Executive Summary

The County of Simcoe launched the *It’s Coming* marketing campaign in March 2013, in order to promote changes and improvements to waste collection services as a result of a new waste collection contract which commenced on April 1, 2013. The development of the campaign was unique, as it was rolled out in a short timeline to ensure rapid adjustment to change while still ensuring maximum awareness.

The campaign utilized a consistent avant-garde look across an array of marketing components with different key messages highlighted in order to promote a variety of benefits.

The *It’s Coming* marketing campaign achieved excellent results as 95 percent of locations had materials correctly set out on their new collection day. The use of an online tool to assist with the transition and website views exceeded expectations and the collection changes implemented were perceived as positive by clients.
The County of Simcoe is applying for the SWANA Marketing Excellence award in order to showcase the achievements of the *It’s Coming* marketing campaign, which commenced March 1, 2013 in order to promote the changes to County-wide waste collection services.

The *It’s Coming* marketing campaign is an example of an extensive, multi-stage marketing campaign that utilized a consistent look, key messages and an avant-garde approach to maximize awareness during a short timeline which was necessary to ensure rapid adjustment to change on the part of the clients serviced.

### 1) Statement of Intent

The County of Simcoe is applying for the SWANA Marketing Excellence award in order to showcase the achievements of the *It’s Coming* marketing campaign, which commenced March 1, 2013 in order to promote the changes to County-wide waste collection services.

### 2) Research/Planning

#### The Need

The County of Simcoe is located in Central Ontario, Canada and covers a large geographic area in excess of 4,800 square kilometers or 1,870 square miles (comparable to the size of the State of Delaware). The County is responsible for providing waste collection services to approximately 137,000 households and other locations. Simcoe County Council and Solid Waste Management Staff are continually looking for innovative ways to renew and improve waste services.

The County amalgamated four waste collection contracts territories into one contract, effective April 1, 2013. At the same time, waste services were standardized and streamlined across the County, including services to the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (IC&I) sectors as well as certain residential sectors.

The amalgamation of the contracts resulted in a savings of $2.6 million dollars annually, while increasing the number of units serviced, generally increased service levels, and provided a new fleet of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueled collection vehicles. However, all of the changes necessitated significant re-organization of the old collection routes which had been utilized for over 20 years in the previous four collection territories. The changes to service days and the changes to service levels required an extensive marketing campaign to communicate to clients what was coming while being conscious not to provide information too early in order to ensure that residents didn’t commence changes immediately.

#### What is the service being sold?

The campaign outlined that changes were coming to waste collection services, the details of which included:

- New, more efficient routing, resulting in new collection days and times for most clients;
- Improvements to holiday collection schedules;
- Increased consistency, eligibility, and frequency of special collections such as yard waste collections, a call-in bulky collection service, and Christmas tree collections;
- Improved access to service for:
  - Industrial, Commercial & Institutional locations
  - Seasonal (cottage) locations
  - Condominiums
The use of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) collection vehicles (significantly quieter and 75% lower emissions).

The new service contract achieved significant cost savings of $2.6 million dollars annually.

While the above changes are positive, people do not generally like change of any kind, therefore the marketing campaign also had to sell the perception that what is coming is positive.

**Research methods and resulting data**

The research methods utilized in preparation for the *It’s Coming* marketing campaign included:

- A review of previous marketing efforts related to waste management in the County and analysis of what was, and was not, effective. This included research into the various local media outlet’s capture areas and ratings.

- An evaluation of neighbouring municipalities’ marketing campaigns was conducted in order to understand how their promotional materials and delivery methods were successful.

- The County’s Communications Department was utilized to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the various aspects of the marketing campaign as it was being developed to ensure the overall direction was appealing and would succeed in meeting its goals.

- Various informal focus groups were utilized to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the aspects of the marketing campaign to ensure the overall direction of the campaign was appealing and would address the goals of the program.

The results of this research indicated that:

- The County was on the right track in utilizing a variety of advertising mediums in order to maximize client awareness of the coming changes to waste collection service.

