SMALL BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHANGE: A CLIMATE CHANGE COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR THE NATURE CONSERVANCY'S NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

Brady Monetus Blackburn III

A thesis submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Mass Communication in the School of Media and Journalism.

Chapel Hill
2018

Approved by:

Lois Boynton

JoAnn Sciarrino

Debbie Crane

ABSTRACT

Brady Monetus Blackburn III: Small Business Partnerships for Change: A Climate Change Communication Plan for The Nature Conservancy's North Carolina Chapter
(Under the direction of Lois Boynton)

This thesis explores small business owner-driven climate communication in eastern North Carolina as a communication strategy for The Nature Conservancy's North Carolina chapter. Results from this research suggests that the words "climate change" alone make up one of the biggest communication challenges in this field and that TNC should seek out untraditional spokespersons—local figures rather than scientists and nonprofit staff—to take the lead on climate change communication.

The words "climate change" alone derail climate conversation, reframing it in the context of politics rather than factual science. The strategy developed for this thesis will attempt to circumnavigate climate change-related cognitive dissonance.

This strategy will likely help engage audiences who are currently resistant to climate change communication. The effects of climate change in eastern North Carolina will be the most-impactful in the state, and it is incredibly important that those who will feel the effects not only believe in the science but also start preparing for the changes to come.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BRAND LANDSCAPE

Introduction

Climate change is one of the most-complicated communication challenges of the 21st century. It poses massive threats to humanity and to the world we live in. Unfortunately, it's extremely difficult to picture the effects of global sea level rise or comprehend the extensive ramifications that the "sixth mass extinction" actually poses ("The extinction crisis," n.d.). There is scientific uncertainty when it comes to the magnitude, location, and timeframe of climate change effects, and while we are causing the problems right now, most of us won't live to see the worst of the negative effects. Further, if we, as a global community, successfully mitigate the effects of climate change, we will be the ones who pay the cost, but we won't be around long enough to enjoy the benefits. On top of how difficult it is to relay the facts without coming off as alarmist, to accurately communicate what "scientific consensus" actually means, and to overcome the temporal dissociation with the effects of our actions, climate change is also subject to the communication challenges that surround modern American politics.

In recent years, America's trust in the media hit its lowest point in history (Swift, 2016). In 2017, public trust grew significantly, to the point where a majority of Americans supported the press (Guess et al., 2017). That trust is heavily divided along partisan lines, however. Democrats' trust in the media is at its highest point in the 21st century while Republican confidence is at its lowest. Opinions on climate change are subject to a similar partisan split.

According to a Gallup poll, only 18 percent of Republicans “worry a great deal” about climate change, compared to 66 percent of Democrats (Newport, 2017).

At the intersection of this distrust in the news media and the massive split on climate change perceptions, conservative audiences have few trusted sources for factual, scientifically based, climate change information. Environmental organizations like The Nature Conservancy (TNC) are attempting to fill in the gap in science communication, but they are fighting an uphill ttle. How do you reach those who don’t believe the science if they also don’t trust what they read, see or hear?

It may be advantageous that TNC doesn’t focus exclusively on climate change. As a land conservancy, its top priority is “to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends” (“About us,” n.d.). Primarily, TNC purchases land and helps landowners put their property under conservation easements, which are partial sales of land that leave the property under its private ownership, but restrict its use in certain ways. For example, a farmer could donate or sell land into a conservation easement that allows for continued sustainable farming but prevents future sale of the land for urban development.

Because of TNC’s mission, climate change is not as central of a focus compared to other environmental nonprofits. For example, the organization 350.org’s name stems directly from the scientific consensus that, to avoid the worst effects of climate change, humanity needs to reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide levels below 350 parts per million (“About 350,” n.d.). Compared to TNC, this grassroots organization can dedicate a much larger percentage of its resources to climate communication. TNC is presently engaged in ambitious climate change communication campaigns, however, that don’t stray from its mission. Currently, the organization’s global marketing team is working to raise public awareness of how important an impact natural carbon reduction strategies like reforestation and coastline restoration can have ("Nature's make or break potential for climate change," n.d.).

