

**TITLE OF CASE STUDY: Battleground Earth-
Rebranding Climate Change in 90 Days 2010**

The Pivotal Year for Climate Action

In late 2008, with the imperative UN climate change conference (COP15) imminent, the Secretary-General of the United Nations faced a serious challenge. On December 7, the world's leaders would converge on Copenhagen to discuss the biggest environmental crisis of our time: climate change. The need for agreement on solutions would be urgent and the temptation to succumb to a status quo of political equivocation ever-present. Experts around the world were pronouncing 2008 as the point of no return for avoiding cataclysmic changes to the Earth's climate. **But with so much at stake, the people of the world didn't seem to know or care.** Recognizing that it would be critical to galvanize mass global support for a positive outcome at COP15 in order to pressure leaders to take decisive action, Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon asked an unlikely hero to take up the cause: the global advertising industry.

COP What?

The challenge was real: how to get people around the world—beyond the usual green suspects—to care and register their support? Typical “green” campaigns had failed to impact audiences in the past, and the context was made more difficult as the financial crisis took on greater urgency.

With the stage thus set, we won a fast-paced pitch among the top global communications agencies with an idea that would break all green category conventions and change perceptions of climate change from something that felt remote into a top-of-mind priority requiring immediate action.

Oh, by the way...

When the United Nations told us, “Go,” we had no budget (not to mention the worst global economy in four decades) and just ninety days to change the way the world thought about climate change.

90 Days to Change the World

The objective from the United Nations was clear but broad: build global awareness of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP15). To give our own teams a more focused sense of purpose, we added a more specific set of expectations.

Marrying gusto to groundedness, we aimed to get about **1,000,000 people** to join the movement. (A look at some other recent, far-reaching events gave us context: Nike aimed to get a million runners to participate in its first Human Race in 2008 and ended up with roughly half that many; and an estimated 1.8 million people attended Obama's inauguration in DC after nearly a year of build-up. So, with a 90-day countdown but no running involved, we hoped we could get into that range.)

Inspire **global** participation.

Attract at least one major corporate sponsor.

Unite disparate **interest groups under a single banner** for the conference.

Not Another Green Campaign:

More polar bears and tree frogs? More ticking clocks and impending catastrophes? Would those well-worn tropes magically work this time around? We didn't think a fresh take on a stale strategy would get the job done. We needed a new way into the climate change conversation – one that would avoid the Bermuda Triangle of green advertising:

The Sea of Green: Lack of Thematic Differentiation
The Doom & Gloom: Cataclysmic Prophecies and Fear-Mongering Tone
The Utterly Irrelevant: Ignoring People's Priorities

The Sea of Green

Green campaigns face a basic issue of differentiation, and the onslaught of identical green messaging was causing eco-fatigue among consumers. We couldn't afford to get lost in the clutter.

The Doom & Gloom

Yale researchers found that all-too-prevalent images of climatic apocalypse were causing people to tune out -- or worse -- distrust climate-related messages. We strongly believed a new, more optimistic tone was needed (*Climate Change in the American Mind*, Yale Project on Climate Change with George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication, October 2008).

The Utterly Irrelevant

Traditional green campaigns address global issues which only a small segment of the global population find relevant. Most of us are preoccupied by issues much closer to home. We saw a need to tie climate change, and the conference in Copenhagen, to people's kitchen-sink issues. We needed to make it personal.

And what was the most relevant issue to individuals in 2009 – the clearest priority? Not a polar bear but **my pocketbook**.

According to Pew Research Center polling data (Pew *Attitudes Project* Key Indicators Database), during a six-month period in 2008, the number of US respondents who said they believed climate change was real dropped from 71% to 56%, and those saying it was man-caused dropped from 47% to 36%. Clearly the climate wasn't climbing the priority list. Then fast-forward to 2009, when the onset of severe, global economic crisis compounded the challenge and began 'sucking the oxygen out of the room' for all other issues—environment included. 79% of US consumers were now more concerned about the economy than the environment. (PSB, *Survey on Sustainability in Recession*, 20 July 2009.)

But what could we do about that? Tackling climate change is typically seen as the enemy of economic progress, as an expensive luxury to be shelved during times of economic hardship. We seemed to have reached a dead end.

From Stalemate to Solution: Consulting the Changemakers

We have a mantra: when in doubt, consult someone smarter than yourself. We began conducting interviews with 50 of the world's smartest thinkers from the worlds of business, government, civil society, academia, finance, and science. People like George Lakoff, Professor of Linguistics at UC Berkeley, leading Chinese environmentalist Ma Jun, WPP CEO Sir Martin Sorrell and the UN Secretary General himself, Ban Ki-moon. We were looking for fresh thinking and insights that might enable us to link climate solutions to economic solutions.

