The Resource Recovery & Waste Management Division
County of Santa Barbara Public Works Department
Santa Barbara, California

SWANA
2009 Marketing Excellence Award Application
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1.0 Statement of Intent

In the Spring of 2008 the Resource Recovery and Waste Management Division (RRWM) of the County of Santa Barbara Public Works Department coordinated a Green Waste Awareness Campaign with goals all related to green waste generation in the county. We wanted to improve the public’s knowledge of how to recycle green waste, increase the effectiveness of our mulch marketing, and expand participation in our discounted home compost bin program.

The campaign utilized a wide array of media to meet these goals including songs, mailers, television and theater ads. The ads all contained consistent elements, including humor and playfulness, and the results were impressive. This application contains electronic links to some of the media outreach that we employed.

RRWM is applying for the Marketing Excellence Award because we believe the effort deserves recognition for its unique approach and measurable success in addressing some of the key issues inherent to the critical matter of green waste management. The marketing success depended on a large public education component, and the creative combination of education and marketing distinguishes this effort from conventional marketing approaches. Both the process and the results reflect innovation and excellence.
2.0 Research/Planning

Identification of Needs - Overview

In 2007, the Resource Recovery and Waste Management Division (RRWM) conducted audits of our three franchised waste haulers. One of the field observations was that the green waste containers provided little guidance as to what exactly should and should not go inside. At that point we decided to review all of our educational efforts regarding green waste recycling, and to upgrade as needed. Typically, the community program part of the RRWM Division undertakes one major public education campaign per year, and we made the decision to target green waste recycling in 2008, similar to the way in which we had targeted curbside recycling, plastics and commercial recycling in prior years.

Our initial focus was simply to improve awareness of the Do’s and Don’ts of green waste recycling. That target expanded as we considered our entire cycle of green waste generation and reuse. The county, which operates its own landfill and transfer stations, is responsible for marketing more than 40,000 tons of the collected material after it has been cleaned and ground up into mulch. Our marketing success depends in some degree on the cleanliness of the materials put in the containers. It also depends on local users “Closing the Loop” as it were, by finding a new home for the mulch that had been discarded as green waste.

One other piece of our green waste system is the promotion and sales of discounted home compost bins. They are available on a year-round basis, but at the time the public’s knowledge of the program was limited.

RRWM staff discussed these issues over a period of several weeks in the fall of 2007, and these complementary needs coalesced into a plan to spearhead a Spring Green Waste Awareness Campaign with three main target areas: **Green Waste Recycling, Mulch and Home Composting**. We thought that spring was a good time as people would naturally be thinking of related matters like gardening, planting, mulching and composting. What began as a public education effort had evolved into more of a full fledged marketing campaign. The goals were as follows:

1) Raise public awareness of and increase participation in proper Green Waste Recycling;
2) Increase the cost effectiveness of the county’s Mulch Marketing;
3) Expand the knowledge and use of county subsidized Home Composting Bins.
Identification of Needs – Green Waste Recycling Education

There are aspects to proper green waste recycling in our county that are not obvious. Customers often think the container is for anything organic in nature and put food, coffee grounds, pet waste and even compostables like paper and cardboard inside. Even within the general category of green waste there are exceptions – pampas grass, yucca and palm fronds are not desirable for various reasons.

The 2007 field audit revealed that there was little guidance on the containers to clarify what went inside. In most cases there were simply the words “GREEN WASTE ONLY” or “YARD WASTE” hot stamped on the lid or side. Many of the containers in the south county did have stickers with guidelines on them, but they were usually old and faded.

In addition to the stickers, green waste recycling information was posted on the RRWM web site, lessismore.org. Information was also periodically sent to solid waste customers in the hauler newsletters. Despite these efforts, RRWM felt that the green waste program would benefit from a more concerted educational effort. We felt in particular that we could greatly enhance the message by associating graphics with the YES and NO category text.