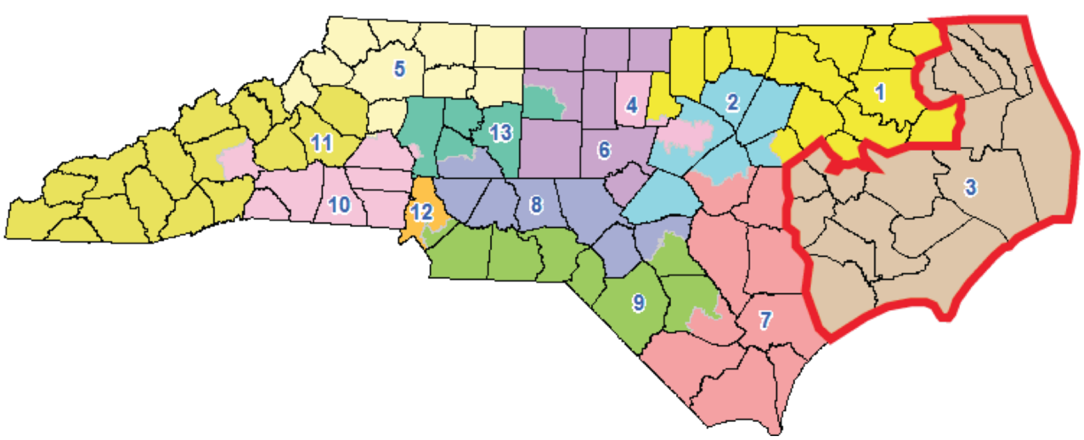
TNC's state-level branch in North Carolina[1] is working to engage its members and nonmembers alike with climate change information. TNC has hosted in-person events like a recent meeting between Republican senators Thom Tillis and Richard Burr's offices and leadership from an eastern North Carolina church that owns two solar farms (Blackburn, 2017). Its consistent communication efforts on climate change, however, are primarily digital, and many articles and messages are created by the worldwide office in Washington, D.C., for dissemination through state-level chapters. To combat the effects of polarized opinions on climate change and to better communicate factual information, TNC needs to reach North Carolinians on a more regular basis in organic, offline settings, rather than saving face-to-face communication for the occasional sponsored event or meeting.

Partnering with businesses to communicate climate change information is a promising opportunity for TNC. As an organization, TNC-Global has a strong history of business partnerships, including Bank of America, Boeing, PepsiCo, and Duke Energy ("Working with companies," n.d.). The organization has received activist criticism for its work with companies like BP and Monsanto, but it stands by its Corporate Engagement Strategy as a net positive approach to conservation (Klein, 2014; "Working with companies," n.d.). If even the worst polluting companies make small steps to become more environmentally friendly, the outcome would be better for the planet than if they had not taken action at all.

[1] TNC's worldwide operations and its individual chapters all use the acronym "TNC." For the remainder of this paper, "TNC" will refer to the organization's North Carolina chapter, and "TNC-Global" will refer to the organization at its worldwide level.

This thesis project will explore the efficacy of nonprofit-business partnerships, specifically focusing on small businesses in eastern North Carolina as potential TNC partners. It will take the extensive existing literature on partnerships nonprofits have with large corporations and apply it to the small business structure and the organizational needs of those local for-profits. The project will diverge from existing literature in two significant ways. First, the literature that does exist largely focuses on partnerships between one nonprofit and one business (Hettche & Walker, 2010; Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009; Seitanidi, 2010; Seitanidi & Crane, 2009;). This project will instead explore the possibility of multiple partnerships between TNC and a wide array of businesses. Second, instead of focusing on large corporations, this study will set a framework for TNC to work alongside small businesses with the intent for business owners and employees to act as opinion leaders in their local communities. The final outcome of this research will be a communications plan for TNC to develop a small business partnership program to help disseminate climate change messaging via opinion leaders throughout North Carolina's third congressional district (Figure 1), currently represented by Republican Walter B. Jones, Jr.

FIGURE 1: NC Congressional District 3



The following brand landscape will examine TNC at its state and global organizational levels. It will identify key attributes that will aid TNC's ability to implement a business partnership program as well as challenges and threats, both specific to the prospect of business partnerships and to the organization in general.

Brand Landscape

TNC-Global is a worldwide nonprofit, founded in 1951. Its headquarters is located in Washington, D.C., and it has chapters in all 50 U.S. states and 72 countries. TNC-Global's mission is "to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends." The organization has more than one million members, and their donations and membership fees represent more than 50 percent of its revenue. More than 70 percent of that revenue goes directly toward program work. Over the course of its organizational history, TNC-Global has conserved more than 119 million acres of land and 5,000 river miles ("About us," n.d.). TNC-Global operates as a single nonprofit entity, so its state-level and country-specific chapters share branding, messaging and operational guidelines.

