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PART A: Executive Summary

Section I. Overview

PraxisPR, a marketing communications firm that serves a diverse client base, including large multi-national clients and NGOs, was asked to participate in a study of promotion and education practices in a selection of Ontario recycling programs. This study, which is funded by Ontario stewards of Blue Box waste, is supplementary to the Ontario Blue Box Program Enhancement and Best Practices Assessment Project.

The objective was to delve more deeply into an area in which stewards and their suppliers offer particular expertise. The desired output is a different perspective on recycling P&E, with practical advice that communities may use to expand or enhance their recycling P&E activities.

This study comprised a review and assessment of blue box recycling communications within eight Ontario municipalities – Barrie, Durham, Hamilton, London, Markham, Stratford, Thunder Bay and Toronto. These communities were selected as a result of a series of interviews with individuals who are knowledgeable about Ontario recycling and P&E for recycling. In these interviews, the respondents were asked to identify communities that they considered to operate notable P&E programs, campaigns or components in support of their recycling programs. Phone audits were conducted with those accountable for P&E programs in the selected communities. Audit findings are presented within this report.

It should be noted that communities shared a wide range of materials for the review. However, communications planning documents and paid media placement information were not available, except in the case of one community. In turn, detailed evaluation of these key components was not undertaken. Instead, insights to best practice for media placement and strategic communications planning have been included in the report.

Industry best practice considered

The Executive Summary insights and recommendations that follow are aimed at enhancing the long-term impact of municipally-driven blue box recycling communications campaigns. Recommendations are drawn from a multitude of sources, in addition to findings about the audited municipalities. They include: industry best practice specific to marketing communications planning; creative development; media

planning and media buying; along with communications measurement and evaluation for paid and earned media campaigns.

Social responsibility campaigns challenge traditional marketing

The report authors also found it pertinent to review P&E recycling programs against best practice in social responsibility campaigns. The communications task posed to recycling communicators can be more complex than the task faced by professional marketers who promote products.

Why? Successful social responsibility marketing often proves more creatively and operationally challenging than product marketing. Operationally, social responsibility campaign budgets are far more limited in dollars available for creative execution and paid media than product marketing campaigns. The latter typically are in the millions of dollars.

From a creative standpoint, when promoting a "product," if the audience buys into it, they receive an immediate reward – the gratification of a product purchase. When promoting an "issue," the audience does not get an instant reward. Communicators must convince them to give of their precious time, money or voice with no immediate "win" for self, except for the promise of a better future.

The increased breadth of traditional measures used to evaluate issue-based campaigns versus product-sell campaigns is just one indicator of the complexity of crafting issues-based campaigns. The evaluation measures are shown in the table that follows.



Measures Used to Measure Success in Product-Sell vs. Issue-Based P&E Campaigns		
Traditional success measures – % of target audience who:	Product-sell Campaigns	Issue-based Campaigns
Are aware of campaign message/s (unaided)	V	V
View message/s as relevant/value to self	V	V
View message/s as having relevance to society		V
Intend to purchase	✓	
View message sponsor as highly credible		V
Believe message sponsor serves its community		V
Believe message sponsor is transparent, fiscally responsible		V
Understand how issue/message sponsor is having measurable, meaningful effect		V

Because issue campaigns do not deliver instant rewards, relapse to undesirable behaviours is a common problem. This drives the need for sustained message exposure in social marketing to re-motivate the target audience to act responsibly.

Best practices in social responsibility campaigns

Due to the added complexities in social marketing, to assess P&E recycling programs, insights were also drawn from mass awareness and community-driven social responsibility programs. The programs considered were all piloted, executed, and measured within Ontario, over 5-15 year time spans. They include: Charitable Sector Giving Campaigns (provincial and community-based), Smoke-Free Ontario, Drinking & Driving Campaign, and Ontario's Recognize & React to Stroke.

Key insights from recognized social marketers including Doug McKenzie-Mohr, Neeli Bendapudi et al (authors of: *Enhancing Helping Behaviour – An Integrative Framework for Promotion Planning*), along with AMRC's P&E insights have also been considered within the recommendations.

Section II. P&E Findings and Best Practice Recommendations

A. Resource limitations require cost-efficient solutions Municipalities may be unnecessarily reinventing the communications wheel

Municipalities have and continue to make enormous strides in executing communications campaigns when resources, financial and human, are considered. Recycling communicators report working to support other mandates, and do not typically have dedicated communications staff, requiring reliance on other waste management staff. While they utilize communications committees, the mandate as well as scope of committee work is unclear. There is a sense that the P&E communicator is a one woman or one-man show, for the most part. Many indicated a belief that dollar resources need to be doubled to execute more effective communications. Based on estimated communications spend relative to market size, their perceived lack of resource shortfalls are founded, if mass media placement is in the communications mix.

In reviewing recycling communication campaigns, it became apparent that each municipality may be unnecessarily reinventing the wheel in relation to creative development and execution. "Municipalities
have and
continue to
make enormous
strides..."

This is a critical factor if budgets remain flat, and population growth continues.

Collateral materials are remarkably similar in formats and content, despite the need to have the flexibility to tailor tools to deliver locally-specific information (i.e., via website and localized logo presentation). The opportunity to partner in resource development is generally not being leveraged.

Report authors recommend that going forward, communication development partnership models should be examined to understand and capitalize on the efficiencies that could be leveraged among municipalities.

If communities could agree to develop and share overall creative templates (branded house design) along with an agreed to, tested umbrella message and support messages, this would open up the opportunity to identify resource and supplier-sharing potential that could be used in various applications. This approach could become highly valuable on a province-wide basis – especially for communities that do not have the same level of communications expertise or resources, as do the eight evaluated municipalities. Lead communicator municipalities could look at a cost-recovery model for their leadership role – not uncommon in NGO-based community models.

Municipalities should determine their creative to media placement costs ratio

Too often, the largest proportion of a community-based communications budget is spent on creative development versus paid media placement. Maximizing audience reach is therefore compromised. The report authors are uncertain whether this is the case within recycling municipalities as communications planning information was not available.

Regardless, it is recommended that each municipality examine its creative development to media placement cost ratio. While there is no longer a standard rule of thumb of what the ratio should be, best practice shows that placement costs for promotion should far outweigh creative costs. Many years ago, prior to the diversification and fragmentation of the paid media environment, a 1:10 ratio (\$\$ for creative to \$\$ for placement) was believed to be in order.

If creative costs do indeed represent a significant portion of overall budget, the potential impact of creative development partnerships between municipalities as a means to free-up resources for enhanced placement should be considered very seriously.

"...placement costs for promotion should far outweigh creative costs"

B. Strategic communications planning is a must

Due to lack of information, the report authors were not able to evaluate best practice relative to communications planning, nor evaluation approaches to measure communications performance. However, it was viewed as helpful to outline key best practice plan components. Each practice component is examined in detail throughout this report.

C. Need to define the #1 audience Communications should target those supportive of recycling, versus those not supportive

A critical component in marketing communications planning that significantly impacts success is the ability to clearly define the #1 audience. Attitudes, beliefs and barriers to action (all critical to effective message development) will vary among different audience segments.

Communications is ideally targeted at the audience segments that are already "somewhat" supportive of your messages, but require motivation to help them overcome barriers to action. The communicator's task is to move the audience into the "fully supportive" camp over time. Targeting those "off-side" or "non-supportive" is not seen to be a good use of communications resources.

However, if the communicator determines that the largest proportion of their community falls into the "somewhat opposed" segment, this group will need to be targeted. In this case, the communications challenge will be tougher and will require more concentrated message outreach, likely over longer timeframes to see positive communications impact.

Consider women highly desirable target audience

Recycling research has identified "women" as the most receptive audience for recycling messages. This is consistent across many social responsibility issues as women typically play a societal caregiver role, and have a tendency to respond more favourably to socially-relevant messaging versus personally-relevant when positioned as a lead message. It should be noted that women continue to report the "time-crunch" as their #1 lifestyle barrier. This needs to be taken into consideration in message development and creative presentation¹.

In reviewing the communications offerings within the pilot

¹ Informa Research and Ehl Harrison Consulting Inc., Blue Box Recycling Public Opinion Survey – Benchmark Report (for City of Hamilton), March 2006



municipalities, only a handful of communications tools appeared to target a pre-defined audience. More commonly, messages were general in nature, and assessment of intended audience was challenging.

D. Defining the umbrella messaging A captivating umbrella message to inspire recycling despite barriers should be integrated throughout all communications vehicles

"We are powered by our emotions, not our reason," is a neurologist's quote adopted by marketers as best practice. It speaks to the need to appeal to an audience's emotional triggers versus utilizing factual triggers.

