2015 SWANA EXCELLENCE AWARD
AWARENESS CAMPAIGN ENTRY

86IT ANTI-LITTER CAMPAIGN

Wake County, North Carolina
Population: 1,000,000
Annual Budget: $155,875
Cost per household: $0.39

Submitted by:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2008, the Wake County Board of Commissioners adopted a goal to address the roadside litter problem in Wake County, North Carolina. The 86it Anti-Litter Campaign was launched in 2010 with strategies to emphasize the importance of citizen participation by focusing on the positive action of throwing trash away instead of shaming those who litter. Since then, 86it has been thriving by participating in community events, organizing clean-ups, and providing litter kit supplies to groups for the purpose of conducting cleanup events in their respective communities.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Wake County’s 86it Anti-Litter Campaign is applying for a SWANA’s Awareness Campaign Excellence Award to seek recognition for its innovative approach to addressing the issue of litter. Many other anti-littering campaigns primarily shame littering behavior by focusing on the negative action and using images of accumulated trash in their marketing materials for shock value. Research has shown that when it comes to changing behavior, especially in regards to the environment, positive reinforcement works better than the above mentioned “shaming” campaigns. The 86it Anti-Litter Campaign stands apart by engaging citizens to be part of the solution, while emphasizing the importance of personal responsibility in the reduction of litter in our community. Stopping old litter habits is about starting new positive behaviors, so 86it focuses on celebrating positive behavior and the act of “86ing” litter.
RESEARCH AND PLANNING

NEED FOR THE 86IT CAMPAIGN

Wake County has long been considered one of the most beautiful areas of North Carolina, with residents who take pride in their surroundings. Home to North Carolina’s state capital, Raleigh, as well as a number of parks and open spaces and a vibrant economy, people are not only coming to Wake County to visit, but to live and work. With an increase in population and visitors, there has been more opportunity for litter to not make it to the trash can.

Litter is an issue that affects our communities more than one may consider, both personally and economically. “Litter begets litter” is a phrase used to describe the litter problem in many places. Meaning, if a person sees litter on the ground, they are more likely to litter in that same area or elsewhere. When trash piles up in neighborhoods and on roadways, it diminishes a sense of personal pride in the community. Litter also impacts the economy. When businesses or home buyers scout an area to relocate or expand, litter should be the last thing that affects their decision in a negative way. When those people don’t see a sense of pride in a community, why would they want to invest in that area? It may result in businesses and homeowners taking their investment elsewhere.

Noticing a gradual increase in the amount of litter in Wake County, the Wake County Board of Commissioners voted to tap into the resources of the Solid Waste Management Division to come up with a campaign that would not only clean up litter, but educate the general public about litter prevention.

RESOURCES USED PRIOR TO THE 86IT CAMPAIGN

Prior to the 86it program Wake County had a number of ongoing cleanup programs in place including the North Carolina Department of Transportation’s (NCDOT) Adopt-A-Highway, Litter Sweep and Maintenance Crews programs, North Carolina Department of Correction’s Inmate Crews, local environmental group cleanups, and NC Big Sweep. Littering laws and efforts to enforce them were in place in both North Carolina and within Wake County. But these efforts weren’t enough to stop the littering behavior. Both enforcement and cleanups don’t prevent litter from occurring and have their limitations. For example, there are 5,100 miles of roadways in the County (not including abandoned roads) and only 183 miles of roadway are assigned to NC Department of Correction inmate crews and 811 miles contracted to the NCDOT’s Adopt-A-Highway program, approximately 91 miles of which overlap. This leaves nearly 4,200 miles of the to be addressed by other litter cleanup programs.
Enforcement isn’t without it’s challenges either - law enforcement officers must witness the act of littering in order to issue a citation or find identifiable personal information in the litter that directly links it to an individual. Additionally, of the 672 litter citations issued in Wake County in 2006, less than 50% resulted in convictions. In many cases, littering violations are dropped during plea-bargaining.

A comprehensive and effective litter program needs a functional system of laws, enforcement, cleanups and education. After careful analysis of Wake County’s past and current efforts to control litter, it was determined that a missing piece was a strong educational campaign.

**86IT CAMPAIGN’S TARGET AUDIENCE**

A study conducted by the NCDOT found that over half of all roadside litter in North Carolina consisted of paper, snack wrappers, take-out food and beverage containers. It also found that the most persistent, deliberate litterers tend to be between the ages of 11 and 24. This data has been consistent with other surveys done nationally and research conducted by Keep America Beautiful (KAB). KAB also conducted research into the reasons why people litter. They found that a lack of stake or ownership in the community and perceiving that litter is socially acceptable if litter is already present were the most common reasons.

