

Advocacy Messaging for Kiwi in Human Care

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Introduction

Holders of kiwi play an important role in engaging and inspiring audiences for the protection of New Zealand's most iconic species. As visitor attractions, we have a combined annual audience of well over 1.5 million visitors. We are involved in regional conservation breeding programmes, Operation Nest Egg and a wide range of visitor engagement programmes and interpretative story telling experiences.

The object of this report is to identify opportunities where we can all work together to engage our audiences with messages that complement one another at a national level. This goal was identified in the 2011 Kiwi Captive Management Plan - under chapter 12 'Advocacy':

'Goal 1 – Agree to a process which ensures that the KRG-identified kiwi conservation messages are consistently delivered through participating institution advocacy programmes'.

This paper outlines the recommendations, which have been made based on a number of considerations. Effective collaborative messaging needs to balance what is relevant to the organisations and their values, their sites and physical locations, and most importantly, relevance to the audience. To be most effective, it is also important that we take into account messages communicated by other stakeholders working to protect kiwi (DOC, Kiwis for Kiwi and community projects).

Recommended Collaborative Kiwi Messages

Below are three messages that are recommended be used across all holders of kiwi when engaging with our audiences. Each is detailed below:

- **We all need to care about kiwi.**
- **Be a responsible pet owner.**
- **Support local kiwi recovery projects.**

Each holder has the option to choose one or more of the messages above that best fit with their organisation.

- We all need to care about kiwi

The ground work – getting the audience to connect and understand before they act.

Positive action and behaviour change for the benefit of kiwi will only occur if our audience care about the species. Allowing our audience the opportunity to connect and understand Kiwi is fundamental in inspiring positive action.

As holders of kiwi, we have the opportunity to give our audience the opportunity to get up close and help them learn about kiwi every day; which many others working in kiwi recovery find more difficult.

Unfortunately, it is not as simple just telling our audience they should care. We need to take an experience based approach that engages our audience's senses and ability to emotionally connect - encouraging our audience to see, touch, listen and smell. We can use story telling techniques to share stories about kiwi and their cultural and ecological significance. Often stories about individual kiwi are very effective.

For those that engage with a largely international audience, this message will help raise the profile of kiwi.

– Be a responsible pet owner

Bringing action home – achievable action for our audience.

A survey published by the New Zealand Companion Animal Council (NZCAC) in 2011 shows 68% of New Zealand households own at least one pet - a higher percentage than in any comparable country. 29% of New Zealand homes own dogs, meaning our canine population stands at an impressive 700,000. New Zealand was also revealed as having the highest population of cat owners, with a feline population of 1.419 million. According to the survey, 28% of New Zealand households own a cat. These statistics show that addressing pet ownership is relevant to a large number of our domestic audience.

Obviously, kiwi are at risk of predation from cats and dogs, creating a great opportunity for our audience to take simple action to make a real difference in the protection of kiwi.

The definition of a *responsible pet owner* is ambiguous, and there are a lot of actions that could be suggested.

For dogs, options are (but not limited to): kiwi aversion training, avoiding walking dogs in areas where kiwi are, keeping dogs on a lead, training dogs to heel, not replacing your dog when it passes away, etc.

For cats, options are (but not limited to): de-sex your cat, keep it inside at night, keep it inside all the time, put a bell on it, don't replace your cat when it passes away, etc.

For the sake of clarity and consistency, focusing on two targeted actions is most effective.

For dogs - **keep dogs on a lead.**

For cats - **keep cats inside as much as possible.**

Both messages above strike a balance between being effective at reducing the impact of these animals on kiwi, as well as being simple enough to achieve without telling our audience they are bad for owning these animals. It is also important to note that these actions will not only benefit kiwi but other native animals.

– Support local kiwi recovery projects

Offering opportunities - Linking to community and wild places

This message focuses on collaboration with in-situ kiwi recovery work. It leverages off our ability as visitor attractions to consistently engage with a large audience of people, and show links to community projects and wild kiwi habitat.

It is up to each holder to make contact with their nearest kiwi community project and discuss what this 'support' could include. Support may include (but not limited to): raising awareness and profile of the project, encouraging financial support (assisting fundraising, donations or ticket clipping), promoting volunteer support, showcasing collaboration through Operation Nest Egg, etc.

This is an opportunity for holders that largely engage a more international audience to offer an action that will benefit kiwi. A simple action for international visitors is encouraging financial support.

Other messages considered

The messages below have all been considered and have been put aside at this point in time. Action messages should be reviewed, and in the future some of these messages may become more relevant.

Control of Stoats, Possums and other mammalian predators.

While it is acknowledged that these mammalian predators are a threat to the survival of kiwi, it is not an appropriate action message, as it is very problematic.

Any messaging that encourages an audience to kill an animal needs to be well planned and thought-out. It is age and demographic sensitive. We need to be careful that in our efforts to protect wildlife, we do not disconnect people with that end goal by focusing on controlling introduced species. Conservation is not about killing animals, but rather protecting native plants and animals.

There are also issues around the vilification of animals, which once again may prove to be counterproductive to our efforts to connect our audiences with nature. Introduced species are often portrayed as 'evil' or 'bad' in their nature and therefore the species itself is blamed for its impact on kiwi and other native animals. However, this is untrue – human introduced species are just trying to survive like every other species. The focus of the issue about introduced animals is that humans introduced these species, and humans are now the ones working to solve the issue.

