



# The Hydrogen Education Foundation's Public Outreach Program

## Summary



# Organization

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- Led initially by Hydrogen Education Foundation staff
  - Who is the HEF? The charitable, 501(C)3, education-focused arm of the National Hydrogen Association
- Guided now by our **Steering Committee** -- communications professionals from sponsoring companies
- Developed with and supported by **a professional marketing firm, Zocalo Group**, selected because of its record of success with Word of Mouth marketing
  - *Thank you Zocalo Group for much of the content of this presentation!*

# Steering Committee



TOYOTA



Shell Hydrogen



DAIMLERCHRYSLER



HONDA

The Power of Dreams

BALLARD<sup>®</sup>



SOUTH CAROLINA HYDROGEN  
AND FUEL CELL ALLIANCE



Building Awareness and  
Understanding for Hydrogen  
Background & Strategy





# Overview

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- Much discussion about alternative energy, including hydrogen; however, most vocal voices for hydrogen are those of critics
- There's a distinct lack of understanding despite nearly unanimous support for alternative energy
  - Conflicting, complicated information
  - Need to simplify, clarify
- Hydrogen has been replaced in the public mindset, and skepticism has increased after failed promises/unmet expectations
- Hydrogen is a concept that people do not grasp; it's “an element” they can't identify with, and therefore can't support

“Keep It Simple Stupid.”

(and realistic!)

K.I.S.S.A.R.?



# Overarching Objectives

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- Increase broad-based understanding, acceptance and support for hydrogen
- Use words and concepts anyone can understand and relate to.
- Build realistic expectations for hydrogen products and development
- Position hydrogen as an important part of the energy mix



# The Marketing Dilemma

## Traditional Marketing Becoming Less Effective

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- People suffer from information overload
  - “Over-choice”
  - Advertising and marketing clutter
  - Need for “informed shortcuts”
- Increased lack of trust in institutions, product claims and paid messages
- Increased connectivity with friends, families and informed opinions

*Nearly 70% of all American consumers say they are interested in ways to block, skip or opt out of being exposed to advertising and traditional marketing — Yankelovich Partners*