An umbrella message should be deployed that plays on key consumer insights to captivate attention and inspire the target audience to recycle, despite perceived barriers. Moreover, the umbrella message should be woven throughout all communications vehicles, to maximize its exposure and act as a reinforcer to build audience impressions over time and help counteract relapses in recycling behaviour.

Research conducted by social marketing experts like Doug McKenzie-Mohr indicate that, in order to overcome time and complexity barriers, recycling needs to be conveyed as an easy process and a normative behaviour. According to recent findings presented in the Focus Group Report of the Enhanced Blue Box Recovery Program² and Municipality of Hamilton research³, citizens/residents are seeking better understanding of the fate of recycled materials and of community progress in order to make the effort.

A local print campaign developed in London was executed extremely well in presenting an emotive answer to what happens to recycled materials. Its headline reads: "We could have been a ski jacket." The new "Recycling Works" provincewide advertising campaign (developed under E&E Fund PN 105) takes on a similar creative direction and is likely to be received very positively by answering consumer uncertainty about the fate of recyclables.

In reviewing the selected communities, a number of opportunities emerged to strengthen communications for mass and direct-to-consumer vehicles. They include:



Informa Research and McConnell Weaver Communication Management: Enhanced Blue Box Recovery Focus Group Report, March 2006. (Available at: http://www.stewardshipontario.ca/pdf/eefund/reports/105/105_focus_group.pdf)

City of Hamilton Waste Management Division: Blue Box Recycling Public Opinion Survey – Benchmark Report, March 2006.

- Developing a captivating umbrella message
- The need to weave the umbrella message across communications vehicles
- Infusing warmth and personal tone into language
- Avoiding too many statistical factors that would not be fully appreciated by a non-expert audience:
 - For example, the phrase, "4,000 tonnes diversion" would be a stronger support message if translated into human terms. "City residents' recycling efforts have preserved "x" land space of potential park lands"
- Simplifying communications avoid heavy prose, small type, and too many messages – all reinforce time-consuming, complexity perceptions
- Prioritizing content focus concentrate on one solution to overcome one barrier instead of taking them all on.
 Too many messages and too much information impede comprehension and recall.
- Establishing clean, simple, contemporary branding elements that become instantly identifiable with the recycling campaign and its messages
- Creating a compelling tagline to accompany the sponsor logo
- Avoiding "commanding" word choices in taglines as this could alienate consumers. Adopt language that empowers and reinforces their importance.

E. Defining the communications mediums An integrated communications campaign is optimal

Social marketing experience has shown that mass awareness advertising is an excellent tool for increasing awareness and shifting attitudes (TV is regarded as a top performer). However, mass advertising has not proven to be an effective behavioural change tool. Providing consumers with new information or insights to increase public awareness does not in itself build needed skills or touch points to stimulate behaviour change.

This means that community-based recycling programs should ideally be multi-tiered, incorporating a mass media vehicle (from Tier 1) to build issues awareness and shift attitudes, complemented by community outreach tools (from Tier 2) to help build skills, and experiential opportunities (from Tier 3) to engage with the issue.



The tiered approach is described more fully in the Media Planning Guide shown in Section 2 (D). Ideally, Tier 1 should include: a TV or radio component (if available to the community); Tier 2 includes householder mailers that offer a user-friendly tool such as a calendar; complemented by Tier 3 activities comprised of public relations or word-of-mouth strategies to animate communities. These activities can include highly visible events, community and corporate partnerships, role model identification, and personal testimonial approaches. All these efforts reinforce recycling as a community and as a personal norm.

Newspaper print opportunities, while regarded as a mass media vehicle, can be leveraged as a Tier 2 vehicle to prompt issue engagement and/or website traffic. (See PART D: Opportunities to Maximize P&E Impact, Section II. Pg. 28, for a list of newspaper strategies to engage consumers in the issue.)

While a tiered media approach is ideal, it will challenge current budgets and best practices relative to achieving adequate mass media placement from a reach, frequency and message sustainability perspective. Hence, the need to examine a centralized approach to maximizing mass media efforts.

There are other reasons why the report authors continue to recommend that the mass media tier (Tier 1) be driven centrally across Ontario. They include optimizing the use of Ontario's media marketplace whereby network penetration is strong, and the fact that broadcast media outlets are not consistently

distributed across the Province. Many municipalities do not have access to full-service advertising agencies and this puts them at a disadvantage from a strategic communications planning perspective. They must rely on design firms and their own skill-sets to develop strategic messaging, media plans and negotiate with media outlets, whereas agencies would be likely to be able to negotiate more effectively on their behalf.

F. Frequency and sustainability Communications flight plans should be developed to ensure sustained message exposure year-round

The research conducted on the eight audited municipalities revealed that P&E media planning data were scarce, with frequency of paid advertising appearing to be generally low to poor. This may help to explain why the audited municipalities were uncertain about and questioned the value of mass media in a number of instances.

The observation was made that some communities are placing many different ads into their markets, even though the ability to deliver needed frequency and sustained presence is limited. Advertising takes much longer to fatigue than is typically thought. Market research houses that measure performance of multi-million dollar campaigns have found that using multiple companion ads to convey the same message can cut overall campaign awareness/recall by half.

What has emerged in media buying research relative to social responsibility is that continuity of message (message exposure sustained over longer time periods) is at least as important if not more important than frequency of message. Other research supports the notion that a "communications blitz" is only effective when lower volume continuity strategies are in place to

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keep the issue top-of-mind. This reinforces the need to be highly focused and strategic in utilizing paid placement, when continuity is critical.

It also drives the need for municipalities to more proactively pursue media relations opportunities, and community and corporate partnerships to help deliver message continuity in order to stay on the public's radar screen year-round.

Hence, the report authors recommend that companion advertising strategies (ads that share the same creative approach

and umbrella messaging, but are varied in execution) be avoided in favour of a single advertising execution.

G. Effectiveness measures & goal-setting Some form of evaluation methodologies should be in place, despite the challenges faced

Isolating the effectiveness of proactive communications outreach from the effects of overall environmental noise and recycling program efficiencies can be difficult – especially in budget-constrained scenarios. Few formalized evaluation methodologies had been constructed within pilot municipalities. In one community, post-campaign research was conducted to understand if campaign exposure was effectively delivered.

Some form of evaluation methodologies should be implemented as part of a best practice program to understand and monitor whether overall communications goals are being met. A few suggested directions follow:

- Setting awareness and attitudinal baselines to track awareness and attitudinal shifts that influence behaviour change among the defined audience every 2-3 years, based on market research findings on social marketing campaigns. Awareness and attitudinal shift measures should directly correlate to umbrella messaging and the tagline delivered by the communications campaign.
- This would allow goal-setting relative to attitudinal shifts such as: x% of target audience will view recycling as the norm by "y date"; or x% will be able to speak to the fate of recycling materials (i.e., recyclables are turned into ski jackets).
- Attaching a prompt or incentive to a collateral communications tool to track response, such as a coupon or free offer (i.e., for a reusable grocery bag or recycling bin); or driving to a website to enter a Test Your Recycling IQ and Win a Free....

Section III. Evolution of Recycling P&E Transitioning from information to inspiration?

In reviewing P&E audit findings and other research, there is some indication that an information or education-driven campaign approach may be fatiguing. This would be expected as the public has been exposed to the recycling issue for nearly

"We are powered by our emotions not our reason."

Neurologist inspires marketers.

two decades. Even if the public's depth of knowledge on key issues is less than optimal, they may believe they are knowledgeable and tune out to education-based campaigns.

Social responsibility campaigns have been seen to evolve and need to be transitioned to a new communications platform every five to 10 years. Whereby the original platform may have been mass awareness and education-driven, campaigns often evolve towards self-evaluation of personal action and engagement as attitudes shift and solidify among receptive audiences.

The recycling issue could be coming of age – whereby the movement away from an education or information platform to an engagement and inspiration-driven communications platform is now in order.

This would parallel international communications trends whereby experiential communications aimed at engaging and inspiring the consumer are becoming more effective than the information-dominant trends that have defined the last decade.

The potential communications opportunities that could evolve from infusing new strategies into the communication mix are explored more fully in the report, within the section:

Opportunities to Maximize P&E Impact – Recommendations for the Future.

