

Haagen-Dazs Loves Honey Bees

In depth research can be required before an agency can begin a campaign. The public relations industry determined that Haagen-Dazs would need assistance once an elusive malady was determined to be the source for the decline of honey bees. "Every third bite we consume in our diet is dependent on a honey bee to pollinate that food," according to the vice president of the American Beekeeping Federation, Zac Browning. One-third of all foods require pollination by honey bees that play a significant role in the development of our food supply.

Honey bees are responsible for the pollination of flora and, without pollinators, the human race would cease to exist. In 2007, U.S. senators approved a bill that would provide \$1.5 million for research to determine threats to honey bees. In 2008, senators from Georgia announced that \$4 million would be given to the University of Georgia to study the decline of the honey bee. Georgia is a major supplier of peaches. U.S. peach production in 2021 was 661,890 tons valued at approximately \$624 million. Without honey bees, many of the fruits and nuts used in the production of ice cream would not be available. According to a spokesperson for Haagen-Dazs, up to 40% of their all natural flavoring require honey bee pollination.

The Haagen-Dazs brand could be modified by educating publics on the plight of the honey bee. The campaign would inform consumers that products such as ice cream, frozen yogurt, sorbet, and snack products could become unavailable. The campaign primarily focused on consumer education and consumer behaviors. The campaign was called Haagen-Dazs Loves Honey Bees. The education part would be delivered by various media to increase existing impressions by 25%. The goal would be 125 million impressions. This approach would require significant campaign research.

Focus groups yielded the following information: the Haagen-Dazs brand was extremely popular and well-liked. They felt positive about the brand and its involvement in determining the decline of the honey bee. Next, building awareness about the malady gives consumers the impression that Haagen-Dazs truly cares about the crisis and the environment. Finally, the education of consumers left them with the impression that they felt connected to the brand.

Additional research demonstrated that while honey bees are vital to the U.S. food supply, no major food brands had become involved with the crisis. All of this research would impact the communication strategy. The goals are to educate consumers, connect them to the brand, and engage publics and community groups to be a part of the solution. This is called cause-marketing. The PR firm developed several strategies for communicating with publics.

One approach would give consumers an opportunity to become involved with solving this dilemma. They would achieve this objective by demonstrating Haagen-Dazs concern for their brand and the importance of the honey bee to the environment. To impact the behaviors of consumers, Haagen-Dazs would convince consumers to plant 1 million bee-friendly flowers. Haagen-Dazs would utilize their positive reputation to underscore the “all-natural” brand by linking honey bees with their organization.

While running this campaign, universities and organizations were working to solve this dilemma. The brand would donate \$250,000 to Pennsylvania State University for further research. Furthermore, the brand created a nine-person board of subject matter experts. This board consisted of horticulturists, geneticists, bee garden experts, scholars, and etymologists.

To reinforce their new brand, Haagen-Dazs launched a new product that was called “a rich vanilla ice cream blended with a touch of golden sweet honey. It is a creamy classic with a mouthwatering twist only the honey bee offers.” The company continued to push forward by pledging to donate a portion of the sales of this new product to further research. In addition, the brand developed a new logo that was placed on the container of all bee-dependent flavors. This further linked the brand with the honey bee. They were inseparably linked.

As far as media interactions are concerned, Haagen-Dazs achieved 277 million media impressions. This campaign was featured in at least 1,097 unique placements including Cable News Network (CNN), Associated Press (AP), National Public Radio (NPR), Wall Street Journal, The Today Show, and The New York Times. In one media audit, 93% of all coverage was positive toward the brand. Almost all media outlets branded the product and positioned Haagen-Dazs as the driving force behind the cause. Brand recall was tremendous. The company further positioned themselves as the all-natural product.