When we examined the loads of collected materials after they were tipped at the disposal site, we found that while the material was clean, there was room for improvement. Plastic bags and palm fronds were the most common contaminants. Santa Barbara County residents had strongly embraced the green waste collection program since it began in 1997, which has helped the county record an impressive 69% diversion level. We knew that there was great support, and felt that with a stronger educational message the level of participation and the quality of the materials collected would both improve.
Identification of Needs - Mulch Marketing

The RRWM division county is responsible for marketing approximately 40,000 tons of green waste that is processed into mulch every year. Marketing the end product from municipal green waste collection in California is typically a huge challenge. Many jurisdictions simply apply the ground material as Alternate Daily Cover (ADC). It would be easy to take this route, insofar as the county operates its own landfill, but it would not meet the higher intent of AB 939, the state’s recycling mandate. Therefore RRWM made the decision long ago to seek a local reuse for the collected green waste, which means that the marketing task is ongoing. State regulations limit mulch to 7 days on site, which means that the distribution of the material has to be efficient and continuous.

RRWM staff went out to the landfill to visually inspect the green waste right after it was dumped. Plastic bags, palm fronds and decaying fruit were some of the most common unacceptable items observed. While overall the material was clean, even one plastic bag put through the grinder can affect the quality of the end product. Palm fronds are not as bad as plastics, but they are hard on the grinder, and they don’t turn into a visually appealing product.

The unacceptable materials are removed by hand prior to grinding, but this is a laborious process. Our site visit convinced us that if we could improve the quality of our customer participation that we would in turn improve our system efficiency.
RRWM staff then spoke with some of the larger end users of the mulch. They valued the product but really needed it to be clean with few or no contaminants. These interviews reinforced the necessity for improving customer awareness of acceptable versus unacceptable materials.

Past marketing efforts had targeted agricultural end users by partnering with representatives of local agricultural extension programs. Word of mouth was very important. The written materials that were used to promote mulch use was posted on a section on the RRWM web site describing the mulch and how to get it. There was also a flyer to be used as a handout with the same information.

RRWM had been successful in marketing all the mulch without using it as ADC. We felt that if we made our presence better known throughout the county we could do even better and generate more revenue per ton than we had been.
Identification of Needs - Home Compost Bins

RRWM had been promoting home composting since the 1990’s. Home composting accepts materials that green waste recycling does not - food, coffee grounds and more. To the extent that it lessens the need for green waste and/or trash collection, it also has environmental benefits. The county developed a “How To” booklet on home composting and distributed copies at no charge. In addition, RRWM had sold home compost bins to the public for $40, which is about half of the normal retail price.

The program was in a period of transition. Historically the county had conducted one-day compost bin sales. In 2007 the decision was made to discontinue the one-day sales and offer the bins year round. RRWM had yet to promote this new future, other than a mention on the web site. The timing seemed perfect to stress this new program as part of the coming campaign.

Target Audience

The target audience for the green waste education were the 180,000 people living in an estimated 35,000 single family households with trash service in the unincorporated portions of Santa Barbara County, and in the cities of Goleta, Buellton and Solvang. This audience has shown a high degree of participation in the green waste collection program, but we felt there was room for improvement.

The target audience for the mulch ranged from individuals to agricultural oriented businesses. These customers could be smaller users who picked up their mulch for free or for a small loading fee, or they could be larger end users. The county has 75,000 acres of vegetable crops, over 20,000 acres of Vineyards, and another 20,000 acres of fruit and nut orchards. Other potential end users included nurseries, seed growers and landscapers. The audience was perfectly suited to mulch, which is valued for its water savings potential, soil building, erosion control, and weed and disease suppression.

The target audience for the compost bin promotion was the entire county population, estimated at 428,816, including all the cities whether or not they participated in the campaign and whether or not they have green waste recycling. There is a high level of environmental commitment in Santa Barbara County, and we felt there were many people who would take the extra step to composting at home if we made it more affordable and available.
Campaign Goals

After the first month RRWM reached a consensus to focus on the following three areas: Green Waste Recycling, Mulch and Home Composting. The goals were as follows:

1) Raise public awareness of and increase participation in proper Green Waste Recycling;
2) Increase the cost effectiveness of the county’s Mulch Marketing;
3) Expand participation in the subsidized Home Composting Bins program.

