



Do Diligence Sounding Board Report

To: Interested Parties

From: Eric Eckl, Water Words That Work, LLC

Re: Results of a Do Diligence Sounding Board Review of "Bon Appetit"

Date: 01/19/2010

Water Words That Work, LLC is preparing to launch a new market research service -- tentatively titled the "Do Diligence Sounding Board" -- for nature protection and pollution control organizations to use to evaluate marketing materials and messages.

The purpose of this forthcoming service is to allow you to quickly and affordably pre-test materials before they are final -- giving you an opportunity to improve your piece before you "release it into the wild." Once the service launches, Water Words That Work, LLC will provide DDSB feedback to our clients in complete confidence.

As part of our field trials for this service, we tested 10 "social marketing" pieces from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Nonpoint Source Outreach Toolbox (<http://www.epa.gov/nps/toolbox/>). Thee EPA offers these materials up as examples for others to emulate -- so they are fair game for a public critique by the panel.

All sounding board answers are verbatim -- including spelling and typographic errors.

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This report summarizes what 25 "everyday citizens" have to say about the "Bon Appetit" magazine ad that the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources produced as part of the "Know Where it Goes" campaign. Here are the highlights of their feedback:

Compared to other 9 pieces tested in the batch, the "Bon Appetit" Ad earns average marks for clarity, persuasiveness, and overall effectiveness. The message that water pollution is a health issue comes across clearly.

The strength of the piece is that it illustrates the problem in a clever manner, and explains how pollution enters the water.

Several reviewers dinged the piece for leaving it up to the reader to figure out for themselves what to do about it. The panel criticized a number of other toolbox pieces for this shortcoming.

The "Johnny Fishpatrick" character -- a man in a fish suit in the lower right -- draws a handful of negative comments, and no positive ones.



By the Numbers

Statement	1-Strongly Disagree	2-Somewhat Disagree	3-Somewhat Agree	4-Strongly Agree	Average for this Piece	Average for similar pieces
The piece gets my attention	1	3	8	14	3.34	3.29
The piece has a clear message	0	2	1	23	3.80	3.46
The piece is believable	1	5	7	13	3.23	3.38

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The issue is important to society	1	4	6	15	3.34	3.60
It is urgent to address this issue now	0	1	11	14	3.5	3.43
The issue has affected me personally, or people I care about	12	3	6	5	2.1	2.23
I could take this action, if I choose to	0	1	5	20	3.73	3.57
If I take this action, I am confident it would make a difference	2	4	9	11	3.11	3.14
If I take this action, I'm confident others will do their part, too	3	9	9	5	2.61	2.55

One Word Summary

Question Wording: "Pick one word that summarizes your opinion of this piece, for example: "Great," "OK," "Bad," "Inspiring," "Depressing," "Motivating," "Confusing," etc.

- Gross
- gross
- Enlightening!
- Interesting
- Amateurish
- Thought-prevoking
- OK
- Informative
- Effective
- Great.
- depressing
- Intriguing
- Intriguing
- uninteresting
- Excellent
- impactful

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- interesting.
- awful
- Horrible
- Depressing
- Interesting.
- Discusting
- Great
- inspiring
- good
- Effective

Your Message in Their Words

Question Wording: "Imagine that you are telling a friend, coworker, or family member about this piece. In your own words, how would you summarize the message?"

They answered like this:

- "The issue is that our water and oceans are not being treated properly."
- "The need to keep our streams clean and healthy"
- "Pollution that affects the main necessity of life... water."
- "storm drain pollution"
- "If you use pesticides or leave other harmful things around when it rains it can be washed into our waters and harm wildlife and us."
- "Pollution and the effect on the environment of not recycling correctly."
- "The stormwater drains on the sides of streets lead right to our freshwater streams, which we use for recreation, drinking, and fishing. Things other than water are going into the stormwater drains and they're unhealthy for the stream, causing water pollution that's bad for our health."
- "Pollution in our stormwater."
- "Pollutants in storm water runoff making their way into waterways"
- "Everything that can be washed into a storm drain by rain water ends up polluting the water that we use."
- "If you leave garbage or other harmful pollutants around they more than likely will be washed into lakes rivers and streams which are harmful especially for wildlife."
- "Careless people putting garbage and other waste into the storm drains which in turn pollutes the water and food supply. "
- "Water pollution caused by storm water run off."
- "People are leaving behind garbage and other harmful materials behind that are being washed away into lakes and rivers."
- "Stormwater runoff pollution."
- "Stormwater pollution of our bodies of water."
- "dirty lake water with fish in it."
- "The problem is people are not keeping harmful pollutants out of reach but instead allowing them to be washed into streams and lakes etc."
- "Everything you leave behind gets washed into stormdrains and eventually makes it way to our rivers and streams."
- "The poster highlights the urgency of cleaning up our streams from the large amounts of toxic materials that come in due to water brought by storms."