The action of controlling introduced species has a lot of barriers to it. You are asking your audience to take the time to buy traps, baits and/or poison, set them up and dispose of anything they catch safely. This requires time, a financial cost, safety considerations and a willingness to deal with caught animals. Anyone with children or pets may feel hesitant about these actions.

Responsible driving behaviour

This action would affect too few visitors to be rolled out across all kiwi holders. The time between receiving the message to having to change the behaviour would be too great and too hard to measure. Site-specific messaging (e.g. road signage) would be a more effective way of dealing with the issue.

Sustainable resource use – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and encouraging the use of sustainable wood and paper products.

This message addresses the loss of habitat for kiwi by reducing demand on products that come from wild kiwi habitat. This message has been put aside largely because it is assumed that habitat loss for kiwi is more of a historical issue rather than a current issue.

Understanding Our Audience

As mentioned in the introduction, understanding our audience helps guide our action messages and sets us up to be as effective as possible. There will be variations in audience type from one holder to another; however in the information below, there are some consistencies that can be acknowledged.

As kiwi holders, we are engaging with a wide variety of demographics within our audience. Finding relevant action messages across all holders is challenging for a number of reasons, but it is worth noting our mix of domestic and international audiences. From a survey conducted in November 2012, results show that our organisations primarily engage with two audience types. 45.5% of holders class the majority of their audience as international tourists, 54.5% class the majority of their audience as coming from New Zealand towns and cities. Assumptions can be made based on this demographic mix about what is relevant/less relevant to these audiences, and this should be taken into account when deciding on messages.

We also engage with a wide age demographic - from young children to adults to the elderly. While it is important to consider these visitor demographics, they are less influential on our messages. The same message can be delivered to a range of ages, but the delivery of the message should be tailored depending on the age of the group.

In results from the survey mentioned above, about half of the organisations are within 20kms of a wild population (the other half being 20kms plus). Proximity of kiwi holders to wild populations of kiwi is an important factor, as it is easier for audiences to relate to a topic or issue if they are familiar with areas in which kiwi live. This may influence relevance to *place*. If we are engaging with an audience within a certain area, visitors are going to be able to more easily relate if they recognise the area where the kiwi work is taking place.

The most common context in which kiwi holders engage audiences is in an ‘informal learning environment’. The informal learning environment is one where the audience chooses whether or not to participate in the learning experience offered. Basically, it is very easy for our audience to disengage if they are not finding their experience enjoyable to process. Knowing this, holders need be mindful of their approach to the audience, using methods that encourage engagement and avoid disengagement as much as possible. When it comes to collaborative messages, audiences will engage when actions are portrayed as a contribution to a future aspiration, rather than correcting a historical precursor (avoid blame for the past, and instead inspire for a better future).

Communication Approaches and Methodologies

Loss and Gain Framed Messaging – focusing on love, not loss

Loss-framed and gain-framed messaging refers to how cause and consequence is expressed when delivered to an audience.

A loss-framed message emphasises the disadvantages of failing to comply with the communicator’s recommendation. For example: if you don’t use a lead, your dog will kill kiwi.

A gain-framed message emphasises the advantages of compliance with the communicator’s recommendation. For example: if you put your dog on a lead, you will protect kiwi.

Gain-framed messages have the advantage that they reduce the likelihood of a defensive response from your audience. They also provide clear actions, whereas loss framed messages often say what action to avoid, but miss actions that are encouraged.

The approaches above reflect the style that you use to communicate with your audience. Loss-framed messaging tends to lean towards a more negative engagement style, whereas gain-framed messaging portrays a more positive voice that is inspiring for an audience. An analogy is having a conversation with a negative person versus a positive person: a positive person will encourage engagement, and the negative will prompt disengagement.

These two clips from the IUCN explain more:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BvldwOezreM>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrz8nxzo_nw

Behaviour Change, Barriers and Benefits

A common element in behaviour change methodologies is reference to *barriers and benefits*.

A barrier is anything that might stop your audience from carrying out an action being asked. Barriers to behaviour can be (but not limited to): apathy, lack of time or money, and incompatibility with personal values. Barriers are personalised, so will vary between individuals. Most importantly, for action messages to be successful,

barriers should be analysed and addressed, removed or minimised as much as possible.

Benefits are any positive outcome (perceived or real) resulting from a change in behaviour. These are also important to analyse. Addressing and highlighting benefits in any communication with your audience is beneficial for fostering behaviour change.

The best approach to behaviour change is to practice empathy. The ability to put yourself in the situation of your audience can be a valuable exercise and will provide insights that will help you communicate more effectively.

Reference material

Branding Biodiversity – The New Nature Message. *Futerra Sustainability Communications*

Download the book here:

http://iucn.org/about/union/commissions/cec/cec_how_we_work/love_not_loss/

Psychology for a Better World - Strategies to Inspire Sustainability. *Niki Harré*

Download the book here: <http://psych.auckland.ac.nz/psychologyforabetterworld>

Or watch a summary in this 15min You Tube clip here:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zExibEV_PY

Fostering Sustainable Behaviour - Community Based Social Marketing. *Doug McKenzie Mohr*.

Book available online here: <http://www.cbsm.com/pages/guide/preface/>

Kiwi information

Kiwis for kiwi website: <http://www.kiwisforkiwi.org/>