Goal Measurement

Goal #1: Awareness would be gauged by tracking visits to the RRWM web site, lessismore.org, web site to measure any increase in activity.

Goal #2: Cost effectiveness would be quantified by measuring our ability to increase the amount of mulch sold and increase the overall revenue per ton.

Goal #3: Participation could be measured by tracking growth in compost bin sales and in visits to the mulch section of the web site.

Strategies & Means of Reaching Goals

The overall strategy was to employ a variety of media to reach our goals. We would emphasize clear graphics so as to bridge language gaps. We would try having a consistent “personality” to the campaign, one with elements of playfulness and humor that would make the message memorable. RRWM was committed to employing in house skills and creativity to keep costs low and quality control high.

We ended up with five outreach activity categories to our Spring Green Waste Campaign.

Component 1 - Green Waste Songs - Radio
Component 2 - Multi-Message Mailer
Component 3 - Spanish Language Ad - Television & Radio
Component 4 - Animated Graphics Ad - Movie Theaters
Component 5 - Multi-Purpose Ads - Online Newspaper

Anticipated Obstacles & Opportunities

Because we had settled on an approach that had several distinct but interrelated messages, there was the chance that we might muddle our outreach and fail to address any of the main goals optimally. There was also uncertainty initially as to how we would reach the Hispanic community. Finally, there was a danger the budget would get stretched too thin to do justice to all of the outreach components.

In each of the challenges lay an opportunity. We would have to prioritize the goals in order to plan and budget accordingly. We would also be forced to simplify our message and hone it to make sure it didn’t get muddled. The large Spanish speaking population underscored the need to use universal graphics as far as possible in our outreach. And lastly the relatively thin budget could help become more creative in keeping costs down and making sure that we spent the people’s money wisely and cost-effectively.
3.0 Implementation

Spring Green Waste Campaign Timeline

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Oct ’07</th>
<th>Nov ’07</th>
<th>Dec ’07</th>
<th>Jan ’08</th>
<th>Feb ’08</th>
<th>Mar ’08</th>
<th>Apr ’08</th>
<th>May ’08</th>
<th>June ’08</th>
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**Overall Campaign Planning & Coordination**

Evaluate Needs
1. Green Waste Education
2. Home Compost Program
3. Mulch Program

- Develop Goals & Strategies
- Seek Campaign Partners
- Draft Budget

**Component 1 - Green Waste Song**

- Write Song Lyrics
- Pitch Song Idea to Group
- Work w/Musicians to Add Music
  - Final Studio Mix
  - Solicit Bids for Radio Spots
  - Buy & Schedule Ads
  - Deliver Ads

**Component 2 - Multi-Message Mailer**

- Develop Mailer Content & Design
- Hire Graphic Artist
  - Find Stock Photography
  - Arrange & Conduct Photo Shoot
  - Get Printing /Mailing Bids
  - Select Printer/Mailer
  - Get Addresses From Haulers
  - Schedule Job
  - Mailers Printed & Mailed

**Component 3 - Spanish Language TV**

- Mtgs. re Spanish Language Outreach
- Write & Translate TV Ad
  - Shoot Footage
  - Final Mix
  - Buy & Schedule Airtime

**Component 4 - Movie Theater Ad**

- Brainstorm re Movie Ads
- Find Animator
- Write Storyboard
  - Animate Mailer Graphics
  - Final Mix
  - Buy & Schedule Ads

**Component 5 - Online Newspaper Ads**

- Convert Mailer into Online Ads
- Buy & Schedule Ads

Radio Ads Play

- Solicit Bids for Radio Spots
- Buy & Schedule Ads
- Deliver Ads

TV Ads Play

- Convert Audio for Radio
- Radio Ads Play

Movie Ads Run

- Ads Run
Implementation Component 1 - The Green Waste Songs

Santa Barbara County residents are accustomed to highly creative public outreach campaigns, so staff wanted to do something more than a typical PSA. The first idea came from an RRWM staff member who envisioned a green waste container that would sing about the kinds of things he/she wanted inside. He wrote some lyrics that used humor to draw special attention to the things to avoid putting in the containers - plastics, pet waste and food. After getting the go ahead to pursue the project, a well known local musical duo - Tom Ball & Kenny Sultan - was approached and agreed to put music to the words.

