

# Sharing the Message III: Backgrounder

Over the past two years, the seed industry has been moving forward with a plan to promote the role certified seed plays in successful farm operations. This process included the Sharing the Message campaign which armed the seed industry with tools to better articulate the seed message, a second wave of the campaign focused on retail techniques, and qualitative research with farmers regarding the motivators behind the use of certified and common seed. Sharing the Message III began with a brand and marketing planning workshop held with seed industry professionals, and culminated in developing a brand and positioning strategy and advertising campaign for certified seed.

## FOCUS GROUP TESTING

Blacksheep Strategy conducted four focus groups in April 2007 with producers in Strathmore, AB; Saskatoon, SK; Morris, MB; and London, ON. The sessions were structured to test:

- Three different conceptual platforms (Success, Innovation, Control) for an ad campaign;
- Seven finished ads, derived from the above concepts; and
- Five different logos that could become the icon for certified seed.

While all three concepts struck a chord with farmers, the ads derived from the Success and Innovation concepts fared better in testing than those derived from Control. The ad that tested most favourably was the crop version of 'Success. Some farmers plant it.' which included an image of a wheat field. It created a positive first impression, drew farmers in, engaged them, evoked a highly positive and consistent "feel good" emotional response, and had the most consistent and accurate interpretation of the intended message. 'Certified Seed. The Right Decision. Everytime' and 'Innovation. What's it worth to you?' also tested well.

In logo testing of the certified seed tag and several other options, the familiar blue seed tag was the farmers' preferred logo and the one they considered right for certified seed, however it did not rate highly when it came to reflecting new varieties: being innovative or reflecting success. 'Certified Seed – You're planting success.' was liked for its simplicity and slogan.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons noted above, sponsors have agreed to proceed with the Success concept, focusing on the 'Success. Some farmers plant it.' ad. This advertising concept, with a wheat and canola version, is being made available for the sponsors of the Sharing the Message project. It was also agreed the existing blue tag logo will be updated and modernized, and the slogan will be changed to 'You're Planting Success' to align with Success advertising concept.

## YOUR ROLE AS A SPONSOR

Your role as a sponsor of the campaign and a member of the seed industry is to utilize the campaign materials as part of your marketing plans over the next year. This Sharing the Message brand kit will provide the tools you need to integrate the certified seed brand in your seed product guides, advertising, web sites, and related communications vehicles, and help share the message.

The whole industry working together to integrate consistent certified seed brand materials and promote the value of certified seed extends the worth of this program immeasurably and has the power to make this campaign succeed.