The 86it Anti-Litter Campaign is designed to target the 15-24 year demographic. From the vernacular use of “86 it”, which means to throw something out, to the bright colors, distressed fonts, and Warhol-like graphics, the campaign is geared to appeal to a younger demographic. Wake County also opted not to include Wake County’s official logo on any of the branding. Research found that the target demographic is less likely to “listen or pay attention to” messages from authority. The end result is a brand that feels less government and more relatable to the target demographic.
**86IT GOALS AND TACTICS**

The 86it Anti-Litter Campaign strives to emphasize the importance of personal responsibility in the reduction of litter in our community. In order to do this, 86it strives to engage a core demographic who would best respond to behavior change — a not-too-young, but not-too-old approach. 86it also encourages the target demographic to share their experience and influence others through positive peer pressure.

The ultimate goal of the 86it campaign is to change littering behavior and to instill a sense of community pride and responsibility by encouraging a culture that believes:

- Littering is unacceptable to me and those around me
- Every piece of litter hurts the image of my community and is harmful to the environment
- I’m responsible for my own trash

In order to achieve these goals the 86it has taken a multi-faceted approach to changing behavior including community outreach, organized cleanups, high school program development, as well as a progressive and upbeat social media, interactive web and television marketing campaign.

86it attends a wide range of community festivals and events throughout the year. Ideal events not only include music festivals, concerts and other activities that appeal to the target demographic, but also stadium events that usually result in a lot of intentional littering.

A key aspect of 86it is to empower people to take responsibility for their own community. 86it does this by providing people with the tools to conduct their own litter cleanups. Anyone interested in conducting a litter cleanup can check out a litter kit from the 86it web page. Each kit is customized to include litter grabbers, safety vests, gloves as well as trash and recycling bags. Litter kits allow people to take ownership for their community and where there is less litter, there will be less littering.

86it also coordinates cleanup events in a heavily littered communities. 86it partners with local businesses, colleges, church groups and schools to raise awareness and garner volunteers. Volunteer service hours are issued to high schoolers as an incentive to participate.

86it Litter Kits are customized for individuals conducting litter cleanups.
In order to most effectively reach the high school demographic 86it conducts outreach in partnership with Wake County Public School’s driver education program. This includes a brief interactive presentation on risks, fines and impacts of litter as well as impactful promotional items, such as litter bags and car air fresheners to help students remember to 86it.

86it recently debuted a new commercial featuring street acrobats and the NHL Carolina Hurricanes star hockey player, Justin Faulk, 86’ing their trash, with the message, “it doesn’t matter how you do it, just 86it.” The commercial is being broadcast on the local CW and Fox affiliate stations, which features programming targeted at the 86it demographic.

Screen shot from 86it commercial “It doesn’t matter how you do it, just 86it.” (visit https://www.youtube.com/user/Channel86it to view)
OBSTACLES FOR MEETING GOALS

The biggest challenges with 86it has been ensuring that the message resonates with the target audience and finding ways to measure behavior change. Appealing to today’s youth and changing behavior is not an easy task, especially when it comes to a behavior such as littering. A lot of thought and effort was spent working with a marketing firm to design 86it in such a way that would catch the attention of the younger demographic without coming across as authoritative or too much like a governmental organization. Another challenge is measuring the impact of behavior change. Obviously behaviors don’t change overnight, but the target demographic is very sensitive to peer pressure. The true shift in social standards occurs when someone impacted by the message says to someone who has just littered, “hey, 86 that cup in the trash.”

IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION

86IT CAMPAIGN TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>KEY OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2008</td>
<td>Wake County Board of County Commissioners adopt a goal to address the litter issue in Wake County.</td>
<td>County Manager tasks Solid Waste Management Division with solving the litter issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2008</td>
<td>Increase litter enforcement efforts</td>
<td>Hired deputy sheriffs to issue littering tickets in heavily litter roadways</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2009</td>
<td>Increase cleanup efforts</td>
<td>Hired contractor to cleanup litter along heavily littered roadways</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2009</td>
<td>Researching litter outreach programs</td>
<td>Worked with a local marketing firm to research littering behavior and successful campaigns</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2009</td>
<td>Developed 86it Anti-Litter Concept</td>
<td>Tested various messages with targeted demographic. 86it message was favored by test groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2009</td>
<td>Develop communication strategy</td>
<td>Create 86it.com, Facebook, Twitter, campaign</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2010</td>
<td>Launch 86it Anti-Litter Campaign</td>
<td>Kicked off campaign at Raleigh’s First Night Event which draws thousands of people</td>
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<td>July 2010/July 2013</td>
<td>Conduct attitudinal survey about litter</td>
<td>Conducted baseline survey in 2010 and follow up survey in 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010 - Ongoing</td>
<td>Provide resources to curb littering behavior and cleanup litter</td>
<td>Provide litter bags and other promotional material free of charge. Check out litter kits to groups to conduct cleanups</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011 - Ongoing</td>
<td>Participate in strategic community events</td>
<td>Participate in key community events to reach target demographic - such as music and art festivals</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012 - Ongoing</td>
<td>Conduct community based cleanup events</td>
<td>Conduct at least one community cleanup event in the spring and the fall</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013 - Ongoing</td>
<td>Conduct multi-media advertising campaign</td>
<td>Online and billboard advertising</td>
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<td>November 2014</td>
<td>Partner with Wake County Drivers Education Program</td>
<td>Developed an educational component for all students that attend drivers education</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2015</td>
<td>Expand marketing to broadcast advertising</td>
<td>Developed a :30 broadcast advertising commercial reminding people to 86it.</td>
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86IT BUDGET