# The Power of Word of Mouth & “Customer Evangelism”

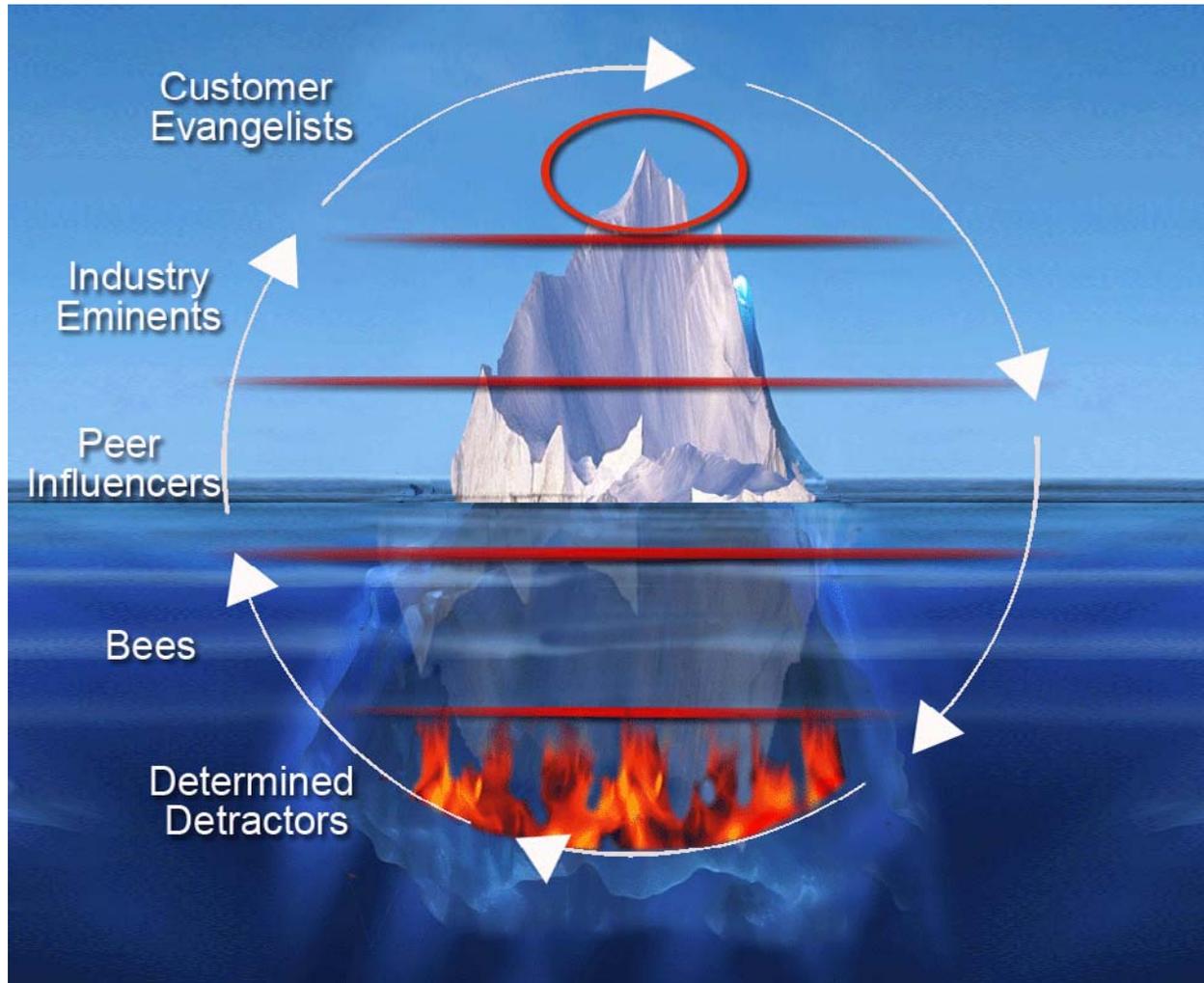
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- Word of Mouth (WOM) can overcome traditional marketing limitations, information overload and consumer/customer control
- Increased recognition and benefits
  - 92% of Americans rate WOM of friends, family, others among best source of ideas and information (advertising 48%, editorial 42%)
  - 85% of U.S. marketing execs plan to incorporate WOM, customer evangelism and blogs into their marketing mix – *CMO Magazine Survey*
  - **WOM ranked as #1 driver (48.3%) of directly influencing a technology or services purchase decision in past 12 months (CNET Business Network)**

*“Most marketers say their only true effort toward word of mouth marketing is hoping their e-mail newsletter gets passed along to a few more people.”*

*- CNET Business, August 2006*

# The Influence and Word of Mouth Continuum





# Defining the Ecosystem

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## Customer Evangelists

Customers who are *positively* passionate about a product or company to the point of sharing their experiences

## Industry Eminent

100-300 individuals who are true leading voices and thought leaders in a particular industry

## Peer Influencers

The one person in ten—by category—who impacts the perceptions and buying behaviors of friends, colleagues, family and others

## Bees

Mass market “buzz creators” on lookout for next great thing—and enjoy being in the know—until the next hot thing comes. Provides “15 minutes of fame”

## Determined Detractors

Individuals—hear me, reputation terrorists or reputation destroyers—who are increasingly strident in their opposition to a product or company

Building Awareness and  
Understanding for Hydrogen  
Program Strategy





Integrated communications  
program targeting:

- Industry Eminentes
- Media
- Bloggers

Objectives:

