

2017 AAPA Communications Award Program

Entry Classification: Videos

Title: "Happy" video

Summary – "Happy" video

The Port of Vancouver USA performed a community survey in early 2016. The survey confirmed what the port had long believed: We have an awareness problem in our community. Some people don't know we exist, and others know they have a port but have no idea what it does or why it matters to them. In response to these findings, we added a community-focused advertisement to our outreach toolbox to reach the public with messages that resonate with them. We ran the ad, which we nicknamed "Happy" because of its ending, on our local cable station and promoted it through several external communications tools.



1. Communication Challenges or Opportunities

The Port of Vancouver is well-known and well-regarded by those familiar with our activities and our positive impact on the community. But, since the port has been operating quietly and efficiently for over a century, those familiar with us tend to be a small and homogenous group. In 2013 the port signed a lease for a proposed crude oil transfer facility. This elicited backlash from a select group of community members and regional environmental activists, pushing the port into the spotlight.

We realized we had an opportunity to manage this public attention and media coverage in a way that could raise awareness about our economic and community benefits, but too often the coverage was negative. It also wasn't reaching many members of the port district, which includes rural and suburban areas that are disconnected geographically and socially from neighborhoods adjacent to the port.

In February 2016, we contracted with Riley Research Associates to perform a district-wide survey of 450 registered voters in the port district (margin of error +/- 4.6 percent). The survey showed that our community did indeed have limited familiarity with the port, with 55 percent of residents stating they were “not very or not at all” familiar with the port and five percent stating they had “no knowledge at all.” When asked to rate the port’s overall performance, 42 percent of those polled were “too unfamiliar” to give a rating.

When asked about information they’d heard about the port’s recent activities, 33 percent responded they’d heard about the oil terminal; 17 percent heard about our waterfront redevelopment project; and 39 percent hadn’t heard or didn’t recall hearing anything about the port.

We needed to raise awareness of the port and its benefits to the community by succinctly conveying how our activities touch people’s everyday lives through the products we move, the jobs we create, etc. It was challenging to come up with a message that was accurate yet consumable for internal and external stakeholders, and a marketing plan that was broad yet targeted enough to reach as much of that elusive audience – the general public – as possible.

2. Complement to Overall Mission

The Port of Vancouver USA’s mission is to provide economic benefit to our community through leadership, stewardship and partnership in marine, industrial and waterfront development. The ad intersects port products and activities with images of our cranes, our tenants’ workers and other local workers to convey the message that relevant products move through and are processed or manufactured at your community port, creating jobs for real people and bringing you things you use every day, such as bread, cars, fruit and beer.

3. Planning and Programming Components

We wanted to move the needle on awareness and recognition of the port by sharing a relatable and evergreen message about jobs and community that resonated and could easily translate to multiple platforms (e.g. TV, social media, Web, events, e-newsletters). We were primarily trying to reach our community – those who most lacked awareness and were hardest to reach – with potential customers as a secondary audience.

We measured earned media, clicks and shares from digital platforms, feedback from audiences and changes to perception/awareness in our February 2017 survey (see below).

4. Actions Taken and Communication Outputs

We chose to produce a straightforward, optimistic ad that shows specific products we move and actual port tenant employees to create a sense of recognition and ownership for people who live in Vancouver and the Pacific Northwest. Subaru vehicles, craft beer and wheat are all part of our local identity (e.g. hardworking, rugged, unique, sustainable).

Starting in March 2016, we aired the ad during the daytime on specific networks and during specific programs to capture 96 percent of adult (18+) Comcast/Xfinity subscribers (Comcast is the main cable network in Clark County). Networks included AMC, CNBC, CNN, Discovery, ESPN, FOOD, FX, Fox News, Hallmark, HGTV, History, MSNBC, National Geographic, TBS, TLC, TNT, USA and TV Land. We also aired the ad during the NCAA football championship game between Clemson and Ohio State to capture a wide audience. The overall Comcast/Xfinity strategy netted more than 229,000 impressions per month.

The port's External Affairs (EA) team worked with our marketing firm – Grady Britton – to produce the video and implement the ad campaign on Comcast. However, the EA team handled all PR, which included a news release to local media, promotion through social media platforms (i.e. YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn), e-newsletters, tours, public Board of Commissioners meetings and community events. One example of a community event with a great, targeted audience was the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce Installation of Officers and Business Leadership Awards Dinner, during which more than 350 business and community leaders viewed the video as part of the port's sponsorship agreement.

5. Outcomes and Evaluation Methods

In February 2017, the port performed another community survey of 600 registered voters in the port district (margin of error +/- 4.0 percent). The 2017 survey showed that 37 percent of those polled had no opinion/didn't know enough about the port to rate our performance, compared to 39 percent in 2016. The 2017 survey also showed that 47 percent of those polled were not familiar with port, down from 55 percent. Twenty-four percent of those polled had recalled seeing Port of Vancouver advertisements, mostly print and TV.

The video has been viewed 479 times over its life on our YouTube channel and the Web page into which it's embedded saw 139 unique visitors in the weeks following its launch. The average view duration of the 31-second commercial is 30 seconds, which tells us people are engaged in the content of the video. The video was also shared 20 times or about four percent of total viewership. We also found that 53 viewers, or 11 percent of total viewership, clicked through from this video to other videos on our channel.

Supporting Documents

- Video: "Happy" :30 commercial <https://youtu.be/FVwz4XXsMjk>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/portvanusa/posts/1125092864188067>
- News release: www.portvanusa.com/news-releases/port-of-vancouver-adds-tv-radio-spots-to-2016-community-outreach/
- 2016 community survey: www.portvanusa.com/assets/POV-PollResults-032316.pdf
- 2017 community survey: See attached .pdf