- Web search tools, search optimization, web based communication and social media were identified as being vital to the campaign including the provision of tools to assist clients in the transition to different service days.

- The main mailed marketing pieces historically utilized by the County; the annual waste management calendar and “Managing Your Waste” newsletters would be strategically timed for use in the campaign.

- The use of an avant-garde campaign look was identified in order to increase the perception of changes as being positive.

- The necessity of providing numerous public information sessions to ensure accessibility across the large geographic area of the County was also re-enforced as a result of the research conducted.
Describe materials that were being used prior to implementing this program

Prior to the execution of this campaign, the following marketing and advertising materials were used:

- The County’s website included information to educate residents, provided disposal service fees and other program information.

- Newspaper advertisements were used to promote changes to collection schedules due to holidays and to promote special collection service times, etc.

- The major marketing pieces provided by the County are an annual waste management calendar and two annual “Managing Your Waste” newsletters which were distributed as the main method to educate residents about waste management. The annual waste management calendar for 2012 was developed as a 15 month calendar (January 2012 through March 2013) in order to provide residents with information right up to the time that the new contract would commence in anticipation of providing a subsequent calendar which would include information on all of the changes coming.

- Outreach presentations were given to various audiences such as school groups, etc. to promote different waste management programs.

Describe the target audience(s) and how your approach is appropriate for each audience

The It’s Coming campaign targeted clients eligible for waste collection services, including:

- Full-time residents
- Seasonal residents
- Multi-residential locations
- Industrial, Commercial and Institutional locations

The County utilized a multi-pronged approach to communicate changes to reach the maximum number of clients (137,000 locations). All printed mediums utilized the same look for consistency throughout the campaign.

As the target audience spans a range of age groups, socio-economic groups and, as some clients are not even in full time residence within the County, the approach taken to utilize a wide range of mediums to ensure maximum awareness was appropriate. The following are examples:

- Bulk mail outs of information were provided to all addresses located in the County of Simcoe, ensuring that all occupants, including tenants, would be aware of the upcoming changes to waste collection services. Mail also tends to be an effective way of reaching the older population which may not utilize social media or other forms of marketing.
- Addressed mail outs were also provided to all out of County rate payers, ensuring that all seasonal property owners and absentee landlords would be aware of the upcoming changes to waste collection services.
- Newspaper advertisements were utilized to maximize awareness in case residents did not read information provided through bulk mail outs.
- A series of public information sessions were held throughout the County prior to the new contract, to allow residents who prefer to speak to someone face to face with an opportunity for this. These open house sessions were popular with the older
demographic, any residents located in close proximity to a session location and to those seeking to receive all pertinent information in a one-stop shop.

- Radio commercials and billboard advertisements were utilized to ensure that busy, on-the-go clients would be aware of changes coming and would know to look for information in the mail or to seek information through the County’s website.
- Various key messages were sent daily via social media to reach the more modern audience.

![Sample material from the It's Coming campaign](image)

**Describe marketing goals (SMART format) and the strategies to meet the goals**

The goals of the *It’s Coming* campaign were specifically to promote the various changes to waste collection services and to do so in such a way to maximize awareness while still ensuring that clients didn’t change their collection day too soon or didn’t forget about the changes by the time the new contract commenced. The timing of various aspects of the *It’s Coming* marketing campaign was critical to the client’s ability to adjust to the changes successfully.

The success of the *It’s Coming* campaign was measured through various methods, including observations during the contract commencement week to determine if clients were putting waste materials out on their new collection day. Additionally, the number of visits to the Solid Waste Management section of the County’s website was measured and compared with the same time period as the previous year. Use of the on-line waste collection day tool (implemented to assist residents in accurately determining their new collection day), Google analytics, Customer Service call volumes, etc. were measured in order to gauge the success of the campaign.