PART B: Introduction

Purpose of the Blue Box Program P&E Review: Making the Blue Box Program Better

In October 2006, the Stewardship Ontario Board of Directors embarked on an eight-month, comprehensive \$2.5 million "Recycling Best Practices" project. This project will serve as the key input to the Ontario Minister of the Environment's requirement to define municipal recycling best practices and best practice costs for setting stewards fees for 2008 and beyond. The Stewardship Ontario Board has strongly endorsed the importance of this critical "Blue Box Recycling Program Enhancement and Best Practices Assessment Project" of which the areas of promotion and education (P&E) are critically important.

The Scope: Participant Overview

This study focused on eight communities that were identified



as implementing effective P&E programs, program components or campaigns. The eight communities studied were: Barrie, Durham, Hamilton, London, Markham, Stratford, Thunder Bay and Toronto. Of the selected communities, four were studied in the Blue Box Recycling Program Enhancement and Best Practices Assessment Project. To the extent possible, Toronto was asked to comment specifically on P&E for its multi-family recycling program. In some cases comments that were provided reflected the City's recycling P&E as a whole.

The Role of PraxisPR

PraxisPR, a professional marketing communications agency, was engaged to participate in this process by providing professional guidance to help inform the Blue Box program P&E review process. In cooperation with PraxisPR, Stewardship Ontario developed a 25-question audit, to probe each community about specific P&E efforts. (see Appendices for list of questions)

PraxisPR was also charged with identifying effective P&E best practices, and providing practical advice in executing P&E programs moving forward to help municipalities across the province expand and enhance their blue box recycling communications efforts.

PraxisPR also reviewed mass advertising samples, communication collateral tools and community-based market research specific to P&E/communications. This report provides an extrapolation of those results, combined with recommendations related to best practices for Blue Box program P&E, leveraging the agency's expertise in the area of social marketing, as well as a comparison of those results to pertinent research findings.

Methodology: About the Audits

Stewardship Ontario conducted the audits by telephone, and the audit results were compiled and tabulated by PraxisPR. The eight community-based audit interviews took place in communities ranging in size from less than 13,000 households to more than 1 million. The breadth of community size was purposeful – allowing for varying results due to different P&E needs.

PART C: Key Findings and Considerations

The community-based P&E audits of eight selected municipalities yielded valuable information about current P&E practices



among Ontario recycling programs. This section presents key findings and considerations emerging from the research.

Section I. Defining Recycling Communicators, Communications Roles

Findings

- Half of all the audit participants were dedicated communications specialists.
- The majority of recycling communicators are focused on waste management.
- The majority also reported working in other areas of waste management or other departments.
- Examples: Durham's communicator reports responsibilities ranging from P&E, to policy and planning of all waste management programs; Hamilton's communicator does P&E for all waste, not just recycling; Markham's Corporate Communications Department also assists in waste management communication initiatives. In Toronto there are 3.6 communications staff who work on Solid Waste business.
- Most of the communicators have support from other waste management staff.
- Half of these communities have an outside communications agency to develop materials and help support P&E, with the majority reporting utilization of a graphics art firm. Toronto and Markham noted they receive help from translation and research firms and Durham work is typically done in-house, with outside printing support.
- Half of these communities also turn to community committees to help accomplish their goals. Hamilton works with community committees at a strategic communications level to review concepts and receives help from two municipal government relations/public affairs coordinators.

Considerations

- Given that dedicated communications staff does not typically exist in communities, and that communicators have more than P&E tasks to deliver as part of their mandate, community committees should be considered a valuable resource more often. It is a highly valued approach to social marketing, especially in communities with a need to do more with less.
- Thunder Bay has previously used the help of the Eco-Superior,



a local non-profit 'green' group. In contrast, in Stratford, a committee of city council is used for energy and environment, but not P&E. London noted that is has tested the effectiveness of community-based social marketing in pilot projects by partnering with community groups on selected issues. The Opportunities to Maximize P&E Impact section of this report describes potential roles for community-based communicators to enhance current programming.

- Corporate and community partnerships should also be given consideration as often as possible, to maximize and leverage available resources. Hamilton, for instance, appears to have leveraged a campaign sponsored by a corporate partner to raise awareness of hazardous waste diversion. Markham has leveraged a public space recycling program with advertising space that is available to the Town free of charge, to communicate its various programs, including waste management to its residents.
- As these external partnerships can prove time-consuming for a single individual, a well-connected community committee could prove supportive in helping to initiate and grow this type of outreach.

Section II. P&E Budgets

- A statistical analysis of P&E spending in 2005 (as analyzed by KPMG for the Blue Box Recycling Enhancement and Best Practices Assessment and the four additional communities in this study) suggests that there is a correlation between P&E spending and heightened diversion, although this correlation is somewhat weak.
- Communities vary widely in the total amount of P&E spent and on \$P&E/household.
- Many communities that were achieving approximately 60% diversion of Blue Box materials in 2005 spent a range of \$0.83 to \$1.18 on recycling P&E in 2005.
- Community size does not appear to be the driving factor in P&E investment.
- P&E budgets reported by audited communities in this study range from one per cent to 10 per cent of the waste management budget.
- The majority of communities audited say their budget is not adequate to cover the P&E activities they believe are needed in their community.



- Most of the audited communities believe they need to more than double the current budget to accomplish successful P&E.
- For many communities, P&E budgets stay much the same year after year.
- Half indicate budgets are project based.
- Barrie has added more money for new programs.
- Thunder Bay notes the budget increases with new programs.
- Toronto develops budgets based on specific programs.
- Markham has a baseline advertising budget which is augmented with project/program specific budgets.

- Budget and human resource constraints on P&E are challenging. However, during the audit, a number of opportunities to share resources across communities in developing communications emerged.
- Standardizing design templates, advertising tools, advertorial approaches and direct mail formats, and sharing PR program design, and research learnings are among them.

Section III. Research & Planning

- The majority of audited communities conduct some form of research to identify their audiences, themes, targeted messages, images and branding before rolling out new communications efforts.
- The majority use a professional researcher, and look to research to identify target audiences and to develop key messages.
- One-third use research to understand barriers to effective P&E and motivating positive behaviour.
- Hamilton says quantitative and qualitative has research helped them develop programming.
- In Toronto, research has also helped develop demographic information.
- Half of the communities audited also test their communications messages prior to initiating promotional or educational campaigns.
- In Markham, a program was initiated to test messages in



12,000 households, which were then evaluated through focus groups before a second stage roll out took place. Eight months following the roll out, messages and impact were evaluated and the campaign was tweaked for the entire community.

 Markham also used focus group research to develop the implementation and communication of its multi-residential recycling program expansion in 2006.

Considerations

- It is difficult to isolate and measure the effectiveness of communications efforts since these are intrinsically linked with a wide range of overall programming factors (i.e. convenience of box location).
- That said, some form of communications measurement with set goals should be put in place and tracked to gauge communications impact. This will inform communicators to when new directions are required, and older directions should be revamped or discontinued.
- One consideration, as many communities do rely on a professional researcher, is to set baselines for recycling attitudes among a specific key audience, and then every few years re-measure those attitudes to identify positive attitudinal shifts within that audience segment.

Section IV. P&E Tools and Media Vehicles

1. PR/Press Releases

- All communities audited send press releases to media.
- Not one community identified press releases as effective communications tools although Thunder Bay noted that over 90% of the media releases it sends out are picked up by the media through radio, TV or newspaper coverage.
- The number of releases sent annually varies drastically from community to community. Annually, Barrie sends out 10, mostly released around the holidays, while Durham sends five. Hamilton distributes 25 to 30 media releases each year, while Toronto sends 10 to 12 annually. London sends three to four, Stratford two, Thunder Bay five to 10.

- Best practice reveals that a continual presence on issues of social responsibility requires an on-going media presence. Earned media (PR) adds the element of third-party credibility and can be effective in keeping a community animated and overcoming attitudinal barriers on an issue. And, while human resources and creativity are required, hard costs are minimal when compared to maintaining paid media strategies. Going forward, media relations strategies should be used as part of an overall marketing strategy to increase reach, frequency and most importantly continuity of message (sustained message exposure). It is often recommended that a PR program include a highly newsworthy flagship event annually, with three to four lower volume PR and media activities across the year.)
- A likely key factor that explains why audited communities are not reaping benefit from media relations outreach is an over reliance on press release dissemination to generate news coverage. Without newsworthy content or newsworthy spokespeople, accompanied by proactive story pitching, news releases are unlikely to drive coverage on their own. Targeted media relations follow-up will build stronger relationships with community editors and other media and, along with the other key factors outlined, will most likely drive improved results.
- Consideration should be given to making PR programs, news release templates and a media relations "how to" manual available to all communities.

