

Change a Light, Change the World Bus Tour: A Communication Audit

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ABSTRACT

ANN E. MCGINNIS: Change a Light, Change the World Bus Tour: A Communication Audit
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A communications audit of the Change a Light, Change the World Bus Tour was conducted to evaluate its ability to influence the media's agenda on energy efficiency. The audit includes a description of the Tour's history, a document analysis of its information subsidies, interviews with staff, and an overall analysis of the Change a Light campaign's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The document analysis determined that the Tour's primary message frames were easy and effective, consumer financial benefits, and environmental benefits. These frames were compared with the frames that emerged from the resulting print media and blogger coverage. Contrary to campaign expectations, the information subsidies were used far more frequently by bloggers than print journalists. The communication audit concludes with a list of recommendations for future campaign endeavors and a discussion of how the audit's results contribute to the fields of public relations and nonprofit communication.

In honor of Francesca H. Dittmann

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
	LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
Chapter		
I	INTRODUCTION.....	1
	ENERGY STAR Background.....	3
	ENERGY STAR Partners.....	4
	ENERGY STAR Consumer Awareness.....	5
	Change a Light Campaign History.....	6
	The CFL Bulb.....	6
	The Change a Light Pledge.....	8
	The Change a Light Bus Tour.....	9
II	LITERATURE REVIEW.....	10
	The Importance of the Public Agenda.....	11
	Agenda Setting.....	11

Agenda Building.....	13
Importance of New Technology in Agenda-building Study.....	14
Information Subsidies.....	16
Source Influence and Competition.....	17
Framing.....	19
Summary: Public Relations Theory and Practice.....	21
III RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHOD.....	23
Method.....	24
History of Communication Audits.....	24
The Diggs-Brown Communication Audit Plan.....	27
Step One: Finding Out About the Organization.....	27
Step Two: Analysis.....	30
Step Three: Evaluation and Reporting.....	32
Limitations.....	33
IV CHANGE A LIGHT BUS TOUR COMMUNICATION AUDIT.....	35
The 2007 Change a Light Bus Tour.....	35
Consultants.	36
A Tour is Born.....	37
Bus Tour Goals and Objectives.....	38
The Tour Bus.....	40
The Tour: Consumer and Media Events.....	41
Staff Interviews.....	43

	Change a Light Public Relations Materials.....	49
	News Releases.....	50
	Media Resources.....	52
	The Bus Tour Blog.....	54
	Change a Light Bus Tour Frames.....	56
	Frame One: Easy and Effective.....	57
	Frame Two: Consumer Financial Benefits.....	58
	Frame Three: Environmental Benefits.....	59
	Print Media Coverage.....	60
	Blog Coverage.....	63
	Assessment of Campaign Goals.....	66
V	CHANGE A LIGHT CAMPAIGN SITUATION ANALYSIS.....	70
	Strengths.....	70
	Weaknesses.....	71
	Opportunities.....	72
	Threats.....	74
VI	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	77
	Improve Measurement Techniques.....	77
	Develop New Media Angles.....	78
	Address Early Adopters.....	80
	Utilize New Media.....	81
	Take Advantage of New Legislation.....	81
VII	DISCUSSION.....	84

Future Research.....	92
Conclusion.....	93
APPENDICES	97
REFERENCES	99

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1. Change a Light Campaign-issued News Releases.....	50
2. Media Resources for the Change a Light Bus Tour.....	53
3. Print Media Coverage.....	61
4. Blogger Coverage.....	63

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

1. ENERGY STAR Brand Mark.....	95
2. CFL Bulb.....	95
3. Change a Light Tour Bus.....	96

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Environmental advocates believe we can no longer afford to think of the environment as an intangible, unchanging entity far removed from the concerns of our daily lives.

According to the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (Dimock, 2006), more than half of Americans believe that protecting the environment and dealing with the nation's current natural resources crisis should be top priorities. Although the respondents surveyed were often divided along political lines on how these pressing issues should be addressed, the results indicated that the respondents had almost universal support for solutions that address both problems at the same time (Dimock, 2006; The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2004). In spite of this supposed increase in environmental concern, the Environmental Protection Agency reports that American's rampant consumerism is still very much on the rise, projecting that the number of household television sets will outnumber the total population of the United States by 2010 (Gussow, 2005). To encourage people to match their actions to their words, it is important for environmental advocates to understand the needs and wants of their stakeholders and to communicate effectively in the public sphere.

Although it is difficult to change the lifestyle habits of a nation, there are signs that communication about the environment is gaining precedence and importance in popular culture. Not only did Al Gore win popular acclaim and an Oscar in 2006 for his documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*, but he and his colleagues at the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change also won a Nobel Peace Prize for informing and energizing the public about the effects of increased carbon emissions, comparing them to the ravages of war

as they relate to economic mayhem, social upheaval, and conflicts between nations (Rosenthal, 2007). Well-known celebrities such as Leonardo DiCaprio, Billy Joel, and Cameron Diaz frequently lend their faces and notoriety to promote environmentally friendly living. Bucking the Hollywood trend towards riding in Hummer limousines and fuel-guzzling sports cars, these celebrities publicly campaign for green causes while driving energy-efficient Toyota Prius cars to award ceremonies and movie openings (Maynard, 2007). Even America's youngest audiences are being introduced to environmental messages through popular, all-ages movies like *Happy Feet* and *Ice Age: The Meltdown* in which frequent reference is made to the negative effects of global warming and gently promote environmentalism (Kelly, 2006).

Hollywood is not the only one that is getting into the act. Retailing giant Wal-Mart has begun to address environmental concerns by starting production of high-efficiency Supercenters that will use 20% less energy than regular Wal-Mart stores and demanding more environmentally friendly packaging from its suppliers (Taggart, 2007). Green marketing, the construction of an environmentally friendly identity for corporate products, images, and behaviors, has also grown more common in the marketplace (Cox, 2006). Large companies like British Petroleum, DaimlerChrysler, and General Electric have recognized the growing interest in environmentalism and have begun green marketing campaigns designed to appease critics and attract environmentally concerned consumers (Melillo & Miller, 2006).

Although some might argue that all of the recent focus on the environment is merely a trend that will soon wane (Mitchell, 2007; Velasquez-Manoff, 2007), there are a number of indicators that suggest environmentalism will continue to be a hot button issue in the years to

come. As a result, the purpose of my research is to explore and analyze the Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR Change a Light, Change the World Bus Tour, an example of how environmentally friendly choices can be promoted to the public through the vehicles of traditional and new media. The following pages will provide an overview of the ENERGY STAR program and a summary of the Bus Tour endeavor in order to provide context for why the Change a Light campaign chose this particular strategy.

ENERGY STAR Background

The first serious wave of consumer concern over energy efficiency is generally thought to have been triggered in the 1970s by the 1973 Arab oil embargo (Davidson, 2006). In the late 1980s, the government agency known as the Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, finally began to take a hard look at the sources of greenhouse gas emissions, the potential effects of these emissions, and how they might be reduced over time (Interbrand, 2007). In the early 1990s, the Gulf War and resulting oil shortages caused the public and corporations to increase pressure on the government to address energy consumption and supply. Acknowledging the mounting evidence from the scientific community and growing public concern, the EPA started to develop ways in which businesses and consumers could improve their energy efficiency in ways that would not only reduce the production of greenhouse gases but would also save money and encourage economic growth.

After creating several programs targeting private industry, the EPA developed the ENERGY STAR program, a comprehensive initiative geared towards reaching a wide variety of publics including local governments, consumers, businesses, builders, and schools. The program is a voluntary labeling program designed to identify and promote energy-efficient products that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and cost consumers less to run. Products

are either ENERGY STAR-approved or they are not. The program did not want to cause any confusion or ambiguity by rating products on a sliding scale. In order for appliances to qualify as ENERGY STAR-approved products, they must meet several requirements--energy efficiency being the primary qualifier. ENERGY STAR products tend to be approximately 30% more energy efficient than competing products (ENERGY STAR, 2007b). According to Sam Rashkin, a long-time ENERGY STAR administrator, the program also seeks to emphasize that ENERGY STAR-rated products provide superior quality and that the program is not just about savings or helping the environment (S. Rashkin, personal communication, November 15, 2007). Computers were the program's first rated product, but they were soon followed by additional consumer and building products such as washers, dryers, and light bulbs, thanks to a partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy in 1996 (ENERGY STAR, 2007b; Interbrand, 2007).

ENERGY STAR Partners

To understand how the ENERGY STAR program and the Change a Light campaign structure their outreach materials and to understand why the Bus Tour plan was created, it is important to understand the importance of partner organizations to the program's success. First and foremost, these partners include utility companies, product manufacturers, and retailers. However, ENERGY STAR also considers nonprofit organizations, such as local environmental groups, and any external groups with vested interests in promoting energy efficiency and the environment when it considers its overall outreach strategies (H. Tomlinson, personal communication, February 16, 2008). As of October 2007, ENERGY STAR counted more than 9,000 partner organizations across the nation. Referring to ENERGY STAR's corporate partners, Hewan Tomlinson, ENERGY STAR program liaison,

said, “ENERGY STAR can’t achieve our objectives if we don’t make ourselves relevant to our partners. We have to be valuable to them and add value while maintaining the ENERGY STAR brand integrity.” ENERGY STAR’s corporate partners have invested millions of dollars in promoting the ENERGY STAR brand and are one of its most-valuable stakeholders. Because ENERGY STAR does not manufacture products itself, the program depends upon being able to educate consumers through placing the ENERGY STAR brand mark on others’ products (see Figure 1). Without these corporate partnerships, the campaign would lose the ability to provide easy-to-understand consumer guidance. In addition, the campaign would lose out on the opportunity for valuable co-branding and promotion with its corporate partners.

ENERGY STAR Consumer Awareness

In addition to building relationships with its corporate partners, the ENERGY STAR campaign must continually reach new audiences as well as those who are already outspoken advocates for the environment. “Making the broad economic and social changes needed to solve these global [environmental] problems will require not only the setting of policies and negotiations of international treaties by governments but also the understanding and active participation of the public” (Kempton, Boster, & Hartley, 1995, p. 174). According to a 2006 survey (Interbrand, 2007), ENERGY STAR has a 68% level of awareness among American households. Of those individuals, 73% had a high or general understanding of the ENERGY STAR label’s purpose and of those people, 71% would likely recommend ENERGY STAR products to a friend. In terms of the consumer motivations, 55% of those aware of the program agreed with the statement “buying ENERGY STAR labeled products makes me feel like I am helping to protect the environment for future generations” (p. 34). Although no data

were made available about how people feel about the cost-saving benefits of buying ENERGY STAR products, the high level of awareness and message agreement would represent a significant public relations triumph for any organization.

Change a Light Campaign History

The Change a Light campaign, a division of the larger ENERGY STAR program, was launched in 1999 as an expansion of the national Change a Light Day on October 3. Change a Light Day was originally conceived as an opportunity to encourage environmentally concerned citizens and organizations to hold activities and events, share government proclamations, and hold in-store promotions to educate consumers about the benefits of energy-efficient lighting (ENERGY STAR, 2008a). Expanding the Change a Light Day's goals, the Change a Light campaign is positioned as a "national challenge to encourage every American to help change the world, one light — one energy-saving step — at a time" (ENERGY STAR, 2007c). ENERGY STAR recognized the need to promote the Change a Light campaign year-round due to increasing national concerns over energy efficiency and the growing awareness of ENERGY STAR products.

The CFL Bulb

The Change a Light campaign centers around the national promotion of the compact fluorescent lamp, otherwise known as a CFL (see Figure 2 for image). Lighting accounts for close to 20% of the average home's electric bill (Frequently Asked Questions About Mercury in CFLs, 2007). A CFL bulb uses approximately 75% less energy than standard incandescent bulbs and last up to 10 times longer (ENERGY STAR Change a Light Bus Tour Overview, 2007). According to EPA research, an ENERGY STAR-certified CFL can save consumers about \$30 or more in electricity costs throughout the bulb's lifespan. As a result, consumers

may reduce their energy consumption and thereby reduce the cost of their monthly power bills.

In addition to publicizing the financial benefits associated with using CFLs, the Change a Light campaign promotes CFLs because of the associated environmental benefits. Power plants do not have to work as hard or produce as many greenhouse gas emissions when consumers and businesses demand less energy. According to ENERGY STAR research, each CFL bulb in use can keep an equivalent of 200 pounds of coal from being burned at a power plant over the bulb's lifetime and can prevent approximately 400 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions over its extended lifetime compared to a traditional incandescent bulb (ENERGY STAR Change a Light Bus Tour Overview, 2007).

Despite the financial and environmental benefits of CFL usage, the Change a Light campaign faces several challenges related to the new bulb. One of these challenges is to reach out to those early adopters who tried CFLs early in their production and were disappointed by the lighting quality or lack of lighting options. Some of these early consumers reported that CFL lighting made rooms look "dark, cloudy, and cavelike" and even "ghastly" and "institutional" (Scelfo, 2008, para. 8). Since its inception, CFL construction has been extensively refined to improve the quality and color of light. The range of CFL bulb types has also been expanded to meet the many different consumer lighting needs, including dimmer switches and multiple bulb fixtures. Not everyone is aware of these drastic product improvements, however (Finholm, 2007).

Another challenge is that not all CFLs are ENERGY STAR-certified. As a result, ENERGY STAR also seeks to differentiate its branded products from the competition by emphasizing the government-associated environmental credibility and quality assurance

(Interbrand, 2007). The organization only attests to the quality of ENERGY STAR-certified products; it cannot respond to criticism about CFL bulbs produced by unaffiliated manufacturers. In addition to educating consumers about new CFL technology, the campaign must continually emphasize that consumers look for the ENERGY STAR mark on bulbs, not only to provide value to ENERGY STAR's manufacturing partners but to maintain the public perception of CFL quality as well.

Finally, the Change a Light campaign must educate existing and potential consumers about the relative dangers of mercury. Every CFL bulb, including those certified by ENERGY STAR, contains a minute amount of mercury. A recent newspaper article about CFLs' mercury content referred to the substance as "a potent neurotoxin that contaminates the food chain and can cause birth defects in children" (Murawski, 2008, p. G1). The Change a Light campaign does not seek to dismiss mercury concerns. Instead, it prefers to emphasize that CFLs actually reduce the amount of mercury in the environment by using less energy because coal-fired power plants are the largest source of domestic mercury emissions (Updates from the Road Bus Tour Blog, 2007). Despite these challenges, the Change a Light campaign has had national success introducing CFLs to the public.

The Change a Light Pledge

To quantitatively monitor progress, the Change a Light campaign launched its online pledge drive in 2006. The pledge drive encourages individuals to take the Change a Light pledge and promise that they will exchange a standard incandescent light bulb for an ENERGY STAR-certified CFL. The pledge site also allows partner organizations, such as utility companies and local environmental groups, to act as regional pledge drive leaders. Through encouraging personnel and customers to take the pledge, Change a Light corporate

partners may receive positive attention in the media for their environmental efforts. Although making a pledge does not ensure that people will make lifestyle changes (Grunig, 1983; Kim, Sheffield, & Almutairi, 2006; McNeill & Kelly, 2005), it does indicate growing awareness of ENERGY STAR's Change a Light campaign. The pledge numbers are constantly updated on the Change a Light site and may be sorted by pledge-drive organizations or by location. The Change a Light Web site also prominently displays a link to a color-coded map of the United States indicating which states are experiencing increasing pledge participation. As of March 2, 2008, 1,439,462 people across the country have taken the pledge (ENERGY STAR, 2008b).

