Title: 2018 Excellence Award
Category: Public Awareness
Entrant: City of Hamilton

Can You Green Your Routine?

Approximate population: 693,645
Single family homes: 148,700
Budget: $73,000
Cost per single family home: $0.49

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Executive Summary

When the Central Composting Facility (CCF) was built in 2010, a diversion target of 65% by 2010 was created. This goal has yet to be met.

In June 2017, the City of Hamilton launched Green Your Routine, a two-phase awareness campaign to increase usage of the green bin program. The campaign challenged residents to think about their food waste and to take a 30 day pledge to properly dispose of food waste and other acceptable organics. Staff attended community events and festivals to educate residents on using their green bin.

The pledge provided a tangible tool for residents to participate in reducing waste in their city and also allowed staff to gain data via follow-up participation surveys. This campaign used incentives, such as the reward of a gold sticker, to encourage other residents to get involved and to care about the waste in their community.

See our 15 second video, as presented in movie theatres across the City by clicking on the truck!
Research

Campaign Description

The goals of the Green Your Routine campaign are to get participation from people who don’t presently use their green bin, and to ensure all food scraps get tossed in the right place for those who do use the bin. Although half of the waste resident’s throw away is organic and therefore compostable, a significant amount is ending up in the landfill.

Prior to this campaign, mediums such as print, online and radio advertising were used to educate residents on the importance of diverting organic waste. Additional methods previously used include direct mail campaigns and mobile ads.

While our previous methods have proven to be useful for many projects and outreach initiatives, staff sought to expand on traditional methods in order to meet the goals for this particular campaign. Conducting visual residential waste audits showed that a number of residents were and are still using their garbage for food waste and the green bin for yard waste.

Planning & Goal Setting

Target Audience

The target audience for phase one included residents who have knowledge about the green bin, but do not use it, as well as residents who use the green bin, but not enough, and encourage them to take the 30 day pledge. With the target audience in mind, it was necessary to find innovative ways to reach residents. Utilizing diverse advertising mediums across the city including digital, print, social media, radio and television, allowed us to effectively reach a diverse demographic of residents.
Planning & Goal Setting

Goal One: Increase the overall tonnage being processed at the CCF by 5%

To increase the organic tonnage being processed at the CCF

The goals success will be measured by comparing tonnage from floor audits in November 2016 and November 2017.

This goal will be accomplished by receiving a 5% increase in tonnage from 2016 to 2017.

The increase in tonnage implies that Hamilton residences are using their green bins more frequently. This goal is relevant as it will display how much more organic material is being diverted.

This goal was implemented in 6 months (June 2017 – November 2017)

Goal Two: Increase the food waste composition by 5%.

To increase Hamilton’s food waste composition

This goal will be measured by comparing 3 audits at the composting facility and examining the food waste composition. One of the audits will be conducted in the Spring prior to the campaign to see the change.

This goal will be considered successful if the composting facility reports a 5% increase in the food waste composition.

An increase in food waste composition means that a higher percentage of residents are throwing food scraps in the green bin instead of the garbage. This goal examines Hamilton’s sorting successes as a whole and not just by those who have agreed to participate in the program.

This goal was implemented in 6 months (June 2017 – November 2017)
### Planning & Goal Setting

**Goal Three: Increase the proper use of green bins by residents through visual audits with “gold bin” stickers awarded to at least 50% of residents being audited**

- **S** To increase the proper use of the green bin by residents through visual audits. Residents will be rewarded a “gold bin” sticker by correctly sorting their food waste without contamination.

- **M** Success of this goal will be measured by visual curbside audits by City staff from September to November.

- **A** This goal will be considered accomplished if 50% of residents being audited receive a “gold sticker”.

- **R** A high percentage of residents participating in the audits receiving a “gold sticker” would mean that residents are correctly sorting their waste and less contamination in the composting facility. This gets participants thinking about where their waste should go before throwing it out.