This goal was achieved by using the following strategies:

- Multiple advertising mediums were utilized to ensure maximum awareness that changes to waste collection services were coming effective April 1, 2013. These included radio commercials which were amusing in nature in order to be more memorable, as well as newspaper advertising and billboard advertising along major thoroughfares throughout the County which all featured the consistent look of the campaign. Due to their nature, these forms of marketing provided only high level information to pique the interest of clients and ensure that they were aware to seek more detailed information. Other forms of marketing included press releases and media interviews, multiple mail outs of information, and web-based marketing tools.

- Information was provided in a staged fashion over a short timeline in order to create maximum awareness of the changes to collection days while to ensuring that clients didn’t inadvertently place materials out for collection on their new day too soon, or
find out their new day but forget at the time of contract commencement. This was achieved through:

- Distribution of 137,000 “Managing Your Waste” newsletters at the commencement of the campaign (March 1). This provided high level information on the coming changes, advertised the dates and locations of public information sessions, and advised residents to watch for additional details coming soon. The newsletter featured the consistent campaign look.

- A redesign of the waste management section of the County’s website at the commencement of the campaign (March 1). This was done in anticipation of a significant increase in website traffic as a result of the campaign. The redesign allowed easy navigation to specific information relative to the changes in waste collection services for each sector.

- The launch of a new online tool to assist clients in determining their new collection day. Residents entered their address, the address was confirmed through a Google map image and the new collection day was provided. The tool also provides a reminder service available through the client’s choice of email, telephone, or calendar feed. The reminders assisted clients in remembering that their garbage day would change at contract commencement and of their collection day on an ongoing basis; no more forgetting garbage collection day!

- Web search optimization was implemented at the commencement of the campaign (March 1). This enabled the County’s website to be the first listed site shown when anyone located in the County searched for anything related to waste management or waste collection service. When residents within the County visited other high traffic websites, such as the Weather Network, the search optimization also posted ads on these pages consistent with the campaign look, which was linked to the County’s website.

- Distribution of 137,000 waste management calendars in mid March; two weeks prior to contract commencement. This calendar also featured the consistent campaign look and included detailed information on all of the various changes to waste collection services as well as an internal fold-out map depicting new collection days for each area.

- A series of 13 public information sessions held in mid March, at which clients could speak face to face with staff to have their specific questions answered. Clients were also provided with their new collection day through the online tool, set up with reminders if they desired this, and provided with their own personalized collection calendar for the year.
• Targeted mail outs to various sectors including information specific to industrial, commercial and institutional sector clients (4,000), seasonal/cottage residents (10,360), and condominium units (3,250). Each of these marketing pieces contained information on changes to waste services relevant to that sector and also featured the consistent campaign look. The distribution timing of each piece was dependent upon the specific sector; for example, commercial and condominium information was provided early in March whereas information for seasonal residents was distributed later to coincide with the commencement of the typical cottage season.

• A fringe mail out to approximately 1,800 households which are located on the border between two collection days. This was timed to occur shortly after the calendar mail out. The purpose of this mail out was to encourage these clients to ensure that they were aware of their correct collection day through either contacting the County’s Customer Service Centre or through utilization of an online tool provided to assist residents in the transition.

• Distribution of a reminder card, just days prior to the contract commencement.

Describe anticipated obstacles and opportunities for meeting the goals

The obstacles to be overcome in order to ensure the success of the campaign were as follows:

✓ The variety of target audiences – The changes to waste collection services would impact a variety of sectors, and a variety of demographics; necessitating that pertinent information was provided in a variety of formats in order to engage each group.

✓ Boundaries Issues – The separated cities of Barrie and Orillia are geographically located within the County’s boundaries, however, waste services are not provided by the County to residents of these separated cities. Therefore, the campaign needed to specifically target only County locations in order to avoid confusion with neighbouring municipalities.

✓ Large Geographic Size – Due to the large geographic size of the County of Simcoe, challenges were presented in providing information depicting new collection days to residents in a format that would be clear while still being a reasonable size in terms of distribution and mailing.