The Change a Light, Change the World Bus Tour

On October 3, 2007, ENERGY STAR kicked off its 20-day, coast-to-coast Change a Light, Change the World Bus Tour in celebration of the program's eighth year of operation (ENERGY STAR, 2007d). In partnership with fifteen supporting organizations including JCPenney, The Home Depot, and General Electric, the Change a Light Tour held 16 events across the country. The Bus Tour stopped in Anaheim, CA; San Francisco, CA; Denver, CO; Des Moines, IA; Chicago, IL; Indianapolis, IN; Atlanta, GA; Maplewood, NJ; Boston, MA; and New York, NY. The Bus Tour was envisioned as a way for ENERGY STAR partners to work with the Change a Light campaign to increase awareness nationally CFLs and energy efficiency. To determine how successful the Change a Light Bus Tour was as a catalyst for public awareness, one must understand the related theories behind the creation of a successful public relations campaign, including environmental communication, agenda setting, agenda building, and framing. The following chapter reviews the literature addressing these concepts.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Cox (2006) defines environmental communication as “the pragmatic and constitutive vehicle for our understanding of the environment as well as our relationships to the natural world; it is the symbolic medium that we use in constructing environmental problems and negotiating society’s different responses to them” (p. 12). As a result, public relations practitioners who intend to influence the public’s perception of environmental problems and solutions must carefully craft the messages they send. This literature review focuses on the theories that deal directly with the construction of public relations messages, namely the practice of agenda building and related factors including information subsidies and framing. These theories were chosen because they provide the most-practical methods in which to analyze the construction of ENERGY STAR’s public relations campaign while providing future instruction for other organizations looking to follow in its footsteps.

Although much literature has been devoted to the individual study of each of the theoretical aspects of agenda building, Zoch and Molleda (2006) combined these theoretical concepts into an ideal model of media relations from the perspective of the day-to-day public relations practitioner. To fulfill the main purpose of this paper, I followed a similar process of analyzing the agenda-building process and the construction of frames and information subsidies as they relate to the Bus Tour. Although it is important to break down the individual elements of a public relations campaign to fully understand the process, the

success of the campaign is ultimately how these individual elements come together to produce a cumulative result.

The Importance of the Public Agenda

According to Cobb and Elder (1972), the “agenda” refers to a “general set of political controversies that will be viewed at any point in time as falling within the range of legitimate concerns meriting the attention of the polity” (p. 14). Those who set the agenda “denote a set of concrete, specific items scheduled for active and serious consideration by a particular institutional decision-making body” (p. 14). As a result, the creation of agendas has been an issue of extreme importance for those studying political campaigns and influence (Cobb & Elder, 1972; Curtin & Gaither, 2003; Gandy, 1982; Walters & Walters, 1996). Because politicians and other powerful individuals who want their voices heard by the American public must depend upon the media to spread their messages, it is not surprising that journalism and public relations scholars soon began looking at the power and influence of the media in this light.

Agenda Setting

Because people depend upon the media to get information about the wider world around them, the media become powerful in the creation of the public agenda (Curtin, 1999; Gandy, 1982; Walters & Walters, 1996). According to Walters and Walters, “Legitimacy flows from the media, from the credence and presumption of impartiality the public attaches to the news” (p. 10). Since the public imbues the media with this credibility and power, the media are able to act as gatekeepers who effectively control much of the news production and dissemination. Gatekeepers, according to Cobb and Elder (1972), are “those persons,

institutions, and groups whose actions determine the success or failure of a demand or issue entering into the system or any of its subsystems” (p.19).

Some of the first agenda studies in this vein looked at the media’s ability to set the agenda for the public, otherwise known as the practice of agenda setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Turk, 1986). Although the media have been shown to have power in giving credence to issues and getting people to start talking about them, it has been shown that they do not have absolute power in telling audiences how to think about those issues (Cohen, 1963; Walters & Walters, 1996). As a result, media scholars have attempted to determine how the media set the agenda and how much direct and indirect influence they have on their target audiences.

In the particular domain of environmental agenda setting, Grunig (1983) found that different segments of the public responded differently to media messages depending upon their initial mindsets and personal interests. He described a situational theory of communication behaviors and attitudes in which audiences’ perceptions of a situation determines whether they will communicate about a situation, how they will communicate about that situation, and whether they will have an attitude relevant to the situation. Grunig’s theory involved a series of conditions including problem recognition, when a person recognizes that a conflict exists; constraint recognition, how free a person is to do something about that problem; and presence of a referent criterion, whether or not a person has a prior history of related decisions. Clearly, numerous factors out of journalists’ control affect their audiences’ understanding of media messages, no matter how convincing or influential messages appear to be.

Following Grunig's (1983) earlier work, Cracknell's (1993) study of environmental agenda setting determined that the media's cyclical interest in social issues affected the long-term behavioral change in its readership. He found cumulative messages to improve the chances of actual behavior changes; however, audiences would revert back to previous behaviors once the media changed its focus. Because environmental issues tend to be complex and scientifically based, advocates may find it challenging to maintain media focus on the environment. Studies have shown that the media have also had a difficult time succinctly covering these multi-faceted issues as a result of limited news space and production time available in the shrinking news hole (Chapman et. al., 1997; Cox, 2006; Liebler & Bendix, 1996).

Despite these challenges and competing forces, the public has been shown to rely heavily on the news media for information about the environment (Cox, 2006; Curtin & Rhodenbaugh, 2001). As a result, it is important for organizations interested in getting the public to talk about environmental issues to identify journalists as major target audiences. Public relations practitioners aiming to influence the media do so through the practice of agenda building.

Agenda Building

Agenda-setting theory focuses on how the press set the agenda for the public, but how might interested parties target the press? Curtin (1999) described the process of agenda building as "if practitioners can obtain media placements for their subsidies, then they influence the media agenda, which in turn, can influence public opinion and the public agenda" (p. 54). Weaver and Elliott (1985) expanded McCombs' and Shaw's (1972) research on agenda setting to explore who sets the agenda for the media, or "how issues originate, or

how the subjects of news coverage become issues” (p. 88). In that particular instance, Weaver and Elliott found that although the local media coverage largely mirrored the town council’s agenda, the media were shown to exert some influence in portraying the relative importance of different agenda items. Chapman, Kumar, Fraser, and Graber (1997), in their research on the media production process in the UK, determined that the agenda-building process, similar to the agenda-setting process, is a multi-layered, complex process of weighing often-competing agendas including those of the media, the public, and the politician, or governing body. It appears that journalists, like other publics, are not easily swayed by any single persuasive factor. Many models exist to try to explain how outside publics successfully influence journalists through agenda building, but none have been accepted as completely explaining or predicting the phenomenon (Reinemann & Schulz, 2006).

Importance of New Technology in Agenda-building Study

Most of the studies on agenda building address the relationships between public relations sources and traditional media—namely print and broadcast journalists. New studies have opened up agenda-building research to include the growing importance of the Internet. Curtin and Gaither’s (2003) study on the agenda-building aspects of international government Web sites indicates that even the largest, most-powerful organizations still have work to do in terms of utilizing new public relations outlets. In order to fully measure the output of public relations efforts, savvy public relations practitioners and scholars would do well to pay attention to the growing importance of a new technology medium, web logs, commonly known as blogs (Lim & Yang, 2006). The term “blog” is often credited to one of its first practitioners, Jim Barger, who called his Web site journal a “weblog” (*The Economist*

Surveys, 2006). According to Smudde (2005), blogs can be a blessing or a curse for public relations professionals because of their ability to rapidly create positive or negative publicity for an organization. In addition, the blogging community has the potential to serve as a “sensitive, wide-ranging, and dynamic environment ripe for monitoring the emergence of an issue as well as a barometer of for gauging public opinions” (Lim & Yang, 2006, p. 3). With 120,000 new blogs created every day, this new, alternative media outlet shows no signs of slowing (Marken, 2006). According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project (2007), approximately 70% of American women and 71% of American men surveyed reported going on the Internet at least occasionally. Although simply accessing the Internet does not indicate that people read blogs, the sheer number of people with the potential to access the information and opinions they contain is impressive.

In terms of the traditional media, research has shown that journalists are increasingly likely to look to Internet sources for environmental information due to lack of specific scientific knowledge and training (Cox, 2006). Despite the utility value bloggers may provide, journalists have yet to welcome bloggers with open arms. Jones and Himelboim (2007) pointed out that although mainstream media--those journalists in print, broadcast, and online--are still the predominant source for news information, some view bloggers as “a danger for the individual journalist, for the industry at large and for a society ill-equipped to ‘find the truth’ amongst a cacophony of voices” (p. 2). Because journalists are paying increasing attention to bloggers and their sites, whether as a sources of news information or as possible competition, it makes sense that public relations practitioners interested in increasing their agenda-building prowess do so as well. As a result, it is important to include

blog impressions in future public relations case studies to in order to capture the full promise of agenda building and accumulate more research on this promising new outlet.

Information Subsidies

Although research has indicated that journalists depend upon public relations practitioners for a significant percentage of story ideas and story content, the two professions have had a long and difficult history of interaction (Aronoff, 1975; Kopenhaver, Lillian, Martinson, & Ryan, 1984; Sallot & Johnson, 2006; Turk, 1986). Sallot, Steinfatt, and Salwen (1998) theorized that part of the journalists' dislike of public relations practitioners centers on journalists' reluctance to admit how much agenda-building power public relations practitioners actually wield. Setting any issues of hostility aside, journalists and public relations professionals seem to rely on each other in order to fulfill their daily job functions.

In their roles as communicators for the organizations they represent, public relations practitioners meet journalists' need for news stories by preparing news packages, or information subsidies, saving journalists' the time and money of having to research the stories themselves. Examples of information subsidies include formal elements such as news releases, news conferences, and official organizational documents, as well as less-formal elements like returning a journalist's phone call or setting up an interview opportunity (Turk, 1986). According to Gandy (1982), "The notion of information subsidies is based on the recognition that the price of information may be reduced selectively by interested parties in order to increase consumption of preferred information" (p. 30). Journalists do not, however, passively accept each and every information subsidy that comes their way. Weaver and Elliott (1985) determined from a survey of how the press covered city council agendas that "a prominent news source can have a major influence on the subsequent media agenda, but

the selective processes and news judgments of journalists also play a significant part in shaping this agenda” (p. 94).

With this in mind, public relations practitioners and scholars have conducted much research on exactly which factors are best able to improve the chances that the media will use information subsidies. Research has indicated that public relations practitioners who create information subsidies focused on traditional news values including conflict, prominence, timeliness, proximity, impact, magnitude, oddity, and emotional impact, are most successful at agenda building (Yopp & McAdams, 2003). Curtin (1999) found that journalists were far more likely to use information subsidies when the subsidies promoted social causes instead of financial gain. In terms of public relations tactics, Berkowitz (1990) found that the broadcast media more often picked up information subsidies on public relations events, which gave reporters concrete stories to cover, than purely informative subsidies. This finding was supported by Yearly’s (1991) case study on Green Peace’s success in gaining agenda-building power and stature through the creation and publicizing of sensational media events and story-rich information subsidies.

Source Influence and Competition

Not only must organizations work to influence journalists’ agenda-setting processes, but they must also compete against other organizations to get their voices heard. As one of the first agenda-building scholars, Gandy (1982) was primarily concerned with how public relations staff from well-funded organization and government public information officers were able to exert a large amount of control over media content: “It is through the provision of information subsidies to and through mass media that those with economic power are able to maintain their control over a capitalist society” (p. 8). This finding was echoed in

Andsager and Smiley's (1999) and Curtin and Rhodenbaugh's (2001) later research that indicated that larger, better-funded organizations had the advantage in disseminating their viewpoints on a particular news issue. Although it may seem common sense that organizations with larger budgets would be able to outshine smaller, less-funded organizations, there are certain situations in which wealthy organizations have not prevailed.

Berkowitz (1990) found that subsidies from nonprofit organizations and interest groups were used more frequently by broadcast journalists than any other sources, including governmental public relations departments. He acknowledged that nonprofit subsidies may have been more-frequently used because the particular nonprofits involved in his study were better able to provide stories with conflict or planned events that met the journalists' news values and needs better than the informative government sources. In addition, Curtin's (1999) research found a similar journalistic bias towards nonprofit sources because journalists perceived nonprofit public relations officers to share a common "public service mission" (p. 71) whereas for-profit organizations were more often suspected of wanting "free advertising" (p. 64).

Despite nonprofit groups' apparent agenda-building power, some research has determined that nonprofit environmental groups lag behind in the agenda-building competition because they do not pay as much attention as they should to the news values preferred by busy journalists (Curtin & Rhodenbaugh, 2001). With the growing interest in environmental issues in the 1980s (Duffy, 2003), more parties interested in influencing the public agenda entered the field resulting in greater coverage of environmental issues in the media. Despite the increased news coverage, likeminded groups must fight for individual media attention, which increases the possibility of conflict and even the dilution of

environmental messages as a whole (Duffy, 2003; Reber & Berger, 2005). The competition between news sources and journalists' limited resources means environmental groups must be increasingly aware of not only creating information subsidies that address journalists' news values, but also must pay attention to how the information contained is framed. The following section introduces the concept of framing and how it is employed in the creation of information subsidies and the agenda-building process.

Framing

According to Zoch and Molleda (2006), some researchers may avoid discussing the use of message framing in the production of information subsidies because it “seems too obvious to note” (p. 291). However, others feel that “framing decisions are perhaps the most important strategic choices made in public relations efforts” (Hallahan, 1999, p. 224). Framing theories and behaviors have been the focus of a many different disciplines including psychology, communication studies, economics, political discourse, and organizational decision-making. Regardless of their perspective, researchers seem to agree that framing is a necessary part of any organization's public relations planning considerations. According to Reber and Berger (2005), “Framing is the strategic communication process that organizations use to make meaning for members and to attempt to influence public policy debate and formation” (p. 192).

Robert Entman, considered to be one of the fathers of framing theory, was greatly interested in the power relationship between government information sources and the press. He believed that due to a lack of understanding of the framing process, “journalists frequently allow the most skillful media manipulators to impose their dominant frames on the news” (Entman, 1993, p. 56). He found that frames that “employ the most culturally resonant

terms have the greatest potential for influence” (Entman, 2004, p. 6). Entman (1993) identified four locations in the communication process in which framing takes place: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture. Due to time constraints of this project, I looked at framing solely in terms of the communicator and the text. Examining how the receivers and overall culture frame ENERGY STAR information subsidies is an important part of understanding the effectiveness of the campaign, and would provide an interesting area of study for future researchers.

Carpini (2005) built on Entman’s earlier work and wrote that every story covered by the media is framed in some way due to journalists’ selective decision process and how the information is portrayed. Despite the large body of framing theory across disciplines, Hallahan (1999) believed that framing “suffers from a lack of coherent definition” (p. 209). To address this need, he developed a comprehensive framing model from the perspective of the public relations practitioner including the framing of situations, attributes, choices, actions, issues, responsibility, and news. His discussion of the framing of attributes, in terms of highlighting a product’s positive characteristics in advertising and marketing language, is particularly relevant to how the Change a Light campaign persuasively frames CFLs’ various beneficial qualities. Hallahan’s description of the framing of responsibility is also applicable to the Change a Light campaign because the outreach materials also focus on the individual consumer’s ability to improve the world, or environment, through little additional expense or effort.

Some of the prior research on environmental framing suggests that environmentalists have not always had the easiest time getting the media to adopt their preferred frames. DeLoach, Bruner, and Gossett’s (2002) study found that the framing label of “tree hugger”

has long been used as a way for environmentalists' opponents to remove legitimacy from environmental activists' concerns, portraying activists as unrealistic, foolish, and absurd. Reber and Berger's (2005) study of the ways in which particular Sierra Club frames were picked up and repeated by club newsletters and the media found that as frames multiplied, the likelihood that any individual frame would influence media coverage and ever get out to the general public decreased. In light of these findings, it would seem that environmental organizations should focus on only a few key message frames to avoid reducing the overall effectiveness of their public relations campaigns while still being aware that the media may not always be immediately responsive.

Summary: Public Relations Theory and Practice

Looking at the literature, one would assume that an event-centered public relations campaign from a powerful, relatively well-funded government program such as ENERGY STAR would be very successful in its agenda-building efforts. Supporting that hypothesis, Grunig's (1983) study indicated that broad environmental issues that have the potential to affect everyone, such as greenhouse gas emissions and global warming, tend to be more successful than niche issues in rallying support from traditionally uninvolved publics. As agenda-setting research shows, however, the media have many concerns and considerations when it comes to the production of the news. There are no guarantees that even the most-thoughtfully framed information subsidies will ever reach the American public. Through a communication audit of the Change a Light, Change the World Bus Tour and the resulting media impressions, I analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of its message frames and developed a list of recommendations for future campaigns.

