

GROW IDEA: SFI Branding and Outreach Campaign

Overview

SFI developed and finalized a Strategic Direction in 2014 which was created to (1) strengthen SFI's position in the marketplace, (2) build upon core strengths and assets, (3) positively influence competitive forces, and (4) create long-term value for SFI's community. The core of the strategy was to "be more than a standard" and truly elevate our conservation and community focused work.

While SFI has had great success in many areas, SFI is still known primarily for its certification standards, not for the significant work it does on a much broader level in the conservation and community spheres. Public perception in the marketplace does not match the reality of SFI's breadth of programs. Furthermore, SFI is hampered by the external perception that any discussion of the merits of SFI must also lead to a discussion of FSC.

SFI believes the time is right for a branding and outreach campaign. **The goal of such a campaign is to shift perception so SFI is viewed as a sustainability organization dedicated to the future of our forests.**

If sufficient funding exists, this campaign would ideally be developed in the first half of 2017 and launched in the second half of 2017. It would last approximately 12-18 months (through the middle or end of 2018). Beyond that point, SFI would then move into a sustained long-term communications and marketing program.

Audience

SFI believes there are 3 key audiences for this campaign:

1. SFI's "inner circle": Program Participants (PPs), SFI Implementation Committees (SICs) and the SFI External Review Panel (ERP);
2. Conservation organizations
3. Broad marketplace – Customers/brandowners, State and Provincial Foresters, universities, architects/builders, the public/consumers.

The work outlined below would be tailored to each of these audiences.

Action Items and Resources

Phase 1: Website Redesign

SFI has identified a complete redesign of its website as one of its most pressing needs and therefore has moved this up in order of priority. While much of SFI's recent communications materials (e.g. fact sheets, progress reports, etc.) utilize updated designs and are created in a way that effectively conveys SFI's brand, our current website is antiquated, both in terms of current technology (e.g., viewers increasingly look at websites on their smart phones), and in terms of design and content to portray SFI's broader sustainability work and the important work of our community.

Estimated cost for Phase 1: \$75,000 (web designer)

Timing: Q1-Q2 2017

Phase 2: Conduct analysis, develop outreach campaign strategy and action plan

This will involve examining current opportunities and challenges, including the market landscape, Canadian and US political contexts, and the forest sector in general. This will also entail mapping out a comprehensive **timeline and set of actions**. SFI will identify the key events and opportunities that can help us achieve our strategy, including Canada's 150th anniversary and SFI's annual conference.

Estimated cost for Phase 2: \$25,000 (consultant to help with analysis and shaping of strategy)
Timing: Q1-Q2 2017

Phase 3: Establish baseline and tracking mechanisms

In order to determine success with this campaign, SFI needs to identify a baseline which measures current perceptions of SFI. This would involve surveys and possibly focus groups. Multiple surveys may be necessary, to accommodate the different target audiences.

Estimated cost for Phase 3: \$80,000 (for consultant and surveys)
Timing: Initial survey in Q2 2017; Resurvey in Q3 2018

Phase 4: Launch outreach to all audiences

The rollout of the campaign will be targeted to each of the three key audiences. SFI's PP/SIC liaison (a planned hire, budgeted separately from this campaign) will help implement the outreach to the "inner circle", through personal meetings, webinars, letters, and other means, to help develop their understanding of SFI's new positioning and to solicit their help in reaching the other audiences, specifically customers, conservation and community groups, and others within the broad marketplace.

SFI will also utilize professional services (possibly including a boutique PR firm) to directly engage the broad marketplace audience. This will involve hosting forums, participating in strategic forest and sustainability sector events, getting paid media in key publications, achieving unpaid media coverage, and other actions. SFI will build on its current work in reaching the conservation sector through its conservation impact and large landscapes conservation work, and will ensure consistency in messaging.

SFI will develop and execute strategic advertising to elevate the campaign, using not only traditional print and electronic publicity, but also social media advertising to ensure Search Engine Optimization (SEO). An effective SEO strategy will ensure SFI's website can be found in a search engine's results page (SERP) when searching for words or phrases relevant to the campaign.

Estimated cost of Phase 4: \$300,000 - \$350,000
Timing: Begin in Q4 2017, complete by Q3 2018

Total cost of outreach campaign = \$480,000 - \$530,000

Based on the above schedule, it is estimated that:

- **Approximately \$200,000 would be needed in 2017.**
- **Approximately \$280,000-\$330,000 would be needed in 2018.**

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