Ball & Sultan refined the words and created two different one minute song demos. The demos were played to RRWM and the City of Goleta staff and got reactions ranging from positive to “hit a home run” positive. We got the go ahead to buy the song, make a final studio mix, and purchase airtime on the radio. We ended up liking both versions, each with the same words. One song was dubbed the “Green Waste Blues” and the other the “Green Waste Rag.”

RRWM purchased airtime for the campaign with 11 radio stations, including 3 Spanish language stations. All of the stations had high arbitron ratings and cumulatively they covered a broad demographic. The songs aired in March and April of 2008. Here are the words with a link to the music on our web site. There are copies of the songs on the award submittal CD as well.

Green Waste Blues & Green Waste Rag Ads

Intro - The County of Santa Barbara and the City of Goleta invite you to listen to a message from a previously unsung recycling hero, your green waste container.

I want your leaves
I want your grass
Don’t want your plastics
Can’t use no glass
Don’t want no garbage of any kind
Don’t give me nothing
Your dog has left behind.

Just want that yard waste
No dirt or rocks
Give me the green stuff
And Keep your smelly socks
Well I dig your flowers
And I dig your weeds

So keep it clean and green
And I’ll have what I need

I’ll take your tree trimmings
Small branches too
Don’t want no paper
Or your old tennis shoes
Just want that yard waste
All nice and clean
And that’s a simple tip
For Living Green.

Outro - Find out more at lessismore.org
Implementation Component 2 - The Multiple-Message Mailer

The mailer was the most challenging of the outreach tasks because its goal was to communicate all three campaign messages in one piece of material. The largest size mailer measures 11.5 by 6 inches, and we felt this could be an effective way to communicate directly to our target audience. We had plans to follow up on and reinforce this communication after the campaign was over, but we thought the mailer had great potential to make an immediate impact.

RRWM started with the desire to craft a simple and clear presentation of what should and should not go into the green waste containers. The commingled recycling promotion in 2006 created guidelines that featured color photos of acceptable items. It made sense to craft the yard waste guidelines in a similar fashion.

One difference was that we wanted to have pictures of non-acceptable items as well, since the problems posed by contamination are greater. Our commingled recyclables are sent to a sorting facility that is well equipped to remove non-recyclables. Green waste contaminants need to be removed by hand in a laborious manner not aided by any kind of picking line. Furthermore, contaminants like plastic and palm have a negative impact on the end product if they are not removed. Therefore we would need to emphasize the Don'ts as well as the Do's in our promotion.

We talked to the mulch operations people and visited the disposal site, which helped us prioritize a list of acceptable versus non-acceptable materials. In addition to sticking with an approach based on simple graphics, we wanted to incorporate some of the personality of the green waste songs. Hence the creation of the happy and sad green waste carts, and some of the language that echoes the song lyrics.

The guidelines were very important and we gave them the largest side of the mailer, the side without the customer address and postage information. The mulch and compost bin information would go on the reverse side. We needed something to tie the two sides of the mailer together, and we came up with the “Complete the Loop!” phrase and language which explains how the collected green waste is ground into mulch, and how the loop is completed when the “nutrient-rich mulch” is returned to the soil. The completed front side of the mailer is pictured below.
The Loop starts by keeping yard trimmings out of the landfill by putting them in a green waste container. CLEAN GREEN materials are then taken to county facilities, where they are processed and ground into a new product — MULCH. The loop is completed with the return of the nutrient-rich mulch to the soil. Give your Green Waste a second chance at life — Recycle it!

The reverse side of the mailer above presented the difficulty of combining two messages into a smaller space. We wanted to pictorially show the benefits of using mulch, and we wanted to briefly tell people how to get it. We also wanted to add a short promotion for the discounted compost bins. We were able to save time and money by using the very affordable stock photography as opposed to finding models and conducting a photo shoot.