The next chapter describes the research questions that were used to guide my study of the Change a Light, Change the World Bus Tour and details the methodological framework employed in my study. The chapter also includes justification for why these research and analysis methods were best suited for the study of this particular public relations campaign, as well as the limitations associated with their use.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHOD

The Change a Light, Change the World Bus Tour was a part of the Change a Light campaign, itself a division of the larger ENERGY STAR program. Given greater resources and time, a researcher may conduct a communication analysis of the entire ENERGY STAR communication output. According to Hargie and Tourish (2000), however, “restricting the number of issues to be explored is sufficient to provide valid data, while ensuring that the audit remains practicable” (p. 29). To focus the range of my research, I explored the following questions:

R1: What were the agenda-building goals of the ENERGY STAR Change a Light, Change the World Bus Tour? As part of the response to this research question, I also assessed whether the Tour met these goals.

R1a: What types of outreach vehicles did ENERGY STAR use to practice agenda building and the dissemination of information subsidies for this campaign?

R1b: What are the key frames that emerge from ENERGY STAR Change a Light, Change the World Bus Tour printed information subsidies?

R1c: In what ways are frames from the information subsidies consistent and inconsistent with the frames in the resulting print news coverage and blogger coverage?

R2: What public relations strategies and tactics have been the most effective for the Bus Tour in terms of successfully influencing print media and bloggers? Additionally, answering

this question resulted in recommendations that the Change a Light campaign should make to be more effective in the future.

R3: How do the results of this study contribute to the fields of public relations and nonprofit communication?

To answer these questions, my study applied the multi-method approach of the communication audit. The following section describes the history of this approach and indicates how I used a communication audit to assess the agenda-building effectiveness of the Change a Light, Change the World Bus Tour.

Method

To study the agenda-building effectiveness of the Change a Light, Change the World Bus Tour, I conducted a communication audit, which is a multi-method approach that may include both qualitative and quantitative assessments. I collected the campaign's print public relations materials, interviewed campaign staff, and examined the resulting print media and blogger coverage. According to Ragsdale (2000), government agencies have had "a bad track record" in communicating with their internal and external publics due to their tendency to be "notoriously slow-moving," "hierarchical," and "resistant to change" (p. 6). My study helped to determine if this was indeed the case for the Change a Light campaign, a government-backed initiative dedicated to bringing about change in national beliefs and behavior.

History of Communication Audits

According to Hargie and Tourish (2000), the practice of conducting audits was originally associated with assessing an organization's financial standing. However, the term "audits" has since expanded to include communication audits, a practice that has grown in stature to the point that it is well recognized and accepted by most professional bodies.

Hargie and Tourish wrote that organizations use communication audits to find out whether the organization's desired message is getting through to its chosen audiences, whether people feel informed or patronized by that message, and if the communication program addresses the issues that really concern most people. From more of a management perspective, Kopec (2004) stated that communications audits are important because they "uncover necessary data to allow top management to make informed, economical decisions about future objectives of the organization's communication" (p. 1). Dozier, Grunig, and Grunig (1995) found that communication audits were an integral part of achieving overall public relations excellence, as part of an organization's environmental scanning in which communicators can identify issues that could help or hurt their organization. Regardless of how a communication audit is defined, concern with how effectively organizations are able to select and frame important messages is at the root of the practice.

Many researchers have stepped forward to define and describe how public relations practitioners and researchers should conduct communications audits (Goldhaber & Krivonos, 1977; Haas, 2007; Hargie & Tourish, 2000; Koning & De Jong, 2006; Strenski, 1984). Audits can vary in size and scope from auditing an organization's entire communication history, both internal and external, to audits that simply look at one piece of an organization's communication output. In terms of comprehensive communication audits, Goldhaber and Krivonos (1977), two of the driving forces behind the International Communication Association's communication audit guidelines, stated that communication audits should involve a variety of methods and include an organizational profile of communication events, practices, and relationships; a map of informal and formal operational communication networks; verbal summaries of successful and unsuccessful communication; an

organizational and individual profile of actual communication behaviors; a set of general recommendations derived from the audit; and access to the ICA's audit information bank. If done correctly, an ICA audit should take about six months to complete. Not surprisingly, some researchers found the ICA communication audit to be an "administrative overkill" (p. 53). Despite the comprehensive quality of the ICA audit results, other researchers felt that the ICA audit was impractical in terms of required resources and criticized the fact that researchers were encouraged to customize research methodology to suit each situation, thereby making research comparisons difficult, if not impossible (Sincoff & Goyer, 1977).

With perhaps more-practical applications in mind, some public relations practitioners have moved away from the ICA vision to offer less-complicated ways for public relations professionals to conduct communication audits. For example, Strenski (1984) simply defined the communication audit as "an opportunity to assess the value of communications expenditures, find out what messages are getting through to what audiences, and with what success" (p. 18). Strenski advised practitioners to determine the publics whose perceptions need measurement, identify current communication channels, and apply a selection of auditing techniques to the organization's channels in light of those publics. Reducing the communication audit process further to meet her organization's needs, Wadman (2006) developed an easy-to-understand, one-page communication audit scorecard that allowed her staff to gather feedback and monitor internal communication regularly without excessive time or expense. Diggs-Brown (2007), aware of the constraints of the average workplace, developed a communication audit process that fits well with the process of analyzing an organization's external communication. Her plan entailed finding out as much as possible

about the organization and its communication processes, analyzing the data, and then evaluating and reporting on what the data indicate.

Although I conducted the Change a Light Bus Tour communication audit to add to public relations scholarship, I intend for the final audit results and recommendations to serve as practical guidance for staff at nonprofit organizations, which likely have limited resources and personnel. In a perfect world, I would have had six months and the unlimited patience of the Change a Light campaign in order to carry out an ICA-style communication audit. Ideally, every nonprofit organization would also have access to similar luxuries. However, out of respect for my research participants and the academic calendar, I followed Diggs-Brown's (2007) communication audit methodology to structure my research endeavors.

The Diggs-Brown Communication Audit Plan

The following pages detail how I carried out a Diggs-Brown (2007) communication audit of the Change a Light Bus Tour. As mentioned, the plan included finding out about the organization, analyzing the data, and reporting the results of the audit. The discussion of my audit plans closes with a description of the related limitations of the communication audit and how I mitigated the possible effects of these limitations.

Step One: Finding Out About the Organization

Following Diggs-Brown's (2007) communication audit guidelines, I began the audit by researching the Change a Light campaign, as well as its place in the larger ENERGY STAR program. Although some of the organizational research was included in the introductory chapter, the full audit includes information on the Bus Tour's history and background, organizational issues, situational analysis, product and service descriptions, implementation issues, and evaluation issues. The majority of the program's background data

gathered were gleaned from ENERGY STAR's Web site, the Change a Light campaign's site within that larger site, and its associated online promotional materials. To understand how campaign staff attempted to build the media's agenda, I employed additional research methods including an analysis of the information subsidies contained in Bus Tour materials such as news releases, the staffs' blog, transcribed interviews with campaign staff, and a comparison of those intended messages with the messages found in the resulting media and blogger coverage of the Tour.

To determine which messages the Change a Light campaign wanted to emphasize, I analyzed the content of the Bus Tour's public relations materials including the Tour blog, which the Tour's participants created as they traveled from event site to event site; the four informational links contained in the Media Resources portion of the Change a Light Web site; as well as the contents of the seven ENERGY STAR news releases about the Tour. By looking at this selection of public relations materials, I put myself in the place of a journalist or blogger looking for key messages and information concerning the Change a Light Bus Tour.

To determine whether or not the media and bloggers framed information on the Bus Tour as the Change a Light campaign intended, I collected print news articles that mention the Change a Light Bus Tour using the LexisNexis search engine, primarily for convenience purposes. The first news release about the Bus Tour was issued at the beginning of October 2007, so the search engine parameters ran from October 2007 to February 2008. To determine what bloggers said about the Bus Tour, I used the Google search engine to locate relevant blog entries posted from October 2007 to February 2008. I chose to analyze print articles and blogger entries in part due to the data-gathering convenience, as well as to

maintain consistency with the fact that I focused on the printed elements of the Bus Tour's public relations materials.

In addition to gathering data about how information subsidies have been produced and accepted through looking at the print evidence, I gathered supplemental organizational data required by the Diggs-Brown audit through conducting in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews with key public relations practitioners involved in the Change a Light Bus Tour. Daymon and Holloway (2002) wrote that semi-structured interviews are often used in qualitative research because the practice allows participants to provide their own perspectives while the researcher is able to monitor the overall direction of the interviews. Hargie and Tourish (2000) and Daymon and Holloway (2002) wrote that using qualitative interviews to gather data can elicit unanticipated information and enable a greater depth of organizational information to be collected than quantitative methods.

I conducted an in-person interview early in the research process with Sam Rashkin, a long-time administrator in the ENERGY STAR Homes program, which provided supporting data on the creation of the ENERGY STAR program and its primary goals. To get a Change a Light campaign member's perspective on the Tour, I arranged an hour-long, in-person interview with Hewan Tomlinson, at the Change a Light program headquarters in Washington, DC. Tomlinson is the program liaison for the Change a Light campaign who works closely with ENERGY STAR's partner organizations. She is also a former Department of Energy staff member. I also conducted a half-hour telephone interview with Trevor Rasmussen, a consultant from the Colehour and Cohen agency, who handled the public relations outreach activities for the Tour. The Colehour and Cohen agency is located in Seattle, WA, so I was not able to interview him in-person. Tomlinson and Rasmussen both

took part in the campaign's planning process and spent time on the bus during the Tour. I recorded both of these interviews for transcription and analysis and compared the results to the campaign information I gleaned from the Tour's public relations documents. I also followed up these interviews with email correspondence to clarify interview responses.

To ensure that my interview participants talked about subjects that were important to them as well as relevant to my study, I created an interview guide primarily using exploratory questions (see Appendix A for interview guide). According to Hargie and Tourish (2000), exploratory interviewing is defined by having a general notion of subject areas to cover, and beginning with broad, opening questions, which can then be followed up accordingly, depending on the responses of the participants. They believe that the main benefit of using open questions is the "low influence imposed on participants" (p. 76).

As a researcher, I wanted to avoid pushing my own views and values upon those I interviewed as much as possible. Daymon and Holloway (2002) describe this type of researcher awareness, known as reflexivity, as "reflecting on and critically examining the research process by considering the researcher's subjectivity and experiences brought to the research, and then using these reflections to interact with the rest of the research process" (p. 273). They wrote that although the interviewer and interviewee have different priorities and experiences going into the interview process, simply being aware of reflexivity and these differences helps to mitigate any negative effects on the resulting interview experience and data collection.

Step Two: Analysis

According to Daymon and Holloway (2002), researchers who use more than one type of data source, such as campaign documents and interview transcripts, must cross-reference

between the different sources in order to identify similarities and differences within and between them. After I gathered all of my data sources, I used document analysis following Strauss and Corbin's (1998) method to identify and compare the key frames found in the campaign documents and interviews, as well as the resulting press and blogger coverage. The aim of qualitative document analysis is to discover new or emergent patterns in the research data (Daymon & Holloway, 2002, p. 243).

Strauss and Corbin's analysis method takes place in three stages: open, axial, and selective coding. Looking at one's initial data, the first step is to break it down, line-by-line, into different pieces in order to discover the emerging similarities and differences. At this stage, a researcher starts to identify concepts, or "common characteristics or related messages," within the data (p. 103). These concepts are then grouped into categories, or "more abstract higher order concepts, based on their ability to explain what is going on" (p. 113). According to Strauss and Corbin, grouping concepts into larger categories is helpful because it limits the amount of data to consider at any given time, as well as helps to explain and predict future data. Once categories begin to emerge, the researcher moves on to axial coding, a process that involves grouping the emergent data categories by their properties and dimensions. Strauss and Corbin indicated that the purpose of this step is to "begin the process of reassembling data that were fractured during open coding" (p. 124). Finally, the researcher uses selective coding, a process that integrates and refines data categories into a central explanatory finding, which allows the researcher to make sense of the data and helps to fulfill the final step of the communication audit process, which will be discussed shortly.

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) found that the findings that develop from qualitative research are changeable until late in the project because the data continue to evolve as the

research progresses. As a result, the audit results changed as I accumulated and analyzed different data sources. Once I determined whether or not the Change a Light Bus Tour frames were adopted by print media and bloggers, I evaluated the Tour in light of the agenda-building theories discussed in my literature review and the campaign's desired goals. These results enabled me to fulfill Diggs-Brown's (2007) final condition that communication audits provide recommendations for future actions to be taken by the organization in light of an audit's findings.

Step Three: Evaluation and Reporting

In a workplace environment, the public relations practitioner must justify his or her use of an organization's valuable time and resources during the audit process. To fulfill the overall goal of my thesis and provide value to the Change a Light campaign, the communication audit's findings provide the campaign with useful feedback and opportunities for improvement in future public relations plans. In agreement with Diggs-Brown's (2007) final step that emphasized sharing the concrete results of the audit process, Stenski (1984) wrote that "the analysis should be interpreted in terms of specific recommendations for improving communications or it won't be doing the full job" (p. 18). Overall, the report contained a thorough explication of the Change a Light Bus Tour's structure, hierarchy, communication programs and products, publics, and strategic partnerships. The audit report concludes with an evaluation of the campaign's successes in terms of creating consistent information subsidies and framing messages of interest to the print media and blogger communities, as well as a discussion of the challenges and opportunities associated with conducting communication audits.

Limitations

Google and LexisNexis are frequently used in research studies, but these search engines are not all-inclusive by any means. In this case, using these tools has been done primarily for researcher convenience. As a result, there is some level of risk that not every relevant print article or blog commentary was found. To mitigate this issue, I used a variety of broad search terms including “Change a Light,” “Bus Tour,” “CFL,” and “energy star,” to be as inclusive as possible. I also searched for articles using identifying information from the specific Tour events, such as the names of the schools visited, to cast a wide a net as possible.

In-depth interviews with campaign employees can be very useful in the development of a communication audit, but they also have their limitations. Daymon and Holloway (2002) said, “Problems in interviewing concern a possible gap between what informants say they do and what they actually do” (p. 184). They indicated that some participants may fabricate or elaborate in order to enhance their standing, cover up misdeeds, or impress the researcher. Although this was a possible limitation to my interview process, I asked a variety of open-ended, exploratory questions, as suggested by Hargie and Tourish (2002), to encourage participants to answer as freely as possible. As a result, I hoped to limit my own influence on the participants’ testimony, while being aware that “people are not neutral or mistake-free reporters of their own experience” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 172).

Despite these possible limitations, the Diggs-Brown (2007) communication audit process allowed me to evaluate the Bus Tour’s effects on print media and bloggers. By researching the Change a Light campaign’s objectives and identifying the frames that emerged from the Tour’s public relations documents, I was able to set up a comparison with

the resulting Tour coverage. The next section provides the results of the communication audit and helps provide a response to Ragsdale's (2000) contention that government agencies do not communicate as effectively as they could.

CHAPTER IV: CHANGE A LIGHT BUS TOUR COMMUNICATION AUDIT

To examine the effectiveness of the Change a Light Bus Tour, I conducted a six-step communication audit following Diggs-Brown's (2007) guidelines. The audit begins with an explanation of why the Bus Tour was created, a description of the Tour's key players, and the goals the organizers hoped to accomplish. The second portion of the audit contains a description of the Change a Light public relations documents and the frames that emerged from them. These frames are compared with the frames that the print media and bloggers used in their coverage of the Tour. Lastly, the communication audit concludes with an evaluation of the Bus Tour with regard to the campaign's initial goals. Combined, these different data sources and evaluations provide an in-depth portrait of the Change a Light campaign and help measure the success of the Bus Tour's communication practices.