The Wake County Solid Waste Management Division operates a $28 million dollar enterprise fund. All programs and services are paid for by a $20 annual household fee, revenue generated by tipping fees at the South Wake Landfill, the sale of recyclable materials and grant funding. Expenditures for the 86it campaign account for less than 1% of the Solid Waste Management Division’s annual operating budget. The following table shows the total budget expenditures for the 86it campaign since its inception in 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>86IT ANTI-LITTER CAMPAIGN BUDGET EXPENDITURES 2010 - 2014</th>
<th>TOTAL EXPENSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concept development and strategic direction, creative services, surveying, web site creation and hosting, event sponsorship, commercial development and promotions</td>
<td>$336,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising, including broadcast television, billboard, print, web and social media</td>
<td>$224,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies and equipment, including litter kit supplies, litter bags, display materials and other promotional items such as magnets, sticker, t-shirts, etc.</td>
<td>$63,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cost to Date (2010-2014)</td>
<td>$623,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Cost per Year</td>
<td>$155,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Annual Cost per Household</td>
<td>$0.39</td>
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86IT PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

Addressing a problem as ubiquitous as litter cannot be done alone; it requires community buy-in and support. 86it has made it a priority to reach out to different stakeholders and build relationships in Wake County to strengthen the impact and reach of the campaign. Healthy partnerships with the following organizations have provided additional resources and exposure to help maintain a successful campaign:

» City of Raleigh: 86it partnered with the City of Raleigh to place an 86it themed solar compactor in downtown Raleigh.

» NHL and Carolina Hurricanes: 86it partnered with NHL during the 2011 All Star Game held in Raleigh, to distribute litter and recycling bags to all tailgaters. In 2015, 86it worked with the Carolina Hurricanes to create the 86it commercial feature player, Justin Faulk. The Carolina Hurricanes feature the advertisement on their jumbo screen during hockey games.

» Radio One Media: 86it partnered with Radio One to host a series of community cleanup events in urban areas.

» Wake County Public School System: 86it partnered with the drivers education program to educate students about littering and provide them with litter bags and other functional promotional items.

» Town of Rolesville: 86it worked with the town of Rolesville to provide 86it branded drive through trash cans at all fast food restaurants.
» CW22 WLFL TV: 86it contracts with the local TV station to run 86it advertisement to the campaigns core demographic and CW22 provides 86it with in kind outreach space at local outreach events, including the NC State Fair, Artsplosure, Girls World Expo and more.

» Parklet: 86it partnered with local business, Deco and Raleigh Space, to help establish Raleigh’s first Parklet - an extension of the sidewalk to provide amenities and green space for people using the street in downtown Raleigh.

» Girls Scouts: 86it partnered with the NC Coastal Pines Council to create the “Respect the Can” patch. Troops can earn the patch by completing various litter related activities and conducting a litter cleanup.

» Carolina Mudcats: 86it partnered with the minor league baseball team to promote proper disposal of trash at stadium event via video board messaging, signage and between inning announcements.

» Respect the Canvas: 86it partnered with several local artists to paint 86it themed trash cans. The functional artwork is displayed throughout Wake County.
HOW 86IT IS UNIQUE

There are several successful anti-littering campaigns. Some of the most famous include Don’t Mess with Texas and Keep America Beautiful’s Crying Native American. During the development process of the campaign, staff reviewed several research studies on behavioral change campaigns. One of the key findings that was noted was that people responded less favorably to negative images of the environment and shaming campaigns.

For this reason, 86it focuses on the positive behavior that we want people to emulate rather than the behavior we want people to stop. Furthermore, 86it never show litter on the ground or recyclables going into the trash because this just reinforces the negative behavior. Whenever 86it shows litter it is going into the appropriate waste receptacle.

In order to resonate with a younger demographic, 86it developed a series of slang words associated with 86it, such as, “be an 86er” or “we are going to be 86ing Elm Street this weekend” or “request some 86ables for your car” and so on. The campaign has a very strategic voice geared towards inclusion not shaming.