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- "If you decide to leave harmful pollutants or other things behind be aware they will more than likely be washed into storm drains which will eventually pollute our lakes."
- "Anything left behind makes its way into our storm drains. storm water pollution is are biggest source of water pollution."
- "If you leave any type of contaminents behind be aware it more than likely will be washed away into storm drains which is our biggest water polution problem."
- "People are leaving behind harmful hazards which can be washed into our rivers and lakes."
- "If you leave harmful pollutants behind beware they will find there way into waters that we swim and fish in etc."
- "The issue is that pollutants in stormwater runoff are getting into bodies of water and contaminating both the water and the fish that live in the water."

Strengths of the Piece

Question Wording: "In your opinion, what is the strongest or most compelling thing about this piece?"

They answered like this:

- "The fact that it showed us each piece of the fish that could potentially harm or even kill us if we ate."
- "The thought of pet waste in our food and drink"
- "The biggest cause of water pollution can be easily avoided... however it is not initially realized by many. "
- "I never really thought about drain water before, so it is good new information for my family."
- "The picture of the fish labeled with all the harmful contaminants."
- "The message strikes a cord more because of the use of a real fish as apposed to a cartoon or a pie chart."
- "The fact that our water streams are being polluted and we can fix it."
- "The the picture itself. "
- "Definitely the image of the potentially poisonous fish on the dinner plate, labeled with the toxins it might contain."
- "The visual imagery of the fish contaminated with stormwater pollutants. This is what we end up eating!"
- "The evidence on the plate showing all the harmful chemicals in the fish makes us think twice."
- "The most compelling thing about this piece is where it says, "stormwater pollution is our biggest source of water pollution."
- "The picture of the fish marked with different pollutants is quite striking and ties in well with the facts in the paragraph below."
- "The picture of the fish with all the words showing whats inside him."
- "The picture of the fish on a plate with words and arrows pointing to different parts of the fish showing the pollutants that are lodging there."
- "The way that the fish is labeled to show just what kinds of chemicals can be absorbed into the food we are fishing from streams, rivers, and oceans."
- "clean the fish so that u don't get sick."

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- "Stating the facts that our water is being contaminated and we are a big part of it."
- "The message written below the fish states how bad things are and sends a clear message that this is real."
- "It's the picture of the fish on a plate, and words pointing to different parts of it containing very toxic, harmful substances."
- "I did not see anything overwhelming I would say the statement if anything."
- "The differen't descriptive words found beside the fish which were all done by humans."
- "Everything shown on the document plays a part in making this piece realistic and important."
- "I liked the picture of the fish I thought it was unique and interesting. It makes us think twice about what we are doing."
- "The line that says pollutants will find there way into lakes and rivers and will be found where we swim , where we fish etc."
- "The message is clear - the use of a fish linked with the names of various pollutants is very effective."

Weaknesses of the Piece

Question Wording: "In your opinion, what is the weakest thing about this piece?"

They answered like this:

- "The weakest thing could be how it is described. I would like to know more about how the harmful products got there."
- "I don't know".
- "Nothing weak! "
- "I did not find a weakness. It was clear and concise."
- "It looks like an add you would see in a magazine that you would not take seriously."
- "The blue fish guy in the bottom corner."
- "It doesn't really explain how people actually impact what goes in stormwater drains (it just says we can make a difference) so it doesn't make me feel like I actually cause pollution and can take easy steps to change that. Since I'm assuming the action is to not leave things along the street, but I already don't do that..."
- "The logo in the corner."
- "The URL "KnowWhereItGoes.org", suggesting that the website merely contains additional details about where wastewater pollutants go. While important, the gist of that information has already been conveyed by the advertisement. I assume that the website actually contains information about alternatives and proper disposal ("OK, so soap is bad, then how do I wash my car?" or "I can't burn my grass clippings and the city won't pick them up. Apparently leaving them on the ground as mulch is bad, too, so what the heck am I supposed to do with them?") and that should be mentioned in the ad."
- "I don't see anything that is weak."
- "Does not appear to be very interesting so it does not look like it would be strong enough for people to take action by viewing the document."
- "the beginning."

