

CMC Committee Conference Call Minutes

Tuesday, September 05, 2017, 1:00-2:00 PM EDT

Call-in: (646) 558-8656, access code 571 774 3008

Online: <https://zoom.us/j/5717743008>

Agenda:

1. Roll call
 - Voting: Durgan (Chair), Latimore, Reed, Bonnanno, Rieger, Schlutt, Peppers, Clary
 - Non-voting: Nuber, Shipman, Maw, Klemme, Rhodes, Wirth, Leibovitz
2. Approve agenda for 09/05 call
 - **Agenda approved as sent**
3. Approve minutes of 07/27 call
 - **Fred Schlutt moved to approve minutes, seconded by Scott Reed, unanimously approved**
4. kglobal report (Jenny Nuber)
 - Rather than a traditional quarterly report, kglobal reported on the video campaign and next steps for AgIsAmerica
 - Based on the first video's performance, creating a second video right away wouldn't be effective
 - Rest of 2017 will be focused on using lessons learned to improve response on future campaigns
 - Video campaign was the first call to action (CTA) for AgIsAmerica community – the vehicle was a video, the content was the "One Ask".
 - kglobal wants to get more granular going forward
 - i. Testing different types of content
 - ii. Identifying what content generates the highest level of activity
 - iii. Identifying the best vehicles for distributing the content
 - iv. End goal – boost engagement and increase response rates to prime our audience for 2018
 - Question (Scott Reed): Is there value to working on the developing Farm Bill in 2018?
 - i. (Hunt Shipman) – The CLP has not yet developed its complete Farm Bill package or recommendations. No need to devote resources to Farm Bill efforts on the current CMC campaign. If we find ourselves in an adversarial situation on SNAP-ED, that could change the landscape for

us. We don't have a huge pot of mandatory dollars that we're pursuing for the Farm Bill.

- Question (Rick Rhodes) – How were the four schools in kglobal's strategic plan identified?
 - i. (Jenny Nuber) – Looking at the whole of universities within our “blessed” states, historically who we had the best relationships with in terms of communicators responsiveness and content creation, kglobal identified these four institutions. Strategies will begin with those four institutions as they're low hanging fruit, to get them up and running quickly.
- Question (Mark Latimore) – Will the October survey enhance the relationships across more universities?
 - i. (Jenny Nuber) – The goal of the survey is engaging the AgIsAmerica audience. kglobal will work closely with communicators at the schools who are involved.
- Question (Rick Klemme) – In some instances, communicators were discouraged to share AgIsAmerica content. Are Government Affairs folks on board with AgIsAmerica correspondence at the four highlighted institutions?
 - i. (Jenny Nuber) – The four highlighted institutions have strong relationships established between internal audiences and kglobal.
 - ii. (Ian Maw) – Government Affairs is an area we need to work on. There are opportunities we could take more advantage from.
- Question (Faith Peppers) – If kglobal can put out a timeline in advance of when information will be coming, Faith can start a discussion with Government Affairs staff to get them ready.
 - i. (Jenny Nuber) – kglobal will release that timeline ASAP.
- Question (Rick Rhodes) – What are the important areas of focus, to better align with Government Affairs?
 - i. (Jenny Nuber) – One important thing is building an appropriate timeline for planning. How can we help institutions engage internal audiences more successfully? There wasn't a lot of that pre-planning period built into the video campaign. The challenge for us: how can we move appropriately to the right Dean/Directors within institutions, to give us a 'stamp of approval' going forward with these campaigns, to best facilitate those internal conversations?
 - ii. (Faith Peppers) – AHS needs to be involved so that Deans know they are part of the conversation, and people can be assured that the message comes from throughout the whole organization. Deans are part of the national conversation, and we need communicators with Deans on their side to seek approval from Government Affairs.
 - iii. (Ian Maw) – The CMC represents interests in all of our sections. CMC members need to engage section leaders accordingly.
- (Rick Klemme) – A candid comment from Sonny Ramaswamy - perhaps Deans/Directors aren't necessarily wired for advocacy work? We've encountered

significant challenges in increasing internal response, and getting Government Affairs people on board.

- (Fred Schlutt) - Instructions on what Directors were supposed to do weren't entirely clear. Fred thought it was his responsibility to push info to the entire ECOP community.
- (Ian Maw) – We need to incorporate these instructions and strategies into orientation for new Deans/Directors.
- (Rick Rhodes) – This is one reason why the CMC has a sub-group examining where the committee is positioned to ensure it best reaches multiple audiences.
- (Bev Durgan) – As we emphasize states with representation in various sections or who have committee chairs, we can do a better job of engaging others. We need to help the rest of the system know that others are interested in what they do.
- (Jenny Nuber) – kglobal would be happy to be involved with creating a primer on the AgIsAmerica effort, something that could be distributed or kept on file.
- (Faith Peppers) – A version of the communications training done for the Northeast region Directors could be part of a new administrators' orientation.
- **Rick Rhodes, Jenny Nuber, and Faith Peppers will explore creating a primer on the AgIsAmerica campaign to assist other regions and new Directors nationwide.**
 - Bev would like to see a video that talks about what it means to be an advocate, what you can do?