✓ Lack of Major Media Outlet – Unlike many other large jurisdictions, there is a lack of a major media outlet that covers the region. This complicates marketing as there is no universal source that residents would look to for important information. Instead there are many small outlets and no coverage in some areas.

✓ Timeline – The campaign had various deliverables that had to be distributed on a tight timeline in order to ensure maximum awareness and rapid adjustment to change while minimizing the opportunity for confusion on the part of residents.
The opportunities for meeting the campaign goals were as follows:

- **Improvements to Communications** – Standardizing waste collection services throughout the County provided the opportunity to improve communication effectiveness; allowing messaging to be clear and consistent.

- **Increased Education Opportunities** – The campaign provided the opportunity to interact with clients at one of the many public information sessions as well as through contacts with the County’s Customer Service Centre. This direct interaction allowed for the provision of information specific to the individual as well as the opportunity to promote the various waste management programs offered by the County. With only 6.5 years of landfill capacity remaining at the time of the campaign, the opportunity to promote waste reduction and diversion was extremely valuable.

### 3) Implementation and Execution

**Describe how the marketing program was implemented using a timeline of events that lists each task.**

Multiple marketing mediums were utilized in a staged fashion to ensure maximum awareness of upcoming changes to waste collection services. Due to municipal budgeting processes, the planning and cost forecasts related to the marketing campaign were completed a year in advance. The development and implementation of each of the various marketing pieces commenced many months in advance of the launch of the marketing campaign. A timeline and description is provided below, links are provided to view the various pieces:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing Piece (please click on hyperlinks below)</th>
<th>Deliverables</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campaign Look</strong>&lt;br&gt;Necessary for cohesiveness, recognisability, and to foster a positive perception of the upcoming changes.</td>
<td>Fall 2012 – Development of tag line and design concept in-house collaboratively between Solid Waste and Corporate Communications Departments. Visually incorporated a waste collection vehicle along with highlighting that something important was coming in an avant-garde manner.&lt;br&gt;Late 2012 – Feedback sought from focus groups.&lt;br&gt;January 2013 – Design finalized in order to be utilized in the development of the various print marketing mediums.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Waste Management Calendar</strong>&lt;br&gt;Utilized consistent campaign look, provided pertinent details, provided a large fold-out map depicting new collection days, ensured accessibility for disabled per legislative requirements, a marketing medium already familiar to clients, particularly enjoyed by older audience or those less inclined to utilizing online resources.</td>
<td>Fall 2012 – In-house development of content and majority of graphic design, procurement process completed for printing services from outside vendor.&lt;br&gt;January 2013 – Incorporation of the final campaign design for cover of calendar and throughout to ensure consistency of the campaign.&lt;br&gt;Early February 2013 – Proofing and feedback from focus groups.&lt;br&gt;Late February 2013 – Printing&lt;br&gt;Early March 2013 – Delivery to mailing house.&lt;br&gt;Mid March 2013 – Delivery of calendars to clients.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Managing Your Waste Newsletter</strong></td>
<td><strong>Website Re-design</strong></td>
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<td>Used consistent campaign look, acted as a “teaser”, introducing the fact that change is coming, provided highlights of changes but not details of collection days both due to its limited size and in order to ensure clients didn’t change too early, advised to watch for additional information, a marketing medium already familiar to clients.</td>
<td>Necessary in anticipation of significant increase in traffic due to the <em>It’s Coming</em> campaign, allowing easier navigation to specific information for each sector, incorporated the campaign look on pieces related to changes, ensured accessibility for disabled per legislative requirements, incorporated the online tool to assist clients in determining their new collection day and facilitating provision of reminders.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>January 2013</strong> – In-house development of content and graphic design incorporating the campaign look.</td>
<td><strong>November 2012</strong> – Conceptual development in-house between Solid Waste and Corporate Communications.</td>
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<td><strong>Early February 2013</strong> – Feedback and proofing.</td>
<td><strong>December 2012</strong> - Clean up and re-organization of content, removal of all old materials from databases.</td>
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<td><strong>Mid February 2013</strong> – Printing.</td>
<td><strong>January – February 2013</strong> – Finalized development of new content, insertion of graphics, validation of links, testing.</td>
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<td><strong>Late February 2013</strong> – Completed newsletters to mailing house in preparation for distribution via mail.</td>
<td><strong>March 1, 2013</strong> – Live date.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>March 1, 2013</strong> – Delivery of newsletters to clients.</td>
<td><strong>Fall 2012</strong> – Discussion with County’s internal IT department on development of a tool to fulfill campaign requirements, determination that a scaled down version of what was required could be developed in-house.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Online Tool</strong></th>
<th><strong>Social Media</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Necessary to assist residents comfortable with the utilization of online resources in determining their new waste collection day, tool also confirms the clients address ensuring that information provided is completely accurate. Serves to provide reminders, ensuring that residents wouldn’t forget to place material out on their new day and on an ongoing basis.</td>
<td>Enabled immediate mass reach, cost efficient, and highlighted the fact that change was coming, utilized consistent campaign tag line, and drove clients to resources available on the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2012</strong> – Discussion with County’s internal IT department on development of a tool to fulfill campaign requirements, determination that a scaled down version of what was required could be developed in-house.</td>