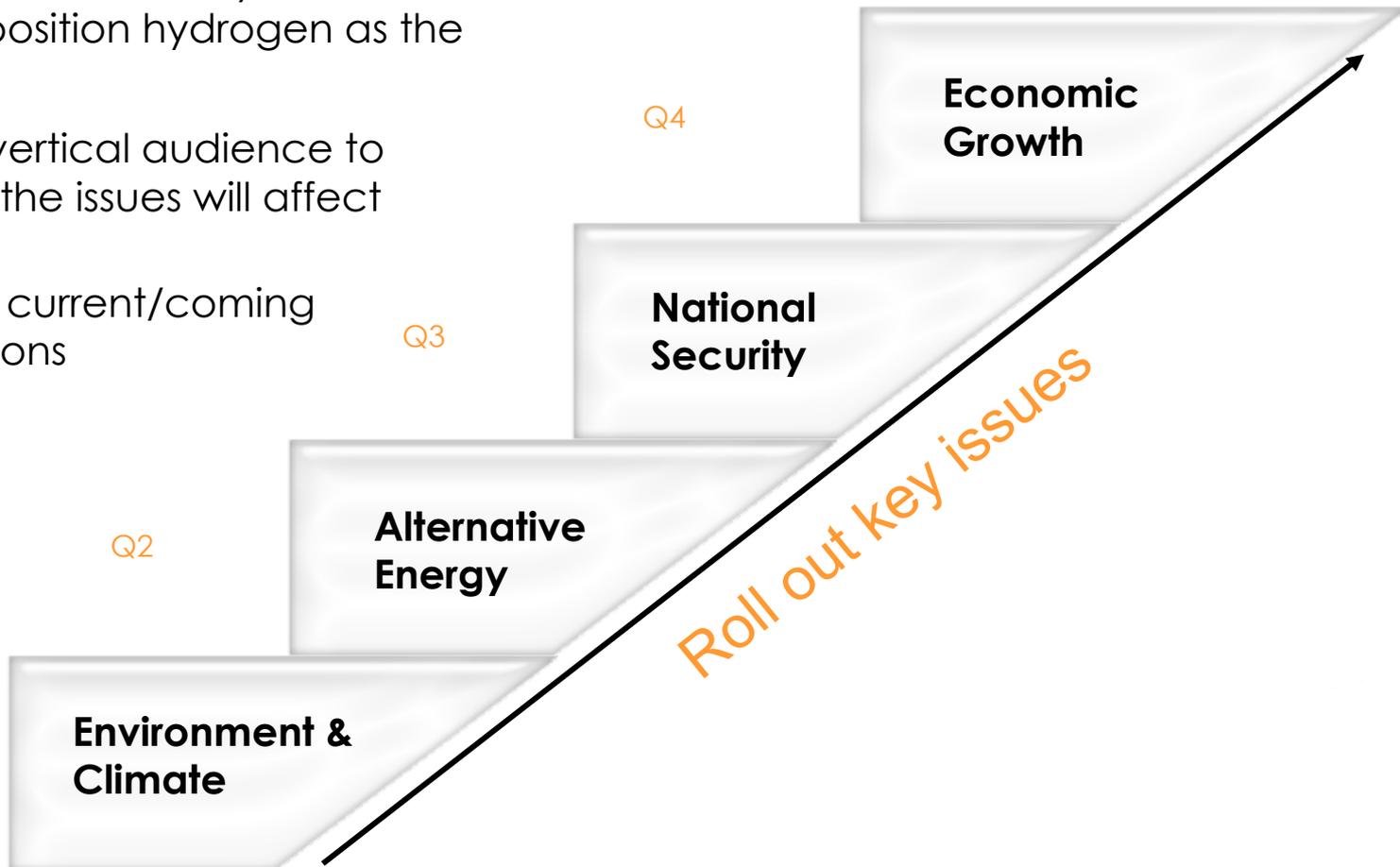
- Increase broad-based understanding, acceptance and support for hydrogen
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What Success Looks like:

- We know we have elevated visibility and awareness using several metrics across media, Internet and direct response
- Perception of hydrogen by majority is positive, with realistic expectations
- *Hindenburg* association is replaced by positive association
- People answer “yes” when asked if they understand hydrogen

# Proactive Issue Platforms

- > Must diffuse the debate and controversy; introduce key issues that we identify and position hydrogen as the lynchpin
- > Target each vertical audience to illustrate how the issues will affect industry
  - Highlight current/coming applications





