

## Case Study

### Häagen-Dazs Viral Video Helps Honey Bees Cause

**Client:** Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream on behalf of the Häagen-Dazs brand  
**Agencies:** Goodby, Silverstein & Partners (Creative), Feed Company (Video Seeding & Outreach)  
**Campaign:** Häagen-Dazs Loves Honey Bees Campaign  
**Video Specs:** Executive Producer - James Horner  
 Creative Director - Jeff Goodby  
 Production Company - Bob Industries  
 Music - Elias Arts  
**Duration:** 2 weeks (July 15, 2008 - August 1, 2008)

#### Background

Marketing centered around social causes is nothing new: 25 years ago, American Express launched the first "cause marketing" campaign for the Statue of Liberty restoration project - and saw their applications jump 45%. Moreover, consumers have a strong emotional connection to brands that are linked to a political, social, or environmental cause, with more than 7 in 10 admitting they have purchased a brand because it supports a cause they believe in.<sup>1</sup>

Still, companies must be careful to choose a cause that is integrally linked to their products and/or services so as not to risk an accusation of using the latest "cause of the day" to increase profits.

#### The Häagen-Dazs Brand & Honey Bees

One cause that came to light in late 2006 is that of the disappearing honey bees. Millions of worker bees began to mysteriously disappear from their hives in a poorly misunderstood phenomenon known as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD).<sup>2</sup>

Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream, the maker of Häagen-Dazs ice cream, adopted the issue - the first time it has ever lent support to a cause - because of its direct impact on its product: 30 of the 73 Häagen-Dazs flavors (including the immensely popular Strawberry, Vanilla Swiss Almond, and Banana Split) contain ingredients pollinated by honey bees.

The company embarked on a number of bee-related philanthropic initiatives, including the donation of a portion of the proceeds from sales of their new Vanilla Honey Bee ice cream and all bee-dependent flavors to support CCD research at Penn State and UC Davis. Products that rely on the bees were labeled "honeybee-dependent" and tagged with an HDlovesHB icon.

#### Program Strategy: Online, Viral, Engagement

The complete campaign spearheaded by Goodby, Silverstein & Partners included a variety of mediums and creative assets: TV ads, "Plant this page, Save a bee" flower-seed paper print ads, an interactive website<sup>3</sup>, documentary/art project sponsorships, and a web video called "Bee-Boy Dance Crew," featuring a hip-hop interpretation of the "dance" a bee performs for its hive mates describing in detail the location of a newly discovered source of nectar.

<sup>1</sup> According to a 2007 PR Week / Barkley Cause Survey.

<sup>2</sup> Total bee colony losses from Sept. '07 to '08 stand at 36%, representing nearly a 14% increase in total losses compared to last year, according to the Apiary Inspectors of America (AIA) and USDA-ARS Beltsville Honey Bess Lab (via a PBS *Nature* interview with beekeeper Dennis Van Engelsdorp.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.helpthehoneybees.com>

The video's relevance to a major cause and unquestionably youthful style had the ability to speak to a young audience - the very group that would be most likely to be inspired to spread awareness of the bees cause through word of mouth.

But what would be the best medium to reach this highly engaged demographic? The Internet, being also relatively low cost, but with a high potential return, was chosen for several reasons:

- American youth (18-24) are using the Internet as a primary source of news, peer-to-peer communication, and as a form of entertainment.<sup>4</sup> Video is especially prominent: comScore data show that 7 in 10 internet users view online video, with the 18-34 age group watching nearly 5 hours per month.<sup>5</sup>
- Technology has become a key tool for education and support of social and environmental issues.<sup>6</sup>
- The sharable, social platforms of the Internet (e.g., blogs, online networks, forums) are an ideal tool for spreading awareness of cause-oriented campaigns.

Dreyer's, the maker of Häagen-Dazs ice cream, would also use the video as an opportunity to learn about the impact of viral video campaigns, measuring consumer reaction to a video produced with the purpose of generating awareness about an issue.

### **Video Seeding & Outreach**

Feed Company - a specialist in online marketing and driving discussion around video content across web channels - was faced with the challenge of promoting the "Bee-Boy Dance Crew" video and communicating its cause message in a relevant and emotionally compelling way.