2. Calendars

- All audited communities produce a calendar.
- Half of respondents consider them effective tools. Hamilton, Markham, Durham and Toronto noted that calendars are one of their most effective tools based on the feedback they have received from residents.
- Unique in each community, design and content approaches vary significantly from community to community.
- In 2006, Toronto's current calendar supplier invited the City's participation in a pilot where a multi-residential 12-month calendar was produced and made available for buildings to purchase for giveaways. The calendars were developed in consultation with Toronto and sold by the supplier. The calendars cost approximately \$1 each; approximately 40,000 were sold in 2006.



- Calendars often contain too much prose and lack simplicity; the approach may reinforce perceptions identified in research that recycling takes too much time or is complicated.
- It is recommended that this staple piece become highly branded, always interfaced with websites where possible, and centralized with a template design, creating a recognizable format that can be easily identified from community to community across the province and tailored as necessary.
- Fresh delivery methods for calendars could also be considered such as newspaper insertions, an often under-valued tool.
- Some communities may wish to emulate the multi-residential calendar that Toronto participated in on a pilot basis.

3. Websites

Findings

- All audited communities have a website that hosts P&E information.
- Communities were not asked about web traffic measurement in the scope of this study.

Considerations

- The importance of a professional-looking website cannot be overstated, especially as this interactive medium allows for a greater depth of information provision than traditional paid media strategy.
- To optimize this medium, websites should be highly branded, easy to locate, easy to navigate, and updated regularly.
- To maximize site traffic, the website URL should be show-cased within collateral materials, listing helpful site tools.
 Its visibility should be notable and standout on each page of a print vehicle. Too often, URLs are presented as an add-on to the end of a communications tool, which reduces the likelihood of traffic.
- If consumer engagement tools are created as newspaper advertorials or collateral vehicles (i.e. Test your Recycling IQ, Does your home make the recycling grade....) they should also be featured online.
- A key challenge faced by a number of recycling communities is that the website offering is part of a larger municipal site – reducing its visibility online, and requiring several click-throughs to access local recycling information. One way to counter this is to present the URL with a page-



specific reference for recycling or waste, which helps prevent click-throughs. This URL strategy is implemented successfully already by the Region of Durham whose recycling information is available through a waste-specific URL at: www.durhamregionwaste.ca

- Avoiding consumer frustration relative to online access is critical (if consumers can't readily locate online information, it reinforces the attitudinal barriers that recycling is too complicated and time-consuming).
- Consideration should be given to promoting and/or providing links to the new Ontario-wide recycling website – www.blueboxmore.ca – which provides key information in an accessible way about recycling programs around the province and the fate of recovered materials.
- There is also untapped potential to use the web to address language diversity in communities.

4. Print Advertising & Newspaper Inserts

- All audited communities take part in print advertising campaigns and run CNA/OCNA funded ads.
- Just over one-third of communities audited believe that newspaper advertising is effective.
- Thunder Bay reports they have a middle-section community newspaper spread which runs every other month. Stratford runs waste information ads twice a month. In the past, Toronto has run newspaper ads specific to owners and managers of multi-family residents.
- In Durham, the majority of newspaper ads are municipalitypaid and run every two weeks to educate residents on a variety of waste management issues. Newspaper ads are consistently placed in a prime location on page 3 of the local newspaper. The same community reports that full colour newspaper ads are the most effective communication tool to motivate and improve changes in recycling behaviour.
- London does not use inserts, but print advertising is used in all campaigns in addition to other forms of advertising.
- Just over one-third also utilize newspaper inserts, with Thunder Bay leading the way, using this medium six times per year.
- Markham avoids newspaper inserts, and considers them undistinguishable and as throw-aways.
- Few consider newspaper inserts effective.



- Advertising funding exists at a much higher level in newspapers than any other medium. The positive relationship platform created with CNA/OCNA should be adapted to other forms of community media partnerships, where possible.
- Social marketing research conducted in Ontario has measured 'healthy community' advertising campaigns specific to the impacts of print advertising vs. TV advertising. One largescale, two-year study utilized a pilot media market approach that included Hamilton, London, Kingston and Peterborough. It showed that broadcast media was the much stronger performer. This may help explain why the majority of those municipalities audited did not see print advertising as their top performer.
- However, newspaper remains a very important media tool.
 To maximize print ad performance, creative directions should be re-examined to look at advertorial approaches.
 This could include creative directions focused on: News You Can Use, or Test Your Recycling IQ, Ask the Recycling Expert, or featuring a recycling makeover of a local family, community celebrity versus the traditional creative ad format. Ad placements should be strategically timed with other P&E efforts to maximize impact when possible.
- Communities should consider alternative use of the municipality-paid CNA/OCNA in-kind ad space. For example, newspaper inserts may be used as a method to present calendar information and other user-friendly tools instead of direct-mail, in certain communities.

5. Radio

- Almost all communities audited use radio advertising.
- Frequency of use varies greatly. London uses radio at least once per year and as part of any major campaign and considers it an effective P&E tool. Stratford uses radio once a year and Hamilton once every few years. Toronto uses it two to three times per annum. Durham uses radio the most. Its ads are submitted every week running on a two week rotation. Durham also has a monthly segment with the stations called "Waste Management Minute." Set up as a telephone conversation, the radio announcer calls a Durham staff member asking a frequently asked question. The FAQ runs throughout the month.



- Thunder Bay uses radio for special events such as Waste Reduction Week.
- Markham doesn't use radio, as a local station doesn't exist.
- The majority of communities audited consider radio ads effective; Thunder Bay ranked radio among the top three tools in a list of the city's most effective ways to communicate P&E.

- Radio may be undervalued, considering its affordability versus television from a creative development, placement and local penetration perspective.
- Efficiencies of the medium are not leveraged. Radio is not being used with the regularity or frequency needed to have a significant impact.
- One audited community takes advantage of free radio spots that are available because of its non-profit status.
 Value-add radio buys should be explored – asking for matching PSAs as is done in this community, or engaging hosts in live remotes and appearances at events, etc. As a point of reference, non-profits are often successful at negotiating a 'one ad paid' for 'two ads free' deal with local stations during their peak communications periods.
- A centralized radio advertising bank should also be considered with potential to customize the exit voice-over.
- There are a number of factors that can make radio buying planning tricky, especially as it is very market-specific. To maximize its impact, it does require specialized, professional skill-sets. It is recommended that a relationship be struck with a recognized Ontario media buying firm that municipalities can tap into for advice and potentially leverage the firm's media buying clout to optimize cost-efficiency.

6. Television

- Half of respondents have advertised on television. Hard data on costs of creative development, placement and media flight planning was not collected during the audit.
- Only one of the four communities is using TV as an education vehicle; Thunder Bay considers it effective.
- Frequency of placements varies widely within communities that use TV – Hamilton is sporadic, once every few years, only used for launches and re-launches; London uses TV on a project-driven basis; Durham leverages cable interview



- show opportunities; Thunder Bay notes they use the medium as budget permits.
- Further, Hamilton and Toronto avoid television for budgetary reasons, while London has moved away from mass marketing. Markham does not use TV, as there is not a local station.
- According to most audited communities, TV advertising should be explored at a centralized level.

- TV has been shown to be a highly effective tool in overcoming attitudinal barriers that impact community well-being and social consciousness. It typically outperforms print advertising to this end. It is also a top performer from a mass reach perspective – the key factor as to why placement costs are high.
- Communities undertaking television advertising not only need to be concerned with the frequency of TV ad placements, but the continuity of message exposure.
 Studies funded by the Ontario government and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario showed that extending the time period over which a TV ad is run and reducing its frequency within defined time periods is more effective in shifting public attitudes and keeping an issue top-of-mind. It also helps to reduce costs.
- Centralized TV advertising could allow communities to access banked, ready-to-air ads (with option to customize the last frame) to significantly decrease the prohibitive creative production costs. Social marketing experience in Ontario suggests that ideally, TV campaign budgets should be in the \$1.5-\$3 million range to shift and sustain attitudes across the population base. This should not be interpreted to be a best practice standard but instead a guideline, as media buying needs are all dependent on where the public sits on an issue, and what communications goal is being sought.
- Relationships with corporate partners to leverage their advertising buying, as well as with major media outlets, would help to reduce the often cost-prohibitive nature of TV. These partnerships are difficult to solidify, but well worth it. If the corporate partner is a national or multinational company vs. Ontario-only or locally-based, a national communications strategy may be required.

