

The WILDOCEANS’ “Only This Much” Campaign – advancing the protection of the oceans around South Africa.

*¹Van Nijkerk, L., ²Mthembu, R., ³Stephenson, T.

I prefer - ORAL Presentation

*Lead presenter

¹Lauren van Niekerk, LaurenVN@wildtrust.co.za, WILDTRUST, South Africa

²Ruth Mthembu, RuthM@wildtrust.co.za, WILDTRUST, South Africa

³Tamryn Stephenson, Tamryn@loveafricamarketing.com, Love Africa Marketing, South Africa

Background

On World Oceans Day, the 8th of June 2018 a coalition of organisations (funded by Oceans 5) that included WILDOCEANS, Ocean Unite, WWF-SA, Centre for Environmental Rights and the South African Association for Marine Biological Research (SAAMBR), expressed their aim to advance the protection of the oceans around South Africa (in MPAs – Marine Protected Areas) and launched a campaign called “Only This Much.” At the time South Africa only had 0.4% marine protection – and the campaign premise was - “Only This Much” is not enough.

It is important to note that the South African Department of Environmental Affairs, the authority that can expand marine protection, sent their Deputy Director General, Judy Beaumont to attend to the launch and give a key note address on the evening. Beaumont welcomed the new MPA expansion support.

Year 1 (of 3 years) of the campaign had an overarching objective of creating more conversations about Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), targeted at the South African public and decision makers.

The measurable objective linked to the campaign in year 1 (March 2018 – March 2019) was to secure 5% MPA expansion (from 0.4%).

Methods

The messaging linked to the campaign highlighted the importance of MPAs, awareness of the then 0.4% protection and how the average person on the street could help change it.

The campaign brought MPAs into mainstream media, making them “cool” and easy to understand - spreading awareness about the then 0.4% protection (using clever creative devices that played on space – to illustrate just how small 0.4% was), MPA benefits, their value and their threats.

Results

Some of the campaign messaging was viewed as controversial and negative, and we believe it did cause discomfort at times – but this was strategic, and we saw this as a positive – placing

pressure on decision makers to stay true to their commitments and do the right thing and supporting them to do so through external pressure.

The year 1 messaging was rolled out on social media to 5128 followers (Facebook 4111, Twitter 459 and Instagram 558) and reached over 500 000 people.

It also must be noted that the campaign was supported by Richard Branson (3.1 million Facebook followers), Leonardo DiCaprio (16 547 687 Facebook followers) and the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation (67 776 Facebook followers) on social media.

The active and strategic content generation (press releases/ opinion editorials etc.) of the team saw R4.5 million in media coverage value and a readership of over 6 million people achieved in year 1 of the campaign.

Conclusion

On the 25th of October 2018 South Africa's Cabinet announced the expansion of Marine Protected Areas from 0.4% to 5% - with an additional 20 new MPAs being announced. We believe the "Only This Much" Campaign played a part in securing marine protection expansion and hope we can play a similar role when trying to secure 10% MPAs by 2020.

Keywords: public awareness, public involvement, marine protected areas

Theme: Capacity development and outreach