This SWOT analysis covers the primary strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for TNC at its worldwide organizational level. Because it operates as a single global nonprofit, there is better information at this level, and an overarching SWOT analysis will cover the important strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that its North Carolina chapter faces.

Strengths

One of TNC-Global's primary strengths is its spending power. According to a Forbes list of the top charities in the U.S. for 2016, it ranks first in total revenue among environment-oriented nonprofits, and 19th among all nonprofit organizations in the country (Barrett, 2016).

Nearly 70 percent of that money goes toward the organization's programmatic expenses such as buying land and conducting land conservation work ("About us," n.d.). That level of spending has helped the organization receive high ratings from charity watchdogs and accreditation agencies (Our charity ratings, n.d.). Early in 2018, TNC-Global was named one of the world's most ethical companies by the Ethisphere Institute ("The 2018 world's most ethical companies honoree list," 2018).

Weaknesses

Most of TNC-Global's focus goes toward land acquisition and land conservation, as that is the organization's primary mission. Climate communication is a secondary goal for the organization. Much of its climate plan, therefore, is restricted to digital communication tactics. TNC-Global's Washington, D.C., office creates a large portion of the content that is subsequently shared with state-level chapters. This framework limits state-level chapter ability to launch and maintain strong localized campaigns that can better meet the needs of their publics. State-level chapters play a large role in obtaining and managing land, but because of the organizational structure, they generally have few dedicated communication staff.

Opportunities

TNC-Global has a history of working well with business partners. The organization has formed a business council, which is a forum that promotes business-led conservation strategies that protect nature and increase profits. The council assists its members in integrating sustainable practices into their operations, in connecting business leaders with up-to-date scientific information, and in developing tools to account for nature costs in business plans.

“Working with companies,” n.d.). By implementing its corporate engagement strategy, the foundation behind the business council, TNC-Global hopes to successfully promote practices that help the environment without hurting companies’ bottom lines.

Sharing its strong history of business relationships may help separate TNC-Global from other nonprofits in the eyes of business leadership. Additionally, TNC-Global’s business strategy is, in part, meant to combat the idea that good business and environmental protection are not mutually exclusive, a notion often used to argue against conservation goals and policies (Gunther, 2017).

Threats

While TNC-Global treats its business ties as a net benefit, many in the environmental activist community see it as a major weakness. Author and activist Naomi Klein gave a scathing perspective of the organization and its business ties in her 2014 book, “This Changes Everything.” Klein specifically focused on a tract of land owned by TNC-Global in Texas that was drilled for oil, despite a TNC pledge to not allow any new drilling on its land. TNC-Global also conducts and promotes scientifically grounded conservation techniques that are sometimes opposed by radical environmentalists. Techniques like allowing hunting on preserves to balance the food chain and conducting forest thinning activity to reduce wildfire risk and promote healthy forest growth are among such practices that have received backlash from environmentalist groups (Trachtman, 2003).

TNC-Global also must balance appeals to progressive-leaning audiences with those geared toward its conservative membership, too. Among conservative-oriented audiences, there is a stigma associated with “environmentalists” (Foote, 2010). As a conservation organization rather than a climate change-focused nonprofit, TNC-Global has managed to draw and retain conservative membership, especially those in the hunting, fishing, and farming communities. In the current political climate, however, it will become more and more difficult to engage and retain those audiences.

Additionally, there is constant competition among nonprofits to secure donations. TNC-Global is one of dozens of world-renowned environmental charities and hundreds of other charitable organizations, all vying for donor support. This is a constant existential threat to donor-reliant organizations that TNC-Global must always take into account.

The following literature review will summarize the scholarly research relevant to TNC and the prospect of a business partnership program in North Carolina. The research will be incorporated with the information in this SWOT analysis to develop a business partnership plan tailored to TNC and grounded in the most up-to-date research and theory.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will cover the scholarly work pertaining to corporate social responsibility-oriented partnerships between the private sector and nonprofit organizations. It will discuss arguments for partnering, partnership frameworks and the partnering process, climate change-focused partnerships, and the theoretical framework for persuasion.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) will be an integral concept in this literature review, and in this thesis as a whole. There are abundant, varying definitions for the meaning and scope of CSR (e.g., "Corporate social responsibility," n.d.; Fallon, 2017; Leonard, 2018; "What is corporate social responsibility?" n.d.). For the purposes of this thesis, CSR will cover meaningful effort by businesses and corporations to better their communities, society at large, and the world by dedicating time, resources, and community influence to goals that reach beyond company profit (Heath & Ni, 2008).

Why partner?