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- "The picture of the man in the fish suit is just silly and does not make the issue seem serious."
- "Not graphic enough the fish looks clean even though its supposedly contaminated."
- "The little man in the green suit at the bottom."
- "I think the website address should be bigger. It is easy to overlook since it is at the very bottom and after a rather lengthy text block. "
- "putting fish in a dirty lake."
- "Not enough statistics to make it more real."
- "The photo of the fish on the plate does not look like what you would expect to find if you found an infected fish."
- "The quote "You're the solution" was the weakest because there was no hint or suggestion on how anyone could stop natural stormwater pollutants. It was too cliché and unexplained."
- "It appears to be more like an advertisement instead of this is a big problem lets take action now."
- "Only a photo add would have been better if it was a video."
- "I am sure more detail could have been used to make it more believable such as adding facts etc."
- "A picture and a few words will not make it seem real enough to where people will want to make a difference."
- "No real evidence that this problem really exists even though it more than likely does."
- "The weakest thing about the piece is that it does not give specific actions people can take to solve the problem even though it tells people that "you're the solution".

Shop Talk vs. Plain English

Question Wording: Imagine that your friends, coworkers, or family member are looking at the piece themselves. If there are any words or phrases that might be difficult for them, please share them below:

They answered like this:

- "They would also feel grossed out at the thought of so many disgusting things winding up in our precious water sources."
- "Nothing difficult"
- "No I think it was a clear insightful well done approach to an important subject"
- "None".
- None."
- "No, I don't think so. All the words use were common and self explanatory. "
- "I don't see anything like that in the piece."
- "Everything is clear and easy to understand."
- "I do not believe there would be a problem here."
- "none."
- "N/A"
- "I found all the words to be understandable. I think some people just might not want to accept or believe the dangers."
- "I don't think that any of the words are difficult."
- "fish being dumped in dirty lakes."
- "cannot think of any."

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- "I highly doubt they would have issues understanding."
- "Maybe pollutants, but everything else was easy."
- "No issues with anyone I know."
- "The description can be read by anyone who understands english."
- "No difficult words or phrases."
- "Looks good to me."
- "No problems with this."
- "I don't think there are any problem words in the piece. I would think that virtually all adults know that "bon appetit" literally means "good appetite"."

How They Summarize the Issue

Question Wording: The piece touches on a social issue or problem. In your own words, what is this issue?

They answered like this:

- "The issue is that our water and oceans are not being treated properly."
- "The need to keep our streams clean and healthy"
- "Pollution that affects the main necessity of life... water."
- "storm drain pollution"
- "If you use pesticides or leave other harmful things around when it rains it can be washed into our waters and harm wildlife and us."
- "Pollution and the effect on the environment of not recycling correctly."
- "The stormwater drains on the sides of streets lead right to our freshwater streams, which we use for recreation, drinking, and fishing. Things other than water are going into the stormwater drains and they're unhealthy for the stream, causing water pollution that's bad for our health."
- "Pollution in our stormwater."
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- "If you leave harmful pollutants behind beware they will find there way into waters that we swim and fish in etc."
- "The issue is that pollutants in stormwater runoff are getting into bodies of water and contaminating both the water and the fish that live in the water."

How This Issues Touches Them Personally

Question Wording: "If this problem has touched you personally or someone you care about, please briefly share how:"

They answered like this:

- "This problem has not touched me personally but I can see how it could."
- "I can't think of how it's directly touched me or anyone I know, but I believe it touches us all as a whole."
- "I like to fish and I didn't even realize or think about the fish that I eat are effected by what we let go into the water. Thanks for making me aware! "
- "I think it has the potential to touch us all. But no one personally in my circle as of yet has been sick."
- "Has not happened to me."
- "It has not."
- "n/a"
- "n/a"
- "I grew up fishing, but no longer do so because I am afraid to eat anything I catch."
- "A river near my home has been so polluted by fertilizer, industrial waste, animal waste, pesticides, and herbicides that the fish are not healthy and cannot be eaten."
- "I have not been affected by this."
- "this problem has not touched me personally."
- "N/A"
- "I never have worried about this before I was unaware that it was a problem."
- "I personally think that pollutants are the cause of the huge increase that we are seeing in the number of premature births in this country. To that end, this problem has touched me recently as two relatives have given birth to babies weighing less than 3 pounds. One child is making it; the other is still on oxygen at home and having a hard time."
- "I don't have any direct stories of impact, but I know that I am careful to only purchase fish from reputable knowledgeable merchants because of the risk of mercury and other toxins being in the fish we eat."
- "about fish being dumped in a dirty lake."
- "I can't think of a time where this has happened to me or where I took part in this."
- "I don't leave waste behind."