The 2007 Change a Light Bus Tour

When it came to determining the public relations plan for the 2007 Change a Light campaign, ENERGY STAR partner organizations were a primary consideration. As discussed in the introduction, ENERGY STAR and its associated campaigns place a significant emphasis on the mutually beneficial relationships it has established with its partners. The concept of the Bus Tour was a direct response to partners' repeated requests for more support and co-promotional opportunities to publicly engage with the campaign at a national level. Earlier Change a Light campaigns were launched without consulting its partners. As a result, the partners would do their best to create their own promotional

activities and tie them into the larger national campaign. To address the feedback it had received, the Change a Light campaign asked its public relations consultants to develop a plan that would allow it to work on building and leveraging its relationships with its partners.

Consultants

The Cadmus Group, a frequent consultant to the EPA on other campaigns including the National Watershed Protection Program and the National Asthma Forum, was asked to serve as the Change a Light campaign's chief marketing contractor. Although the EPA has faced criticism for spending tax dollars on public relations activities in the past, it has limited internal resources compared to the private sector and therefore must carefully budget its resources when hiring outside firms to help with public education and outreach (Interbrand, 2007). Hence the EPA hired an agency that it had worked successfully with in the past.

According to its Web site (2008), The Cadmus Group is a consulting organization that "helps government, non-profit, and corporate clients address critical challenges in the environmental and energy sectors." Acting as a larger umbrella group, The Cadmus Group subcontracted the 2007 Change a Light public relations planning to a smaller consulting public relations agency, Colehour and Cohen. The agency, located in Seattle, WA, specializes in social marketing endeavors and was previously involved in the original ENERGY STAR branding strategy and launch in 1995. Colehour and Cohen were responsible for developing and pitching the Bus Tour concept in response to the Change a Light campaign's request to leverage its partner relationships while generating national consumer awareness.

A Tour is Born

A selection committee consisting of Change a Light staff and Colehour and Cohen personnel was formed to determine how the Tour would take place and which partners to involve. The committee sent out a request for event proposals to all of ENERGY STAR's partners. The partners were asked to propose a public event at which the Change a Light campaign and the partnering organization could generate the most exposure to local consumers. The selection committee received more than 25 proposals, which were examined with an eye toward touring logistics, dates, event quality, and the excitement of the proposing organization. In addition to these considerations, the selection committee also wanted to ensure coverage in major media markets such as Chicago, Boston, and New York City.

According to Hewan Tomlinson, Change a Light program liaison, Colehour and Cohen "conceived the Bus Tour as a trial tactic to make those connections between the national campaign and local efforts." The Bus Tour was different from anything the Change a Light campaign had done before and required a lot of coordination between involved parties. Some of the key people involved in the Bus Tour were long-time campaign manager Wendy Reed; program liaison Hewan Tomlinson, and Colehour and Cohen representative Trevor Rasmussen. Guest speakers including local politicians and school officials participated throughout the Tour as it traveled through Anaheim, CA; San Francisco, CA; Denver, CO; Des Moines, IA; Chicago, IL; Indianapolis, IN; Atlanta, GA; Maplewood, NJ; Boston, MA; and New York, NY. EPA staff from different regional offices also participated along the way.

Bus Tour Goals and Objectives

The Bus Tour had several key goals to achieve during its 20-day rollout. The goals stated in the campaign documents were to get every American to take the Change a Light pledge and follow through by replacing at least one incandescent light bulb every year with a CFL bulb. Although asking people to change a single bulb is a relatively simple request, trying to effectively target every American is a lofty, if not impossible, campaign goal. However, six additional campaign goals were identified through interviews with Bus Tour staff, which divided all of the potential stakeholders into slightly more-distinct groups.

As mentioned, one of the primary goals of the campaign was to build relationships with new ENERGY STAR partners and strengthen existing relationships. The campaign itself was structured with this goal in mind. Second, the campaign's organizers wanted to create a media draw to garner local and national media coverage measurable through the quantity and quality of media impressions. This goal addresses the public relations practice of agenda building. The third, fourth, and fifth goals dealt with persuading and educating the consumer base directly. The third goal was to generate momentum for and tap into existing enthusiasm for the campaign and pledge drive. The fourth goal was to empower community groups and individuals to lead change on a local level. The fifth goal was to reach out to consumers who normally would not be exposed to CFLs through persuasive messaging, free CFLs, and bulb coupons. Lastly, the sixth goal of the campaign was to raise awareness about global warming and environmental concerns. This goal depended upon the campaign's cumulative success at achieving its five other goals. Through efforts to affect the media's agenda, leveraging valuable partnerships, and reaching out to consumers, the campaign intended to increase environmental awareness overall.

For public relations practitioners and outside auditors to objectively measure the success of a campaign, they must have access to the campaign's original, measurable objectives and any prior benchmarking numbers. Specific, measurable campaign objectives were not immediately available through the sources I consulted, however. According to Hewan Tomlinson, a key Bus Tour participant and planner, the overall goal of the campaign was to reach "everyone" because "energy efficiency and global warming impacts us all." The original Bus Tour manager, Wendy Reed, who may have been able to provide these numbers, left the EPA after the Bus Tour ended and was not available to be interviewed for this project. Colehour and Cohen staff and the remaining Change a Light campaign staff were only able to provide the general goals listed above.

In addition, neither Rasmussen nor Tomlinson were able to provide information on Bus Tour's cost. Rasmussen said that his agency "does not deal with these kinds of statistics" and that the cost would be difficult to determine because "there were so many ENERGY STAR sponsors and individual events that [his agency] had nothing to do with." Tomlinson, a likely source for budget information, was unavailable for further questions after our interview. Unfortunately, the time constraints of this audit did not allow me to file a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request with the EPA to obtain the Bus Tour's cost information through formal channels. Scott Misner (2008), chief strategist for Misner and Associates Public Relations in Raleigh, NC, provided a conservative estimate of \$45,000 based on a rough description of the Tour's activities. As Rasmussen said, however, the Tour's cost is difficult to estimate without official campaign data because so many items, such as the bus and CFL giveaways, were donated by ENERGY STAR partner organizations. According to the Alliance to Save Energy (2006), ENERGY STAR's total budget in 2007 was \$49.5

million, down \$500,000 from the year before. Even though the total budget may sound like a lot of money, it is important to note that the program received less funding than the year before. When an organization is forced to cut back on its spending, it is important to justify the value of every expense. Although evaluation is necessarily less conclusive without hard data, such as the Tour's cost and measurable objectives, it is still a necessary portion of any communication audit. The following sections break down the campaign's broad goals and provide an evaluation of the various strategies and tactics employed with the data provided.

The Tour Bus

To help achieve the campaign's second goal of creating a media draw, the campaign planners decided to employ a specially designed Tour bus to feature during the different Tour stops. According to Tomlinson, the campaign's organizers used the bus as a "backdrop for local and national media coverage of the school events and the local sponsor events." The physical appearance of the bus contributed to the promotional campaign. The outside of the bus was covered in Change a Light slogans, ENERGY STAR's Web site address, a United States map, and a large image of a CFL bulb branded with the ENERGY STAR logo. The bus was also painted in the campaign's distinctive light blue and white colors (see Figure 3 for image).

ENERGY STAR partner Motor Coach Industries, of Schaumburg, IL, provided the Change a Light bus. To maintain consistency with the campaign's environmental focus, the bus featured a 2007 EPA-model clean diesel engine, which reduces particulate matter emissions by 90% compared to a standard bus (EPA, 2006). As stated in the campaign's press materials, the bus serves as a reminder that foregoing one's car in favor of public

transportation is another way in which one can have a personal impact on global climate change.

In addition to the environmentally friendly features, the bus was outfitted with an outdoor interactive learning center sponsored by JCPenney, the 2007 ENERGY STAR partner of the year for energy management. The learning center featured interactive displays focused on the importance of looking for the ENERGY STAR label on lighting products, how to use and dispose of CFLs, and the connection between personal energy consumption and global environmental impact. At all of the different events, visitors walked through the learning center and were then asked to take the Change a Light pledge. Through encouraging visitors to visit the learning center and take the pledge, campaign staff intended to achieve its goals including generating momentum for the campaign and reaching out to consumers who were unfamiliar with CFL technology.

The Tour: Consumer and Media Events

To satisfy the Bus Tour's goals of building relationships with its partners and ensuring that the Change a Light campaign received sufficient publicity, the Tour included both consumer events and private media events (see Appendix B for full list). The main difference between the two types of events was the lead organization. Change a Light partners dictated the structure of the consumer events. Key partner organizations included energy utility companies such as Osram Sylvania, MidAmerican Energy Company, and Georgia Power. At these consumer events, the Change a Light staff took a helper role by coordinating the set-up for the events and ensuring that the bus and promotional materials were ready for visitors. The structure and focus of each event was left to the partner's discretion. These events tended to be high traffic, fast paced, and focused on short-term

interactions between Tour staff and the target audience. Free bulbs or discount coupons were popular giveaways. Examples of these events include the kick-off event hosted by the Walt Disney Company and Osram Sylvania outside Disneyland in Anaheim, CA, and the Xcel Energy Corporation events held outside of the Denver Broncos stadium. Consumer events, the focus of the overall Tour, consisted of 12 of the total 16 events of the Tour. The remaining four events targeted the media.

Media events, on the other hand, were private events directed by the Change a Light staff. These four events were interspersed with the consumer events throughout the duration of the Tour. Three of the media events took place at public elementary and middle schools. The campaign staff considered the fourth media event to be a more-traditional media event because it was a public event held at Old North Church in Boston, MA. Overall, these events focused on attracting media representatives and provided greater opportunity for longer interactions with those who walked through the education center.

The school events were coordinated with local EPA offices and regional school districts. Each school ran a pledge drive, poster contest, or essay contest to encourage pre-event excitement with the students, families, and school administration. The general public was not invited to these events due to the fact that they were held on school grounds. Building on the excitement generated from the pre-event contests and providing local media interest, the campaign's representatives handed out awards at the Bus Tour events to recognize teachers and students for their environmental commitment. To add visual appeal and further the campaign's educational goals, the participating school children were then taken through the bus' exhibits, which included a stationary bike that generated power to light up incandescent and CFL bulbs.

The Boston media event consisted of a historical re-enactment of Paul Revere's famous ride. The event was intended as a symbolic call to change, to call for a revolution in how people think about energy consumption (Updates From the Road Tour Blog, 2007). Instead of candles, the famous Old North Church's steeple was lit using CFL bulbs provided by partner organization Osram Sylvania to signal to the Paul Revere character across the Charles River. In addition, cannons on the USS Constitution ship in the nearby Charlestown Navy Yard were set off, adding to the excitement and drama of the event.

Overall, the Change a Light Bus Tour was a complex, multi-faceted public relations effort consisting of many interested parties, different types of consumer and media events, numerous strategies and tactics, and several broad campaign goals. Bringing together that many different campaign elements into a cohesive Tour was an achievement in itself. The Tour planners and participants had to juggle many different priorities and location characteristics as the Tour traveled from event to event. The next section details the experiences of two of the Bus Tour's key participants during the Tour experience.

Staff Interviews

To get a richer understanding of the campaign's history and strategy beyond the publicly available Change a Light documents, I interviewed Trevor Rasmussen, a lead coordinator of the Bus Tour from the Colehour and Cohen agency, and Hewan Tomlinson, the Change a Light program liaison. Tomlinson and Rasmussen's testimonies provided in-depth perspectives on the Bus Tour's goals, how the bus was utilized as a public relations tactic, and how they measured the campaign's success. Tomlinson spent a third of the Tour on the bus, and Rasmussen was on the bus for the entire 20 days. Both were involved with the partner selection committee. My interview with Rasmussen took place over the telephone

because of travel limitations, and some details were clarified through follow-up emails. My interview with Tomlinson took place in-person at the Change a Light office in Washington, DC.

According to Tomlinson, maintaining message consistency in all aspects of a campaign was important because consistency “creates value in the message” and increases the chances that the media will use campaign information to write news articles. Her concern with message consistency is echoed in the 2007 Interbrand ENERGY STAR brand report. The report indicated that although many of the message inconsistencies early in ENERGY STAR’s rollout had since been solved, ENERGY STAR staff must continue to increase communication consistency in order to increase communication efficiency.

In terms of maintaining consistency, Tomlinson and Rasmussen identified the same Tour goals of working on relationships with partner organizations, creating a media draw, generating consumer enthusiasm and empowerment, and raising environmental awareness. However, they varied on which of the goals held the greatest importance for the Tour’s success. Tomlinson identified building and leveraging partnerships with ENERGY STAR partners including utility companies, manufacturers, and retailers as the primary concern. She said, “The partnership dynamic is critical to highlight here. It isn’t just about us going out with our campaign. It is in everything that we do.” As a program liaison, Tomlinson is directly involved with building and maintaining partnerships with ENERGY STAR partners in her daily work activities. In my interview with Rasmussen, he acknowledged the importance of partnerships to the campaign’s success but indicated that the main objective of the campaign was to “get CFLs or coupons for CFLs to as many people as possible.” It makes sense that Rasmussen, a consultant brought on to handle the day-to-day rollout of the

Bus Tour, might focus on creating as many immediate consumer relationships as possible. Although both approaches may increase the overall awareness of global warming and environmental concerns, the targeted stakeholders are distinctly different.

Despite the different approaches, Tomlinson and Rasmussen provided similar feedback about the use of the Tour bus as a public relations tactic. Although the bus approach differentiated the 2007 endeavor from previous efforts, neither interviewee saw it as the most-important or defining feature of the campaign. Tomlinson referred to the bus as a “backdrop for media coverage” and a “rolling billboard.” She spoke about the bus as being “just a tactic; it was a way for us to get on the ground and meet people.” Although the bus was specially outfitted with environmentally friendly features in accordance with the campaign’s goal to increase environmental awareness, Tomlinson only talked about the bus when people asked, which did not happen frequently in her experience. Rasmussen found that journalists did not want to write about the bus because “they found it to be too promotional.” He said that the campaign received greater media coverage from the media-specific school events that better addressed journalists’ news values and “gave education editors something to write about.”

When asked about specific challenges related to the Bus Tour, Tomlinson and Rasmussen again agreed on some points and differed on others. One of these common points was that they both identified the need to exert more control over future public outreach events with ENERGY STAR partners. Although the partner-led events allowed campaign staff to work directly with its partners and communicate with potential and existing consumers, Rasmussen said that not everyone who saw the bus really understood what the campaign was trying to do. Referring to increasing the number of people who actually visited

the bus instead of just walking past it, he felt that “more control would make events more effective in getting the quantitative numbers of people to rise.” Because many of the partnered events took place in busy areas, it was difficult for the Tour staff to stop busy passers-by long enough to explain what the bus was doing there. In talking about the events that took place outside of crowded sports arenas and in high-traffic thoroughfares, Tomlinson said:

The challenge was reaching people who were busy. It became clear that we had events that took place on a weekday, but it would have been better to be out on a weekend at a venue or location where people had time to talk and walk around more. We had to adapt on a daily basis to each new venue.

Tomlinson and Rasmussen’s evaluation of the events were based upon their personal experiences and observations. The main quantitative measures were how many people signed up to take the pledge and how many handouts were distributed during the course of the event. Although these less-formal public events provided challenges in terms of achieving rich interactions with people, Tomlinson and Rasmussen reported that the events were very successful in terms of improving and building upon relationships with the Tour’s partners, the first goal of the Tour.

Tomlinson and Rasmussen agreed on improvements for future public outreach events, but they each also brought up additional challenges. Several times during my interview with Tomlinson, she mentioned the challenge of explaining CFLs’ mercury content and putting the associated risks in perspective for concerned consumers. “We had some negative publicity related to mercury, and it is valid,” said Tomlinson. Later in the interview, she added:

It is a trade-off from the speck of mercury in a CFL that fits on the tip of a ballpoint pen and the amount of mercury that is released into the air by burning fuel to produce power. The bottom line is that we are telling people that you do have to be careful, and you do want to dispose of CFLs properly.