More and more, consumers agree that the businesses they support should implement CSR practices in some way (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009). According to a Nielsen consumer report (2014), a majority (55 percent) of consumers worldwide will seek out and spend more on products and services from companies they see as actively taking their social and environmental impacts into account. Nielsen (2014) defines social and environmental impact as a broad range activities like including using recycled materials in products, increasing access to clean water, and working to reduce poverty and hunger. In North America, that number is slightly lower, with 42 percent of consumers reporting that they are willing to pay extra for a product from a company with strong CSR initiatives. Within that, however, the millennial generation, ages 21-37 (Fry, 2016), is much more willing than any other generation to choose responsible products and companies, regardless of price (“Doing well by doing good,” 2014). A Morgan Stanley study found that millennials are more than twice as likely to invest in companies with social or environmental goals compared to the total investing population (“Sustainable signals,” 2017). More than half are willing to pay extra for responsible products, and they will actively check labeling and packaging to ensure the purchases they make are from socially and environmentally responsible companies, compared to 25 percent of Generation X, 12 percent of Baby Boomers, and only 3 percent of the Silent Generation (“Doing well by doing good,” 2014).

Although consumers want to see the companies they support take steps toward environmental sustainability, businesses must ensure that efforts they decide to make do not create significant financial strain that affects their profits. Business transactions alone don’t serve the public interest, and often businesses, especially small businesses, aren’t in the financial position to implement expensive CSR initiatives on their own (Seitanidi, 2010). Partnering with nonprofits and other public interest-serving organizations allows businesses to diffuse the responsibilities of CSR initiatives across multiple sectors (Seitanidi, 2010). If implemented well, nonprofit-business partnerships can in effect serve the needs of one another, benefitting the business’s bottom line and the nonprofit’s common-good interests at the same time (Seitanidi, 2010, Seitanidi & Crane, 2009).

Zatepilina-Monacell (2015) found that small businesses have three main characteristics when it comes to nonprofit partnerships. They wish to have a higher level of representation on nonprofit boards, they are more likely to support and partner with nonprofits actively focused on the local community's needs, and they favor long-term partnerships over one-time donations or sponsorships.

From the nonprofit perspective, partnerships with businesses provide new ways and resources to connect with target audiences. Audiences are increasingly fragmented into small groups because of the mass of information sources available in the 21st century, the quickness of modern news cycles and the increased political division on issues such as the environment (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009). This makes it more difficult to reach large audiences with limited resources, and especially hard to reach new audiences and audiences that disagree with a message's position. Additionally, according to the 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer, American trust in nonprofit organizations dropped nine points from 2017 to 2018, to the point where a majority of U.S. citizens distrust nonprofit organizations. Similarly, distrust in the government, media and business is low; overall, only 43 percent of Americans have trust in institutions (Ries et al, 2018). Because of this widespread distrust, people are seeking information sources that reaffirm what they already believe and would rather discredit opposing views than deliberate on new information. To combat that problem, opinion leaders like local business owners provide nonprofit partners the opportunity to reach audiences stuck in opposing viewpoint spheres. Opinion leaders are active members of their communities. They may or may not be experts in a given field, but when they speak, people in their community are likely to listen (Bergstrom, 2018). When local figures disseminate information, it can circumnavigate the barriers between institutions and their localized audiences (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009).

Types of partnerships and partnership framework

In her book The Politics of Partnerships, Seitanidi (2010) divides society into three broad categories. In her view, all industry falls under the public (government), profit (business), or nonprofit sector. Seitanidi and Crane (2009) identify four types of CSR partnerships within these three sectors of society: public-private, public-nonprofit, private-nonprofit, and tripartite partnerships. This paper will primarily focus on the private-nonprofit and tripartite partnership frameworks. (See Figure 2)

FIGURE 2: Four Frameworks for CSR Partnerships (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009)

Public-Private Partnerships	Partnerships between government agencies and private business, with the purpose of giving business the opportunity to solve problems for the government and turn a profit. For example, the North Carolina Department of Transportation paying a private company to re-pave a state highway is a simple example of a public-private partnership.
Public-Nonprofit Partnerships	Partnerships between government agencies and nonprofit organizations, often involving research that the government needs assistance with, advocacy for a government program, etc. For example, many local governments making commitments to 100 percent renewable energy are partnering with local nonprofits to advocate for the policy and then assist in the planning and implementation.
Private-Nonprofit Partnerships	Partnerships between private business and nonprofit organizations, often for the purpose of easing the burden on the business of implementing a CSR initiative. For example, the partnership between environmental organization Earthwatch and the global mining company Rio Tinto is a heavily studied environmental private-nonprofit partnership (Seitanidi, 2010).
Tripartite Partnerships	These partnerships involve government, private business, and nonprofits. Also referred to as the triple-helix model, these partnerships seek to employ all potential resources to solve a problem. For example, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, and North Carolina-based solar companies collaborating on ecosystem-friendly solar farms that host beehives and other wildlife features is a hypothetical example of a tripartite partnership.