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- "I have heard stories about friends who got food poisoning after eating fish with toxic levels of waste."
- "This question does not apply to me personally."
- "I cannot imagine I have had any part in this or any of my family members as we are very clean."
- "I have not discovered this as a problem in my local area."
- "Not a problem for me."
- "No applicable."
- "I have been aware of the problem for some time, and I modified my behavior long ago to clean up waste when I walk my dog and to keep grass clippings from getting into the gutter where they can get into the storm drain and eventually into bodies of water."

The Action That is Called for

Question Wording: "The piece urges you to take some action to address the social issue or problem. In your own words, what is this action?"

They answered like this:

- "The action is to take steps to cleanse our waters and treat them better personally and show the awareness to others."
- "Not sure yet"
- "To be careful of what we let go down our storm drains and that water pollution is a serious issue."
- "Put the word out and don't let things go down the drain."
- "To take action in preventing harmful hazards around that can be washed away by not using harmful products."
- "It urges people to become more conscious of recycling and waste disposal and the effect that not recycling can have."
- "It doesn't really say what the action is on the flyer, I'd have to go to the website. I'm not so sure what actions I could take but I'm assuming it means not to leave things lying around on the street that can get into the drains."
- "I would like to start recycling and watching my water usage. "
- "To be mindful of what you use in your yard and what you put or allow to be washed into storm drains."
- "We are all part of the solution to this problem. Find out more about the problem by visiting KnowWhereItGoes.org."
- "If you have had any part in the past of leaving garbage motor oil behind etc stop immediately and help keep our waters clean."
- "to visit their website to see how to help."
- "It urges you to visit the website knowwhereitgoes.org to find more information and things you can do about the issue."
- "Help be a part of keeping our waters clean by not contributing by leaving wastes behind where they can be washed away."
- "Be careful about using pesticides on your lawn; be careful about what you flush down your toilet and down your drains. Join a group."
- "Think twice about what we put into our storm drains since all of it will eventually end up in the streams and lakes."
- "trash that is dumped in a lake where fish are dumped in."

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- "Keep garbage where it belongs and any other harmful pollutants."
- "Avoid leaving behind anything that can be washed into storm drains."
- "The action is to carefully dispose of potentially toxic materials and to guard streams and rivers from pollutants."
- "Start spreading the word about what happens when you leave products behind."
- "Keep all harmful products pesticides garbage and anything else in proper locations so they will not be washed into storm drains causing more problems."
- "I beleive the best you can do is help keep waste where it belongs so it don't get into rivers and lakes and other bodies of water."
- "To keep are waters clean by not leaving waste and other products behind this will only cause more and more problems over time."
- "To keep as many dangerous items out of our storm drains as possible we need to keep our water clean and by doing our part and not leaving waste behind we can help make this happen."
- "The action would be to clean up after your pets when you take them for a walk, don't let grass clippings get into the gutter, and be careful when applying pesticides and herbicides to your lawn and plants."

About the Do Diligence Sounding Board

Just whose opinions are these, anyway? The "Do Diligence Sounding Board" is a standing body of U.S. residents who provide feedback on marketing materials and perform related tasks in return for payment.

A major corporation recruits the board members, maintains the system for securing their feedback, and handles the financial transactions. Water Words That Work, LLC pays to access to this service, as do other marketing firms.

The feedback that you receive from the sounding board is different from feedback you receive from your peers, for three reasons:

- The sounding board members who review your materials approach them like actual everyday citizen "in the wild." They are not professionals in the field and have not participated in the drafting of the materials.
- The sounding board members have never met you, and will provide their feedback anonymously. Their feedback will not be influenced by their personal relationship with you.
- The sounding board more closely approximates the demographic makeup (especially race and education) of the U.S. "public" than the staff and board of most nature protection and pollution control organizations.

Demographic Trait	Environmental Professionals	Do Diligence Sounding Board	Traditional Telephone Poll, U.S. Sample	Actual U.S. (Census)
4 Year College Degree	95% or higher	~50%	~40%	24%
White/Caucasian	95% or higher	~80%	~80%	79%

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