The mercury content in CFLs, which is not found in traditional incandescent light bulbs, was a particular point of concern for some consumers who stopped by the bus, according to several Bus Tour blog entries. Rasmussen did not mention mercury in his interview.

In addition to informing people about the relative dangers of mercury exposure, Tomlinson also mentioned the need to provide consumers who have already tried CFLs with additional information about the bulb's evolution and information on what next other steps consumers might take in terms of becoming more environmentally aware. According to Tomlinson, the complaints about CFL's quality of light stem from those who have not tried the improved bulbs or perhaps have used the incorrect bulb for their household lighting application. "You can't just stick a CFL into any old fixture with a dimmer and expect that it is going to work," Tomlinson said. She also reported that those who had already switched to CFLs wanted additional information about additional steps consumers can take to become more environmentally aware. Although she said it was heartening to hear that people had already changed their lighting habits, she did not have a lot of materials on next steps to provide to existing CFL users. In this regard, the campaign's straightforward focus on taking the "first step" to energy efficiency, although approachable to many consumers unfamiliar with ENERGY STAR, may have missed an opportunity to build upon relationships with existing CFL users and generate additional environmental awareness.

On a strategic note, Rasmussen identified obtaining media coverage as a big challenge during the Tour. He said, "We found it more difficult to get feature coverage in the local daily papers. The subject of CFLs has already been covered. We needed to find new angles and new outlets to pitch to." In follow-up correspondence, however, Rasmussen said

that the Tour had been more successful in getting broadcast media coverage because the Tour's events were "geared a little more towards the visual," a sentiment also shared by Tomlinson in her evaluation of the Tour's media coverage. Although not the focus of my communication audit, broadcast coverage is an important yardstick in terms of measuring a campaign's overall agenda-building success.

In spite of the challenges faced by the Change a Light staff, Tomlinson and Rasmussen agreed that the Tour achieved its primary goals and exceeded their original expectations. Rasmussen cited impressive media impressions statistics, the 15,000 CFLs or CFL coupons the Bus Tour staff handed out, and the fact that the staff had face-to-face interactions with approximately 100,000 people in the 10 cities they visited. According to data gleaned from Colehour and Cohen's media tracking company, the agency estimated that the Change a Light campaign received 120,000,000 media impressions from October through November 2007. Although Tomlinson did not provide any numbers to back up her evaluation, she also cited overall increased media coverage and additional Change a Light pledges as a measure of campaign success. According to an EPA news release issued at the end of the Bus Tour, 100,000 people and 885 organizations took the Change a Light pledge during the Tour's 20-day run.

When measuring a campaign's success through counting media impressions, it is important to take several factors into account. In this case, Colehour and Cohen's media impressions do not reflect the agenda-building success of the Bus Tour alone because it includes all mentions of the Change a Light campaign, not just the Bus Tour. Also, the 120,000,000 impressions number is based on circulation and viewer numbers provided by Nielsen Media Research and individual media outlets, which may or may not have an interest

in inflating their reported audience size. Lastly, the tone of the coverage and not just the number of impressions is an important consideration. Coverage might have mentioned the Change a Light campaign but framed it in a negative light by focusing on mercury dangers instead of the more positive messages the campaign intended to promote. Merely focusing on numbers does not provide a complete or necessarily accurate measure of agenda-building success. Counting media impressions is a good first step, but it does not guarantee that those who had the opportunity to receive the Tour's messages actually did. Impressions also do not translate directly into actual changes in consumer behavior, one of the campaign's primary aims.

In addition to interviewing Bus Tour staff, I also collected the Bus Tour's public relations documents to determine how the campaign chose to frame its intended messages. The documents, unlike the participants' testimonies, were very consistent in highlighting particular features of the Tour and CFL bulbs. Although my participants talked to many thousands of people during the Bus Tour, these documents presumably reached many thousands more in the form of information subsidies adopted by different media outlets.

Change a Light Public Relations Materials

To achieve widespread media coverage of the Change a Light Bus Tour and the overall campaign, the staff employed a range of public relations materials from traditional vehicles such as news releases to more modern tactics such as creating a Bus Tour blog. Following is an analysis of the documents' structures and locations in terms of how they could be most useful to someone interested in writing about the Tour. In addition, I analyzed the documents' contents to determine the campaign's primary frames.

News Releases

A LexisNexis search for news releases about the Change a Light Bus Tour resulted in 24 releases available through publicity services including PR Newswire and Business Wire, seven produced by the campaign and 17 by its partners, which include Progress Energy and JCPenney. As mentioned in the Bus Tour background information, beneficial partnerships with utility companies, manufacturers, and retailers are key ingredients to ENERGY STAR's overall success, and their supporting publicity vehicles contributed to the campaign. To maintain consistency in this communication audit, however, I chose only to analyze the agenda-building techniques of the seven campaign-issued news releases, which were issued nationwide throughout October (see Table 1).

Table 1: Change a Light Campaign-issued News Releases

Title of news release	Date issued
Bright idea: Change a light, change the world with Energy Star	10/03/07
EPA Energy Star 'Change a Light' Bus Tour to hold two events this week in Chicago	10/10/07
EPA Energy Star 'Change a Light' national Bus Tour to stop at Cobb County Middle School	10/12/07
EPA Energy Star 'Change a Light' national Bus Tour stops at Cobb County Middle School	10/15/07
Bright idea: Change a light, change the world; Cross country Bus Tour heads to New Jersey and concludes in New York City	10/17/07
Energy revolution promised as Energy Star "Change a Light" bus comes to Boston's Faneuil Hall Sat. Oct. 20	10/18/07
Have you seen the light? Nearly 1 million take pledge to make energy efficient change	10/23/07

If a journalist or blogger were interested in finding out information about the Change a Light Bus Tour from the official source, she would have two different link options from the Change a Light site, http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=bus_Tour.bus_Tour_index. She could click on the News Room link towards the top of the page or the Media Resources link on the lower, left-hand side. Each link contains distinctly different documents. News releases and links for additional information about several of ENERGY STAR's programs, including the Change a Light campaign, are located within the site's News Room link. Two news releases specifically about the Bus Tour and links to the Bus Tour's homepage were found in this section. However, I found five additional releases about the Bus Tour on the EPA's main Web site, www.epa.gov, under its separate News Releases link. The difference in location may be due to the large number of news releases available on any given ENERGY STAR program or to the fact that the EPA has a national headquarters as well as regional and local program offices. Regardless, offering campaign news releases in two different locations forces an interested party to spend extra time and effort to locate all of the available information subsidies about a topic.

Overall, the Change a Light campaign news releases met Diggs-Brown's (2007) requirements of containing newsworthy information written in clear, concise language. The releases were generally a page and a half long and contained one or more quotes from different EPA administrators. They also included Change a Light research statistics on the effects of CFL usage, which addressed key news values of impact and magnitude. Several of the news releases focused on specific events, which would address journalists' interest in stories with proximity news value.

In addition, all of the releases included prominent release dates, which help ensure that the release's content is timely when it reaches the media. For the five releases issued in advance of events, however, not much notice was given to reporters who might have been interested in covering the story. For example, the release about the Faneuil Hall event in Boston was issued only two days prior to the event, which might have affected the amount of press coverage that event received. Despite the short notice, all of the news releases consistently repeat the campaign's persuasive messages, which increase the likelihood of media adoption, according to Berkowitz's (1990) research findings. These messages are assessed in a subsequent section about the campaign frames.

As Diggs-Brown (2007) recommends, the news releases also provide up-to-date contact information for reporters who want to know more. The only potentially confusing point is that interested journalists have the option of contacting five different EPA staff members if they were to read all seven releases. Because the EPA has 10 regional offices and a national headquarters, public relations materials are issued from a variety of office locations. The Bus Tour, being a national tour, traveled through several of these regions. All releases contained a contact person's name and phone number, although only one mentioned the contact person's job title. All but one release also provided a contact email address.

Media Resources

In addition to the two different news release links, the Change a Light homepage also provides Bus Tour information through the Media Resources link (http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=bus_tour.bus_tour_media). The Media Resources link, referred to as a media kit on the site, is found on the lower, right-hand side of the Bus Tour homepage near the end of a list of Bus Tour links. Unlike Diggs-Brown's (2007)

suggestion, the media kit and news releases do not accompany each other. Instead, the Media Resources page contains links to four documents about the Tour and the ENERGY STAR program (see Table 2):

Table 2: Media Resources for Change a Light Bus Tour

Media resources document	Contents
ENERGY STAR Change a Light Bus Tour Overview	Information on the Change a Light campaign, the pledge drive, environmental facts, CFL types and benefits, and mercury
ENERGY STAR Change a Light, Change the World Talking Points and Lighting Facts	Information on Tour's mission, Tour facts and figures, event highlights, the bus, and a comprehensive list of all of the Tour's stops and events.
Background on the ENERGY STAR Program	Information on the ENERGY STAR program including a brief history, program facts, persuasive messages for consumers, and reasons why businesses and organizations should get involved with the program.
Frequently Asked Questions About Mercury in CFLs	Information on why consumers should use CFLs, what mercury is, CFLs' mercury content, and extensive instructions on how to handle bulbs in the event that they break or burn out

These documents contain much of the same information and news values as the news releases. However, the Media Resources documents are written as fact sheets in a simple, bulleted format with easily digestible facts about the campaign and the Bus Tour. The documents also contain a significant amount of white space and clear subheads, which would make them easy to scan. Although these documents are classified under the Media Resources link, the CFL information they contain would also be useful to non-media people, including consumers and CFL retailers. Because these documents do not have to conform to the traditionally brief news release format, they have enough space to contain additional

information including an extensive list of the different Tour events, informational links to other Change a Light Web sites, and a consistent ENERGY STAR branding image across the top of each document. Less formal than the campaign's news releases but more formal than the Tour's blog, the media resources documents provide key Tour facts, figures, and persuasive frames at a glance.

The Frequently Asked Questions document, unlike the other documents in the Media Resources link, contains information on when it was last updated. The FAQs address the public concern over the mercury content found in CFL bulbs and provide detailed instructions on how to safely handle and dispose of broken or burned out bulbs. Mercury is rarely mentioned at length in the other campaign materials although it was a key feature in my interview with Change a Light staff member, Hewan Tomlinson. The FAQs contain a notice at the end that says, "EPA is continually reviewing its clean-up and disposal recommendations for CFLs to ensure that the Agency presents the most up-to-date information for consumers and businesses." The public's concern over mercury, considered both a challenge and a potential threat to the success of the Change a Light campaign, is further discussed in the analysis and recommendations portions of the communication audit.

The Bus Tour Blog

In addition to more-traditional public relations vehicles such as the news releases and media resources documents, the Bus Tour staff also transmitted important information about the Tour by hosting its own blog. The Bus Tour blog is titled Updates from the Road and was updated daily during the Tour by Wendy Reed, the former Change a Light campaign director, or Hewan Tomlinson. Entries were written between October 3 and October 26, and were labeled by date, location, and the name of the author.

Unlike the news releases and Media Resources documents, the overall tone of the blog is informal. The entries are not written following AP style guidelines and entries were peppered with exclamation marks, giving the document a conversational feel. It is not clear who the specific target audiences were for the blog, but the informal language and punctuation might have made it more appealing for consumers than journalists. When asked about the purpose of the blog, Tomlinson said that it was intended as just another way to spread information about the Tour. Instead of directly pushing the campaign's persuasive facts and figures, the entries contain the staff's personal impressions of each day's events and interactions with the public. These entries include anecdotal evidence about specific individuals learning about CFLs and the environment, which might address journalists' needs for stories containing emotional impact and proximity. The blog also contains quantitative information about the Tour, such as how many bulbs were given away that day or how many pledges had been gathered at different events, but the facts and figures are not the main focus of the entries.

Despite the fact that Updates from the Road repeatedly calls itself a blog, the campaign staff conceived of it as a "running journal" instead of a true blog, which would permit individuals to correspond with those posting messages. According to Hewan Tomlinson, EPA staff members are not permitted to directly blog or empower third parties to do so on its behalf. Unlike 90% of traditional blogs, the Tour blog did not allow readers to comment on its contents (Kent, 2008). Interestingly, even though the Bus Tour staff created their own version of a blog, neither Hewan Tomlinson nor Trevor Rasmussen thought of bloggers as important stakeholders during the Tour's planning stages. According to Rasmussen, the Bus Tour "focused on larger, more mainstream outlets." Even though

campaign staff did not identify bloggers as an important target audience, the fact that the campaign created its own blog demonstrates the growing interest in blogs as a means to disseminate an organization's messages. Despite the fact that bloggers were not the Tour's target audience, bloggers have the ability to help the campaign achieve its goals of raising consumer awareness of CFLs and the environment.

In summary, this section has presented an assessment of the media tools used to communicate the campaign's messages. The following section identifies the Change a Light campaign's intended messages as discovered through an analysis of the Tour blog and the additional publicity documents.

Change a Light Bus Tour Frames

To analyze the primary frames of the Change a Light Bus Tour's documents, I considered the contents of the seven news releases, the four Media Resources documents, and the Tour blog together. Despite the different locations, formatting, and levels of writing formality, the Change a Light campaign materials were very consistent in terms of the persuasive messages, or frames, employed. Interestingly, none of the news releases linked directly to the Media Resources page or vice versa. In order to judge the Bus Tour's agenda-building effectiveness in the resulting print media and blogger coverage, it was critical to identify what the primary messages were that the campaign intended to transmit to its stakeholders. Three key frames emerged from the analysis: (1) easy and effective, (2) consumer financial benefits, and (3) environmental benefits. Each frame is described in the following sections.

Frame One: Easy and Effective

All of the documents make reference to the idea that exchanging an incandescent bulb for a CFL is both easy and effective. These adjectives are frequently paired or appear in neighboring sentences and often at the beginning of each document. Promoting the easy and effective frame is also important in terms of meeting the campaign's fifth goal of reaching out to new consumers who may not have heard of CFLs or who may be reluctant to adopt new technology.

Examples of the easy and effective frame occur throughout the campaign materials. For instance, a majority of the news releases contain the phrase "an easy, effective and money-saving first step." The national EPA administrator, Stephen Johnson, is quoted in several news releases as saying "Protecting the environment and saving money is as easy as changing a light." The FAQs portrays switching to CFLs as an "effective, accessible change every American can make right now." Because the campaign promotes CFL usage as a "first step" toward helping the environment, it is important that the step recommended be fairly simple. The campaign is not trying to persuade anyone to do anything drastic or demanding; it just wants people to "change a light."

The effective component of this frame, which is frequently paired with the concept of ease of use, is demonstrated by the campaign's frequent inclusion of numbers and research data citing the measurable results of CFL usage. Most campaign documents contain the following phrase or a similar derivation: "If every household changed one bulb, it would save \$600 million in energy costs, provide enough energy to light 3 million homes, and prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to 800,000 cars' emissions." As an EPA-run initiative, the Change a Light campaign is able to build upon its organization's existing credibility by

emphasizing EPA-sanctioned research numbers. In addition to highlighting the measurable results of CFL usage, this phrasing is interesting because it encourages individuals to change “just one bulb” although it provides the results based upon every household across the country taking the Change a Light pledge. The combined easy and effective frame attempts to persuade consumers that they can achieve big results with just a little personal effort. This frame directly relates to the campaign’s goals to persuade consumers who may be unfamiliar with CFLs or reluctant to adopt new technology.

Frame Two: Consumer Financial Benefits

Although the Change a Light Bus Tour is frequently referred to as a national call-to-action, the campaign materials often emphasize the individual financial benefits that CFL usage provides. By appealing to consumers’ wallets, the campaign addressed its fifth goal of attracting the attention of those who have not tried CFLs. The statistic repeated throughout the Bus Tour documents is that exchanging an incandescent bulb for a CFL can save consumers approximately \$30 throughout a CFL’s projected 10-year lifetime. Another frequently cited consumer statistic is that lighting costs are approximately 20% of home energy bills, which allows the consumers to understand how much they could potentially save on their home energy bills. Tellingly, information about a CFL’s financial benefits often precedes information about the environmental benefits throughout the Tour’s documents.

