

Using Social Media for Water Conservation: Tacoma Water's Experience



Tacoma Water's Conservation Program

Program Goal

- Reduce per capita water consumption 10% from 2000 to 2010
- Offer programs to assist customers with reducing water use

Program Offerings

- Offer residential customers fixture/appliance rebates; free water-saving devices; education/training



Tacoma Water's Conservation Program

Education and Outreach

- Public events
- Workshops and classes
- Literature: brochures and posters
- Annual ad/awareness campaign
- Website

Programming Changes

- Raise awareness of conservation program using awareness campaign and events
- Increase workshops to engage customers and support behavior change
- Provide workshops and events outside Tacoma



Why add social media to the mix?

Consumer Research

- Customers outside Tacoma are less aware of & participate less in programs
- Customers outside Tacoma/higher water users use internet more and a majority want to use internet to get conservation information

Social Media Objectives

- Reach more customers with media they use – provide program information
- Additional input into new goal-setting process
- Updates on upcoming events

Social Media Management

- Community & Media Services section manages social media



Conservation Goal Development

Conservation Goal

- New goal for 2011-2017
- Customer input through online survey and public forum

Social Media

- Online survey conducted January – March 2010
- Facebook and Twitter posts
- Other media: bill insert, calls to large customers
- 191 responses
- Announced adoption of goal



Tacoma Water needs to know what you think about water conservation. If you are a Tacoma Water customer, please take our short survey.



2010 Tacoma Water Conservation Goal-Setting Survey

www.tacomawater.com

Tacoma Water provides safe, reliable water to more than 95,000 customers. We take our water from the Green River and groundwater wells. We act in a socially and environmentally responsible manner, and serve as a good steward of our water supplies. ...

January 28 at 9:27am · Comment · Like



Wade Stewart Thanks just took the survey. When it comes to conservation, one thing that would facilitate my family's interest is making more information about water use available. When I get my bill, I'd love to see what my neighborhood average use is, and see how much we might need to improve or see how well our personal conservation efforts stack up to the average.

January 28 at 10:16am · Report



Tacoma Water Super! Thank you. This is valuable input.

January 28 at 12:14pm · Report



Misty Eason Crick I'd like to see Tacoma Water offer info and/or offer to purchase the new toilet conversion kits (\$30 a unit) that gives your toilet two flushing options: a half flush for "#1" and a full flush for "#2". I bet if customers could order them in...

[See More](#)

March 12 at 9:07am · Report



Awareness Campaign

Know Your H₂O

- Launched multi-year campaign June 2010
- Raises awareness of conservation program
- Directs customers to interact with program to find an answer
- New media mix
 - Bill inserts, newsletters; Utility vehicle wraps; Customer pay box video monitors; Newspaper
 - Website
 - Social media

TIMING IS EVERYTHING. HOW'S YOURS?

H₂O

LEARN MORE
TacomaWater.com/smart

T 
TACOMA WATER
TACOMA PUBLIC UTILITIES



Awareness Campaign

HOME PAY BILL CUSTOMER SERVICE CONTACTS NEWS CALENDAR JOBS ABOUT PRINT

SEARCH

TACOMA WATER

HOME WATER SYSTEM WATER SERVICE WATER QUALITY WATER CONSERVATION HEALTH & SAFETY

Water Conservation

LEARN WAYS TO BE WATER SMART

Water Smart

- Indoors
- Outdoors
- At Work
- Your Use
- Rebates & Incentives
- Workshops & Events
- The EnviroHouse

EnviroHouse

Environment

Conservation Goal

Conservation Plan

Where do you use water smartly the most?

Indoors

Outdoors

At work

Vote Now

Indoors

Outdoors

At Work

Your Use

TACOMA PUBLIC UTILITIES

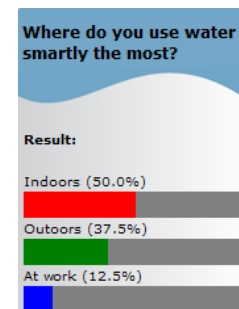
TACOMA POWER

TACOMA GAS

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Website

- Revamped website for Know Your H₂O campaign
- More interactive elements
- Online survey
- Tools to answer questions asked in ads
- Developing interactive tools in 2011



Do you use water-saving fixtures in your home?