<td><strong>December 2012</strong> – Consulted with the Corporate Communications and Customer Service Departments.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>January 2013</strong> – IT identified a vendor which provides the tool we sought, initiated discussion between the vendor, IT and Solid Waste staff.</td>
<td><strong>December 2013</strong> – Identification of suitable venues, site visits, procurement of staging services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Early February 2013</strong> – Negotiated contract with vendor.</td>
<td><strong>Early 2013</strong> – Development of storyboards and other support materials (County backdrops, computer kiosks, map boards, educational displays), develop mock up of each site layout.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Late February 2013</strong> – Provided detailed information to the vendor on each property in the County for utilization in the tool, content development and testing.</td>
<td><strong>Mid March</strong> – Conduct information sessions.</td>
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<td><strong>March 1, 2013</strong> – Live date.</td>
<td><strong>December 2012</strong> – Consulted with the Corporate Communications and Customer Service Departments developed timelines for use of social media including Facebook and Twitter.</td>
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<td><strong>February 2013</strong> – Developed messaging</td>
<td><strong>March – April 2013</strong> – Regular posts provided.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>March 2013</strong> – Live date.</td>
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</table>
| **Targeted Mail Outs** | Fall 2012 – In-house development of content for each mail out.  
January 2013 – Finalize each piece incorporating consistent campaign look, development of address databases.  
March – May 2013 – Preparation for mailing and distribution to each sector timed appropriately, for example seasonal locations received information specific to them just prior to the commencement of the typical cottage season. |
| --- | --- |
| Necessary to highlight standardization of services requiring changes in the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors, to seasonal (cottage) locations and to condominiums, mail out conducted to ensure that the tenants and property owners were aware of changes relevant to their sector. | **Reminder Cards and Fringe Mail Outs**  
Short messaging necessary to ensure maximum awareness and reminder that change would be commencing the following week. Fringe mail out conducted to households located on the border between two collection days to encourage them to confirm correct collection day. |
| January 2013 – In-house development of content and address database for each mail out.  
February 2013 – Printing.  
March 2013 – Completed pieces sent to mailing house in preparation for distribution.  
Last week of March 2013 – Delivery to clients. | **Web Search Optimization**  
Enabled the County’s website to be the first listed site shown, provided advertising and links on other high traffic websites. An excellent marketing tool to ensure information was easy to locate on the web for clients. |
| Late 2012 – Concept development between Solid Waste and Corporate Communications Department.  
January 2013 – Sourcing of vendor, identification of deliverables and receipt of quotes.  
February 2013 – Development of key word search list.  
March 1, 2013 – Live date. | **Radio and Television Commercials**  
Enabled immediate mass reach and repeat exposure, cost efficient, high credibility, introduced the fact that change is coming, provided highlights of changes in an amusing way to increase memory retention, utilizing characters that are already familiar to clients. Utilized consistent campaign tag line. Use of various media outlets maximizes exposure. |
| Fall 2012 – Meet with advertising agency to review campaign concept, key dates and overview of deliverables.  
December 2013 – Refinement of advertising agency deliverables, obtain quotes.  
Early January 2013 – Review of concepts and story boards, editing of scripts.  
February 2013 – Completion of ads, contact various radio stations and local television station to book advertising and obtain pricing.  
Early March 2013 – Commence advertisements. | **Billboard Advertising**  
Enabled mass reach and repeat exposure, cost efficient, introduced the fact that change is coming, utilized consistent campaign look, effective for busy, on the go, clients. |
| December 2012 – Sourced billboard vendors.  
January 2013 – Development of billboard incorporating the campaign look and determined optimal billboard locations, obtained pricing.  
February 2013 – Provision of artwork to vendors.  
Early March 2013 – Billboards up throughout the County. | **Press Releases and Media Interviews**  
Traditional technique which is cost effective with editorial potential. Provided opportunity to highlight benefits of changes. |
Throughout March – Release of various press releases timed to coincide with other deliverables in the campaign, conducted numerous media interviews with local television, radio and newspapers. | **Newspaper Advertising**  
Utilized consistent campaign look, acted as |
a “teaser”, introducing the fact that change is coming, provided highlights of changes, advised to watch for additional information, a marketing medium already familiar to clients, particularly enjoyed by older audience or those less inclined to utilize online resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Printing (Calendar, newsletters, maps, storyboards, posters, reminder cards)</td>
<td>$99,526.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postage and mailing</td>
<td>$138,213.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>On-line media (search engine optimizations and ads)</td>
<td>$7,794.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Truck Signage</td>
<td>$25,047.58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Information Sessions (facility rentals, refreshments, staging and technical services)</td>
<td>$37,152.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper advertising</td>
<td>$75,135.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio advertising and creative</td>
<td>$48,933.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television advertising and creative</td>
<td>$48,194.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billboard advertising</td>
<td>$6,554.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$486,513.14</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost Per Serviced Unit</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3.55</strong></td>
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**Budget**