In addition to acknowledging consumers’ interests in lowering their power bills, focusing on the consumer financial benefits frame is important because CFL bulbs have historically carried a higher retail cost than traditional incandescent bulbs. By lowering the perceived CFL cost through emphasizing long-term benefits, the campaign makes trying a new product less daunting. Similar to the easy and effective frame, the consumer financial

benefits frame relates to reaching out to those unfamiliar with CFLs, as well as indirectly addressing the campaign's interest in getting people excited to try CFLs while raising awareness of environmental issues overall.

Frame Three: Environmental Benefits

Not surprisingly, there is a consistent environmental benefits emphasis throughout the Bus Tour literature. Raising awareness about environmental concerns is one of the primary goals of the Change a Light campaign and a prominent feature in every document and outreach event the campaign produced. This framing aspect addresses the third campaign goal of generating momentum for and tapping into the existing enthusiasm for the campaign, as well as certainly addressing the overall campaign goal of raising environmental awareness.

In the environmental benefits frame, the frequently cited campaign statistic is that if every American home were to replace just one incandescent bulb with a CFL, the U.S. would be able to prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of more than 800,000 cars. Because promoting CFLs is relatively new compared to long-standing efforts in the environmental community to promote efforts like taking mass transportation or riding a bike, it makes sense for the Change a Light campaign to use the more familiar car comparison when discussing the CFL. Providing these statistics also helps consumers to understand the impact and effectiveness of switching to CFLs.

Perhaps as a nod to the current controversy over whether greenhouse gases are directly responsible for global warming, the Tour documents refer to both "global warming" and "global climate change." Nowhere is this concession more apparent than a sentence found in the Bus Tour Overview document within the Media Resources link. The document states, "When you use less energy, somewhere a power plant is generating fewer greenhouse

gas emissions, which means you are helping to solve the problem of global warming [global climate change]!” Regardless of what the campaign documents call this global environmental issue, the call to protect the environment is found consistently throughout the text.

The easy and effective, consumer financial benefit, and environmental benefits frames are all firmly situated within the campaign’s third, fourth, and fifth goals of educating and persuading consumers and the six goal of raising awareness about the environment. In the next section, I discuss whether or not these frames were repeated in the print media and blogger coverage of the Bus Tour. In order for the Change a Light campaign to successfully build an agenda on CFLs and energy efficiency, it is important for the campaign to receive coverage that not only mentions the campaign and Tour, but adopts its preferred frames as well.

Print Media Coverage

To determine the Bus Tour’s agenda-building effectiveness, I used a number of broad search terms to locate newspaper articles that contained a reference to the Change a Light Bus Tour. Searching for articles using broad parameters such as “change a light” and “energy star” provided many articles that discussed the national campaign and the growing presence of CFLs in the consumer market. I was interested in determining the agenda-building effectiveness of the Change a Light Bus Tour, however, and not the entire Change a Light campaign. From my extensive search, there were only nine articles that directly referred to the Bus Tour (see Table 3).

Table 3: Print Media Coverage

Article title	Name of newspaper	Date published
Seeing the light	<i>Pittsburgh Post-Gazette</i>	9/30/07
Light bulb giveaway to get under way	<i>Chico Enterprise-Record</i>	10/4/07
PG&E giving fluorescent bulbs away	<i>The San Francisco Chronicle</i>	10/4/07
Maplewood is on board in global warming fight	<i>The Star-Ledger</i> , State Edition	10/19/07
Maplewood shows its cool: Town displays its climate consciousness	<i>The Star-Ledger</i> , Essex Edition	10/19/07
Old North's lanterns shed light on energy	<i>The Boston Globe</i>	10/19/07
A revolutionary idea to promote energy efficiency	<i>The Boston Globe</i>	10/20/07
'Light' Tour visits Durham Middle	<i>The Atlanta Journal-Constitution</i>	10/21/07
Durham Middle a green champ	<i>The Atlanta Journal-Constitution</i>	11/29/07

None of the articles appeared on the first page of their respective papers. Overall, the articles were found in the papers' community sections. The articles tended to be very brief, sometimes only a summary of upcoming Bus Tour event details and mention of the Change a Light campaign name or ENERGY STAR affiliation. As a result of article brevity, there was not much space for journalists to repeat the Change a Light campaign's primary frames of easy and effective, consumer financial benefits, and environmental benefits.

Not all of the events were covered. In fact, one of the Tour's most-distinguishing features, the specially designed bus, received little coverage at all. As Trevor Rasmussen predicted, the school events garnered the most-extensive media impressions. For example, the article that provided the greatest Tour coverage and the highest rate of campaign framing

adoption occurred in *The Star-Ledger* in Newark, NJ, on October 19, 2007. The bus had stopped in Maplewood, NJ, the smallest city on the Tour, to hold a media event featuring 200 students at Maplewood Middle School visiting the bus. The 570-word article, one of the longest, focused on local officials and students learning about CFL bulbs and the town's recent strides to become more environmentally aware. The article repeated the easy and effective frame, and also demonstrated a strong emphasis on CFLs' environmental benefits. It did not explicitly refer to the consumer financial benefits frame, but the article did provide an opportunity for the campaign staff to respond to consumer concerns about mercury, a major threat to mass consumer adoption of CFLs.

Unlike the Maplewood article, the majority of articles did not provide as much opportunity for the campaign to transmit its intended frames. Because October 3 is national Change a Light Day, many other organizations across the country created and publicized their own events and activities to celebrate energy efficiency. As Trevor Rasmussen said, "The subject of CFLs has already been covered. We needed to find new angles and new outlets to pitch to." For example, California-based Tour partner, Pacific Gas and Electric Co., received extensive media coverage on its plan to have its employees hand out a million CFLs at 300 community events throughout the month of October. As a result, the Bus Tour's October 4 event at a San Francisco Safeway store was relegated to a one-line mention in a longer article about Pacific Gas and Electric Co.'s CFL giveaways ("PG&E giving fluorescent bulbs away," 2007). The reference only identified the location and event details; there was no mention of the Tour bus, the Change a Light campaign, or even ENERGY STAR. Although these additional events may be seen as a positive sign of overall energy

efficiency awareness and partner enthusiasm, these other events likely competed with the Change a Light Bus Tour for print media coverage.

Blog Coverage

Unlike with print media, researchers have yet to conduct extensive research on blogs' agenda-setting or agenda-building abilities. However, blogs are rapidly becoming a pervasive force on the Internet and have the potential to help practitioners reach mainstream media outlets and address stakeholder concerns at a grassroots level (Kent, 2008). The fact that the Tour bus staff created their own version of a blog on the Change a Light Web site indicates the blog's growing presence in public relations planning. To add to the growing body of research on public relations and blogs and to measure the Bus Tour's agenda-building influence on this new media, I used Google to locate blog entries that discussed the Bus Tour using the same search parameters used in my print media search. My search found 12 different blog entries (see Table 4). Similar to my print article results, many more blog entries mentioned the Change a Light campaign and CFLs than those that made reference to the Bus Tour.

Table 4: Blogger Coverage

Blog entry	Site	Date posted
Sylvania kicks off 2007 Energy Star Change a Light, Change the World Bus Tour: Lighting leader hosts first Tour stop at Disneyland resort	www.juli-research.blogspot.com	10/3/07
Pledge to change a light today	www.greendaily.com	10/3/07
Energy Star Change-a-Light Bus Tour	http://lib.wmrc.uiuc.edu/glpppr-blog	10/5/07

Bright idea: Change a light, change the world	www.cleanmpg.com/forums	10/7/07
Change-a-light	www.earthportal.org/forum	10/12/07
Energy revolution promised as Energy Star “Change a Light” Bus comes to Boston’s Faneuil Hall Oct. 20	http://bhujangadev.blogspot.com	10/19/07
New Jersey leads the nation on Energy Star Change a Light, Change the World campaign.	http://market-research.typepad.com	10/21/07
Nearly one million take pledge to make more energy efficient change	http://earth911.org/blog	10/23/07
A million more changes!	http://projectporchlight.com/blog	10/24/07
EPA Energy Star ‘Change a Light’ National Bus Tour stops at Cobb	http://outdoorlightingideas.net	10/29/07
Change a light Bus Tour boosts pledges to nearly one million	http://forum.landrovernet.com	11/1/07
Outdoor light fixtures	http://outdoorlightingideas.net	11/28/07
Bus Tour	http://busTours.newzguide.com	1/7/08

Unlike the print media coverage, the majority of the blog entries adopted all three of the Change a Light campaign’s frames. Although this finding can be viewed as successful agenda building, there was a catch. Eight of the entries were simply Change a Light news releases, which had been simply pasted into the blog or a just few lines from a Bus Tour news release with additional links to the Change a Light Web site. This finding is expanded upon in the Discussion portion of the audit.

Blog entries about the Tour that were not simply copied news releases were favorable. In these cases, the three campaign frames of easy and effective, consumer financial benefits, and environmental benefits were consistently repeated. Even the Tour bus

received attention. Because bloggers are not limited by space constraints as newspaper journalists are, they are able to expound at length about the subjects that interest them. For example, the Porchlight Blog posted an entry about the Tour on October 24 titled “A million more changes.” The blogger, Lucy, wrote:

The bus itself was also a nice little reminder to reduce our carbon footprint. The state-of-the-art motor coach showed the possible upside of public transit. And with its 2007 EPA model clean diesel engine powered by ultra-low-sulfur diesel fuel and its ‘particulate scrubber’ making sure no particulate matter or nitrogen oxide can escape the tailpipe, no one was choking when it rolled by (<http://projectporchlight.com/blog/million-more-changes>).

Bus Tour goals did not include promoting its specially designed bus; however, the campaign’s sixth goal sought increased awareness about energy efficiency and the environment. Determining how audiences, including bloggers, view campaign tactics like the specially designed bus is important for future campaign planning.

Despite the fact that the Bus Tour received very little print media and blogger coverage compared to the overall amount of coverage received by the Change a Light campaign, most of the instances of coverage included the campaign’s chosen frames of easy and effective, consumer financial benefits, and environmental benefits. Although research has yet to conclusively determine how much agenda-setting power bloggers have, the interactive blog format offers a valuable opportunity for getting expanded coverage of in-depth campaign issues as well as environmental scanning of the bloggers and their readership. As with analyzing print media coverage, the tone of bloggers’ entries must also be taken into account. Not all bloggers are guaranteed to be enthusiastic about CFLs. Despite blogs’ potential, print media’s established legitimacy and demonstrated agenda-setting capabilities should continue to be an important focus of future campaign activities.

The next section contains an assessment of the Tour's goals and situation analysis. This analysis provides additional communication audit findings that may contribute to the success of future campaigns as well.

Assessment of the Campaign's Goals

Although the campaign did not provide quantitatively measurable objectives, my research findings indicated that the Change a Light Bus Tour achieved some success in meeting its six goals, although some of my findings were a result of anecdotal feedback from campaign staff. Regarding its first goal involving building relationships with partner organizations, Hewan Tomlinson and Trevor Rasmussen both reported that the Bus Tour's partners were "very happy" with the Tour's planning process and rollout. According to an October 23 EPA news releases, 885 new partner organizations including local governments, schools, businesses, and nonprofit organizations, signed up to take the Change a Light pledge. Without knowledge of prior growth rates or directly surveying personnel at the partner organizations, it is hard to judge exactly how much of a jump in organizational pledges the Bus Tour caused.

The results were mixed in terms of creating a media draw to garner local and national media coverage. Compared to partners' outreach activities and the overall amount of coverage received by the Change a Light campaign, the Bus Tour did not receive a lot of print media or blogger coverage. Bloggers were not a major consideration in the Tour planning, if they were truly a consideration at all, but my research findings indicate that the Tour got measurably more impressions and frame adoption through that outlet than from print media. Conversations with Trevor Rasmussen and entries from Wendy Reed and Hewan Tomlinson in the Tour blog, however, indicate that the Tour was far more successful

in garnering broadcast media impressions than any other type of coverage. Because agenda building through broadcast media was not a focus of my communication audit, I cannot speak to those achievements. Rasmussen reported that the campaign as a whole had achieved approximately 120,000,000 media impressions from October 2007 through November 2007. Unfortunately, no impressions numbers were available for hits that specifically mention the Bus Tour. And, as noted previously, media impressions are but a first step in the agenda-building process. Further research must assess how consumers were affected by the messages.

A news release issued on October 23 states that approximately 100,000 Americans took the pledge from the beginning of the Tour till its final stop. The new pledges indicate that the campaign was able to address its third and fourth goals of generating momentum for the switch to CFLs and empowering communities and people to lead change on a local level. I was not able to obtain any prior benchmarking information to compare the rate of growth from before the Tour until after the Tour. With all of the related partner activities and Change a Light Day events going on throughout the month of October, it is hard to say if the Bus Tour and its outreach tactics were directly responsible for all of the pledge increases. Blog entries and interview data, however, indicate that the campaign staff received lots of positive feedback from passersby, local governments, and school communities, who were enthusiastic about promoting CFL usage.

The fifth campaign goal addressed persuading new consumers to adopt CFL technology. According to Rasmussen, Change a Light staff handed out approximately 15,000 CFLs or coupons for CFLs during the Tour. Although the CFL giveaways themselves did not generate much media coverage, most likely because so many partner organizations were

already doing the same thing, directly reaching out to consumers was an important achievement in itself. Additionally, the staff did not officially collect data on the consumers who received the giveaways to determine their level of familiarity with the product; however, reducing or removing the financial cost of new products is often an effective tactic in terms to influence those who are traditionally slow to adopt new technology (Rogers, 1983).

The sixth campaign goal, raising awareness about global warming and environmental issues, is best achieved when all five of the previous campaign goals are achieved. Through nurturing partnerships, building the media's agenda, directly talking to consumers, and empowering them to be environmental leaders at the local level, the Change a Light campaign can be more successful at raising awareness on all fronts. According to campaign data on pledge numbers, face-to-face interactions, and partnerships, it can be expected that the Change a Light campaign also successfully raised consumers' environmental awareness. It is hard to objectively determine exactly how successful the Bus Tour was as a stand-alone campaign effort because of all of the concurrent partner initiatives and ENERGY STAR programs going on at the same time. The Bus Tour staff who participated in its creation and rollout, however, believe that the Bus Tour campaign achieved its goals. Although they are not unbiased sources, it is important to acknowledge their anecdotal evaluation as a valuable part of the communication audit process.

Even though the campaign staff deemed the Bus Tour a success in terms of accomplishing its goals, there are several critical weaknesses to address and external threats discovered in this communication audit. The following chapter provides a breakdown of the campaign's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Without a thorough evaluation of past efforts, the Change a Light campaign will not be able to fully take advantage of its

existing potential opportunities to increase national awareness and adoption of CFLs in the years to come.

CHAPTER V: CHANGE A LIGHT CAMPAIGN SITUATION ANALYSIS

According to Diggs-Brown's (2007), a communication audit must include a situation analysis to provide valuable feedback to the organization on its public relations practices. As a result, I developed a list of the Bus Tour's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, so the Change a Light campaign might make informed decisions for future initiatives. Many of these situations were discussed earlier in the communication audit, so I highlighted those that will likely have the greatest impact on the campaign's public relations planning in the next few years.

Strengths

The Change a Light Bus Tour campaign had many positive features, which enhanced its success. These features include:

- ENERGY STAR-associated credibility and name recognition
- Government financing, resources, and support
- Strong partnerships with resource-rich partner organizations
- Long-term relationships with external public relations consultants at The Cadmus Group and Colehour and Cohen
- Consistent, strong message framing throughout campaign documents and publicity activities

Unlike many smaller nonprofit organizations, the Change a Light campaign has the advantage of the credibility, objective authority, and extensive resources associated with

being a government-run program. As a result, the campaign management was able to employ external public relations consultants to assist in the planning and rollout of the Bus Tour effort. In addition, the Change a Light campaign, through its association with ENERGY STAR, enjoyed an already high level of campaign awareness as indicated in the 2007 Interbrand branding report. Although the CFL is a fairly new product, the Change a Light campaign already had good name recognition before the Tour began.