7. Information Cards, Educational Pamphlets

& Brochures

Findings

- All communities audited produce information cards or brochures, with the majority creating educational pamphlets.
- Interestingly, the glossy nature of a number of print tools may convey a lack of being recyclable against a backdrop of collateral pieces from corporations that make the deliberate point of looking like recycling.
- Frequency varies widely. Hamilton and Durham produce them annually, but Durham reports that they are moving away from educational pamphlets. Thunder Bay produces these materials every other year.
- Hamilton distributes these depending on when information changes, while Markham distributes info cards and brochures to education centres, recycling depots, events and schools. Barrie will open a recycling education centre in Fall 2008. These communications tools will be utilized in this new facility.
- Markham also produces a semi-annual newsletter. Its print material is printed on paper that is made "from 100% post consumer recycled paper, processed chlorine free, Environmental Choice certified and is printed with 100% vegetable-based inks."
- Toronto makes information cards available to civic centres, recycling depots and events upon request. Cards are also translated in up to 23 languages and available online. In 2007, a recycle card and green bin card will be delivered door-to-door as an insert in the calendar.
- Three respondents consider information cards and brochures as effective. Durham considers these somewhat effective depending on the venue citing a "take and toss" phenomenon; London says information pieces are most effective when they can be targeted to selected neighbourhoods regarding specific issues; Thunder Bay suggested some brochures provide good community clarity on recycling, and therefore rate them among their most effective tools. Thunder Bay also has great success with "how to" magnets.

Considerations

 To reinforce the message of recycling, brochure and information card materials should instantly communicate that they are "recyclable." This may be accomplished by using paper stock that obviously contains recycled content





- or with messaging indicating that the paper is recyclable in the community.
- There was also a tendency to include too much information, again reinforcing that recycling is complicated and timeconsuming. Messages were often more technical in nature or impersonal in tone, versus appealing to the time-crunched audience – "only tell me what I need to know, fast."

8. Events

Findings

- Events are being organized by almost all communities
- Quantity varies greatly Hamilton is organizing 25 to 30 a year; Markham does 12; Stratford does five, Thunder Bay, four to five; Durham, 15-20 (Durham's events include home shows, fairs, public works day, compost events, E-waste & HHW events) and Barrie arranges nine.
- Barrie's events include two home shows, a canvas bag give-away during waste reduction week in the spring, and an interactive display at Celebrate Barrie.
- Markham provides recycling and organics collection services at York Region's "Ribfest" event.
- Thunder Bay also takes part in trade show events.
- One-third of those audited consider events effective.

Considerations

- Respondents favouring events have pinpointed piggybacked events as a more effective approach, wherein recycling messages are part of a larger event like a food festival, a community-wide celebration, or even a city-wide waste reduction week.
- Local celebrities from sports heroes and community leaders to those in positions of power – could be better utilized when considering events and educational programs to create more attention. This would also help generate community newspaper coverage.

9. Piggybacking On Municipal Utilities

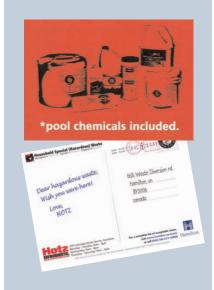
- Two communities leverage municipal utility bills to deliver recycling P&E.
- One community is not permitted to do so.

- A few communities piggyback on other community partners' correspondence.
- Half use elected officials' newsletters.
- Twice a year, Thunder Bay distributes information cards and brochures through Eco-Superior. These materials are made available to the public year round through Eco-Superior and city information kiosks.
- Communities question effectiveness.
- One community would like to explore using these techniques more.

- Potential has not been investigated fully in most communities.
- Such tools can deliver messages in a more targeted way than direct mail, but do require a working partnership with the corporate or community alliance to ensure the messages delivered are visible, make strategic sense, and are continuous.

10. Education

- A majority of those audited take part in school visits.
- One-third offer formal visits, with collection.
- Others offer informal drop-in visits.
- According to Durham, school programs have worked well in the past but are only done on request.
- Hamilton has a formal school outreach program with personal visits.
- Toronto offered a full school program in the past but due to budget constraints has reduced the program. It would be unrealistic to offer a full school program with only .5 full-time support, so Toronto now targets English as a Second Language (ESL) programs and focuses on educating new Canadians who may not be familiar with recycling.
- Thunder Bay considers this the most effective type of outreach.
- Barrie gives facility tours to students.
- Markham offers elementary and high-school presentations and will do a waste audit of any school that comes onto the Town recycling collection program. Waste audits are conducted in the incoming school's gym or auditorium. Classes are invited to view the audit and to see what materials the school is throwing out. The school collection program is





- also used as a communication tool since the same materials are collected as in the residential Blue Box program.
- Some believe this is an effective way to motivate, improve or change recycling behaviour.
- Stratford implements a yearly seminar.

 A broader communications strategy to engage school-aged children in community advocacy, or campaign messages geared around – let's do it for our kids – may make sense to increase community compliance, by animating and refreshing the issue at the community level.

11. Direct Mail

Findings

- One-third of those audited produce direct mail flyers.
- Hamilton's annual direct mailer is the calendar.
- One-quarter considers direct mail effective.
- Hamilton says direct mail flyers require a concerted effort and more are needed.
- London targets at the street or neighbourhood level with specific issues.
- Markham's collection calendar and semi-annual newsletter is distributed via Canada Post bulk mail.

Considerations

- Communities need to keep a close eye on the potential to be negatively typecast as "junk" mail, especially as a means to communicate about recycling.
- As with information cards, brochures and other printed information materials, direct mail flyer materials must instantly convey a message of being recyclable.

12. Dedicated Newsletter

- One-third of the communities audited produce a dedicated waste or recycling newsletter.
- Durham's newsletter is a Works Department publication featuring several articles about waste management.
 Durham mails its newsletters twice a year to community residents rather than information cards or brochures.



- Toronto delivers the Waste Watch newsletter for households and the Waste Watch newsletter for apartments through Canada Post.
- Markham has a semi-annual newsletter which is distributed via Canada Post bulk mail.
- Only a few respondents highlighted newsletters as being effective.

 Newsletters appear to be posing challenges – the value-add content may be better disseminated through a newspaper advertorial strategy; through media outreach effort – Release of Community's Annual Report Card on our Recycling Habits; or, online if traffic-generating strategies are put in place.

Section V. Municipal Diversity

- Diversity in community housing exists. Toronto reported 500,000 multi-family unit dwellings (apartment buildings), versus Stratford's 3,000 individual units and Markham's 51 multiple units.
- All respondents develop specialized P&E materials for multi-family unit dwellings, as pick-up and other details are often unique.
- Multi-unit dwellings are often ethnically diverse, requiring communication in more than one language.
 London is currently creating a piece for multiresidential units that uses pictures instead of words.
- Half of the respondents consider their population ethnically diverse.
- One-third does not consider their communities culturally diverse.
- The residential population's language needs have not affected how recyclers communicate within the majority of audited communities. Example: in Durham, Barrie, and Stratford, ethnic groups were not identified. In Thunder Bay, ethnic groups including Native, Italian, Finnish and French residents populate the area, although communications are currently in English only.
- Diversity does require Toronto to develop basic P&E in 23 languages, although many documents are produced in six languages only, based on census info that identifies top



languages in each area. Markham is planning to create materials in five languages including Cantonese, Urdu, Tamil and Italian. Hamilton also produces materials in French and Italian.

Considerations

- The unique attitudes and barriers faced by multi-dwelling residents vs. single-dwelling residents suggest that P&E campaigns require two distinct strategies that deliver tailored messages and tailored outreach strategies aimed at each of these audiences. If budgets remain flat, supporting two distinct communication strategies will prove to be a tall order for municipalities.
 - Shared communications strategies and resources among municipalities should be considered to effectively increase outreach aimed at those who reside in multi-family dwellings. This audience is likely to require a greater marketing thrust to view recycling as the norm within their living environment. The need for tailored communications strategies also holds true for ethnic communities.
- Ethnic diversity is growing in many communities across
 Ontario. Given Toronto's demographic need to communicate
 in a multitude of languages, multi-language resources could
 be shared by Toronto P&E communications, to support
 communities with developing needs in this area.
- As maximizing distribution of non-English language print vehicles could prove difficult, engaging ethnic community representatives would be beneficial to access these communities.

Section VI. Measurement

- One-third measured or evaluated the effectiveness of their programs or campaigns.
- Hamilton measured public opinion through an annual survey before they set their P&E plan.
- Stratford conducted surveys with a wide sample of community residents.
- Durham communicated with residents at community events and received feedback informally.
- Toronto measures effectiveness using a variety of methods including formal research, anecdotal feedback, material audits, increases in diversion, media coverage and questions



- to frontline staff. Overall P&E success is not typically measured using any one tool but a combination of tools.
- Durham suggests the only true measurement is tonnage and they see spikes in recovery that are based on communications. London also measures tonnages.
- In Markham, municipal performance measures the link to recycling.