A budget of $500,000 was allocated for this major marketing campaign. The final cost was $486,513.14 or $3.55 per serviced unit within the County. This is seen as a very cost effective campaign as it achieved maximum exposure, minimizing potentially costly issues. No outside funding was sourced for the *It’s Coming* campaign. The final budget is broken down below:

The County’s Solid Waste Management Department and Corporate Communications Department partnered to ensure the *It’s Coming* campaign would be successful. The partnership achieved this through the collaborative establishment of a marketing strategy, development of the campaign look, media relations, information session planning, and creative concept development with the advertising agency for television and radio advertisements.

The County’s Customer Service Department assisted by providing feedback during the development of many campaign pieces. The Manager of Customer Service Department participated in all public information sessions and was responsible for the provision of social media messaging. Customer Service Representatives interacted with clients to answer questions and provide information.
The Information and Technology (IT) Department worked diligently and under very short timelines with the online collection day tool vendor. The Procurement Department collaborated on the purchase of goods and services related to the campaign; these vendors contributed to the success of the campaign through the provision of quality goods such that the campaign could flow through its various stages during the tight timelines required. These partnerships with internal departments and outside vendors were critical to the success of the campaign.

Finally, the waste collection service providers, Progressive Waste Solutions, were integral partners in the *It’s Coming* campaign. They provided valuable assistance through feedback on concepts, provision of visuals necessary to the campaign (truck photos as soon as the first truck came off the production line) signage, etc. Senior management also attended public information sessions during a time when the other demands of contract preparation were significant.