# Influencer Engagement

## Industry Eminents

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- 253 Eminents Identified
- Scored on relevance, involvement, tonality, reputation, visibility, reach and accessibility
- Personalized approach to (re)connect with identified Industry Eminents to:
  - Introduce H2 & You initiative
  - Gather feedback and support
  - Gain insights into opportunities, concerns, trends and market issues
  - Set stage for ongoing interaction and communications
- One-on-one interactions designed to encourage two-way dialogue
  - Phone calls; e-mails; formal letters of introduction; in-person meetings when possible

# Influencer Engagement

## Tracking through online dashboard

| Profile Picture   | Name                                   | Website  | Recent Articles  | Engagement                 |
|---|--|--|--|----------------------------|
|    | <a href="#">Jennifer Boulden</a>       | IdealBite.com  | <a href="#">Big Sky Revisited 12-30-07</a><br><a href="#">Current Medical News of Ark... 12-04-07</a><br><a href="#">How to rid yourself of stuf... 10-10-07</a>               | None <input type="radio"/> |
|    | <a href="#">Heather Stephenson</a>     | IdealBite.com  | <a href="#">Christmas Eve dinner was su... 01-12-08</a><br><a href="#">This kids all played so well... 01-12-08</a><br><a href="#">Sadie and Hannah wanted to ... 01-12-08</a> | None <input type="radio"/> |
|    | <a href="#">Greg Horn</a>              | Living Green: A practical guide to simple sustainability | <a href="#">Plenty of new stuff this we... 01-14-08</a><br><a href="#">Jenna Jameson's Shadow Hunt... 01-13-08</a><br><a href="#">Marine Environmental Biolog... 01-10-08</a>  | None <input type="radio"/> |
|    | <a href="#">Vanessa Farquharson</a>    | National Post and GreenAsAThistle.com                    | <a href="#">Outpost nation 01-14-08</a><br><a href="#">in the papers 01-12-08</a><br><a href="#">3 sites to check out this w... 01-07-08</a>                                   | None <input type="radio"/> |
|  | <a href="#">Colin Beaven</a>           | No Impact Man  | <a href="#">what a week, what a year. 12-30-07</a><br><a href="#">No impact man 12-21-07</a><br><a href="#">Gridiamolo forte: basta con... 12-04-07</a>                        | None <input type="radio"/> |
|  | <a href="#">Vijay V. Vaitheeswaran</a> | Power to the People                                      | <a href="#">Oil is the problem, not cars 01-08-08</a><br><a href="#">Black Swan found in King Tu... 01-06-08</a><br><a href="#">Vijay V. Vaitheeswaran 01-05-08</a>            | None <input type="radio"/> |



# Media Relations

Set the Agenda with Proactive Outreach, Rapid Response

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- Just beginning: 9 Opportunities generated so far
- Strong interest in the local tie-in
- Aggressive, consistent proactive media outreach driven by Issues Platform
  - Position subject matter experts from to provide insight, commentary and analysis on broad array of issues
- Daily monitoring of media and blogs for stories/commentary
- Immediate, personal response to correct misinformation distortions (Online publications can revise published content)

**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL**

**Los Angeles Times**

**The New York Times**

**Chicago Tribune**



**REUTERS** 

**Bloomberg**

# Blogger Engagement

- 41 blogs currently focus, completely or in part, on hydrogen (dozens more cover parallel subjects)
- No need to create NEW blog
- Important to monitor and actively engage bloggers
  - Education
  - Encouragement
  - Fact check & verification to correct misinformation
- 26 Blog responses so far





# How Can You Participate?

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- **Tell me you're interested**
  - *Soon, H2andYou.org will go live with a great simple array of 101-type information to share*
  - *We will notify you of influential blogs that need a pro-hydrogen response*
  - *Let's discuss how H2 and You might be synergistic with your program*
- **Become a sponsor**
  - *Gain access to Industry Eminentes, media opportunities, editorial calendars, H2 and You reports, etc.*
  - *Shape the messages*
  - *Gain exposure for your organization*

Patrick Serfass: [serfassp@hydrogenassociation.org](mailto:serfassp@hydrogenassociation.org)

“If we don’t help the public understand hydrogen, no one will do it for us. We’ll be lost in the chatter, and buried by detractors...”