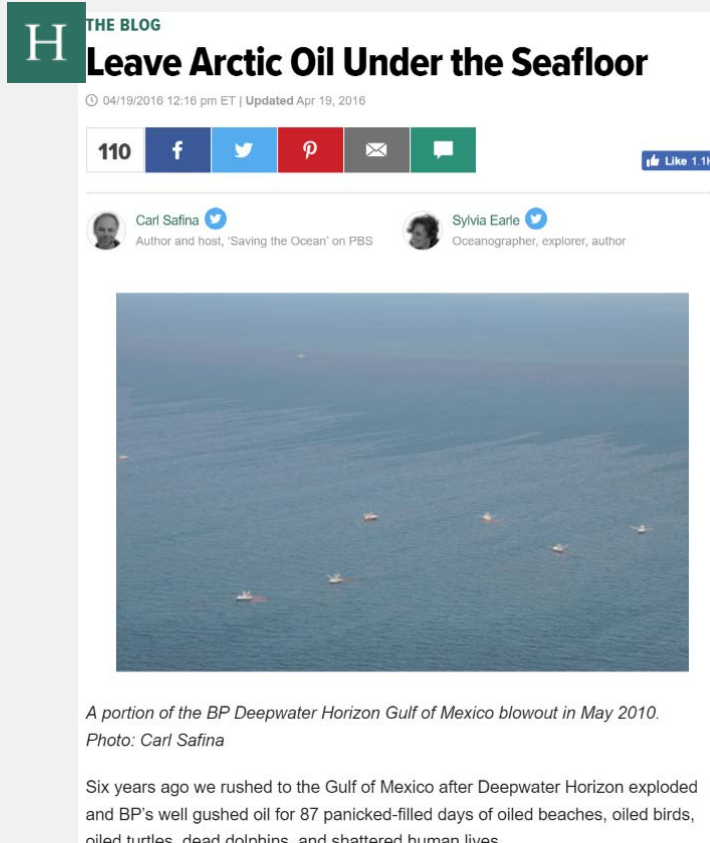
★★★★ (of 4) = Overall performance

6 of 24 = "Most engaging" votes

4 of 24 = "Least engaging" votes

- The only piece of "reading" in the Top10 of engagement scores
- Big issue, short format made an impression
- The BP spill was familiar and tapped into negative feelings; the authors' defiant voice seemed to rub off on these participants
- Still too "wordy" for some, and not a piece Millennials were eager to share
- Too much "old news" to get action as opposed to sympathy

"I could not imagine going through that again. The United States spent so much money on the clean up, paying out the affected families/communities, and fining the company responsible." CC



Source (Edge search): Huffington Post

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/carl-safina/leave-arctic-oil-under-the-sea_b_9728632.html

"Nature Is Speaking"

format: edu-tainment

topic: human impact

★★ (of 4) = Overall performance

3 of 24 = "Most engaging" votes

7 of 24 = "Least engaging" votes



Nature Is Speaking - Harrison Ford is The Ocean | Conservation International (CI)

Conservation International
Subscribe 47,475

1,222,720 views

Add to Share More

10,405 133

Published on Oct 5, 2014

Julia Roberts, Harrison Ford, Kevin Spacey, Edward Norton, Penélope Cruz, Robert Redford and Ian Somerhalder all join forces to give nature a voice.



- All the videos generated conversation, and some participants really liked the device of the ocean personified
- But somber tone was a turn off, and the script seemed condescending
- Pace and narration made it hard to keep attention (Harrison Ford's voice distracts)
- Overall, many appreciated the message, but wanted it conveyed differently

"'Nature Is Speaking' was very engaging to me. The ocean talking - as if in it's own voice." GG