- Measurement tools are very important to inform communications.
- In social marketing, it can take three years to see the lasting impact of communications, so annual measurement that is typically very costly is not generally necessary.
- Because many municipalities do not have budgets or market research firms to professionally measure communications impact, sharing market research findings among municipalities is critical. The report authors did note that research conducted among various municipalities had very similar findings on key message development.
- Another possibility is to adapt market research questions used by lead municipalities and deploy the same questions in website polls, phone-based helplines, and one-on-one surveys. The key is to make sure that respondents fall into your defined #1 target. This will only provide qualitative indicators but should prove useful.
- While some rely on tonnage diversion to measure campaign impacts, it may not be the most reliable measure of communications impact alone across all municipalities, because of the other significant factors that influence recycling behaviour.
- Another possibility is to adapt market research questions used by lead municipalities and deploy the same questions in website polls, phone-based helplines, and one-on-one surveys. The key is to make sure that respondents fall into your defined #1 target. This will only provide qualitative indicators but should prove useful.

Section VII. Barriers to Improved/ Changed Recycling Behaviour —

Multi-family dwelling and ethnic community challenges

Findings

- Barriers identified by selected communities were both program delivery and communications-specific.
- Many communities identified key barriers as: ability to influence multi-dwelling building management/owners and lack of focus on multi-dwelling issues; cultural differences among ethnic populations; time barriers faced by both the recycler and the recycling communicator.
- Durham research has indicated that bin locations in multifamily dwellings are commonly not convenient. Durham is planning to review their efforts on multi-family dwellings and improve superintendent relationships.
- In Hamilton, complacency and busy lifestyles are preventing those in single-family dwellings from doing more; in multi-family dwellings it's issues such as language, culture, transient culture. To resolve, Hamilton is embarking on an apartment study and collaborating on other AMRC research.
- London's work in multi-family dwellings has focused on identifying the categories of building types and developing diagnostic tools to provide a range of options (including a P&E component) to improve recycling rates. This approach recognizes that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' fix in multifamily buildings.
- Markham says they need to overcome cultural differences, and appeal to ethnic groups that are not familiar with storing recyclables for a week. Likewise, hidden waste management systems in multi-family dwellings are to blame in this community. Markham is engaging focus groups.
- Stratford cites a lack of time in residents of single-family homes; while more printed information is needed for multi-family units.
- Toronto says audience demographics; transience and language issues are barriers. Toronto is developing relationships with owners and sponsors to reach multi-family dwellings.

Considerations

 Multi-family issues appear to require major yet distinct concentrated communications solutions, different from those deployed against single-family dwellings.



- Because the issues at play are so similar across municipalities, a working partnership among lead municipalities, whereby each test drives the validity of a potential communications solution would help to overcome key operational barriers – no time, no incremental resources.
- If certain solutions do appear to have some impact, then a pilot test of the collective impacts of emerging solutions conducted within one or two municipalities would be advantageous.

PART D: Opportunitiesto Maximize P&E Impact

Recommendations for the Future

Section I. Overview

A number of opportunities to strengthen and secure recycling P&E have emerged from the overall communications assessment of eight audited municipalities, the body of research that currently exists specific to consumers' recycling attitudes and behaviours, along with social responsibility marketing trends.

The overall sense is that the Blue Box Recycling P&E programming has come of age, whereby a shift away from an education-driven communications platform to an engagement-driven or inspiration-driven platform may now be in order. The terminology "Promotion and Education" (P&E) in itself may become problematic in the future if it conveys that conventional "education" tactics are central to mass communications success.

A number of factors have influenced the future recommendations that follow:

- Impact of mass communications trends whereby information-driven strategies are lessening in effect (due to our information-overload environment)
- The need to present recycling as a societal norm
- The need to significantly grow consumer awareness on the net benefits and results of recycling
- The significant and potentially competitive noise from global warming issues (as behaviours of environmentally-

conscious individuals tend to be issue-specific vs. consistent across key environment issues)

- The need to establish greater messaging frequency, along with strengthening message continuity to have issue visibility year-round
- The need to address the unique audience segment that resides in multi-family dwellings, without incremental budget

Section II. Future Recommendations

1. Formalized model to drive a province-wide mass media campaign

Mass media, particularly TV and radio, are ideal vehicles to influence attitudes on social norms, provided that they are delivered with appropriate reach, frequency and sustained exposure and showcase high-impact creative. These mass media vehicles are also effective in communicating positive impact of social responsibility.

As both the need to understand the net result of recycling and to solidify recycling as a social norm are not community-specific, it is recommended that a centrally-driven, broadcast-based mass media campaign be initiated across Ontario.

Social responsibility mass media strategies – "the air cover" – are viewed as a critical component of social marketing – and work best when companioned with other communications strategies delivered locally. As the report authors were not asked to assess funding models to successfully execute across the Ontario jurisdiction, whether resources can be attained to drive a centrally-delivered mass media campaign is unknown.

The rationale for a centrally-driven approach is based on several factors:

- Professional resources and associated costs to create/deliver a mass media component consistently at a municipality level are out of reach;
- Key messaging needs are broad-based vs. community-specific;
- Ontario's media market is well-suited to a TV network strategy;
- Corporate or media sponsorship potential for broadcast tends to best be negotiated provincially or nationally;
- NGOs, public sector and for-profit franchise operations

centralize their TV outreach to maximize resource, cost, and impact effectiveness;

 A new, professional, well-tested TV ad has been created for Ontario that answers consumers' unmet need relative to the fate of recyclables issue.

Until the issue of centralization can be examined, it is recommended that municipalities run a radio commercial (vs. TV which is more expensive). The willingness of the radio station to contribute free spots for every paid radio ad should be pursued. A respected community leader or local celebrity should be sought to deliver the radio message. Recommendations relating to media flight planning outlined in the executive summary should be considered. This will offer insights to the reach and frequency being achieved using a radio strategy and how radio fits into the overall communications outreach mix.

2. Repository to share communications approaches, tools, suppliers

As mentioned in other sections of this report, an ability to share communications tools, approaches (branded house design and templates) and potentially certain creative suppliers would benefit recycling P&E overall, provided the flexibility to tailor certain communications elements to the individual municipality exists. Budget allocations could be shifted from creative development towards paid placement of promotion. This could prove especially beneficial for smaller communities with the least financial resources to get the message out. This would build on the approach that underlies the WDO Ad and Graphics bank, the "Recycling Works" ad developed under E&E Fund Project PN 105, the blueboxmore.ca internet campaign and the sharing of P&E materials developed in other E&E Fund projects that will be posted on the Recyclers' Knowledge Network.

A number of models could be looked at to leverage lead municipalities' expertise and potential cost-recovery compensation for their contributions in leading the charge to create a workable, shared communications model.

Moreover, it would help to free up time among over-worked recycling communicators to focus on growing communications outreach in the areas that follow.

3. Engaging consumers in recycling communications

Most of the communications tools reviewed undertook a factual, conventional educational message strategy. As self-



evaluation, behaviour modification and positive reinforcement are critical to the recycling issue, greater engagement strategies within communications are recommended, going forward. These strategies have proven effective with women – the #1 target audience. Engagement tools might include:

- Test your Recycling IQ
- What type of recycler are you?
- Does your household make the recycling grade?
- Recycling Makeovers (a recognized community member's or media personality's habits are revamped, and progress monitored)
- Ask the Recycling Expert
- Top Tips to get your partner, kids to recycle
- The Best Recycling Tip of the Month award submissions by community individuals for the best tips to overcome common barriers.

These communications directions lend themselves well to print and magazine (advertorial, editorial, free-standing inserts and outsert formats), the web's interactivity, media relations, community challenges and householder drops.

A consistent observation made during the communications assessment was the human element was not pronounced within existing communications, with the exception of a few cases. Adopting engagement tool strategies would help to address this issue.

Another direction is to elevate the value of "the recycling bin" in an unexpected and humane way. One municipality supported a local food bank by asking residents to place food contributions within the blue box on a specific day – garnering media attention and community-wide goodwill. This inherently placed an unprecedented value on "the recycling bin." Reinforcement strategies delivered through these types of initiatives – feel good about recycling – should be identified and executed more often.