I use faucet aerators.

I use efficient showerheads.

Vote Now



Awareness Campaign

Facebook & Twitter

- Started using in 2009
- Use for awareness campaign
- Post messages every few days
- Posts relate to recent weather, events
- Linked account/same posts
- Develop many posts at once
- Interact with customers and answer questions



The screenshot shows the Facebook profile for Tacoma Water. At the top, there's a blue header with the Facebook logo and a sign-up prompt: "Tacoma Water is on Facebook. Sign up for Facebook to connect with Tacoma Water." Below this is the profile picture and name "Tacoma Water" with a "Like" button. Navigation tabs for "Wall", "Info", "Photos", "Events", "Video", and "Links" are visible. A "Filters" button is on the right. The main content area shows several posts:

- A notice: "THIS PAGE IS NOT MONITORED 24 HOURS PER DAY. FOR WATER EMERGENCIES CALL 502-8384. We make Tacoma a better place to live and work by providing cost-effective, safe, reliable, high-quality water in a socially and environmentally responsible manner." Below this is an "Information" box with contact details: "Location: 3628 S. 35th Street Tacoma, WA, 98409. Phone: (253) 502-8600. Mon - Fri: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm." A "Like" button is also present.
- A post from Tacoma Water: "An average household could cut indoor water use almost in half by switching from older fixtures to new, efficient ones. Call our conservation specialists at (253) 502-8723 or e-mail conservation@cityoftacoma.org for smart tips and info. 23 hours ago · Comment · Like."
- A post from Tacoma Water: "If you purchase a qualifying clothes washer, you may be able to receive a rebate of up to \$100. TPU Power Clothes Washers bnyurl.com You'll load up on savings and earn a rebate of \$50, \$75 or \$100 when you buy a new qualifying Energy Star clothes washer and install it in a home in the Tacoma Power or Tacoma Water service area. October 11 at 9:30am · Comment · Like. Rob Mcnairhuff likes this."
- A post from Tacoma Water: "Calculate your drip against water waste with AWWA's WaterWise Drip Calculator."
- A question from Courtney Anderson-Love: "Are there any rebates offered for homeowners who purchase water saving toilets? December 20, 2009 at 12:07pm · Comment · Like · Flag".
- A response from Tacoma Water: "Hi Courtney! We don't currently offer a toilet rebate program, BUT if an 'average' household (2.64 people) replaces a toilet that was made between 1950 and 1980 (uses 5 gallons per flush) with a 1 gallon per flush high-efficiency toilet, that household would save more than 1,600 gallons of water per month. That equals a monthly savings of about \$9.90. If the toilet cost \$160, the payback period for the toilet (not including installation cost) would be less than 18 months. December 21, 2009 at 9:33am · Report"