The campaign's partner organizations, considered both a strength and a weakness, were another key factor in the Tour's agenda-building effectiveness. Developing and maintaining strong, mutually beneficial relationships with its partners extended the program's outreach abilities because the partners actively created and successfully promoted their own events and news releases. In some cases, their efforts were more successful than the Bus Tour alone. Fortunately, the partner organizations tended to adopt and repeat the campaign's consistent public relations frames of easy and effective, consumer financial benefits, and environmental benefits, so the media were exposed to the frames regardless of the source.

Weaknesses

Although the campaign had many positive features, several issues hindered its agenda-building effectiveness. These include:

- Disappointed early CFL users were not specifically targeted
- Absence of outreach materials on next steps for those who had already switched to CFLs
- Competition with partner organizations for media coverage

- Event control
- Information subsidies were inconsistently dispersed throughout the Web site
- Unavailability of benchmark numbers and objectives

The Bus Tour's greatest weaknesses revolved around the issue of needing to identify key stakeholders and anticipate their needs. The Bus Tour campaign focused on introducing people to the first step in improving energy efficiency but neglected the opportunity to improve relationships with those who were already familiar with CFLs. Several news stories indicating the need to address these early adopters were published since the Tour concluded (Bauers, 2008; Finholm, 2007; Mufson, 2008). In addition, Change a Light staff should have considered doing something different than what their partner organizations were already doing in order to give the media something new to write about. Finally, in terms of addressing the media's needs, the campaign might improve its agenda-building capabilities by reorganizing the Web site to have all of the media resources and news releases in one central, prominently identified area to increase the chances that interested journalists actually get all of the intended information subsidies.

Opportunities

The Change a Light campaign has many opportunities for future success and the enhancement of its public relations activities. These opportunities include:

- Upcoming light bulb and energy efficiency legislation
- Future partnerships with bulb manufacturers and retailers
- Making use of relatively low-cost Internet communication vehicles
- Promoting energy-efficiency home calculator

A new energy law signed into effect in December 2008 states that by 2012, any bulb emitting the light of a 100-watt bulb must use only 72 watts to do so. By 2020, light bulbs must be approximately 75% more effective than today's incandescent light bulb (Mufson, 2008). In addition, states have specific mandates called renewable portfolio standards (RPS) that require utilities to obtain a minimum percentage of their power from renewable energy sources within the next two decades, a portion of which can be met through energy-efficient technologies (Department of Energy, 2008). Failure to do so will be met with a range of state-imposed penalties. Required percentages range from 4% in Massachusetts to as high as 25% in Illinois, Minnesota, and Oregon. Although it may seem contrary to utility companies' interests to encourage consumers to use less energy, RPSs and the new energy legislation provide powerful incentives to do so.

As a result of these state and federal mandates, the Change a Light campaign has a tremendous opportunity to become increasingly involved in CFL promotion and consumer education. The legislation also provides an additional news angle in which the campaign can promote its chosen frames. The campaign may also reach out to the new consumers who will be obligated to learn about and adopt these new bulbs and help to alleviate any fears surrounding the bulb's mercury content, the primary threat to the success of the campaign. In addition, bulb manufacturers and retailers will have to switch to producing and selling more energy-efficient bulbs, which will provide a growing number of potential ENERGY STAR partner organizations. Thanks to these new laws, the Change a Light campaign will have additional opportunities to communicate directly with these important partners without having to depend upon the media to adopt their chosen frames.

In terms of communications and new features, the campaign has the opportunity to gain greater media coverage by getting to know environmental bloggers who may share similar goals and more fully embracing Internet communication outlets. More ideas on how this might happen are described in the following recommendations. Additionally, Tomlinson mentioned that the Change a Light organizers are promoting a new, online calculator link, which would allow consumers to enter basic energy consumption information and receive tailored energy-efficiency information. The calculator would be a great tactic to help consumers understand the impact they could make, financially and environmentally, through using the CFL bulb. Additionally, this tool provides a newsworthy angle for media. As Rasmussen said, the campaign needs to find new ways of talking about the benefits of CFLs. The calculator, a comparatively low-cost tactic compared to running a national Bus Tour, offers an effective opportunity to reinforce the campaign's messages to the media and new consumers.

Threats

For public relations practitioners to be successful in building and maintaining beneficial relationships with stakeholders, they must continually scan the environment for threats. For the Change a Light campaign, these issues include:

- Mercury
- Balancing the priorities of partner organizations while maintaining focus on the campaign's goals
- Successfully differentiating ENERGY STAR-products from rising number of non-affiliated, energy efficient products

The campaign's primary threat is the public's rising concern over CFLs' mercury content (Johnson, 2008). According to Wendy Reed's final blog entry, being able to explain the relative dangers of CFL-related mercury to the mercury currently being released by coal-burning power plants was a "personal trial" over her last year at the EPA. Being able to help build the media's agenda on mercury should feature prominently in any upcoming campaign efforts. According to staff entries in the Tour blog, the campaign attempted to address this issue through the regularly updated FAQs in the Media Resources link and during face-to-face interactions during the Tour. Tomlinson frequently mentioned the difficulty in getting people to understand how little mercury is actually contained in the bulbs. The fact that the EPA's list of instructions on how to properly dispose of CFLs is nearly a page long, however, contradicts the campaign's easy and effective frame. Convincing people to bring CFLs into their homes is more difficult when consumers must consult local or state governments about how and where to dispose of these new bulbs instead of simply throwing them in the trash as usual. Switching an incandescent bulb for a CFL is not difficult, but safe disposal seems to be. As a result, the campaign should consider working with partners, such as local governments, to help simplify CFL disposal by increasing the number of bulb drop-off locations and reassuring the public about mercury's risks.

The Change a Light campaign has many impressive qualities but also has several important weaknesses and threats to address in future public relations endeavors. The campaign must learn to walk a fine line in terms of balancing its needs with those of its partners who make the campaign's work possible. In addition, future campaign planners need to take into account all of its key stakeholder publics to make sure opportunities to create further environmental awareness are not neglected and that messages are appropriately

targeted. The next section provides a list of recommendations to address these issues and a discussion of the audit's findings in regard to public relations theory and practice.

CHAPTER VI: RECOMMENDATIONS

According to Diggs-Brown (2007), a communication audit does more than just evaluate the effectiveness of an organization's communication strategies. A communication audit must also provide information that will allow an organization to develop better relationships with its stakeholders and improve its overall communication performance in the future. This section includes recommendations based upon the Change a Light campaign's goals, the findings of the organizational analysis, and the agenda-building research conducted on the Bus Tour's information subsidies. In order for the Change a Light campaign to achieve its goals and increase the public's awareness of global warming and environmental issues, I suggest the following steps:

Improve Measurement Techniques

❖ Quantify campaign goals and share them with all relevant staff and Tour participants

As a government endeavor funded by taxpayer dollars, it is highly likely that the Change a Light Bus Tour had a set of specific benchmarks and objectives to accomplish. The Tour participants I interviewed, however, were either unaware of these numbers or were unwilling to share them with an external auditor. To evaluate a campaign's true effectiveness, it is necessary to be able to judge whether or not objectives were achieved beyond anecdotal evidence from those with an interest in the campaign's success. Specifically, it would have been helpful to know the average rate of pledge and partnership growth to better judge how effective the Tour was at increasing these numbers. Research on the tone and amount of

media coverage from past campaign endeavors would also have been valuable to see how the Tour ranked in comparison to previous campaign strategies.

❖ Make sure media impressions measure what you want them to measure

When judging a campaign strategy's agenda-building effectiveness through media impressions, make sure to differentiate between impressions that mention the campaign and those that specifically mention the strategy being measured. In addition, it is important to judge the tone of the coverage received. Not all publicity is good publicity. For example, coverage about mercury could have negative implications for the campaign and its efforts. Also, creating a media draw, the campaign's second goal, does not guarantee that the campaign's other goals of reaching out to consumers or raising environmental awareness will be achieved. Just because the media use an information subsidy does not mean that the public will necessarily read it, much less be affected by it.

Develop New Media Angles

❖ Celebrity spokesperson

Celebrity spokespeople participating in public service announcements and events would not only draw media attention but also give a relatively unfamiliar technology a familiar face. A younger, trendy celebrity endorsement would likely be effective in reaching younger audiences but securing a contract with someone more relatable to more mature audiences (those who would purchase CFLs) would be preferable. A spokesperson might also be featured in campaign public service announcements, or PSAs, in print, radio, and television spots. PSAs have been found to be powerful communication tools for nonprofits because they can quickly boost an organization's visibility, and the media are obligated to run them at no charge (Diggs-Brown, 2007). Because the media donates PSA space, the issuing

organization has no control over where or when a PSA is displayed. Despite the media's tendency to relegate free PSAs to back pages or late hours, as many as 20% of PSAs run in prime, daytime spots (Greco, n.d.). If the Change a Light campaign were to use celebrity PSAs, their effectiveness might be measured through benchmarking pledge numbers or asking event attendees where they learned about the event.

❖ Create a media opportunity by giving CFLs to those who need them most

Instead of giving away bulbs at big, public events, as other organizations already do, focus on giving CFLs to specifically targeted audiences. For example, the Change a Light campaign might focus on providing CFLs to those affected by natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, or those participating in Habitat for Humanity programs. Because CFLs have to be changed far less frequently than incandescent bulbs and save on energy costs, they might also be appealing to older consumers on a fixed income. Not only would the campaign help these deserving consumers who might be put off by the bulb's initial higher cost, but it would also generate positive media impressions through practicing good community relations.

Organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, private homebuilders, and home improvement retailers might be potential partners for these targeted giveaways.

❖ Continue to address mercury fears

As discussed in the campaign analysis, mercury is an increasingly powerful campaign threat, which must be mitigated in order for the Change a Light campaign to succeed. Instead of focusing on all of the technical aspects of mercury disposal, the campaign should also focus on making mercury less frightening. Reducing fears could be accomplished by hiring a trusted celebrity spokesperson, by emphasizing the amount of mercury found in each bulb compared to how much is currently being released by power plants, or by reminding

consumers that they have been successfully living with fluorescent lighting commonly found in locations such as office buildings and schools for years. As mentioned in the campaign analysis, local governments might be enlisted to increase the number of CFL disposal locations and help inform the public about correct disposal measures. Instead of trying to focus attention solely on CFLs' positive features, the campaign should aggressively address the mercury issue instead of letting other sources do it for them.

Reconnect With Early Adopters

- ❖ Promote all of the recent advances in CFL technology

Instead of primarily focusing on new consumers, the campaign should also conduct public relations outreach activities for those who initially tried CFLs and were disappointed by the bulb's lighting quality or lack of applications. These opinion leaders need to be educated about how CFLs have evolved. Outreach activities might include news releases, PSAs, online media campaigns (see subhead below), or even public demonstrations featuring a comparison of the old and new bulbs at technology tradeshow, home improvement centers, or local retailers. Bloggers, especially those whose blogs focus on technology and energy efficiency, might also be helpful in spreading the message to these early adopters.

- ❖ Provide additional information beyond CFL facts

In order to tap into the existing enthusiasm for the Change a Light campaign and increase environmental awareness, the campaign should always include information on additional steps to take beyond changing a bulb. Feedback from the Bus Tour participants indicated that the needs of these existing stakeholders were not fully addressed in the Tour's existing information subsidies.

Utilize New Media

- ❖ Reorganize the campaign's Web site to be more user-friendly

The campaign took the time to create the Media Resources documents and the news releases; the staff should put them all in one clear location or make sure to include prominent links so journalists have a greater chance to read and use all of them.

- ❖ Develop mutually beneficial relationships with bloggers

Although the extent of agenda-setting and agenda-building effects of blogs have yet to be determined, the campaign should start researching this growing communication outlet. Even though EPA staff are not allowed to blog, there is no reason why they should not try to build relationships with reputable bloggers who might help them disseminate campaign messages to a wider audience. In addition, scanning blog entries and reader commentary might help campaign staff identify and react to any developing campaign threats.

- ❖ Create an online PSA competition for students

Building on the success of the Bus Tour's school events and contests, the campaign should consider developing an online contest hosted on Youtube.com in which students or student environmental groups compete to create public service announcements to promote CFLs. The PSA that best represents the campaign's chosen frames could be broadcast nationally, and ENERGY STAR-partners could receive positive publicity by donating the prize money.

Take Advantage of Upcoming Legislation

- ❖ Approach new partners

With the advent of legislation forcing all bulbs and utilities to become more energy efficient, the Change a Light campaign has the opportunity to approach additional partner organizations including bulb manufacturers and utilities. The campaign may leverage its

experience promoting CFLs and its governmental credibility to educate these new partners. As a result, partner organizations would receive the benefit of appearing environmentally aware instead of being seen as being forced into environmental compliance.

❖ Strengthen retailer partnerships and consumer relationships through education

The Change a Light campaign has the opportunity to reach out to retailers who will have to explain the new technology to consumers. Campaign staff or trained community volunteers may hold educational events at these retailer locations to explain how CFLs work and how bulbs should be properly disposed. These events would help educate both the retailer staff and consumers, as well as provide a potential angle for news coverage.

By following the recommendations listed above, the Change a Light campaign has the opportunity to build on its existing strengths and address its inherent weaknesses. Structuring public relations tools to better address the needs of important stakeholders, such as the media and early adopters, is a necessary next step. The good news is that there is plenty of opportunity for the campaign to raise environmental awareness in the next few years, but it will be up to the campaign's leadership to evaluate its past endeavors and plan accordingly.

Following Diggs-Brown's (2007) guidelines, a communication audit must include an evaluation of message quality, message delivery, relationship quality, and audience communication in its final campaign analysis. Overall, the Change a Light campaign developed a set of clear, consistent frames focused on the benefits of CFL usage, which were expressed throughout the Bus Tour's information subsidies. As a result of competing environmental factors and internal campaign weaknesses, however, the campaign was not

able to consistently transmit its preferred frames to its intended stakeholders and overlooked certain stakeholders altogether.

In addition to auditing the campaign, this thesis contributes to the academic discussion. The following chapter provides insight into how the findings may further research associated with public relations campaigns and agenda building.

CHAPTER VII: DISCUSSION

This chapter summarizes the findings of the research as they relate to the research questions posed in chapter two. The results were determined by an analysis of organizational background information, staff interviews, campaign documents, and the resulting print media and blogger coverage. This chapter also includes areas for future research and concluding thoughts about the audit process and results.

R1: What were the agenda-building goals of the ENERGY STAR Change a Light, Change the World Bus Tour? Did the Tour meet these goals?

The campaign had intended to create a media draw to garner local and national media coverage measurable through the quantity and quality of media impressions (goal #2). According to the document analysis of the print media coverage and blogger coverage, the Tour was not very successful at agenda building compared to the Change a Light campaign overall and its partner organizations on the same topics over the same time period. This source competition seems to validate Duffy's (2003) findings that environmental groups are facing increasing competition against each other to get their different messages adopted by the media. Increased partnership opportunities or focusing primarily on smaller media markets with less competition, such as Maplewood, NJ, might help the campaign decrease the number of competing voices on energy efficiency. Although the campaign received print media coverage in both large and small media markets, overall, the articles tended to be very brief and gave only a superficial treatment to the campaign's primary frames.

Bloggers, who were not considered a primary target audience, provided more hits with a greater rate of frame adoption. Because the blog coverage tended to be positive, it appears the campaign could benefit from targeting this public. Another consideration regarding blog-influenced public relations is that in some cases, bloggers do not disclose much, if any, information about themselves. Only about half of the bloggers surveyed for this communication audit provided identifying information on their blogs. Mainstream media, such as print journalists, have the reputation of their respective media outlets to back up their work. According to Lim and Yang (2006), blogger credibility is generally established by providing expertise and demonstrating trustworthiness over time. Bloggers tend to be viewed as more-credible sources through building relationships with their readership by creating and maintaining a public dialogue.