5. Cornerstone report (Hunt Shipman)

- Appropriations process moving in the House in the next three weeks to an 8-bill Omnibus bill of which an Ag bill will be included.
- Going to omnibus solution seems the most realistic; natural disasters, debt ceiling complicate that picture more so today than in most years.
- Cornerstone doesn't see where a second video would be needed or effective for moving the needle anytime soon, and recommends conserving resources for the balance of 2017 and get prepared to create content in 2018.
- The Land-grant system did do some message testing 2.5-3 years ago that has gone stale by now given the passage of time and shifts in political perspectives. Jenny's outlined a way for us to not only do de facto messaging as it relates to issues, but a way to engage our stakeholders better as a whole.
- We need a strategy to start with our Deans and move upward, all the way to our Presidents' offices. For anything we do to be successful, advocacy, CMC or otherwise – if we fight internal headwinds we will never move the ball.
- We're experiencing growing pains after concluding our 'growth' phase and taking our first shift toward engagement. We can now build future platforms for advocating within the system, based on improving upon our experiences.

6. Update on CMC as a permanent committee of the BAA/PBD
 - Subgroup formed to examine the CMC's position (Rick Rhodes, Bev Durgan, Gary Thompson, Faith Peppers)
 - Rick Rhodes drafted a summary paper, currently under review as subgroup, for presentation to the CMC
 - Today, the CMC is a standing committee of ESCOP. Since then, CES has joined, AHS has joined, but the committee is located within ESCOP.
 - Changing the CMC's position could improve our exposure in the spotlight, and subsequently allow us to engage and better activate our internal audiences.
 - Where should the committee be? What are our opportunities to activate internal or external audiences? Who should really be on the committee?
 - Repositioning the committee could solve a lot of the problems discussed on this call.
 - **Subgroup will be sending the summary paper on the CMC's position for the committee's consideration after the subgroup reviews.**
 - **After the CMC provides their recommendation, it will be sent to the PBD ~3-4 weeks prior to APLU.**

7. Other business
 - kglobal's 2017 Q3 report should be done in end September
 - CMC will soon schedule a call in early October

AgIsAmerica: Recommendations for Next Steps

August 2017

On June 15, kglobal launched AgIsAmerica's first campaign to test the activation rates of internal and external audiences under the AgIsAmerica banner. Based off the insights from that campaign, and conversations with Cornerstone about the status of the bill, kglobal is recommending we do not create a second video as the primary vehicle for our next community activation:

- Developing a second video now will not move the needle for this year's budget process. A better timeline would be to refocus developing a second video effort in March for the FY18 budget process.
- Under the current structure of the CMC, a video requires too many "asks" to the audience, increasing barrier to entry and decreasing conversion rates.
- The video did not seem to create a sense of urgency to our internal (AgIsAmerica) audience. External audiences were more responsive than internal audiences to the video; our goal is to drive internal engagement.

Instead, we propose the following strategic program over the remainder of 2017, leading into 2018. This program will aim to leverage the existing community by increasing awareness and loyalty to the AgIsAmerica brand through a series of lighter calls-to-action (CTAs).

Success of the program will identify what demographics are most responsive to what types of messaging, and why. It will also continue augmenting AgIsAmerica's goal of educating the public about the importance of funding land-grant universities through showcasing university Research and Extension programs.

Goals

- Strengthen existing relationships between AgIsAmerica, administrative heads, and university communicators in order to drive higher participation rates in future CTAs
- Identify new opportunities for universities and stakeholders to engage with and amplify AgIsAmerica content
- Develop a Messaging Matrix linking content types and delivery vehicles to most-engaged audiences



Strategic Plan

Based off of data from the past year, kglobal will focus on schools in priority states that have (1) strong historical relationships with AgIsAmerica and (2) compelling research pertaining to the BAA Priority Areas.

These schools include:

	Historical Relationship	Research Produced
<i>University of Florida</i>	Relationship with their PR Specialist who regularly submits content	Water
<i>University of Georgia</i>	Strong relationship with Faith Peppers	Food security
<i>North Dakota State University</i>	School has continually been in contact with us for several years, submitting content	Livestock
<i>Oregon State University</i>	Connected with their new communications team early last fall	Wildlife

kglobal will work with university communicators at all four schools to determine which schools to build an audience around in Q3 and focus a light call-to-action on in Q4.