We narrowed the image choices down until we selected one of a healthy woman harvesting her own garden. The impression she makes is wholesome and radiant, and we chose to tweak that a bit by going over-the-top with another image of an almost impossibly cute family working in their garden. We played off their “Ozzie & Harriet” appeal with the call out “GEE DAD, THIS IS THE BEST MULCH EVER.” We also worked exaggerations into the text, which is written with infomercial sensibilities like “Supplies are Limited” and “Operators are Standing By.” This was all in keeping with our aim of being informative yet also playful in our outreach.

RRWM contracted with a firm for printing and mailing that was employee owned and very environmentally responsible. For the mailers they used paper that was 50% recycled with 25% post-consumer fibers and the ink was vegetable based and water soluble. We saved money by getting addresses from our franchised haulers rather than pay for the use of a mailing list. The final proofs were delivered to the printer in March and the mailers were sent out in April to coincide with Earth Day.
From the beginning we knew that reaching the Hispanic community would be important. They represent about a third of the county population, and they also dominate the world of private landscapers and gardeners. We felt that our YES and NO graphics were clear enough to bridge any language gaps. Also, the graphics would eventually be converted into guidelines that would be attached to all of the green waste containers in the county. Beyond this, however, we wanted to make a unique outreach to the Hispanic community.

From previous public relations work RRWM had developed a good relationship with the local and popular Spanish language television station - Univision. Univision had the ability in-house to produce a commercial to our specifications, and that service would be included as part of our advertising contract. We decided to take a personal approach that built on the fact that the drivers for the local trash haulers were predominantly Hispanic. In portions of the county where collection is not automated, the drivers are expected to remove non-acceptable materials from containers before dumping them, an annoying bit of extra work. Thus the drivers had a vested interest in promoting correct habits.

We envisioned a 30 second commercial that would show footage of drivers from all three haulers collecting green waste. We would show them shaking their heads at unacceptable materials like plastic bags, palm fronds and smelly socks. There would be a simple voice over to tie it all together. Univision shot the footage and we worked with them to edit and produce the spot, which started to air at the end of April.
Here is the English text for the ad, which was translated for the commercial.

**English Copy for Univision Television Commercial**

Collecting Trash and Recycling is hard work. Please help by putting the right materials in the right containers. The Green Waste container is for grass, leaves, branches and other yard waste. Please, no dirt, rocks, anything your dog has left behind, plastic bags or plastic pots, palm fronds or pampas grass. Oh, no smelly socks either. Thanks.

Once the video was done we converted the audio into a 30 second radio spot. We had already purchased the airtime as part of a package deal when we bought time for the songs. The ads ran in May and into June. A copy of the ad is available on the accompanying CD submittal.

**Implementation Component 4 - Movie Theater Ad**

RRWM had used movie theater ads before before with strong results. We liked the broad exposure of having our message on 37 movie screens throughout the county. Since there are all types of movies we would reach a wide demographic at a price per screen of less than $70 per month. The ad format is limited in that there is no sound.

We chose to convert the basic YES and NO messages from the mailer into a more dynamic format that features an animated happy green waste cart accepting materials with a grin, and an unhappy cart rejecting materials that are not wanted. The ad ran in May and June and can be found at the link here and on the accompanying CD.

**Implementation Component 5 - Online Newspaper Ads**

RRWM had contemplated print ads in local newspapers early in the planning stages, but we had concerns about the costs relative to the return in that media. We also didn’t think the graphics would translate well to newsprint, especially if we didn’t pay the extra expense for full color. Meanwhile we were approached by a local online newspaper that wanted to partner with us on a new “Green” section of their paper. They were doing special promotions related to the upcoming Earth Day and we took advantage of the opportunity. As an added bonus we felt that supporting a paperless newspaper was a good fit for RRWM philosophically.

The ad sizes available were on the small side, and RRWM worked with our graphic artist to extract elements from the mailer and present them in concise, catchy ways. The advertising special we bought gave us space in several sections of the paper, so it worked well for us to subdivide the mailer into a number of smaller ads. All of the ads featured a link to our “Less is More” web site. The ads ran in time for Earth Day in April and through June.
Budget

The total budget for the campaign started at $40,000 and grew to $62,500 as RRWM was able to acquire a few partners, which we will discuss below. The creative portion of the budget, which was for the graphic artists and the musicians, was $12,500. We allotted more than $25,000 for the radio spots for the songs and for the Spanish language ad. Printing and mailing came in under the estimated $10,000. The Spanish Language television was also a big ticket item at nearly $5,000.