We quickly began hearing things like this:

"The green economy is low-carbon and energy-efficient. It creates jobs. Investment in sustainable technologies will turn today's crisis into tomorrow's sustainable growth." Ban Ki-moon, UN

"Continuing to pour billions of dollars into carbon-based infrastructure and fossil-fuel subsidies is like investing in sub-prime real-estate." United Nations Special Envoys on Climate Change

"It is critical that we highlight economic opportunities from the new industrial revolution – for that is what it is." Sir Martin Sorrell, WPP

In this new language, climate change was being reframed from ‘existential threat’ to ‘economic opportunity’ – positioning action at COP15 as the antidote to the global financial crisis. Bear in mind these interviews were being conducted just as Obama was coming to office, as Thomas Friedman was publishing *Hot, Flat and Crowded* and before Walmart had begun showing Americans how going green could help them save money and live better. This thinking was exciting and utterly fresh.

This was the quote that really clinched it for us:

“The message is: Copenhagen is not just a climate summit, it’s an economic summit. There is a link between that boardroom in a foreign-sounding city and your kitchen table.” George Lakoff, UC Berkeley

We felt we’d hit on the nugget we were looking for. We road-tested the idea with a broader group of thought leaders at the World Economic Forum at Davos in January 2009. They jumped on the idea and offered additional proof points to support our story. We were feeling good.

In order to make the UN climate change conference relevant in this hostile environment, we could show that the intersection of climate and fiscal crisis would in fact give the world a massive opportunity to forge a new road ahead towards a clean, prosperous economy. And that the moment for mass forward progress was now.

Would it fly with the masses?

Armed with our new idea, we embarked on a series of focus groups with everyday Americans.

The economy/ecology message wasn’t the immediate hit we’d hoped for. In the concepts we first presented, it was too dry and rational. Our target wanted to regain control over their destinies and craved reassurance that a return to prosperity would come. But their economic trauma and turmoil were deeply emotional. We couldn’t reason them into supporting us.

They helped us re-craft our strategy around a more holistic concept of optimism and hope for a return to prosperity - with COP15 as the potential turning point and their participation a way to take back control. Coming out of the groups, we were in a strong position to brief creative.

A Rallying Cry

We knew we had to bring people together around a common sense of optimism that the solutions to our climate change crisis would simultaneously help us achieve economic prosperity. And we had to help people believe that they could influence this future by raising their voices at COP15. No ordinary push-sell campaign could cut through the pervasive climate skepticism and ennui. Whatever we built would have to feel collaborative, grassroots, self-propelled. In short, it couldn’t be a campaign at all. It had to be a movement. And it had to have a name.

The apotheosis of this movement-in-the-making was already set: Copenhagen in December. Working backwards from there, we realized the destination had the core of our creative idea already baked in. On the one hand, Copenhagen is one of the greenest cities in the world and a sustainable development exemplar for all of us; on the other hand, it had our antagonist right in the name. “Cope” is the antithesis of progress. And the issues we faced had grown too large for us to merely “cope” with them. That’s when one little letter changed everything:

“Let’s turn Copenhagen into Hopenhagen.”

And with that, a movement was born.

Hopenhagen was a place defined not by geographical boundaries but by shared hope and belief that if we focused on solutions, change would be possible—and could begin in Copenhagen. It encompassed a whole world’s aspirations to prosperity and wellbeing, and helped citizens everywhere articulate their vision for this better future.

Going Live: How to Galvanize a Globe

Step 1: Build A Meeting Place. We had to find a way to reach as many people as possible as efficiently as possible, so we created a digital platform where the world's citizens could congregate, learn, discuss, and act.

An interactive map at Hopenhagen.org formed the heart of the movement's online terrain, inviting people to declare themselves 'citizens' of Hopenhagen and type in messages of hope.

Visitors could take the first step towards Hopenhagen citizenship by signing the UN Climate Petition—a pledge of support for a positive outcome at COP15 that was read to delegates on the opening day of the conference. We brought citizens together through social media: the dynamic Facebook community united people around our common cause, providing the tools to organize across borders, and a Facebook Passport app turned global citizens into bona fide Hopenhagen citizens, allowing them to collect stamps as reward for advocacy and action.

Step 2: Find Friends. We needed to make the causes for optimism – those forward-thinking solutions that would become the vehicles of real change and turn around two crises at once – feel palpable to citizens, so we sought out partners that could amplify the message and demonstrate progress. That's when Siemens, The Coca-Cola Company and SAP stepped up to help us envisage what a better future could look like and spread the word about how to get there.