Tactics

Each month, AgIsAmerica will promote a specific “light” call-to-action with original digital content supported by internal stakeholder communications and external media relations.

The relaunched AgIsAmerica website (agisamerica.org) will serve as the central hub and conversion point. This means that any visitor to the AgIsAmerica website will be anonymously identified across a variety of data points, including sex, age range, location, and agricultural interests.

Based off findings from the video campaign, all calls-to-action will include one short, explicit conversion. These “light” CTAs would be as simple as sharing a Facebook post or filling out a survey. All calls-to-action will be developed to maximize internal stakeholder participation.

Using this data, we will form the foundation that will guide stronger, more robust message testing in 2018. Understanding which types of audiences respond to what types of content will ideally increase participation and activation rates in 2018.



Although we will focus on specific schools, our content and CTAs will focus on all land-grant universities in our priority states:

- Tuskegee University
- Auburn University
- Alabama A&M University
- Fort Valley State University
- University of Georgia
- Rutgers State University
- New Jersey Institute of Technology
- Kansas State University
- University of California, Davis
- University of Maine
- Washington State University
- North Dakota State University
- University of Missouri
- Lincoln University
- Florida A&M University
- University of Florida
- Oregon State University
- Montana State University

Proposed Timeline

	Content Test	Vehicle Test
<i>September</i>	Build audience based off proposed Q4 campaigns	
<i>October</i>	Survey	Targeted Facebook Posts
<i>November</i>	Infographics	Digital Advertising
<i>December</i>	Holiday-Related Content	Email Marketing

Next Steps

- Continue outreach and building relationships with priority states
- Highlight additional priority state content to increase audience engagement
- Begin coordination for first smaller CTA in October



“One Ask” AgIsAmerica Campaign: Video #1 Report

July 25, 2017

Overview

In 2016, kglobal recommended shifting the strategic focus of the AgIsAmerica campaign to “engagement,” including, for the first time, testing the community’s response rate to so-called “calls-to-action (CTA).” By issuing CTAs, we learn not only what percentage of the community is responsive, but also what type of content and delivery mechanism motivates them to act.

An opportunity for the first-ever CTA of the AgIsAmerica community came in the form of the NIFA “One-Ask.” On June 15th kglobal launched a campaign to raise awareness of the need for increased federal funding, and to educate individuals on the available avenues to take further action.

The “One Ask” provided us with the content for this CTA, but the next question was what the primary delivery mechanism would be. Since AgIsAmerica is a digital community, we needed a vehicle that would function well in the social space. We know that more than [4x as many consumers](#) would prefer to watch a video than read about a product. Social videos generate [1200% more shares](#) than text and images. For these reasons, kglobal chose to develop an original video as the centerpiece of this campaign.

What We Did

In coordination with the CMC and our partners at Cornerstone, kglobal created a 1:47 minute [video](#) that explored the diversity of agriculture and its impact on everyday life. The video told the story of American agriculture and made the point that the key to its future success is the land-grant system. We finished with a invitation to the viewer to learn more about ways to support American Agriculture by visiting [AgAction.org](#).

The tone of the video was intentionally informative, as opposed to the urgency normally seen in CTAs. We chose the content in order to make the video evergreen- therefore the story was broad, inclusive and high-level.

The video campaign officially ran from June 15 to July 18 in conjunction with the House and Senate mark-ups of the agriculture appropriations bill. Over the course of the campaign, we altered our approach based on real-time feedback to ensure the most engagement and success possible.



Campaign Timeline

The Ag is America video campaign was optimized throughout, based on feedback from internal audiences and external events:

1. On June 14th, we launched the new AgIsAmerica website. The website redo, while necessary outside of this campaign, also ensured that individuals could view campaign content in a mobile-responsive format (on smart phones and tablets).
2. On June 15, we officially launched the video on our AgIsAmerica website and social media platforms.
 - We posted a blog on the AgIsAmerica website with the video embedded. We then drafted social media content that directed individuals to the AgIsAmerica website. (social media ongoing daily throughout the campaign month)
 - We launched two categories of digital advertisements: social and banner ads on key sites in target states. (ongoing daily throughout the campaign month)
 - We emailed the AgIsAmerica newsletter list. (June 15th and June 21st)
 - To support the video launch, our team emailed all identified land-grant communicators to disseminate the video and spread the word via social media, websites, and eNewsletters. (June 15th and June 21st)
 - We also worked with Faith Peppers and Sarah Lupis to prepare a launch strategy for the ACE conference.
 - Finally, we worked with Rick Klemme for distribution on ECOP's Monday Minute eNewsletter.
3. On June 21, in response to a standard drop-off rate of 1:20, we shortened the video by 15 seconds and added the website address (AgAction.org) throughout the feature.
 - The following day, we posted the shortened video on social media and promoted the video, instead of a image post. Digital advertising was also adjusted to focus on major publications websites from target states in preparation for the House committee mark-up on June 28.
4. On July 5th, after the House mark-up, we adjusted digital advertising to focus on the five target Senate states: North Dakota, Oregon, Florida, Missouri, and Montana.
5. On July 7, we switched advertising to link back to the AgAction page in time for the Senate mark-up on July 18. This allowed us to test what would happen to response rates with fewer conversions.