We ended up under budget due to good planning, good bargaining and collaboration with our advertisers, and effective attempts to cut costs whenever possible. For example, we limited our photoshoot to 2 hours as a result of using some images borrowed from another city and by purchasing stock photography. We also negotiated well with our advertising partners to get both a preferred non-profit rate and to have them match airtime we paid for with airtime they donated. In general this approach resulted in doubling our exposure.
Partnerships

The RRWM community programs group has been responsible for spearheading many public relations campaigns was committed to a green waste awareness campaign, we started to ask our regional partners if they wanted to participate. The City of Goleta, with a population of around 30,000, was glad to participate and we worked with them every step of the way in planning and execution. The small cities of Buellton and Solvang rely on the RRWM for many solid waste services, and they were partners in the sense that we acted on their behalf as we often do and included their residents in all of the promotions. Together these municipal agencies represented about 180,000 people.

We acquired one other in-house partner early on through internal communications with people responsible for the mulch operations. The RRWM community programs group has been responsible for spearheading many public relations campaigns related to solid waste management. The mulch operations people also belong to RRWM, but typically are not involved in a public outreach on a large scale. When RRWM staff started talking to them about the green waste and mulch programs it became apparent that we had overlapping interests. Mulch operations had budgeted funds towards advertising and were even thinking of a direct mail approach, but they hadn’t started their outreach yet. We teamed up and were able to increase our budget and collaborative group at the same time.

The collaboration between the various parties, including the graphic and musical artists, helped bring a variety of perspectives to our efforts. Working with the musicians was a joy. The graphic artist we employed, Ruth from RAVE & Associates, was great to work with, and very creative and flexible when it came to fielding lots of varied input. She would typically make many versions of the different graphics in development which were circulated for feedback and comment. The collaborative process enabled us to combine the best features from the original array of choices into a final product that everyone had contributed to and which everyone felt good about.

Planning Accomplishments

There was a multitude of elements to the campaign that needed to be well coordinated so as to roll out in time for Spring. We chose Spring as a time when people start thinking about gardens, and we wanted them also to think about the related matters of green waste, mulch and home compost. Ultimately we believe we were able to implement each component successfully and also to manage them in ways that were complementary.

Creativity

The RRWM division has a track record for creative approaches to conveying information that can be fairly dry and uninteresting. Being fun and playful in delivering simple, easy to remember messages paid off. The green waste songs especially got a very positive response. The personality and clarity of each of the components is strong enough that we are running them again. We are also building on the campaign components to go even further. The YES and NO graphics have been turned into stickers for the green waste containers. We are looking to sponsor a YouTube-type contest for adding video or animation to the songs, and we are working with a local musician to create a Spanish language version of the song.
4.0 Results & Evaluation

Target Audience & Measurements of Success

The campaign goals were:

1) Raise public awareness of and increase participation in proper Green Waste Recycling;
2) Increase the cost effectiveness of the county’s Mulch Marketing;
3) Expand participation in the subsidized Home Composting Bins program.

Goal # 1 - Raise public awareness of and increase participation in proper Green Waste Recycling

The target audience for this goal was the 180,000 people living in the 35,000 plus single family homes with trash service in the unincorporated portions of Santa Barbara County, and in the cities of Goleta, Buellton and Solvang. These people all should have received the direct mailer. Many of them were also exposed to the other aspects of the campaign.

We tracked our web site visits before and after the campaign in order to determine its impact. The songs began playing in March, followed by the mailers in early April, followed by the other media. We went from averaging less than 4,000 “hits” per month prior to the campaign, to a peak of 6,475 visits in April and then 5,390 in May. There was a parallel boost in web traffic for the specific campaign related web pages dealing with green waste, mulch and home compost. RRWM views this increase is active interest as evidence of meeting the goal of raising awareness and increasing participation in the greenwaste program.
The visits to the specific web pages for green waste, mulch & compost all showed big increase during the campaign.

