

Communications Corner | **On Target**

by **Taylor Belle Matheny**

Building herd-changing genetics is typically the result of strategic planning and precise execution rather than lucky happenstance. The same can be said of effective marketing, which requires developing a plan and employing assets relative to specific goals.

Consider the American Hereford Association (AHA) Western region marketing campaign completed earlier this year.

AHA's goal was to elevate Hereford's image and heighten discussion about the breed among commercial cattle producers in the Western United States. The message amplified Hereford's role as an essential component in complementary crossbreeding by sharing firsthand accounts of producers adding Hereford genetics to their commercial programs.

We identified sources, visited their operations to interview them and captured photos and video. The resulting assets — feature stories, videos, new releases, social media posts and publication inserts — leverage and support the cohesive Hereford benefits message shared with AHA membership in the 1881 booklet (see Hereford.org/media).

Each insert appeared twice in *Western Livestock Journal* and *Western Ag Reporter*, both widely read by commercial producers in the West. A total of eight insertions went to a combined circulation of approximately 80,000 readers. The inserts were supported by seven targeted social media posts sharing some of the information from the inserts and related videos. Feedback about the print inserts was strong from both Hereford breeders and commercial producers. The social media posts featuring video reached 483,024 viewers on Facebook and received 76,376 thruplays, or the number of times videos related to the



campaign were played for at least 15 seconds.

Evaluate your marketing plan

This campaign also illustrates the power of creating multiple entry points for readers and viewers to a common message leveraged by frequency.

Perhaps you already employ a similar strategy. One example is using social media and a past-customer postcard to announce the new sale videos and catalog available at your website, while using the website to encourage visitors to submit their contact information to be added to your mailing list for newsletters, sale catalogs, etc.

I encourage you to evaluate your fall marketing plan. Think about your goals and target audience. Do your promotional assets and chosen channels of delivery support what you're trying to accomplish with the people you're attempting to reach?

Keep in mind there are a variety of assets available for you to use at the AHA website, including

elements from the Western region marketing campaign. You can find these assets by clicking the "Media" tab. The AHA will add more assets to this section as they are created.

Plan to share and learn

The AHA Annual Membership Meeting and Educational Forum in Kansas City, Mo., Oct. 24-27, will include an interactive marketing session discussing social media, photography/videography and print/digital advertising. These sessions will be Thursday, Oct. 24.

Friday's Educational Forum will feature topics related to breed research, marketing Hereford-influenced genetics and an AHA Strategic Plan progress report.

We look forward to seeing you there. **HW**

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