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Environmental Organization Awareness and Perception Index

Over the past 10 years, BrandSolutions has conducted numerous branding and research studies for environmental/conservation organizations. In the research we do in most of these studies, we determine the level of awareness (i.e., percentage of the target audience who are aware of the organization on an unaided and aided basis) and perceptions (positive/negative) of the organization's reputation.

Based on these studies, we have come up with an Environmental Organization Awareness and Perception Index, which has been developed as a guide for environmental organizations in determining where they stand relative to others around the country.

If your organization's awareness is low, it is difficult to develop the level of grassroots support that is critical to the success not only of your organizational initiatives, but also of the long term success of the organization overall.

Likewise, if your organization's image is not positive, that is, if the public is not on your side, your job is much more difficult. On the other hand, if corporate interests and state legislatures see your organization as a force to be reckoned with because it has public sentiment on its side, then your chances of success in all of your initiatives are much greater.

Based on the studies we've conducted over the years with environmental organizations, and also on those of other types of organizations and companies, we have determined what different "levels" of awareness and perception mean to an organization in terms of how effective it can be generating successful environmental/policy initiatives.

We have found that the "cost of entry" for aided awareness (i.e., Are you aware of or have you heard of [organization name?]) is about 30%. In order to even begin getting the degree of public support needed to be effective with its initiatives, an organization needs to be recognized by at least 30% of the organization's target audience (i.e., depending on the organization, this would include either the entire state's or region's population, or some sub-set of that population). As this level is achieved, it is critical that the organization have a positive perception, and of course the more positive the better. At least a 2:1 ratio (i.e., two-thirds to one-third) of positive to negative should be the goal for an organization to have. With less than a 2:1 ratio, an organization has too much of the public/target audience against it, and so it is difficult to generate the level of positive momentum necessary to build grassroots and legislative support.

Aided Awareness Among Target Audience

- <30% - Poor
- **30% - Minimum Threshold**
- 30-50% - Good
- Over 50% - Goal - Excellent

Perception

- 1:1 or lower positive/negative ratio - Poor
- **2:1 positive/negative ratio - Minimum Threshold**
- Over 2:1 positive/negative ratio - Goal - Excellent

Some examples of sample organizational data and our assessments are shown in the table below.

Aided Awareness	Positive/Negative/No Perception	% of Pop. w/ Positive Perception	% of Pop. w/ Negative Perception	% of Pop. w/ No Perception	Assessment
20%	40%/40%/20%	8%	8%	84%	Both awareness and perception are too low; need to get awareness to at least 30%, positive perception to 60%. However, with 84% of state having no perception of the organization, there is opportunity to greatly increase positive perception.
40%	50%/25%/25%	20%	10%	70%	Awareness crosses the minimum threshold; perception is just at the minimum threshold (2:1), so the organization has a good chance for success in public outreach and its policy initiatives in the state legislature. Also, with 68% of state having no perception of the organization, there is opportunity to greatly increase positive perception.
60%	70%/20%/10%	42%	12%	46%	Awareness is high, and perception is well above the minimum threshold, so the organization has a solid foundation for success in public outreach and its policy initiatives in the state legislature. With 46% of state having no perception of the organization, there is also opportunity to further increase positive perception.