Their methodology consisted of three main phases:

1. Feed researched and targeted media<sup>7</sup> in the following verticals: Urban Lifestyle, Green/Environmental Awareness, Humor/General Entertainment, News Outlets, Food Industry and Ad/Marketing, reaching out to trusted site editors and influential bloggers (i.e. TreeHugger, HuffingtonPost) to begin momentum around the issue and the campaign.
2. Creative messaging specific to each niche media outlet. For example, a "green" blog would receive messaging that focused on the bio-diversity and environmental impact of CCD; entertainment outlets received messaging with pop culture references to the video's music and dance styles.
3. As the video gained momentum from the initial push to niche media, Feed leveraged the growing interest and broadened outreach to mainstream outlets, gaining the attention of top-tier sites, major cable television networks and newspapers.

<sup>4</sup> A July '07 Burst Media survey found college students spending more time on the internet than any other media: 33% spend more than 10 hours per week. Some 44% of them are reading news; 43% are viewing streaming video content.

<sup>5</sup> "11 Billion Videos Viewed Online in the US in April 2008" comScore press release (6/17/08)

<sup>6</sup> More than one in five Americans (22%) have used the internet or other technologies to engage in grassroots activism, such as searching for information on issues (37%) and forwarding important messages to family and friends (38%) Source: 2007 Cone Cause Evolution Survey, conducted March 29, 2007 by Opinion Research Corporation.

<sup>7</sup> These included traditional media outlets (i.e. magazines, newspapers, TV) but also social networks, video share sites, forums, blogs, and social bookmark sites.

### Measurable Business Success: A Million Views, Thousands of Conversations

- Over the course of just two weeks, (July 15- Aug. 1), "Bee-Boy Dance Crew" garnered *over one million web views*, 930,000 of which were on YouTube. Other major sources include 5 min (15,024 views), Yahoo (12,889) and Daily Motion (10,753). Additionally **CNN** picked up the story and spread it nationwide, generating an additional 1.3 million views for the video.<sup>8</sup>

Blog coverage of the video was also extensive:

- The video campaign was placed in the eyes of millions through big-name, high-trafficked blogs include the **Huffington Post** (with over 6.9 million monthly unique viewers), the Los Angeles Examiner (1.2 million), and the Sun Sentinel (993k).
- Among the 132 total blog placements that Feed generated, the largest success was in the following:
  - Green/Environmental Awareness category through **TreeHugger** (1.6 million viewers), EcoMoto (425k), and EarthChampion (2k).
  - General entertainment outlets: Neatorama (294k), and **BuzzFeed** (204k).
  - Advertising industry trade publications: **AdRants** (95k unique users), DMNews and Drew's Marketing Minute (2k each), and Marketing Professional Daily Fix (4k).
  - Niche blogs with passionate, loyal followings: **LA Times Blog** - Web Scout, OMG Blog, Real Television, and ViralBlog, among others.

However, it was the high level of user engagement around the Bees video that truly shows the campaign's success:

- Comments on YouTube ran as high as 3,500.
- The video was favorited 5,850 times by YouTube users and received an average of 4 ½ stars.
- It gathered enthusiastic user feedback on the strength of the video, the music, the dancing, and the cause.<sup>9</sup>
- 11,024 discussion sessions<sup>10</sup> and 412 reactions (forum responses)

### Conclusion

Over the course of just two weeks, Feed Company generated over 2 million views for the video, thousands of conversations, and an immeasurable number of overall impressions and conversations about the "Häagen-Dazs Loves Honey Bees" campaign.

The news buzzed into mainstream media outlets, blogs, forums, and online social networks through creative, compelling messaging and key placement, bringing the issue to the attention of tens of millions of people.

Traffic to the Häagen-Dazs helpthoneybees microsite spiked, showing a heightened interest in the cause, and moreover, a connection to the company as a source for more information about the issue.

But perhaps most important of all, consumers' passion about the cause transformed into passion about the brand, creating an emotional connection that would last well beyond the life span of the campaign.

<sup>8</sup> Data compiled from a VMS Media report.

<sup>9</sup> Example comment: "DJ Honey is hot! Amazing video [...] love the music the dance and the cause."

<sup>10</sup> A discussion session is defined by an instance of a user clicking on a headline, entering a conversation where the YouTube link is shared and a discussion about the video is developing. It can originate come from various internet locations, including message boards, newsgroups, and social networking sites.