86it posters that encourage good behavior and prompt proper disposal of waste.
RESULTS/EVALUATION

RESPONSE FROM TARGET AUDIENCE

The response to the 86it campaign has been extremely positive. 86it has had great success reaching the target demographic by strategically targeting events and activities that appeal to 15-24 year olds. These include concerts, sporting events, festivals and communicating through social media. We’ve also been able to tap directly into the demographic through the drivers education program. Over half of the online requests for 86ables (litter bags, car magnets, stickers) are made by people between the ages of 13 and 25 years old. Furthermore, over 60% of social media users are between 13-24 years old.

MEASURING SUCCESS

The ability to measure and evaluate the success of 86it is an important element of the program. Since launching, 86it has implemented several evaluation tools, including surveys, litter indexes and web based analytics.

In 2010 Wake County partnered with North Carolina State University to conduct phone surveys of 400 random Wake County households to gauge the public’s attitude, behavior and understanding of roadside litter. In conjunction, Wake County conducted a web survey and received feedback from over 600 participants. In 2013, Wake County worked with North Carolina State University to conduct a follow up survey to gauge changes in perception and behavior as it relates to litter in the community.
The findings from the surveys indicated that there was a decrease in the amount of litter perceived by Wake County residents between 2010 and 2013. With twice as many respondents indicating there was less litter on the roadways.

The survey also found large variations in the type of media that respondents hear or see anti-litter message. Television remained the most common medium reported, followed by billboard advertising and public events. These mediums all represent significant investments of the 86it campaign. Consistent with an overall move away from print media and towards digital news and media, the proportion of respondents reporting seeing messages in newspapers declined and those reporting seeing messages through the internet nearly quadrupled.

86it has found that billboards provide a viable source of information, particularly in an area such as Wake County, where a large proportion of workers commute around the county and into Research Triangle Park and surrounding counties. In addition, although internet presence may be heavier than it was in the past, this medium may not reach as wide an audience as billboards, given educational and other demographic differences in internet use.
Generally, respondents are more likely to remember long-standing campaigns and less likely to recall specific slogans unless they have been repeated over time. For newer anti-litter campaigns, such as 86it, respondents appeared to retain the overall message but have more trouble recalling either the name of the program or the slogan. The tendency to recall longer-standing campaigns suggests that continued exposure over time may raise the profile of specific efforts. The 2013 respondents’ frequently recalled nationally recognizable slogans such as Adopt-A-Highway and Keep America Beautiful. 86it had the most recognition of the local litter campaigns.

Since launching 86it, staff have conducted an annual litter index. A litter index is a visual assessment to quantify the amount of litter on the roadway. The benefit of a litter index is that it measures progress over time. In order to capture a good assessment of litter in such a large County, staff divided the County into 4 segments with 10 one-mile stretches of roadway in each segment.

Over the past four years, litter index results have shown reduction in the quantity of roadside litter in all 4 segments of the County. This data helps determine where 86it targets outreach efforts and community cleanup events.
Other metrics used to evaluate 86it include the number of litter kits checked out to groups to conduct self-organized litter cleanups, participation in community events and conversations/interaction on social media. Currently, 86it has over 1,800 social media users, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and web based pledges. Since 2010, over 100 litter kits have been checked out by individuals to organize their own cleanup events. The 86it campaign coordinated 5 cleanup events and has reached over 200,000 people at community events, including the NC State Fair, Hopscotch Music Festival, Artsplosion, First Night and more.

**IMPROVING 86IT**

86it is always looking for new ways to improve the campaign through various feedback methods. Staff received feedback that people were having trouble seeing the 86it brand in the original logo. 86it decided to move to a graphic logo that clearly showed the 86it wording and web address.

The 2013 survey indicated that 86it had good brand recognition among people ages 30 to 49 with most recognition from the 86it billboard. In order to better reach the target demographic 86it began focusing on events and social media applications. 86it is also seeking ways to get deeper involvement with high school students through the drivers education program and special school events. The litter index data also helps us understand which communities are improving and which communities are becoming more littered. From this data we are able to focus our outreach efforts in targeted areas.

**REPLICATING 86IT**

The concept of 86it is easily transferable to other communities. The idea behind creating a successful behavior change campaign targeting teenagers is one that many organizations and brands struggle with. The ever-changing technology and fads require evolving strategies to best reach the target audience. The litter problem certainly doesn’t stop at municipal borders and our hope is that neither does the concept behind 86it. For other organizations looking to change littering behavior, we recommend campaigns that stress positive reinforcement with a message that appeals to a younger demographic. Organizations must continue to look for ways to involve unconventional groups and use outreach tools that are relatable to the target demographic.
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