- **T** This goal was executed in 6 months. The auditing portion of this goal took place between two months (September 2017 - November 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Goal Four: Reach 5,000 residents via social media over the course of the campaign</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>S</strong> To reach City of Hamilton residents regarding the campaign and proper waste diversion tactics via social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M</strong> This goal will be measured by tracking impressions and online engagement of Green Your Routine social media posts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong> This goal will be considered successful if 5,000 residents are reached via social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong> This goal is relevant as the campaign strives to educate Hamilton residents on the proper use of the green bin. These advertisements help to promote the campaign as well as advertise proper sorting techniques to the entire city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T</strong> This goal was executed in 6 months (June 2017 – November 2017)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to meet our SMART goals, staff created a multi-faceted and integrated campaign geared towards providing easy access to green bins for residents as well as promoting the correct use of the green bin. Key messages included:

- Almost half of household waste is organic, so keep your mini bin handy.
- Find a new spot for your garbage can and ask yourself, "Can this be composted?" before throwing something away.
- When preparing meals, put food scraps in your mini bin.

Staff additionally gave away free mini bins to residents at local festivals and events throughout the summer. Residents who took a bin were asked to take the Green Your Routine Pledge, fill out a short survey and agree to have their green bin visually audited. For those residents who were not awarded a Gold Sticker following their audit, staff provided additional information to help them correct any contamination issues.
Planning & Goal Setting

Timeline

Print & Digital ads were displayed across the City of Hamilton primarily during this time frame

- June - August
  - Staff attended various local events, festivals and markets
- June - September
- September - November
  - Staff conducted visual curbside audits
Planning & Goal Setting

Budget

- Estimated Budget: $73,000
- Total Spent: $72,050
  - *Other: $17,750
  - Recycling Disposal: $8,720
  - Waste Disposal: $3,750
  - Collections: $3,075
  - Outreach: $38,755

*Other includes items that are prepaid, pre-purchased or part of our regular operations

Can You Green Your Routine?
One obstacle during the implementation of this campaign was our ability to effectively reach residents in person and discuss the campaign with them. Crowds were often so large at festivals and events that some residents would walk away without taking a green bin or learning about the campaign. Moreover, staff often ran out of mini green bins at earlier events due to popularity. The number was later increased to ensure the demand could be met.

Partnerships & New Opportunities

Staff worked closely with local festival organizers and markets to reach a broad range of residents across the city. Due to this larger access to residents, we were able to promote waste and recycling education programs as well as answer any waste-related questions as they arose.

In order to maximize the reach of our campaign, staff took advantage of an opportunity to promote Green Your Routine in three movie theatres across the city. A 15 second clip was played before all films at various times, asking individuals to take the pledge and visit our website.
Implementation

Campaign Strengths

There are several features which make this campaign unique and highly impactful. First, coordinating the ongoing measuring of smart goals required working closely with waste staff across the City; outreach staff worked with collectors, data analysts at the CCF and management. This coordinated effort allowed the program to be successful and to provide key data for future campaigns.

The 30 day pledge was also a strength of the campaign as it allowed residents the opportunity to be actively engaged in making a difference, as opposed to simply being “passive” viewers of our advertising. This campaign used incentives, such as the reward of a gold sticker, to drive a change in behaviour and to encourage friendly competition among neighbours. The posters featured bold images of green meat & fish bones and green vegetable scraps; designed to grab your attention and connect those items with your green bin.

Finally, the campaign is composed of two parts. With the data provided from curbside audits and from the CCF, phase two of this campaign will kick off in the late Spring of 2018 with a focus on food waste. As a play on “Green Your Routine”, phase two will focus on wasting less money on food by reducing the amount of avoidable food waste. We will continue to measure the amount of compost being processed at the CCF and continue to conduct curbside green bin audits with the additional goal of inspecting whole food waste.

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Can You Green Your Routine?

There’s a bin for that!

www.hamilton.ca/GreenYourRoutine • askcity@hamilton.ca • (905) 546-CITY (2489)
Results

Program Outcomes

To evaluate the success of our campaign, we considered total visits to our Green Your Routine page, total views on our 15 second video as well as the reach and click throughs of our online ads. We looked at the overall reach of the print advertising used, including transit shelters, busses and posters.

To evaluate the success of our SMART goals, we conducted a series of visual curbside audits at the homes of residents who had completed the 30-day pledge and who had filled out the follow up survey. We also conducted a series of seasonal audits at the CCF in the Spring, Summer and Fall of 2017. The purpose of this was to assess differences in the amount of food waste collected at different intervals. Lastly we compared the overall tonnage being processed at the CCF in both the Fall of 2016 and the Fall of 2017.

Target Audience Response

The Green Your Routine Campaign was very well-received during face-to-face interactions with residents. While attending community events and festivals, residents often lined up at our booth, eager to receive a compost mini bin, which also required them to take the pledge. We ran out of bins at the majority of our initial events and had to increase our inventory to meet demand.