Step 3: Share the Good Word. We wanted to harness the ripple effect for “hope.” So, we created highly distributable digital content that could be shared and shared again – like badges and a branded blog series featuring high-profile guest writers such as Al Gore.

Hopenhagen then expanded word-of-mouth momentum with special social media-based events that incentivized influencers to activate their social networks. At HuffingtonPost.com, a Hopenhagen Ambassador contest encouraged participation through an online voting process to elect a people's ambassador to send to COP15.

Print, video and live events (sponsored by our corporate partners and the city of Copenhagen) were also core purveyors of the message, especially in developing nations with less exposure to the digital world. To avoid the cliché imagery of green campaigns, the work was designed to consistently telegraph hope and humanity. Pictures of real people and handwriting were core creative elements. Headlines brought to life the belief that a better future *for people* was possible. Films featured actual citizens expressing their hopes for the future.

Open-Source Activation

Businesses, media owners, NGOs and even the city of Copenhagen itself were drawn to the fresh message and became advocates and disseminators, running with their own activation ideas (like outfitting Danish football club Brønby IF in Hopenhagen kit or creating a Hopenhagen Live stage in Copenhagen's City Hall Square). Throughout, we kept Hopenhagen truly open-source so that anyone—from a flash-mobber to a college campus to a city mayor—could interpret and amplify the message in his or her own way. Hopenhagen was truly a campaign for the people, by the people.

Creating a Climate of Hope

We began our 90-day countdown with four primary objectives:

Get 1,000,000 people to join the movement.

Inspire global participation.

Attract at least one major corporate sponsor.

Unite disparate interest groups under a single banner for the conference.

How did we fare?

Six Million Citizens

Our multi-channel, open-source approach enabled us to create a movement of over 6 million people in just 90 days, and *over 70% had never joined a climate movement before.*

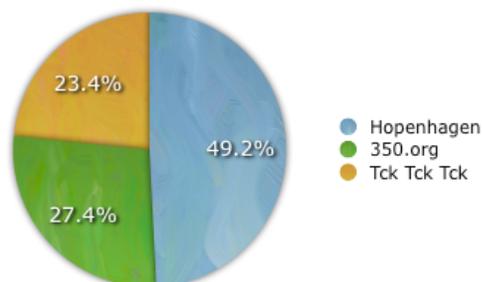
6,172,820 Citizens from over 200 Countries/Territories (Agency data 2009-10)

Largest Global Media Donation in History

Along the way, we attracted what is believed to be the largest media donation of its kind in history—350+ traditional media outlets and multiple digital ones.

(Agency data 2009-10)

Digital Word of Mouth



(Agency data 2009-10)
media agency data). And we also know our assets were in channels that lack rigorous measurement tools, so we estimate a total of **\$350-400MM in projected media value** (Agency

(Total projected 1B impressions) (Media agency data).

Among Climate Movements

Hopenhagen has emerged as the most visible and fastest growing climate movement, with over 50% of the buzz in the run-up to the Copenhagen summit. It is the most visible and fastest growing climate movement, despite the fact that it is a relatively new, non-established NGO with long history in the climate movement (Agency data).

World-Class Partnerships

Hopenhagen attracted the support, partnership, and media dollars of not one but three of the world's most powerful brands: SAP, The Coca-Cola Company, and Siemens. They gave credibility to our message, amplified our efforts and demonstrated how innovations and forward-thinking really can help move us toward the change we need and the future we want.

Changing the Language, Uniting Stakeholders

We set out to reframe the climate discussion and build common ground for disparate interest groups, and we did. Hopenhagen evolved into shorthand for a positive, solutions-oriented ethos; the movement's name was invoked in opening remarks at the conference, including the Mayor of Copenhagen's welcome speech to delegates, and in hundreds of global news headlines. The idea of Hopenhagen, no less than its online epicenter, was the meeting ground for journalists, business leaders, politicians and even other climate movements, helping everyone to propel a unified message of hope around the globe.

And how about the conference itself? Did Hopenhagen deliver results on the ground?

"After a long day negotiating we would leave the center and see the Hopenhagen messages. They helped keep us on track, reminding us what we were here to accomplish. It set the right tone." – US COP15 delegate (to Hopenhagen supporter in Copenhagen)

Raising the Bar

The substantive agreement many of us hoped for may not have been reached in Copenhagen, but we never expected our work to end on December 18. Hopenhagen was and is a starting point.

Leading by example, Hopenhagen succeeded in reframing the climate change conversation in terms of hope and opportunity—a powerful shift that has begun to influence the messaging of other climate NGOs. By bringing fresh voices to the conversation, we raised global awareness of the interconnectedness of our challenges and laid the groundwork for future collaboration.