4. Leveraging others' marketing clout

This recycling P&E review has revealed a general lack of consistent piggybacking on others' marketing clout – be it recognized community spokespeople or champions, corporate sponsors and/or local media partners. These partners all represent third-party endorsers – key to establishing the issue as a community norm.



It is well-recognized that engaging and building community partners is time-consuming and challenging at times, often requiring influential community members to make "the ask" of potential partners.

Communications committees (3-5 members), who are handpicked for their existing community connectivity, have been seen to be effective if their specific goal of engaging select community partners to support social responsibility is clearly defined. Often, these committees include a former mayor, former head of the business association, and local media personality.

Adopting this type of strategy can help shift some of the burden from the often overworked recycling communicator. With the assistance of an active communications committee, the recycling communicator could become more of a "facilitator" than a "do-er" and help stretch staff and budget resources and get more done.

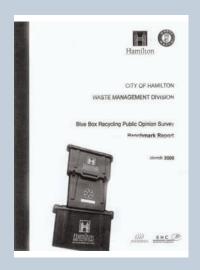
5. Communicating on progress

Part of empowering individuals and communities is to communicate success in a compelling way. Recycling research identified this element as a gap within programming. Public relations could become a very effective tool on this front. Especially if it has engaged community role models, spokespeople and corporate partners in other aspects of recycling programming who can be engaged to report on progress.

One of many tactics used successfully is the unveiling of an annual report on the community's recycling behaviours. To make the report card newsworthy, unique elements relative to recycling should be looked at that go beyond performance vs. past years. These could include: comparisons to neighbouring communities, who are the best recyclers, the top three barriers faced by households, etc. Launching a provocative recycling challenge with defined timelines and rewards, at the time of the report released with a key community corporate partner and lead spokesperson, would help to deliver sustained progress visibility. Speaking anecdotally, the City of Ottawa has produced some attractive and engaging "recycling report card" materials.

6. Addressing the multiple household dwelling issue

The need to tackle recycling issues specific to multi-dwelling environments going forward was identified throughout research and municipal audits. As the barriers are unique, it is likely that intensive and distinctive communications programming will be required in the future to be effective. Audience targeting strategies are likely to differ as well –



as it appears building management buy-in and support is as critical if not more important than is residents' support.

For this reason, the ability to share communications resources, potentially initiate an Ontario-wide mass media campaign, leverage others' marketing clout and establish public relations strategies (to deliver lower cost per contact efficiencies in communications outreach) will support municipalities in that they will be better positioned to divert resources to multiple family dwelling communications strategies longer-term. It should be noted that AMRC is supporting this kind of effort through its recently established (and E&E Fund supported) Multi-Residential Working Group.

PART E: Guides to Best Practice Communications Planning

Marketing communicators use various approaches to strategically plan their communications and map out how they will maximize their message exposure within their marketplace. What follows are generally accepted models that have been modified slightly to meet the needs of the recycling communicator.

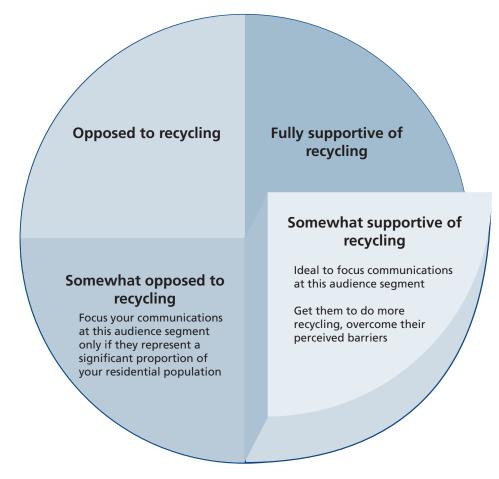
Section I. Creating the Strategic Communications Plan

Planning Priorities	Key Components	
Clearly state a creative communications objective with a measurable goal	Such as: Shift attitudes specific to the issue of X among the #1 target audience by Y% over the next 3 years Or Achieve unaided recall of the campaign's key message among X% of the #1 target audience by Y date.	
Define your #1 target audience (see Section II)	 Describe your audience in terms of: Demographics Attitudinal beliefs Current recycling knowledge gaps & misperceptions Top 3 barriers to recycling Which new insights get them to re-evaluate their current attitudes/behaviours 	

Planning Priorities	Key Components
Define your #1 message (see Section II)	 Short-list compelling message options to determine which one resonates most strongly with your audience Ensure #1 message stimulates audience to re-evaluate existing attitudes that act as barriers to recycling (i.e. too time-consuming) Determine 2 to 3 secondary messages that support your #1 message Test your message among #1 audience Ensure your #1 message is woven through all your communications
Create a calendar of your P&E outreach to examine your message exposure year-round	 Evaluate ability to effectively drive a multi-pronged strategy Ideally combine a mass media vehicle (tier 1), with direct-to-consumer tool/s (tier 2); with community engagement activities (tier 3) When budget constraints are significant, steer media placement \$\$ at the one vehicle that best optimizes reach, frequency of message and sustainability of message Map out how your various media vehicles will work together by charting out overall audience reach; message frequency in a defined time period; and message exposure across a given year (see Appendices for media flight chart)
Evaluate campaign performance	 Test whether your campaign met its measurable goal If measuring positive shifts in audience attitudes, recognize that it could take 2-3 years to see any significant and sustained effect (depends on campaign exposure levels) If using message recall, your ability to measure campaign effectiveness could occur within a shorter timeframe Attaching a direct response device to communications outreach (i.e. coupon, contest) can help provide indication to whether you're reaching your audience

Section II. Tools for Strategic Communications Planning —

How to identify your #1 target audience: typical audience segments



Defining your #1 message

- Each of the above audience segments will exhibit unique points of view, attitudes and perceived barriers relative to recycling.
- Effective communications messaging will differ for each audience.
- Targeting the "somewhat supportive" of recycling is recommended get them to do more, and over time they will shift into the "fully supportive" camp.
- To ensure you develop a compelling #1 message, you will need to understand:
 - Their demographics
 - Their knowledge gaps, misperceptions

- Their top 3 barriers to recycling
- Which new insights get them to re-evaluate their current attitudes/behaviours

A tiered approach to media planning ensures that you maximize your message exposure and its impact. Each tier recommended below plays a unique role within the overall message mix. However, if budgets are significantly constrained, focus on the one tier that will deliver you the best reach, frequency and sustainability for your message within your specific community.

Tier 1: Mass media Goal: Build/sustain mass awareness, drive attitudinal change	TVRadioPrint Advertising		
Tier 2: Collateral communications Goal: Provide the tools to help build recycling skills/know-how	 Householder drops (user-friendly tools) Newspaper advertorials (test your recycling IQ, Ask the Expert) Websites 		
Tier 3: Community animation, engagement Goal: Present recycling as the norm, change behaviour	 PR, media relations, word-of-mouth Community champions, testimonial strategies Business and media partnerships Community events 		

Note: All campaign components should deliver the same look, feel and umbrella message (branded house approach whereby each instantly reads as part of the same family)

PART F: Appendices

Section I. P&E Best Practices: Scientific Evidence

What we know about P&E best practices through research

A growing body of literature provides valuable insights into best practices in social marketing generally and in recycling P&E specifically.

Following is a summary of common themes uncovered in the scientific findings drawn from a review of the available literature, Stewardship Ontario's own research (qualitative and quantitative) and recent studies undertaken by individual municipalities.

Sources used:

- Aceti Associates of Arlington, MA on behalf of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (2002). Recycling: Why People Participate; Why They Don't.
- Informa & Ehl Harrison Consulting Inc. on behalf of the City of Hamilton Management Division (2006). Blue Box Recycling Public Opinion Survey – Benchmark Report.
- McKenzie-Mohr, D. Quick Reference: Community-Based Social Marketing.