Results

It is important to keep in mind that this is the first time that we have ever tested the AgIsAmerica community with a CTA. For the last several years, we have focused on amplifying LGU impacts to a larger, broader audience and in doing so, becoming a trusted source of information for important stakeholders. Typically the first CTA tells us two things: who, if anyone, will actually **do** something other than engage with content; and what the demographics of that group are. Using that knowledge, future calls to action are built targeting that cohort, tweaking content and delivery vehicle based on its profile. These results are not atypical for an initial CTA. As we refine content and understand more about the specific sub-groups within the community, we see these rates and percentages rise. For comparisons sake, Kglobal also works on a similar project with the National Pork Producers Council. We spent a full year testing and refining our messages and delivery mechanisms until we were satisfied with the standard response rates of that digital community.

Numbers at a Glance:

Total Clicks to Ag Is America blog post: **5,045**

- Social: 165
- Advertising: 2,102
- Email/Word of Mouth : 2,778

Total Video Views: **5,032**

- YouTube: 809
- Facebook: 4,233
- Average View Duration 1:20

Clicks to Ag Action Page: **606**

- From Social: 234
- From Ag Is America Website: 84
- Advertising: 194¹
- Email/Word of Mouth: 94

States with the highest response rates: California, Florida, Oregon, Alabama, Missouri

What Worked

- **The conversion rates were very good.** The industry standard click rate for education website CTAs is .07%. We saw rates of .10% This is very good, particularly for our first campaign with an audience that had never been asked to do anything other than to engage with content. This means we do have a cohort of engaged supporters we can prime to be responsive to future CTAs.

¹ On July 7th, we switched the click-through on our digital ads from the AgIsAmerica website directly to AgAction.org.



- **Digital advertisements were very effective.** Throughout the course of the campaign, we ran paid advertisements on social media and as Google and banner ads on key sites in our target states. Over 1.1 million people saw our ads (which is excellent from a purely education and awareness standpoint) and we saw a click rate of .17% (=2,200 individuals), which is significantly higher than the industry standard.²

What Didn't

- **We asked people to do too many things.** In order to keep a strong line between education efforts and advocacy, we had to ask audiences to convert several more times than we normally would. Audiences converted and engaged with the content, but at each step we lost people. Like a funnel, we started with nearly 13,000³ people and ended with 606⁴.
 - Conversion #1: Read our social post
 - Conversion #2: Click from our social post to our website
 - Conversion #3: Watch the video
 - Conversion #4: Click from the video to AgAction.org
 - Conversion #5: Take action (send the email)
- **The video was too long.** While we wanted to tell a comprehensive story, the video was too long for viewers. Only 5% watched the entire original video. When we did shorten the video, near-completion rate increased by over 25%.
- **External audiences were more responsive than internal.** We saw more click-throughs originating from paid advertisements than from internal audiences. On the one hand, this is very positive as it means we were reaching new, interested parties in our target states, but on the other hand, it means that our internal stakeholders were not as engaged as we had hoped they would be.

Lessons Learned

- **Have a numeric goal in mind:** Understanding what is a meaningful result (500 emails vs. 5,000 vs. 25,000) can help us calibrate resources accordingly. If we learn as we continue to test this community that it costs us \$X to achieve X result, we will know how and when to activate this group.
- **Make the ask explicit, short, and one-step:** Over 4,000 people saw the video on social media, but very few watched past the first 30 seconds and even fewer clicked-through the link after. Our most engaged audience has an attention span of less than 10 seconds and the explicit ask (“Visit AgAction.org to learn more”) needs to be made either in video, audio, or graphical format, in under 10 seconds.

² The industry standard for education themed ads is .07%

³ 12,500 people saw our social posts within the existing AgIsAmerica community

⁴ 606 people clicked through to the AgAction.com page



- **Find new ways to communicate a sense of urgency to our internal audiences:** With additional engagement from existing community members and land-grant stakeholders, the reach and engagement for the campaign--specifically with the ultimate action to submit a contact form on the AgAction page--would have been much higher.
- **Make it easy for older audiences to engage:** On social media, the 55+ cohort was most likely to engage. This audience needs higher accessibility options, such as easy-to-find links, an explicit ask they can accomplish, and obvious copy and imagery targeting them.