

Is This Effective? A Content Analysis of Online Agricultural Awareness Campaigns

Joy N. Goodwin, Graduate Student
University of Florida
310 Rolfs Hall
P.O. Box 110540
Gainesville, FL 32611
Phone: (352) 273-2614
Fax: (352) 392-9585
goodwin.4@ufl.edu

Quisto Settle, Graduate Student
University of Florida
411 Rolfs Hall
P.O. Box 110540
Gainesville, FL 32611
Phone: (352) 273-3425
Fax: (352) 392-9585
qsettle@ufl.edu

Tracy Irani, Ph.D., Professor
University of Florida
220 Rolfs Hall
P.O. Box 110540
Gainesville, FL 32611-0540
Phone: (352) 273-2588
Fax: (352) 392-9585
irani@ufl.edu

Is This Effective? A Content Analysis of Online Agricultural Awareness Campaigns

Abstract

This study explored the content and effectiveness of online agricultural awareness campaigns, including campaigns from every state. Content analysis was used to determine the content, appeals and frames, and the web traffic of the pages. The majority of campaigns were on second-tier pages, which are less likely to show up in search engine results. The majority of the pages included photographs and logos, but they did not include other media components, including social media. The lack of social media is an area that can be increased to reach wider audiences. Though included in less than one third of pages, the most prevalent photograph types were non-farming adults, positive food products, fields, and free-roaming animals. Using these photographs types could be missing the opportunity for campaigns to create more personal connections with audiences. Logical appeals were more prevalent than emotional appeals. The lack of emotional appeals could be hurting effectiveness because emotional appeals create stronger connections with audiences and decisions are based on more than logic. The most prevalent frames were agricultural education and economic, which could hurt the campaigns because education-only campaigns are traditionally less effective. Only 21 of the 151 analyzed webpages received enough web traffic to be analyzed using Google Ad Planner, indicating most campaigns lacked the audience exposure needed for effectiveness. It is recommended that campaigns be pre-tested prior to launch, campaign planning be used to better target audiences, and midcourse analysis to assess effectiveness and make any needed adjustments.

Keywords: agricultural awareness campaigns, content analysis, agenda setting, messaging appeals, framing, website traffic, campaign effectiveness