"I didn't get as much energy out of it, nor did it inspire me that much." WW

"Opposition Mounts to MSA"

format: op-ed

topic: fishing

★ (of 4) = Overall performance

0 of 24 = "Most engaging" votes

5 of 24 = "Least engaging" votes

The screenshot shows the Talking Fish.org website. The main article is titled "Opposition Mounts to Controversial Fishing Bill" under the "NATIONAL POLICY" category. It was posted on May 28, 2013, by Talking Fish. The article text discusses fishing groups and conservationists voicing concerns about a bill set for a vote Monday in the U.S. House of Representatives that critics say could seriously undermine the law that has guided sustainable fishing in the country for decades. It mentions H.R. 1335 as the current House legislation to reauthorize the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), the nation's primary fishery management law. A photograph of a cod fish in a wooden crate is included. A caption below the photo reads: "The 2014 cod population on Georges Bank, located off Cape Cod in the easternmost side of the Gulf of Maine, was the lowest ever recorded—roughly 1 percent of what scientists say would be a healthy population." The website also features a "RECENT POSTS" section with links to articles about Atlantic menhaden catch limits, the potential of the Gulf of Maine, and fish talk in the news. There is a "SUBSCRIBE TO TALKING FISH" button and a "HOT TOPICS" section with tags like "CATCH LIMITS, CLIMATE CHANGE, CLOSED AREAS, COD, ECOSYSTEM-BASED FISHERIES, MANAGEMENT FISHERIES".

- "Too wordy" and "boring"
- Participants suggest breaking up the article and factual info with more visuals and infographics
- Importance of MSA was coming through, but this was not energizing
- At least the headline grabbed attention and got some reads (next to other materials like HBO Vice)

"The least engaging item for me was the bill, and only because it was a lot of reading to do and was not engaging at all to the reader. It lacked that zing that the other stuff had and was just data." CC

Source (Edge search): Talking Fish

<http://www.talkingfish.org/national-policy/opposition-mounts-to-controversial-fishing-bill>

"Shell Energy/Innovation"

format: website

topic: arctic/energy/oil

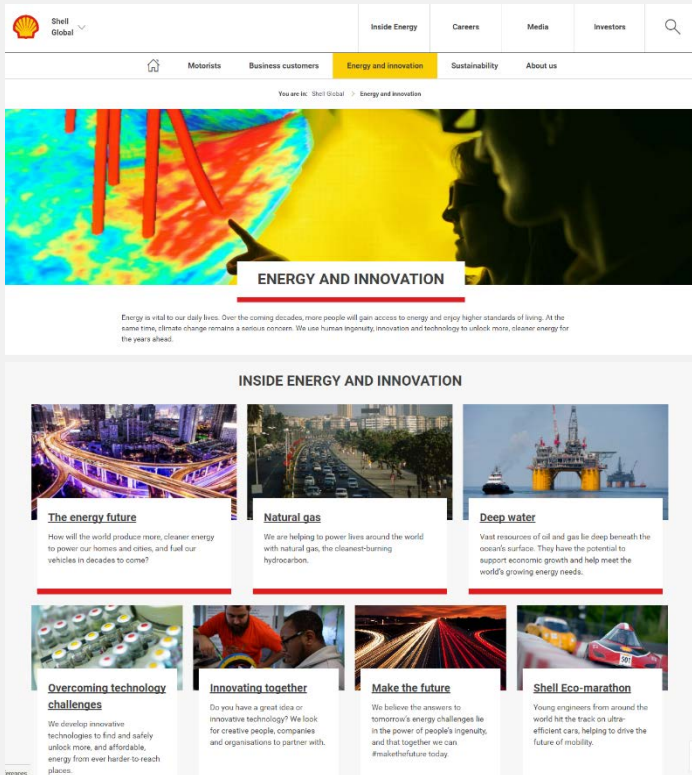
★ (of 4) = Overall performance

2 of 24 = "Most engaging" votes

4 of 24 = "Least engaging" votes

- Too much flash and not enough substance for these Millennials
- "Innovation" content was on the right track, but across groups we heard the critique that the website was "pretty pictures with no backbone"
- They wanted detail, data, timelines to know if advancements would be achieved
- Perceptions of Shell as a "large corporation" also fostered some distrust

"The most boring was the Shell page. It was just pictures happily presented by a large corporation, as opposed to the other links in this set." CC



Source (Edge search): Shell

<http://www.shell.com/energy-and-innovation.html>

Take-Aways

- Communications guidance:
 - Put the problem before the policy
 - Hold someone or something accountable
 - Scale solutions or show a scalable path
 - To promote it, it has to be self-explanatory, they are not experts
 - Most don't know you or your brand, so it is their brand they are putting out there when they share with others

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