Goal #2 - Increase the cost effectiveness of the county’s Mulch Marketing

The target audience here were the potential end users for the mulch. That would include the portion of the county population of 428,816 that had yards of some sort, and also those who manage over 100,000 acres of crops, orchards and vineyards in the county. We also have active nurseries, seed growers, gardeners and landscapers.

Because there is 7 day regulatory time limit for the storing of material, we often had to deliver mulch at no charge to get it off site. We wanted to reduce our need to resort to this costly option, except when it came to community groups and non-profits that we had always served. A related concern was the overall revenue per ton that we received for the mulch. The two categories are closely linked, because the more tons we had to give away the less our revenue would be. During the campaign we encouraged people to come and load their own mulch for free mostly as a way to get the word out about the product, but that is also a fine marketing option, as we have no delivery expenses involved.

For 4-6 weeks after the direct mailer went out the mulch operations phone was “ringing off the hook. After a weekend the phone’s message holding capacity was often reached. We had creates”buzz” and interest, but the marketing numbers would tell us whether this translated into real gains.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pre &amp; Post Campaign Mulch</th>
<th>Tons Delivered Free</th>
<th>Avg. Revenue per Ton</th>
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<td>April 2007 - March 2008</td>
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<td>April 2008 - March 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
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The statistics show that we did accomplish our goals of improving our marketing and increasing our revenue per ton by an impressive 36%. The marketing became easier with greater public awareness we had a clean product with great benefits that we would load or deliver for a modest fee. A few months ago we conducted a follow up survey of some of our newer customers, mostly lemon and avocado growers, and they all loved the material with no hesitations.

**Goal #3 - Expand the knowledge and use of county subsidized Home Composting Bins**

The target audience for the compost bin promotion was the entire county population with access to a yard of some sort, including people in cities whether or not they participated in the campaign and whether or not they have green waste recycling. The county population estimate for 2008 was 428,816.

As mentioned before, visits to the county web pages related to compost increased significantly once the campaign began. Like the mulch operations, the Home Compost phone was also extremely busy once the outreach began. Whereas 1-5 inquiries per week was typical, all of a sudden there was an average of 75 calls per week for a month. This increased interest translated directly into increased bin sales and program participation, as seen in the chart below.
Possible Improvements

While the campaign produced excellent results, RRWM staff reviewed the process as a learning tool. We felt that there were a few areas where there were ideas worth pursuing that had to be put off due to time and resource considerations.

One such idea was to sponsor a YouTube-type contest to set video or animation to the green waste songs. This contest would be promoted especially to local students. Just recently we think we have found a partner with the requisite experience in similar promotions to help us develop this concept.

We also considered developing a Spanish language version of the green waste songs. This would involve both a translation of words and a different, appropriate musical style. At this time we are working on this with a local musician who is also an ethnomusicologist.

Ideally the YES and NO green waste graphics would have been converted into stickers and attached to the containers during the campaign. The reality is that applying stickers to 35,000 containers is very time consuming. The graphic were converted into a sticker format after the campaign, and the haulers are in the process of affixing them to all of the containers in the county.

Is the Project Replicable?

Certainly there are aspects to our outreach that other communities can adapt for their own purposes. We believe strongly that using clear and simple graphics to communicate about good and bad recycling behaviors can be effective anywhere, especially where there are language gaps. The use of stock photography is easily done, and can help with advertising affordability, which is a factor for most organizations.

We also believe that sometimes a campaign with a playful attitude is refreshing and can have a powerful impact, and that is a valuable consideration when approaching the sometimes dry and matter-of-fact world of solid waste. RRWM relied heavily on in-house talent and on partnering with local contractors, and this is possible in most communities and can indeed help foster a community oriented spirit during the project.

The “Close the Loop” message is very appropriate for any organization concerned with encouraging local reuse of materials that are locally generated.

The Home Compost Bin program and message is also simple to promote, and worth incorporating into any waste management system. It brings into everyday life a simple practice that allows people to take more ownership in sustainability efforts.