In all types of partnerships, Seitanidi and Crane (2009) argue that, to develop a successful partnership, coordinators must take into account the initial requests and needs of all partners, how each organization involved is structured, what contingencies and constraints already exist, and what outcomes each organization wants. Seitanidi and Crane (2009) and Hettche and Walker

(2010) both find that organizations in partnerships must clearly define goals, obtain sign-off from senior members of each organization, and communicate frequently with one another. All parties engaged in partnership must share the commitment of resources toward the partnership goals, and there must be a mechanism for evaluating each partner's achievements and the overall partnership progress (Seitanidi and Crane, 2009). When these conditions are met, cohesive, mutually agreeable partnerships can result in mutual value creation, increasing the business's profits and helping the nonprofit reach its organizational goals (Hettche & Walker, 2010; Seitanidi and Crane, 2009). .

Seitanidi (2010) describes a collaboration continuum, which consists of three stages of partnership. The stages are not linear in a sense of evolution over time; rather they progress in how effective they are in reaching the goals of each partner. The first stage is a philanthropic partnership. These partnerships are the least intrusive--they don't involve much in the way of time or resources from either organization. Philanthropic partnerships can look like fundraising drives, donations, and one-time events. The flow of partnership value is generally one-way toward the nonprofit, a disincentive for continued business involvement. The second stage, transactional, is a more equitable partnership that allows for more resource employment. In this stage, the business and nonprofit partners create value from the partnership. For example, a nonprofit hosting a benefit night at a restaurant raises donations for itself while increasing the business's traffic, potentially introducing new customers. Because of the two-way flow of value, more resources can be employed by each partner, allowing them to reach more impactful outcomes (Seitanidi, 2010). By pledging a percentage of the night's revenue to the nonprofit, for example, the business spends less out of pocket than it would have through a flat donation and recovers some cost while increasing potential future revenue. The nonprofit still receives a donation, and it also gets more visibility among members of the general public who visit the restaurant than it would have by accepting a one-time donation.

The final stage of partnership is the integrative stage. In this stage, the nonprofit and business partners fully integrate each other's mission into their own, often involving each organization's highest level of management. When fully integrated, the value creation each organization experienced in the second stage evolves into joint value creation, enhancing the individual value each partner receives (Seitanidi, 2010). For example, if a nonprofit were to help a business reduce waste or energy use in return for free publicity and the business's assistance in message dissemination, the partnered organizations would have created joint value. The business would have reduced overhead costs thanks to the nonprofit's assistance, and the nonprofit could harness increased visibility to build a long term donor base and more effectively execute its mission.

When it comes to climate-centric partnerships, energy use and waste reduction are low-hanging targets for nonprofits such as TNC to capitalize on. Energy and waste are simultaneously important targets for nonprofits to meet climate goals, and they are relatively straight forward avenues to reduce business costs.

Climate partnerships

In climate-related private-nonprofit partnerships, a high level of interaction can be achieved because, in many cases, the environmental goals of nonprofit organizations will either reduce costs or raise profits for a business partner. Bullis and Ie (2007) identify partnership as one of the most productive corporate approaches to environmentalism, but they also acknowledge that there are six different positions that business can take to address environmental concerns. Bullis and Ie (2007) map the levels of corporate willingness to implement environment-focused CSR initiatives, from rejecting responsibility to embracing partnerships. When a company enters the collaborative phase, it can find means to adapt to environmental concerns that in effect allow it to increase profit margins (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3: Business and corporate positions on environmental concerns (Bullis and Ie, 2007)

Rejection	The sole business or corporate focus is economic gain. Conscious rejection of any and all obligations that do not enhance profit. Focus on the environment is considered an illegitimate form of taxation.
Nonresponsiveness	Business or corporation is characterized by a general lack of awareness of external interests. Rather than actively rejecting environmental concerns, in this stage they are simply outside the scope of business interests.
Compliance	Business or corporation has an understanding that if it fails to incorporate environmental concerns, negative external reactions can harm its bottom line. Responds to external threats and pressure.
Openness	Business or corporation has a sense of need to achieve environmental goals and share information with stakeholders. It goes beyond what is required by law.
Integration	Business or corporation decide that social and environmental responsibility will pay off either immediately or in the long run. It incorporates environmental concerns into business plan.
Collaboration	After adopting an integrated positive stance, business/corporation goes one step further and reaches out to external stakeholders to form action-oriented relationships.

