

City of Coachella

Water Conservation

Public Relations Proposal



By

The Online Think Tank

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Mission Statement

Our goal is to reduce water consumption in the City of Coachella by 33%. This includes residential, government and business usage excluding agricultural. We will use grassroots marketing efforts to promote voluntary reduction in water use. Through careful marketing, PR and education we will create awareness of this serious issue. We will distribute city council approved recommendations to citizens on how best to conserve water in their homes and businesses, while personally discussing this with each water user and household.



Introductory Comments

Voluntary water conservation is extremely important as it can often stave off Level II Drought restrictions by slowing the water usage however no voluntary water conservation program can be truly viable unless there is "buy-in" by the water users themselves. This is why it is imperative to talk with water users and households directly and in person. The same is true with small business owners. There are so many things that water users can do to cut their water use if they really make a concerted effort.

Most voluntary only water conservation programs only yield 10-15% at first, even with a robust public relations campaign, which includes education conservation tips in the water bills, cable TV reminders, and newspaper ads. One cannot knock a 10-15% reduction in water, which is an excellent return on such awareness programs. Yet, at the City of Coachella, we have higher goals and realize that it will take our best efforts, and a carefully chosen strategy.

Thus, we have devised a plan to solve this challenge and achieve our ambitious goals of a 33% reduction in households, government and non-agricultural businesses.

The Players

The Coachella Chamber of Commerce:

Since the Coachella Chamber of Commerce is known and respected by the local business community we will enlist their assistance. The Coachella Chamber of Commerce will alert the business community through articles in their monthly newsletter and mention of their participation on their website. Next, we will get a volunteer group of both English and Spanish Speaking members to assist us in personally contacting all the businesses in town.

The Water District:

The Water District will enclose Water Conservation PR Material in their water bills and approve the verbiage and PR pieces that the volunteers hand out during their neighborhood canvassing and at public events. The water district will also print extra "water conservation tips" for businesses to hand out, information that is educational and has local resources such as phone numbers of where to get new equipment or trade in the old, as well as how to get a water conservation audit.

The City of Coachella:

The City of Coachella will keep a record of the progress for all on their website so we can plot our drive towards the 33% water conservation reduction goals. The city will also put downloadable brochures, list of resources for homeowners and business, and links to the Water District. The City of Coachella will provide Proclamations for exemplary business reductions in water and to the individual volunteers who assist in canvassing the community. The City of Coachella will provide a liaison to interface with the team and chamber of commerce.

The Water Conservation Team:

This will be an elite team of volunteers along with some paid temporary workers who will do the most important job of being omnipresent in our neighborhoods and business districts getting the word out. Two members of the Online Think Tank will assist in the coordination of the project. The canvassing team will also allow volunteers from nonprofit groups to assist with a donation made to their respective groups. Any temporary workers will be hired from the City of Coachella's summer work program.



The Plan

I. Planning Team Meeting

- A. Setting up the Committee and Plan Implementation
- B. Mapping Out the Area and City Limits
- C. Find Business to Donate Printed Material (advertise on back - optional)
- D. Get List of Home Owners Associations and Contacts

II. Initial Volunteer Meeting

- A. Assigning Territories and Teams (grid marketing explanation)
- B. Conduct Training
 - 1. Conflict Resolution Role Playing
 - 2. Required Attire
- C. Q and A from Water District Conservation Coordinator
 - 1. Why We Are Doing This
 - 2. Explanation of Level I, II, III Droughts
 - 3. Sprinklers – Toilets – Shut Off Nozzles - Showers
- D. Introduction of City of Coachella Liaison
 - 1. Thank You
 - 2. Motivational Speech
 - 3. Explanation of Goals

III. Test Run – 1,000 Households

- 1. Evaluation Meeting – Free Lunch
- 2. Discussion on Water User Attitude
- 3. More Role Playing if Needed
- 4. Feedback and Suggestions to Increase Efficiency
- 5. Modification of Plan
- 6. Adjust Printed Material Needs and Supply

IV. Team Starts – Operation "Save Water"

- 1. Hand Out Water Conservation Flyers (5, 25 Ways to Save Water in English/Spanish)
- 2. Check In and Out Sheets Talled
- 3. Highlight Map of Completed Areas
- 4. Report Progress to City Council Meeting
- 5. Invite Media to Temporarily Join with Canvassing Teams for PR
- 6. Record Progress in Journal and "City Water Blog" or Use Desert Sun's MyDesert.com
- 7. Hit Business Districts and Find Water "Super Savers" to Award

V. Awards Ceremony

1. Tell Media "It's a Start" but Conservation is a Year Round Issue
2. Re-emphasize the Need to Save Water
3. Give Proclamation at City Council Chamber

VI. Evaluate and Document

1. Provide a Detailed Report of Successes and Challenges
2. Determine if a Repeat is Needed Next Year
3. Calculate the Potential Water Savings Based on Reduction
4. Allow City of Coachella to Post Results on City Website

The Estimated Costs

When estimating the costs of this project, it was noted that the Online Think Tank grants this plan to the City of Coachella at no charge as a public service. The City of Coachella may modify it, shelve it or implement it.

The Online Think Tank is willing to run the entire program for a cost of \$10,000.00 including hiring the needed personnel, but the Online Think Tank also recognizes that a proper Public Relations needs dedicated volunteers of those directly affected by water issues. Thus, it would be better for the City of Coachella to implement it themselves. However, if the City of Coachella cannot or is not willing to execute this plan, the Online Think Tank can.

The Online Think Tank is willing to oversee the project and assist the committee in making this happen and attend all meetings at **No Charge** if the City of Coachella, Chamber of Commerce or a group of volunteers accepts the responsibility and comes forward. The following costs are needed to make this program work

Printed Material: \$0 – 2,225.00

26,700 population divided by 4.0 per household = 6675. The cost of the printed material will be approximately \$.30 per household for handouts or \$2,225.00 [est.] This number does not include the normal flyers and educational material that will be enclosed in the Water Districts Bills. The price of printing can be Zero if we find an advertiser for the back of the flyers and printed material or take on a corporate, small business or farmer sponsor.

Labor for Canvassing Teams: \$4,000.00

This is based on 10 people and 1 week's worth of work [40 hours] @ \$10.00 per hour. Each worker will make \$8.00 per hour take-home. This figure assumes 1/2 of the group will be volunteers.

Fuel and Transportation: \$775.00

This figure is an estimate of the cost to drive to the neighborhoods and pick up or drop off volunteers and paid workers.

Meals and Awards: \$1,000.00

As a way of thanking the volunteers and workers, as well as the organizers, we will need to have a minimum of two get-togethers in a food setting. This will assist in team building, as we set out to canvass during the hottest part of the summer. We also need to purchase bottled water for the group during the mission. Awards will be needed to show our appreciation to the team.

Estimated Total = \$5,775.00 to \$8,000.00

A Final Note

The Online Think Tank understands that there are members of the community who have expertise, own restaurants, run printing shops and perhaps have done canvassing of this type in other endeavors. We believe it makes the most sense (common sense) to leverage any of this experience or resources available to reduce costs and increase the effectiveness of this plan.

We also recognize that no matter how successful such a mission goes, inevitably the responsibility of water conservation rests on the shoulders of each and every one of it. There must be "buy-in" and commitment from households, businesses and government agencies for these goals to be met.

We urge the City of Coachella to take action –

This plan is definitely a step in the right direction.