

CASE STUDY: The Greening of Evergreen Oil

Evergreen Oil, Newark CA



Background

- Evergreen Oil built a \$15 million refinery in Newark, CA
- Although Newark is a town with light industrial manufacturing, it is also home to families, schools and businesses
- When they built the refinery, they had no strategic communications plan in place
- Before the official ribbon cutting & opening, there were fires, explosions, and odors. Community hated this refinery being in its town – “Not In My Backyard (NIMBY).”

Challenges

- TV crews swarmed to Newark & interviewed NIMBY neighbors
- Newspapers exploited the mishaps of this start-up. It was bad and it smelled bad.

Everyone thought so.

- The mayor threatened to throw them out of town if there was one more incident.
- No one knew that Evergreen Oil (EO) actually recycled used oil. The perception was they were like a Chevron Refinery.

Objectives

- Articulate the recycling story of EO to employees first
- Communicate the positive environmental story of EO to the community
- Convince the mayor to let them stay in Newark
- Change perception of the company
- Become an accepted member of the community

Strategies

- Maximize use of local media to communicate to all audiences
- Involve CEO to communicate strategic communications plan to employees
- Develop and deploy messaging to employees, the community, government agencies and the media
- Create a fun mascot to deliver the messages

Results

- Outreach resulted in positive media coverage, including TV
- Children drove the message home to parents from Tin Man recycling classes
- Surveys showed acceptance of EO by community, govt. agencies, the mayor, the community
- Mayor personally asked Working Images to provide the mascot, The Tin Man and his friends from OZ as a central component to the annual Newark Days Fair, three years in a row.
- Mascot was adopted by the city.