**How well were the elements described in the planning phase accomplished?**

The marketing campaign was extremely successful in meeting the elements determined during the planning process. The manner, which information was provided, in a staged fashion through multiple mediums, ensured that the *It’s Coming* campaign was ubiquitous for all target groups for the month leading up to the contract commencement on April 1st. It ensured maximum exposure while mitigating the opportunity for confusion of old and new collection days.

- The first stage of the *It’s Coming* campaign was implemented on schedule on March 1, 2013. It awakened curiosity due to the tag line *It’s Coming*. The campaign began with the distribution of the “Managing Your Waste” newsletter as a teaser which provided only high level information without revealing details in order to mitigate the chances of client confusion between old and new collection days. Other components of the campaign incorporated in the early stages were social media messaging, billboard, newspaper, radio advertising, and press releases; these also provided high level information, further awakening client curiosity.

- The next stage of the *It’s Coming* marketing campaign, which occurred approximately two weeks prior to the collection changes, delivered more detailed information, keeping clients engaged throughout the campaign. The significant variety of marketing (traditional print, online and social media, as well as television and radio) accomplished the goal of maximizing awareness. At the same time, the provision of more detailed information close to the contract commencement date ensured that adjustment to change would be accomplished at the correct time.

- The marketing campaign was also extremely successful in meeting the soft elements outlined during the planning process. Specifically, these were to highlight the benefits that changes in collection service provided such as the environmental benefits of Compressed Natural Gas collection vehicles and the significant cost savings achieve through the amalgamation of contracts. Ultimately the changes were seen as very positive by clients; a huge success as no one likes change.
Describe how your marketing program is unique or an improvement over a similar program

The approach utilized for this campaign was creative and unique due to:

✓ The look of the campaign, which is extremely bold and graphic; featuring a new Compressed Natural Gas collection vehicle literally framed in the graphic which highlights it as being the new look for waste management. The *It’s Coming* tagline annotates that change is approaching and can be used effectively as a teaser; creating curiosity. The look is very graphic, modern and translates well from printed paper and online ads to larger mediums, such as truck signage and billboard advertising.

✓ The staged fashion of the campaign, starting with the initial teaser, subsequent provision of additional specific information over the course of the month, ensured that residents were very aware that change was coming while ensuring that they did not mix up their new and old collection days. Finally, the campaign culminated with the collection truck signage, providing 60 moving billboards. The truck signage utilized the same campaign look but the tagline was revised to *It’s Here*, which effectively completed the campaign.

✓ The innovative online collection day tool available on the County’s website, which clients input their individual address to receive specific information on their garbage collection day, as well as yard waste collection times, etc. The tool visually depicts the client’s location in Google maps to enable confirmation of the address before proceeding. Clients can print their personal waste collection calendar; choose to receive collection day reminders (no more forgetting garbage day). The County of Simcoe is one of only five municipalities in Ontario to be using this cutting edge communications tool.

✓ The use of Google search engine optimization. The prevalence of online tools to obtain information highlighted the importance of ensuring that clients could locate information easily on the web. Therefore various key words such as garbage, waste, collection, it’s coming, Simcoe, etc. were optimized such that if someone within the County searched for any of these words; the County’s website was the first listed. Additionally, as a result of the optimization, online *It’s Coming* ads were prominently displayed on various other popular websites during the campaign. This maximized exposure and allowed clients to click through to the County’s website quickly and easily.

✓ Due to the wide reach it achieved. This improvement over similar programs utilized multiple types of media over the course of the campaign to ensure maximum awareness.

✓ The humorous television and radio advertisements which are unique for a municipal marketing campaign. The use of familiar and amusing characters which have broad appeal, served to significantly increase interest and awareness, as well as maximizing client’s information retention.
4) Results and Evaluation

Describe how the target audiences participated or reacted to the marketing messages

The response from the target audiences to the *It’s Coming* campaign was excellent. The campaign captured both public and media attention. Participation/reaction was achieved through:

- Utilization of the new online collection day tool and other information on the website,
- Contact with Customer Service,
- Attendance at the various information sessions,
- Use of maps and other printed material provided, etc. in order to determine the client’s new collection day and obtain other needed information.