What the research says about target audience

Research Insight	Support/P&E Message Implications			
Women are the prime recyclers, and should be primary target for P&E efforts	 Male household heads may or may not be influential in getting family to recycle (men tend to take box to curb) The role of children varies considerably, depending on age Focus group research showed that women want messages aimed at their non-recycling household members 			
P&E communications should target recyclers	 Focusing on non-recyclers is not effective and not a good use of limited P&E resources 			

What the research says about messages that resonate

Research Insight	Support/P&E Message Implications			
Recycling is easy	P&E should be tip-oriented and very simple			
Recycling is the norm; everyone does it and so should you (social/ community pressures)	This is especially important in multi-family buildings where recycling is anonymous and often awkward and inconvenient			
Recycling = a job well done, with many benefits	 Keep it positive; studies demonstrate that negative messaging has limited impacts and no mass appeal 			
Recyclers believe that recycling is a community responsibility	 Municipalities must ensure that all public spaces and buildings are equipped with well-designed, maintained recycling bins Bins should carry the familiar local images used to promote program 			
Recycling can and should be done throughout the household, not just in the kitchen	 Curbside recyclers design their own recycling system, and they tend to centre around the kitchen. Recyclers appreciate the reminder to expand their recycling behaviour throughout the home and to gear it to two streams recyclables and residual waste Immediate separation at source is key - need to communicate the importance of special bins to encourage immediate diversion, especially in bathrooms 			

What the research says about what motivates fuller recycling behaviour

Research Insight	Support/P&E Message Implications		
The perceived impact of municipal recycling programs in reducing the total amount of materials that end up in landfill is directly related to the program's ease of participation, efficient collection and mass education	 Recycling messages should be ongoing and present in the local media P&E reach should include initiatives with local partners and educators for maximum impact 		
The more that people see recycling as effective, the more they are likely to participate or to participate more fully	 Recycling messages should remind recyclers about program progress and its benefits, including the extension of the supply of natural resources, litter reduction, improvement of environmental quality, preservation of landfill space, energy conservation, resolution of a serious national problem, etc. 		
In spite of efforts to overcome the knowledge barrier, residents lack knowledge about how and what to recycle. Research shows that recycling information alone is not enough to change behaviour. For more effective uptake of recycling behaviour, combining information with behaviour change tools can generate better results	Use tools such as prompts, commitment techniques, incentives and the development of community norms		
People's knowledge of how and/or what to recycle is linked to their level of participation (the more knowledge they have, the more they will participate)	 Messages must underline simplicity and provide clear direction on what can be recycled and how to do it Some studies show that residents are motivated by understanding what happens to their materials 		

Research Insight	Support/P&E Message Implications			
Negative experiences with recycling service and collections staff (leaving a mess, lack of consistency re: what is collected) affects future recycling habits	 When collection barriers occur, they must be remedied, and then messaging must reinforce simplicity and reminders/prompts about how/what to recycle 			
There is growing frustration with manufacturers' excessive use of packaging that may not be recyclable, and recyclers endorse government taking steps to reduce excess packaging	 Messages should feature the full range of recyclables, with emphasis on plastics (to remind consumers that plastic waste can be remanufactured into unexpected new products) 			
Recyclers tend not to separate organics from the waste stream due to a lack of understanding that decomposition is a normal part of the life cycle, and squeamishness related to deteriorating produce and meat	 Need to improve understanding of the benefits of diverting organics, and position organic diversion as virtuous and a solution to a challenging moral issue. 			
Recyclers need to have the tools (bins/bags) to enable easy recycling, and the tools need to address recyclers' desires to meet contemporary design trends.	Tools should be featured in the messages, demonstrating that they are easy to use and integral to the program. The blue box has very strong iconic status.			

Section II. Community Size, E&E Factor, Diversion Rates

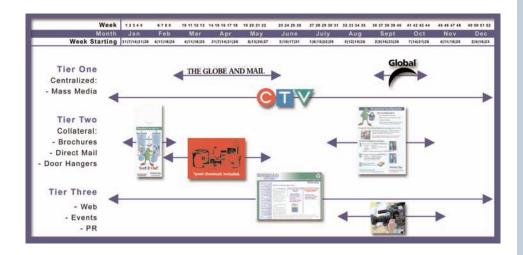
The following provides a summary of community information that was derived primarily from 2005 WDO Datacall as utilized in development of the Blue Box Recycling Program Enhancement and Best Practices Assessment project report.

It is presented as an indicator of the variety of community size, P&E program costs and diversion.

			P&E Cost		
Community	E&E Factor	Recovery Rate	\$/hh	\$/tonne	\$/Gross
1	1.52	78.18%	2.11	8.26	\$96,919
2	1.14	71.96%	1.56	6.53	\$299,352
3	1.86	62.69%	3.30	16.57	\$654,119
4	2.27	49.42%	0.87	5.54	\$133,529
5	3.13	65.56%	0.16	0.86	\$ -
6	3.66	37.79%	0.76	6.82	\$37,345
7	2.42	53.36%	0.60	3.70	\$600,738
8	3.14	65.27%	2.94	13.58	\$797,286

Section III. Media Flight Chart

Calendar of P&E outreach



Section IV. Audit Questionnaire

- Are you primarily responsible for planning and implementing the promotion and education of your residential recycling program?
- 2. Are you a communications specialist working within a municipality?
- 3. How many staff are in the waste management department?
- 4. How many households are in your municipality?
- 5. Do you have an ethnically diverse residential population? If yes, do you produce P&E materials in other languages? If yes, which language?
- 6. Do you get help from any of the following when you are developing or implementing your P&E program?
 - Other waste management staff
 - Other municipal (non-comm.) staff
 - Committee of council
 - Community committee
 - Ethnic community groups
 - Graphic designers in-house
 - Graphic designers outsource
 - Municipal corporate comm.
 - Outsource comm./ad agency
 - Newspaper graphics department
 - No help from anyone
- 7. Do you have separate P&E for single family and multi-family residents?
- 8. Which of the following communications tools do you usually use to deliver P&E into the hands of your residents? (Read list)
 - News Releases

How many a year?

Newspaper advertising

Municipality paid

CAN/OCNA in-kind

Inserts in newspapers

How often

Annual calendars

• Direct mail flyers

How often

 Information cards/brochures (delivered door-to-door/ mailed)

How often

• Dedicated waste/recycling newsletter

How often

Television ads/PSAs

How often

Radio commercials

How often

- Website
- Municipal utility bills (bill stuffer)

How often

 Piggybacking on other community partners' communications vehicles

How often

- Elected officials newsletters
- Events

How many

Educational pamphlets

Where placed

Local celebrity engagements

Describe one

• School programs

Formal (with collection)

Informal (drop-in visits)

- Signs on garbage and/or recycling trucks
- Stickers on:

Carts

Boxes

Apartment bins

- Landfill/MRF/Depot operators talk to residents
- Truck drivers talk to residents
- Community-based social marketing

Describe

- 9. Which of these in your opinion are the most effective at achieving the objective of motivating improved or changes recycling behaviour?
 - News Releases
 - Newspaper advertising

Municipality paid

CNA/OCNA in-kind

- Inserts in newspapers
- Annual calendars
- Direct mail flyers
- Information cards/brochures
- Dedicated waste/recycling newsletters
- Television ads/psas

How often

Radio commercials

How often

- Website
- Municipality utility bills (bill stuffers)
- Piggybacking on other community partners' communications vehicles
- Elected officials newsletters
- Events
- Educational pamphlets
- Local celebrity engagements
- School programs
- Signs on garbage and/or recycling trucks
- Stickers on

Carts

Boxes

Apartment bins

- Landfill/MRF/Depot operators talk to residents
- Truck drivers talk to residents
- Community-based social marketing
- None

- 10. On what basis do you make that assessment?
- 11. Are there any media or tools that you consistently avoid?
- 12. How do you establish your annual P&E budget?
- 13. How do you decide how much to dedicate to each component?
- 14. What percentage of the waste management budget is the P&E budget?
- 15. In your opinion, is the budget adequate to cover the P&E activities you believe need to be carried out? How much would be ideal?
- 16. Do you conduct a strategic planning process to layout a strategic approach to P&E (including identifying audiences, themes, targeted messaging, images that resonate, corporate branding, etc.)? If no, have you considered trying or have tried to develop a strategic plan?
- 17. Have you/do you use qualitative (focus groups) or quantitative (telephone survey) or any other types of research? If yes, please describe.
- 18. Did the research help you identify:
 - Target audience
 - Key messages that work
 - Attitudes toward recycling
 - Gaps in recycling awareness or information
 - Barriers to effective P&E
 - Barriers to improved/changed recycling behaviour
- 19. Did you use a professional researcher in developing and implementing this research? If no, how did you develop & implement this research?
- 20. What, in your opinion/based on the research, are the most challenging barriers to improved/changed recycling behaviour in:
 - Single-family
 - Multi-family
- 21. What are you doing in your P&E to overcome these barriers?
- 22. Do you test your key communications messages and/or communications tools to measure their effectiveness prior to initiating promotional or educational campaigns? If yes, how?

- 23. Do you have a protocol in place to measure or evaluate the effectiveness of your program and/or campaign overall at achieving a shift in attitudes or changes in behaviour? If yes, describe.
- 24. What changes would you make to your P&E program if you could?
- 25. Do you support the idea of a province-wide television advertising campaign that would promote recycling in general? If no, why not?