One Message Many Voices
Reframing our “product” to meet “customer” needs

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Today's promotional frame

Message to date has focused on fire
Today’s promotional frame

Dominant frame: Smokey Bear

We show how fire can be good … Smokey shows how fire is bad. Guess who gets more airtime?
Why this frame not be good

Risks are related to fire.
Benefits related to the forest.

**PROBLEMS / RISKS**
- Smoke
- Risk of wildfire
- Air pollution; asthma risk
- Eyesore (Recalls “less than appealing landscape images”)
- Can interrupt vacation activities.

**BENEFITS**
- Reduces wildfire risk
- Ensures ecosystem health
- Natural process
- Improving wildlife and livestock habitat
- Controlling pests
- Improving access
So why are we framing our message using fire?

**Fire framing**  
*(good fire to prevent bad fire)*

- Focuses on risk
- Related to how much you trust government and land managers (what’s right)
- Logical
- All about the method
Let’s try a new frame: Saving forests.

**Fire framing**  
*(good fire to prevent bad fire)*
- Focuses on risk
- Related to how much you trust government and land managers (what’s right)
- Logical
- All about the method

**Forest framing**  
*(keeping forests healthy)*
- Focuses on benefit
- Related to one’s heart - emotional attachment to forest
- Emotional
- All about the rewards
Our theory: Forest care is our product

- **Demand exists:** Many in audience already shopping for relationship with natural areas.
- **Interest highest in urban-woodland interface.**
- **We have something to offer:** Knowledge-cash about what’s going on.
- **Cold pitch doesn’t work.** Need to get people listening before they can contemplate a prescribed fire. Fire’s association with Smokey Bear too strong.
So we tested some concepts

1. Examine the meaning of prescribed fire / controlled burn
2. Reactions to existing approach: Prescribed fires prevent wildfires
3. Reactions to “nature” benefits: Fires good for wildlife
4. Reaction to forest-focused pitch: Draw users to a website
5. Examine web-based approach
   • What draws users
   • How to frame prescribed fires
Research Methods

- Six focus groups
  - Atlanta, GA
  - Columbia, SC
  - Tallahassee, FL

- Intercept interviews
  - Exurban Atlanta
  - Exurban Columbia
Key Finding: Fire = Smokey message

When shown a billboard that includes images of fire or even mentions fire, people tend to think the message is about preventing fires REGARDLESS OF WHAT THE WORDS SAY.
Intercept interview results:
What are these billboards telling you?

- Be careful with fire
- Support prescribed fires
- Other

![Be careful with fire billboard](image1)
![Support prescribed fires billboard](image2)
So we tested a different approach

Get people’s attention by offering them something they are seeking: A closer relationship with nature

Then pitch the importance of prescribed fire in the context of a web site about nature (VisitMyForest.org).
The result: People understood the message and …..

![Bar chart showing percentage of people who visited the forest, did outdoor activities, learned about nature, or did other activities.](chart.png)
... said they were ready to take action
How it works

Beer and milk back here

Messages
What are people already shopping for? What do they want?

How can we help them take action?

interrupt > interact > engage

What can we offer of value?
Step #1: Draw in audience

Take a forest break.

Take a forest break.

Take a forest break.

Take a forest break.
Step #2: Offer message on website

Three Steps to Protect Your Forest

1. Support Good Fires, Prevent Bad Ones
   Prescribed fires, planned and professionally managed, clear underbrush and renew habitats. With prescribed fires, wildlife thrives and wildfires are prevented.
   GoodFIRES

2. Champion Conservation
   Our forests provide clean water and air, essential natural resources and wildlife habitats. Do your part to champion the conservation of forestland. For 10 simple steps you can take to help, click here

3. Leave No Trace
   Our forests are a place of unspoiled natural beauty.
   LN.org

Messages about prescribed fires

See how prescribed fires PREVENT WILDFIRES in this photo diary.

View larger and with captions

1 of 6
Step #3: Interact with “customer”

Three Steps to Protect Your Forest

1. Support Good Fires, Prevent Bad Ones
   Prescribed fires, planned and professionally managed, clear underbrush and renew habitats. With prescribed fires, wildlife thrives and wildfires are prevented.
   See more about good fires in your area at GoodFires.org.

2. Champion Conservation
   Our forests provide clean water and air, essential natural resources and wildlife habitats. Do your part to champion the conservation of forestland. For 10 simple steps you can take to help, click here.

3. Leave No Trace
   Our forests are places of beauty and peace. You can help preserve the wonder of unspoiled nature by practicing Leave No Trace hiking and camping. Learn how at LNT.org.

Find My Forest
Enter your zip code to find a forest near you:

What I want to do:  
- Hiking
- Fishing
- Hunting
- Camping
- Biking
- Horseback
- Boating
- All

Where I want to do:  
- State Parks
- National Parks
- State Forests
- National Forests
- Wildlife Refuge
- Wildlife Mgmt. Area
- All

Learn more about prescribed fires.
FIND

Invite a Friend to take a Forest Break
Enter Friend’s Email
INVITE

Spread the Word
See how prescribed fires PREVENT WILDFIRES in this photo diary.

View larger and with captions →
Messages for a more engaged audience
Step #4: Fully engaged audience becomes allies of prescribed fire
In the future: Longer-term relationship with the audience
Adopt an Acre App

Take a forest break.