While conducting audits, staff often had the opportunity to further promote the campaign to curious residents and educate the households being audited. The education piece was useful not only for the green bin audit, it was also effective in providing general information regarding waste collection.

Listen to our 30 second “Take the Pledge” ad played on radio stations across the City here:
Results

Goal 1

Following the Green Your Routine phase one campaign, overall tonnage being processed at the CCF rose by 3.1% (between November 2016 and November 2017), just shy of our 5% goal. This informed phase two of the Green Your Routine campaign in which staff will continue to provide green bin education to the public and increase the number of overall tonnage being processed.

Goal 2

The composition of waste being processed at the CCF over the course of 3 audits during 2017 is described below. The Spring audit results were conducted prior to the beginning of the campaign, the Summer was during and the Fall was conducted at the end of the campaign.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring Audit Results</th>
<th>Summer Audit Results</th>
<th>Fall Audit Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yard Waste: 70.1%</td>
<td>Yard Waste: 66%</td>
<td>Yard Waste: 59.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Box/Garbage Contaminants: 6.2%</td>
<td>Blue Box/Garbage Contaminants: 7.6%</td>
<td>Blue Box/Garbage Contaminants: 8.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While it is impossible to attribute these results solely to the Green Your Routine campaign, these findings are none-the-less supportive of the campaign's mandate to increase food waste composition in green bins.
During the campaign, 68% of green bin audits resulted in the resident receiving a gold sticker with all wards receiving a win rate of at least half. Of those bins that were not awarded a gold sticker, the majority (84%) did not receive a sticker because their green bin was not out to be inspected (either they did not use a green bin that week or their waste was not out to the curb before the audit). Slightly over 10% of green bins audited did not receive a sticker due to either contaminants in the green bin or other significant sorting issues. The remaining 5% were either due to not being able to audit an empty green bin (the resident placed an empty green bin on the curb), not being able to audit the resident type (apartment) or the address did not exist.

Through the campaign, www.hamilton.ca/greenyourroutine received 6,551 hits. For 3 weeks digital advertisements on the View and in cinemas, reached approximately 20,000 viewers and 273,038 movie goers.
Results

Goal 4

Additional digital ads were promoted on multiple online news sources and websites:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ad Length</th>
<th>Impressions/Reach</th>
<th>Click Through Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton Community News</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>Avg. 0.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hamilton Spectator</td>
<td>7 weeks</td>
<td>518,294</td>
<td>Avg. 0.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton Magazine</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>166,695</td>
<td>Avg. 0.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Weather Network</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>171,999</td>
<td>Avg. 0.31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Print ads were displayed in Limeridge Mall and on 16 Hamilton busses and 9 collection trucks. The posters were displayed in Limeridge Mall for 4 weeks and received approximately 1,078,594 impressions. The bus advertisements were displayed for over 12 weeks and had roughly 17.2 million views. Ads continue to be displayed on Hamilton collection trucks 5 days a week, 7 hours a day. The following chart highlights the results of other print and radio advertisements for this campaign.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ad Length</th>
<th>Reach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transit Shelters</td>
<td>5 weeks</td>
<td>7,288,505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money Saver</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The View</td>
<td>5 weeks</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHML Radio/Online</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-Lite Radio</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td>101,495</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Evaluation

Lessons Learned

Overall, we believe the Green Your Routine Campaign was very effective in educating the public about using their green bin. Social media proved to be an extremely effective way to target specific demographics. Alternatively, utilizing our waste collection fleet of trucks was perhaps the most successful. Our ads continue to be wrapped on many trucks and are therefore seen throughout the City on an ongoing basis.

An additional unexpected benefit of this campaign was the creation of a systematic way in which to track our advertising. Due to the various types of print, digital, radio and online ads, it was necessary for our team to create a thorough way to manage the publication as well as response/engagement with our ads. This has since been applied to all ads from other campaigns and has increased organization and efficiency for our department.

Future Replication

Better utilization of the green bin program to increase waste diversion is an issue facing many municipalities. Another municipality could replicate this campaign by first assessing a need for increased green bin education and by working with the Central Composting Facility in their community to establish measurable targets and results. Other municipalities who perhaps have less budget to spend on advertising, could also create ads that are wrapped on municipal waste collection trucks and vehicles for an economic and effective way to promote their campaign. The same can be said for social media which is a highly effective and financially affordable way to provide targeted information to residents.