Most importantly, the campaign was successful in achieving the desired reaction by the target audience. The campaign maximized awareness, reduced the potential for confusion of collection days and provided specific information on program changes for certain sectors; all while maintaining a positive perception of the changes.

Describe how success was measured, results should be quantifiable and relate to the goals

Campaign effectiveness was measured through quantitative analysis of the following:

- **Curbside Collection Audits:** Visual audits undertaken during the first week of the new waste collection contract showed that 95% of clients had their waste to the curb on the correct day. Regular participation studies undertaken annually indicate that 98% of clients typically set waste materials out for collection on a given week, therefore we can assess that only 3% of clients were not aware of the collection changes or had forgotten to place materials out on their new day. This result is considered enormously successful.

- **Online Collection Tool:** The new application launched as part of the *It’s Coming* marketing campaign, received more than 55,000 address searches. This result indicates that residents were aware of the need to identify their new collection day and actively sought information through the tools provided in support of the campaign.

- **Website:** There was an increase of 100,000 views from the same period the previous year; an increase of 177%, including social media (Facebook and Twitter).

- **Customer Service Call Centre:** There was a 27% increase in phone calls and email contacts to the County’s Customer Service Centre over the same period in 2012. Over 6,000 clients were educated. The majority of the contacts were positive in nature.

- **Information Sessions:** There were 13 information sessions held throughout the County as part of the *It’s Coming* campaign, in total, almost 4,000 residents attended the various events in order to speak with County staff and learn about collection changes.

- **Search Optimization Results:** Data indicates the Google search optimization resulted in 38,218 web hits directly due to search optimization; meaning that when a client searched an identified key word such as garbage, collection, it’s coming, etc. they followed through to the County’s website. In addition, there were 1,470,343 impressions of the *It’s Coming* marketing campaign through the optimization as a result of views on Google’s content network.
Client feedback: This is one of the best indicators of a marketing campaign’s success. Numerous positive unsolicited verbal and written comments were received from clients regarding the campaign. Some samples of comments are provided below:

“Today was the first day for us under the new collection arrangement and it worked as if there had never been any change. I have been in business long enough to appreciate the effort that must be extended in such a ‘switch over’. But I specifically want to thank you, all the people who have been involved in this arrangement, for the extraordinary amount of preliminary information you made available to all citizens and keeping us fully informed. This is indeed the best example how citizens and their government can work together. THANK YOU!”

“I would like to congratulate you on the new Recycling and Waste Collection Calendar that we just received. It is amazing and so helpful and informative. I can see that a lot of time must have gone into the calendar. But as a resident in Simcoe County, it has provided me with everything I can think of with respect to the new program. It was so easy to understand, and every topic was covered in depth. I want to congratulate your team who worked on this and want you to know that I read each page with great interest and have the calendar hanging in my home in a spot that is easy to refer to. I’m sure it will help improve the recycling and waste collection programs in Simcoe County. And it excited me to really get the dust off my green box and start using it properly. So, thanks very much for all your hard work in achieving this.”

Overall, the It’s Coming marketing campaign produced excellent results for the County; surpassing our expectations in achieving the goals of promoting the various changes to waste collection services in such a way to maximize awareness while still ensuring clients ability to adjust to the changes effectively. The campaign achieved this while successfully influencing the client’s perception that the changes to waste collections were all very positive.

Discuss how the marketing program can be improved

The It’s Coming campaign was extremely successful; however there is always room for improvement. The sheer amount of work required by this comprehensive, multi-media marketing campaign placed a great deal of pressure on available resources. Therefore more time for the development of tools and resources will be allocated when planning for future campaigns.

Describe how the marketing program could be replicated in other communities for similar target audiences

This campaign could be duplicated in other communities that have similar target audiences. Most challenges faced were due to the lack of a major media outlet that covers the region; providing a universal source of information that clients look to. The multi-pronged approach taken ensured that all target audiences were aware; a scenario which can be replicated in other communities.