Awareness Campaign

YouTube

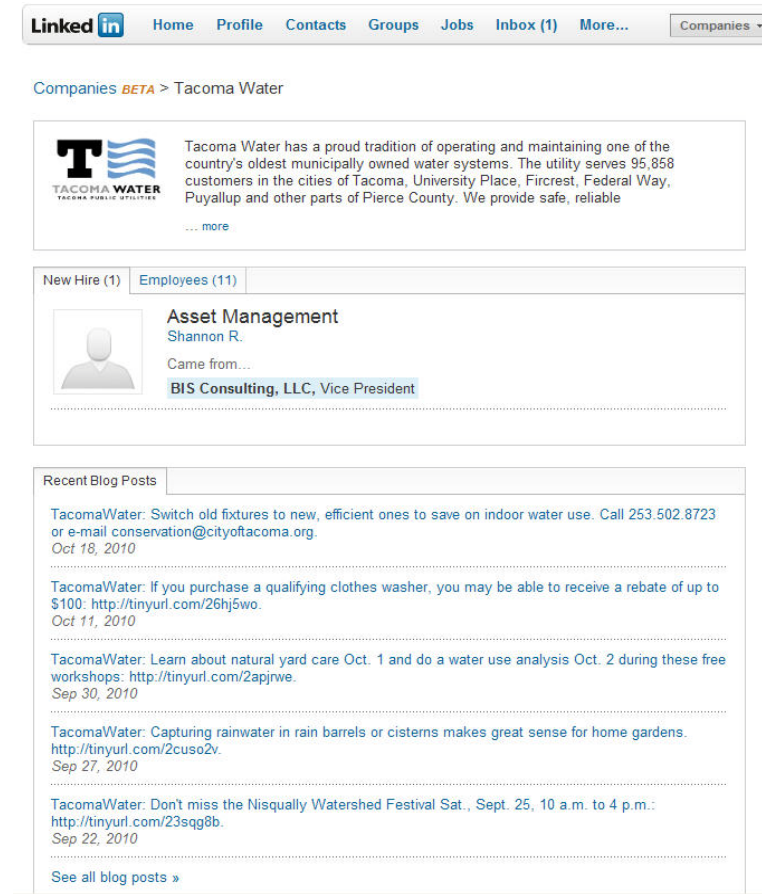
- Developing short TV vignettes for PSAs and YouTube
- Will begin using in 2011
- Know Your Power campaign began posting vignettes in late 2009



Awareness Campaign

LinkedIn and Blogs

- Began LinkedIn account in September 2010
- Using Facebook posts as a LinkedIn “blog”
- Blogs being used by others to network teachers, provide information to special interest groups



LinkedIn Home Profile Contacts Groups Jobs Inbox (1) More... Companies

Companies *BETA* > Tacoma Water

TACOMA WATER
TACOMA PUBLIC UTILITIES

Tacoma Water has a proud tradition of operating and maintaining one of the country's oldest municipally owned water systems. The utility serves 95,858 customers in the cities of Tacoma, University Place, Fircrest, Federal Way, Puyallup and other parts of Pierce County. We provide safe, reliable

... more

New Hire (1) Employees (11)

Asset Management
Shannon R.
Came from...
BIS Consulting, LLC, Vice President

Recent Blog Posts

TacomaWater: Switch old fixtures to new, efficient ones to save on indoor water use. Call 253.502.8723 or e-mail conservation@cityoftacoma.org.
Oct 18, 2010

TacomaWater: If you purchase a qualifying clothes washer, you may be able to receive a rebate of up to \$100: <http://tinyurl.com/26hj5wo>.
Oct 11, 2010

TacomaWater: Learn about natural yard care Oct. 1 and do a water use analysis Oct. 2 during these free workshops: <http://tinyurl.com/2apjrwe>.
Sep 30, 2010

TacomaWater: Capturing rainwater in rain barrels or cisterns makes great sense for home gardens. <http://tinyurl.com/2cuso2v>.
Sep 27, 2010