As an example of such a blog, the CleanMPG blog forum posted an EPA-generated news release about the Bus Tour on October 7 with additional information about upcoming Tour dates and locations. That same day, 13 different readers logged on and commented on their personal experiences with CFLs, both positive and negative, responded to each other's comments, and even provided additional links to each other on how to find out more information about CFLs and the campaign. Unless a print article generates letters to the editor or feedback directly to the campaign's headquarters, it is difficult for public relations practitioners to know how their message was received, if it was read at all. Overall, there is not yet enough research to demonstrate how effective the blogging community is at building the agenda for the media, or setting the agenda for the general public.

R1a: What types of outreach vehicles did ENERGY STAR use to practice agenda building and the dissemination of information subsidies for this campaign?

The campaign utilized numerous public relations tactics to build the media's agenda on CFLs, energy efficiency, and the environment. In terms of print vehicles, the Change a Light Bus Tour's primary means of agenda building were news releases, a collection of online Media Resources documents, and the Bus Tour blog. Additionally, the campaign made use of tactics such as the ENERGY STAR-branded Tour bus, face-to-face interactions with consumers, the education center, and the 16 consumer and media events.

Although the campaign utilized several different vehicles to provide the media with information subsidies, one of the major campaign weaknesses was the organization of these sources, especially the online documents. As discussed in the earlier evaluation, the media documents were broken up between the Change a Light News Room link and the EPA homepage. According to extensive research findings (Curtin, 1999; Gandy, 1982; Sallot & Johnson, 2006), journalists often depend on public relations practitioners to supply them with story ideas and information because they do not have enough time to do it all themselves. By making it difficult for journalists to find all of the intended information subsidies with ease, the campaign decreased the likelihood of agenda building.

R1b: What are the key frames that emerge from ENERGY STAR Change a Light Bus Tour printed information subsidies?

The campaign's three primary frames were the easy and effective frame, the consumer financial benefits frame, and the environmental benefits frame. These frames appeared consistently throughout the campaign's public relations documents and in Tomlinson and Rasmussen's interviews. In terms of theory, the easy and effective frame relates to Grunig's (1983) situational theory component in which people must believe that they are able to do something about a proposed problem. The campaign only asks the

consumer to change a single bulb, not his whole way of life. These characteristics also relate to Hallahan's (1999) identification of the framing of attributes, also known as product positioning. According to Hallahan, message sponsors use semantic framing to emphasize particular attributes, whether positive or negative, in persuasive communications to sway their chosen audiences.

The second frame, consumer financial benefits, although related to Grunig's (1983) constraint recognition, is perhaps more relevant to Rogers' (1983) diffusion of innovations theory. Rogers postulates that consumers who are skeptical of new ideas and adopting new products may be swayed by economic necessity. The fact that CFL giveaways and coupons tend to be popular tactics with the Change a Light campaign and its partner organizations seems to confirm the importance of decreasing economic barriers to change. Similar to the easy and effective frame, focusing on CFLs' financial benefits is another example of Hallahan's (1999) framing of positive attributes. This frame also aims to reach out to new consumers and generates momentum for the overall campaign through focusing on CFLs' positive qualities.

Lastly, the environmental benefits frame again relates back to Grunig's (1983) situational theory. Through drawing attention to global warming and environmental issues, the campaign indoctrinates consumers with problem recognition, or learning that a problem exists in the first place. Although focusing on CFLs' environmental benefits is also an example of Hallahan's (1999) framing of product attributes, focusing on environmental benefits can also be seen as Hallahan's notion of the framing of responsibility. Not only are individual consumers encouraged to create savings in their power bills, but they are also

empowered to “change the world” and understand what they can personally do to improve the environment.

Using familiar comparisons to illustrate these frames, such as relating CFL energy efficiency to home lighting costs and relating the environmental benefits to car exhaust output, addresses Grunig’s (1983) condition that people need to have a referent criterion, or history of related experiences, upon which to base their decision making. Consumers may not be as familiar with complicated wattage or energy-efficiency terminology, but turning on a lamp or seeing visible exhaust pollution from cars is a daily phenomenon that many experience. Through making energy efficiency both familiar to consumers and easy to accomplish, the campaign increases the chance that national consumer thinking and behaviors will change.

R1c: In what ways are frames from the information subsidies consistent and inconsistent with the frames in the resulting print news coverage and blogger coverage?

Overall, the Change a Light campaign had mixed results in achieving frame adoption in the print and blogger coverage. One likely obstacle was the fact that many of the newspapers did not devote a very large amount of space to stories containing reference to the Tour, if they covered the Tour at all. In some cases, only basic Tour event details were provided. However, in the few longer articles, which happened to be in the newspapers with the smallest circulations, the campaign was able to get a very high rate of frame adoption of all three frames.

The campaign generated success in building the blogger’s agenda. News releases were frequently pasted directly into the blogs ensuring message consistency. However, a public relations practitioner who attempts to post her news releases verbatim on a blogger’s

site may incur negative reader reactions because “controlled messages run the risk of being ignored or seen as propagandistic” (Kent, 2008, p. 36). As mentioned in the section on blogger coverage, bloggers establish and maintain their online reputations through demonstrating long-term expertise and trustworthiness (Lim & Yang, 2006). They may also provide public relations practitioners with advance notice of potentially threatening issues (Jacques, 2006). Without a readership, bloggers lose any agenda-building and agenda-setting influence they might have had. As a result, public relations practitioners must be careful to balance the need to get their chosen frames adopted exactly as issued and bloggers’ need to maintain credibility with their audiences.

R2: What public relations strategies and tactics have been the most effective for the Bus Tour in terms of successfully influencing print media and bloggers?

According to the resulting print coverage, journalists were more likely to focus on school-related events than any other feature of the Bus Tour. School events likely addressed journalists’ interest in key news values such as emotional impact and proximity. Tactics such as holding poster contests and essay-writing exercises helped to build momentum for the Bus Tour’s arrival and gave journalists an extra angle to cover. The extra angle is important because it was reported that some journalists found the Bus Tour to be too promotional to cover. This lack of journalistic interest in the bus relates to earlier research that indicated that journalists tend to be wary of public relations tactics that appear to be overly self-serving (Curtin, 1999; Turk, 1986). The second most-popular strategy was to hold a media event at a historic site. The Boston media event generated two articles about the Tour, which centered on how CFLs were used to light Old North Church. Because the church’s lanterns are only lit

twice a year for special occasions, journalists were likely attracted to the oddity value of the novel lighting occurrence as well as the proximity value of covering a local landmark.

Unlike the print journalists, a majority of the bloggers seemed willing to adopt the Tour's news releases verbatim. Because bloggers are not limited to appealing to a particular geographic audience, the news releases with general Tour information, such as the Change a Light campaign's October 3 news release, were the most popular with this audience. Overall, the blogs tended to focus most on the environmental messages, most likely because most of the blogs that featured the Bus Tour were created around environmental topics. Although the campaign did not identify environmentally concerned bloggers as important stakeholders, the campaign documents inadvertently provided valuable information subsidies to this audience as well as to the intended print media stakeholders.

R3: How do the results of this study contribute to the fields of public relations and nonprofit communication?

The Change a Light Bus Tour communications audit has implications for both the fields of public relations and nonprofit communication. In terms of the practice of public relations in general, the audit demonstrated the need for all parties to have access to a campaign's measurable objectives and benchmarking. As a government endeavor funded by taxpayer dollars, the Tour most likely had to have a set of facts and figures in mind. However, Hewan Tomlinson, a key figure in the planning and rollout of the Tour, was not aware of what these numbers were, or may have been uncomfortable with providing them to an external auditor. Providing that information, however, can improve your organization's communication efficiency, and might show the public who paid for the campaign that it was conducted responsibly. Publicizing these numbers is also important because they help those

involved in the day-to-day Tour activities monitor its success and address short comings without waiting until the final evaluation.

The Bus Tour also demonstrated the importance of conducting frequent and thorough environmental scanning when planning a campaign, which is a component of successful issues management (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006). One of the campaign's main tactics to increase awareness was handing out CFLs and coupons at public events. However, many of the Tour's partner organizations were already running many similar events throughout the same time period and locations, which likely affected the amount of media coverage the Tour received. Scanning was also important in terms of dealing with the campaign's weaknesses, such as the need to provide new information to those who had already switched to CFLs. According to Rogers (1983), these early adopters have "the greatest degree of opinion leadership in most social systems" (p. 249). Because early adopters serve as potential role models and opinion leaders for those who are not as quick to adopt new technology, it is critical for campaigns trying to promote new ideas or products to address their needs. According to Tomlinson, the Bus Tour staff was surprised at the level of CFL awareness among those whom they encountered during the Bus Tour. Discovering greater consumer awareness was a positive campaign finding, but they missed out on the opportunity create further environmental awareness. Identifying all of a campaign's key stakeholder publics and being able to anticipate their needs is a top priority for any successful public relations plan.

The Bus Tour also had implications for those interested in nonprofit public relations. Even when organizations have access to relatively large public relations funding, staff, and resource-rich partner organizations, it does not necessarily mean that the resulting public relations campaign will achieve all of its goals. Extra resources and support do not ensure

success. Although Tomlinson said that the Bus Tour had achieved all of its goals, she also admitted that it was unlikely that they would do any additional Bus Tours in the future. By trying something new, however, the campaign staff was able to identify some of the key challenges they will need to address in future planning, such as maintaining more control of partner-lead events. Finally, like many nonprofits with an existing enthusiastic stakeholder base, the campaign needed to remember to better address those who already knew about CFLs, and not just focus on those who were unfamiliar with the campaign's messages.

Overall, my research findings indicate that the Change a Light Bus Tour, although successful in terms of achieving goals such as building and strengthening relationships with partner organizations, had significant opportunities for improvement in other areas, such as creating a significant media draw in local and national media. The following section provides areas for future research, which would provide supporting data to this communication audit.

Future Research

Although my communication audit of the Change a Light Bus Tour included a number of different data sources, future auditors might expand the audit's findings through consulting additional sources. With additional time, an auditor might file a Freedom of Information Act request to obtain the actual cost of the Bus Tour to better determine the Change a Light campaign's return on investment. To more fully evaluate the campaign's relationships with its partners, it would be beneficial to survey those partners directly about the Bus Tour and their overall partnership experience. Looking at the results of this audit, some might conclude that the Bus Tour's true goal was to provide environmental credibility to its partners. Obtaining the partners' perspectives on the Tour would help to confirm or deny this speculation. It would also be illuminating to survey journalists who wrote about the

campaign to determine how they received information subsidies. Because the campaign was so consistent in its public relations documents, it was difficult to identify which sources were most useful to those discussing the campaign.

Future auditors and researchers interested in framing studies also might evaluate the campaign's communication efforts by extensively surveying consumers. It would be helpful to the campaign to understand which of its frames was most persuasive in encouraging different types of consumers, from early adopters to reluctant laggards, to be energy efficient and determine which messages may need to be reframed for greater understanding. With mercury rapidly becoming an important campaign issue, those interested in studying crisis and risk communication might evaluate how the campaign's messages on this potential threat are being received and evaluated.

Conclusion

The purpose of the Change a Light Bus Tour communication audit was to explore and evaluate how the Change a Light campaign chose to promote its pro-environmental messages during its 2007 national outreach event. To evaluate its effectiveness, I analyzed the Tour's coverage in a traditional communication vehicle, the newspaper, and a modern innovation, the blog. The campaign was originally selected because I intended to illustrate how a relatively well-funded, well-known organization could use various information subsidies to affect the media's agenda on an issue. I was also interested in how the campaign framed energy efficiency as an easy and appealing environmental lifestyle choice.

Despite Gandy's (1982) contention that government organizations are able to consistently dominate the media's agenda on any given issue due to their extensive resources and power, this audit has shown that is not always the case. Although the Change a Light

campaign focused on the ease and effectiveness of CFL usage, it did not achieve all of its goals, especially creating a significant media draw. Simply having the benefit of government resources, credibility, and influence was not enough. Without being able to hold the media's long-term interest, the Change a Light campaign potentially lowered the chance of influencing consumer behavior (Cracknell, 1993). Contrary to the campaign's initial targeting of mainstream media outlets, bloggers provided a greater number and quality of media impressions. Although bloggers' influence has not been widely studied, public relations practitioners should consider building relationships with the blogger community, as all signs seem to indicate that it is a growing source of information for the American public and journalists.

With the upcoming legislation forcing all light bulbs to become more energy efficient by 2012, the Change a Light campaign has the opportunity to reevaluate its goals and restructure some of its communication vehicles, such as its Web site. As with any type of organization, its leadership must now evaluate its public relations efforts to learn from its mistakes and better plan for the future. There is no substitute for careful benchmarking, environmental scanning, and understanding the needs of all of an organization's stakeholders. These are necessary measures that any organization, large or small, for-profit or nonprofit, must consider in order to effectively build the media's agenda and successfully conduct public relations.

FIGURES



Figure 1: The ENERGY STAR brand mark, which helps consumers to identify energy efficient products.



Figure 2: A CFL bulb often stands out on shelves due to its spiral shape. However, some of the newer versions have been modified to look more like the traditional incandescent bulbs.



Figure 3: The specially customized bus not only bore environmental slogans, but it also was outfitted with an EPA-certified engine to decrease emissions.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview guide

- 1) What about the bus tour concept appealed to ENERGY STAR decision makers when the idea was first pitched?
- 2) How and when did you become involved with the Change a Light bus tour? What was your role/title in its creation and rollout?
- 3) What were the key goals and objectives of the tour? How do they fit into the overall ENERGY STAR priorities?
- 4) Which audiences did the bus tour hope to target? (Primary and secondary potential audiences)
- 5) Did you tailor specific messages for each of these audiences? If so, how what were those messages? (A focus on the media)
- 6) How did the consumer events differ from the media events?
- 7) Were bloggers ever considered in the creation of this public relations campaign? Do you ever monitor feedback from that community?
- 8) Were there any surprises or particular challenges in trying to reach your different audiences through the bus tour? Did you have to adjust any of your strategies/tactics along the way?
- 9) Did you ever have to respond to any negative publicity related to the tour or the Change a Light campaign?
- 10) What aspects/tactics of the tour were most successful in getting your messages across to the media? Were there any tactics that were not as successful as intended? Were any surprisingly popular?
- 11) What evaluation measures did campaign staff employ to measure the effectiveness of the tour? (Informal and formal measures)
- 12) Did the tour achieve its objectives?
- 13) Will the bus tour take place again next year? Why or why not? If so, will any changes be made?

Appendix B: Tour Overview, from the Campaign Talking Points document

Date	Location	Event
October 3:	Los Angeles, CA	Kick-off consumer event hosted by Osram Sylvania and the Walt Disney Company outside of Disneyland
October 4	San Francisco, CA	Consumer event hosted by Pacific Gas & Electric
October 7	Denver, CO	Two consumer events hosted by Xcel Energy, at the Avalanche hockey and Broncos football games
October 8	Denver, CO	Consumer event at JCPenney store grand opening
October 9	Thornton, CO	Media event hosted at Shadow Ridge Middle School
October 10	Des Moines, IA	Consumer event hosted by MidAmerican Energy Company at Gateway West Park
October 12	Chicago, IL	Media event at Waters Elementary School
October 13	Chicago, IL	Consumer event hosted by GE and the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance at Navy Pier
October 14	Indianapolis, IN	Consumer event hosted by the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance at the Indianapolis Zoo
October 15	Acworth/Atlanta, GA	Media event hosted by EPA at Durham Middle School. Consumer event hosted by Georgia Power and The Home Depot at the Atlanta Falcons game
October 18	Maplewood, NJ	Consumer event hosted by the New Jersey Clean Energy Program at the Maplewood Train Station.
October 19	Boston, MA	Media event hosted by EPA at Old North Church
October 20	Boston, MA	Consumer event hosted by the sponsors of myenergystar.com and the Northeast Regional ENERGY STAR Lighting and Appliance Initiative at Faneuil Hall Marketplace
October 23	New York, NY	Culmination event hosted by New York State Energy Research and Development Authority in Union Square

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