

REFERENCE:

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Colorado Springs Utilities - Drought Response

Background:

During the spring of 2013, the Drought Monitor showed Colorado in moderate to exceptional drought conditions. At the beginning of 2013, lower-than-normal snow pack, lack of significant precipitation and increased demand had put stress on Colorado Springs' water supply. System-wide storage was at a near historical low of 49 percent; our normal storage is 65 percent. Conditions were forecasted to continue through the beginning of 2014. Colorado Springs Utilities activated a drought response team.

VI worked under the expectation that the community would be under water restrictions beginning April 1 and ending October 1, 2013. Restrictions voted on by Colorado Springs Utilities and City Council limited residents to two days a week for outdoor watering and fines for customers who over-watered. Because water is a valued and limited resource, Colorado Springs Utilities had a responsibility to educate and inform customers on the importance of using water wisely. The intelligent use of water could help community members act as conscientious stewards of this resource as we rebuilt our water supply.

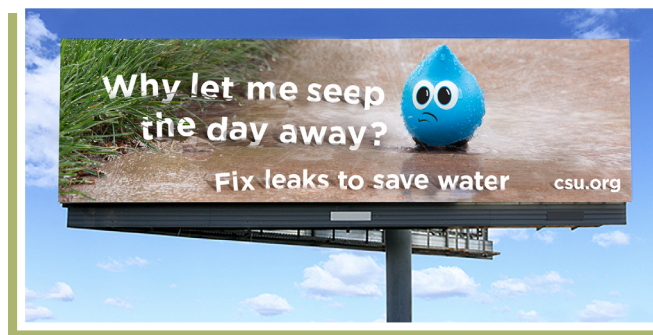
Objectives:

- Save 5.8 billion gallons of water by October 31, 2013.
- Educate customers about the drought and water conservation.
- Educate customers about the restrictions they are facing.
- Educate customers of the watering days and times.
- Engage customers in becoming active in conservation habits.

Strategy:

As Colorado Springs goes into water restrictions, it is Colorado Springs Utilities' responsibility to educate their customers on behavior changes for long-term water conservation, while maintaining a positive perception of their community-owned utility. Capitalizing on "community-owned" is essential to the recommended strategy. The use of a community icon would create a personal and positive connection with customers. It helped communicate that the citizens of Colorado Springs were in this together, that this was best for the city's water supply and future. As we proceeded with the community icon strategy we decided against using photos of employees or real people, but something that we were all asked to save together. We personified a water drop – giving him the name Dewey.

We brought him to life and placed Dewey in situations that we all experience – watering our lawn, taking a shower or bath, washing dishes, etc.; very precarious situations for a single water drop. We asked the community of Colorado Springs to help eliminate or stop these water-endangering situations so we could all save him. As a part of video, we used stop-motion, similar to Marcel the Shell. We made him cute and relatable. An animation that any customer or person might find innocent, helpless and willing to save.



Tactics:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Water drop mascot | Earned media |
| Event participation | Paid media |
| Partnerships | Social media |
| Stickers | |

Statistical results of project:

- Increased awareness amongst all age groups.
- Saved 5.8 Billion gallons of water by Sept 1, 2013, a month and a half ahead of schedule.
- Increased Customer Satisfaction scores amongst our Customer, via JD Powers and Associates, 2014 Water Customer Satisfaction Study.

Awards:

- 2013 Silver and Gold ADDYs
- PRSA Silver Anvil 2014
- CO+AMA Gold Peak 2014, CO+AMA Grand Peak 2014