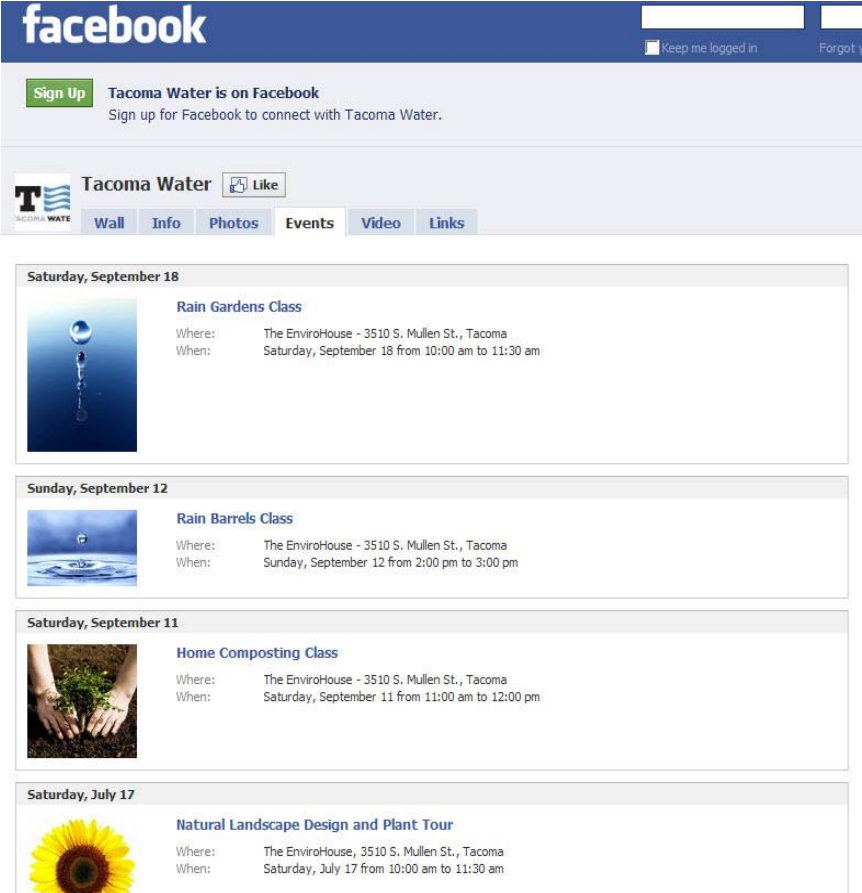
TacomaWater: Don't miss the Nisqually Watershed Festival Sat., Sept. 25, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.: <http://tinyurl.com/23sqg8b>.
Sep 22, 2010

See all blog posts »



Workshops and Events

- Advertise workshops and classes
- One to two weeks and just before event
- Facebook, Twitter, Website, Email listserv



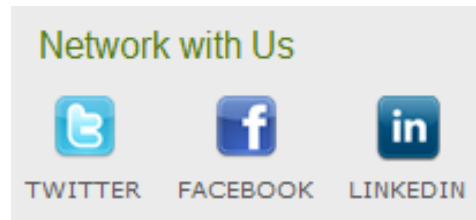
The screenshot shows the Facebook page for Tacoma Water. The page header includes the Facebook logo, a search bar, and login options. Below the header, there is a 'Sign Up' button and a message: 'Tacoma Water is on Facebook. Sign up for Facebook to connect with Tacoma Water.' The page name 'Tacoma Water' is displayed with a 'Like' button. Navigation tabs for 'Wall', 'Info', 'Photos', 'Events', 'Video', and 'Links' are visible. The 'Events' tab is selected, showing a list of upcoming events:

- Saturday, September 18**
 - Rain Gardens Class**
 - Where: The EnviroHouse - 3510 S. Mullen St., Tacoma
 - When: Saturday, September 18 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am

- Sunday, September 12**
- Rain Barrels Class**
 - Where: The EnviroHouse - 3510 S. Mullen St., Tacoma
 - When: Sunday, September 12 from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm
- Saturday, September 11**
- Home Composting Class**
 - Where: The EnviroHouse - 3510 S. Mullen St., Tacoma
 - When: Saturday, September 11 from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm
- Saturday, July 17**
- Natural Landscape Design and Plant Tour**
 - Where: The EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Tacoma
 - When: Saturday, July 17 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am


Where do we go from here?

- Increase interactivity & engagement
 - Currently limited engagement from customers
- Continuing with slow roll-out of features/multi-year campaign
- Website interactivity
 - Calculators & features | Customized tools & recommendations
- Facebook
 - Build fan base | Contests | Posts
- Increase appropriate use of social media
- Identifying how people are learning about website/program
- Maintenance of tools



Thanks!

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tacomawater.com/smart