Livesey and Graham (2007) acknowledge that partnerships can be perceived by stakeholders as nothing more than a way for the business to avoid criticism or actual changes in practice. They argue that by and large, however, collaboration results in net positive environmental effects. Even if businesses that engage in partnerships do not incorporate environmental sustainability as a concrete goal, Livesey and Graham argue that actions even as simple as engaging in corporate-level conversations about sustainability are significant steps toward making environmental considerations the norm.

The Climate Group is the only international nonprofit exclusively focused on climate change solutions through business and government partnerships (Walker, 2008). The organization exclusively operates in the collaboration stage of Bullis and Ie's (2007) environmental concern framework (Figure 2) under Seitanidi and Crane's (2009) tripartite and private-nonprofit frameworks (Figure 1). The Climate Group has reached an unprecedented level of success by focusing on c-suite executives with messages that promote successes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with financial benefit (Walker, 2008). Through that framework, it has developed and launched a number of action-oriented programs, including its campaign, "RE100," which consists of 116 of the world's largest companies who have, thanks to their partnerships with The Climate Group, made concrete commitments to using 100 percent renewable energy (RE100, n.d.). Companies in the RE100 partnership include AB InBev, Ikea, Apple, Goldman Sachs, Google, JP Morgan, and Nike.

The remainder of this literature review will transition away from the scholarly work on nonprofit-business partnership and will cover the theoretical framework that will serve as the foundation for successful communication between business leaders and their local communities. It will focus specifically on cognitive dissonance theory and the elaboration likelihood model, which will be used to identify the underlying attitudes, beliefs and worldviews that lead audiences in eastern North Carolina to deny the validity of climate science.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Cognitive consistency is the idea that people seek to maximize uniformity in their beliefs. If two beliefs are in conflict with one another, it would understandably cause feelings of dissonance. People will naturally take steps to reduce or eliminate that dissonance, generally either by accepting new beliefs or firming up already held beliefs (O'Keefe, 2002).

The theory of cognitive dissonance refers to the relations among cognitive elements and how people manipulate those elements to reduce perceived dissonance. Feelings of dissonance are formed by performing actions or believing ideas that are in contrast either to another held belief or a perceived reality (O'Keefe, 2002). This is an important concept for climate change denial because those who deny the science are often presented with factual evidence that contradicts their beliefs, which today now includes visual evidence of climate change effects that are already impacting the Earth. Especially in coastal regions like the North Carolina's third congressional district (Figure 1), this visual evidence is increasingly prevalent (Climate Stories NC, 2017). Stoll-Kleeman et al. (2001) conducted an early experiment that revealed measures climate change deniers take to reduce dissonance. After receiving messages about climate change, respondents overwhelmingly believed the message, but many mentally heightened the cost of lifestyle change, set blame on the inaction of others, or emphasized doubts of the need for timely, personal action. Altering elements to reduce dissonance is one of many ways that people act to reduce dissonance without changing a belief (O'Keefe, 2002).

Many studies have attempted to construct communication strategies that will encourage reluctant audiences to accept the science rather than put up cognitive barriers that allow them to continue disbelieving the overwhelming evidence in favor of climate change (Lazard & Atkinson, 2014; Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009). Unfortunately, still today, while attitudes are shifting even at the large-scale corporate level ("Re100," n.d.), only 18 percent of Republicans in the United States worry about climate change (Newport, 2017). This suggests that there are underlying motives that climate communication to date has failed to address. If evidence-based communication continues to lack impact, communicators must employ new methods to reach reluctant audiences.

The Jiu Jitsu Method of Communication

Hornsey and Fielding (2017) constructed a method of communication that attempts to reach the underlying roots of disbelief in climate change rather than tackling the surface disbelief head-on. They named the strategy after the martial art jiu jitsu, which teaches redirection of an opponent's force for use to one's advantage. The authors argue that explication, or the idea that evidence, data, and strong arguments drive attitude creation, is a head-on approach that only attempts to change surface attitudes rather than the underlying roots supporting those attitudes. If people have motivation to reject the science, then repeating evidence will have little to no impact (Hornsey & Fielding, 2017).

To effectively reach those who deny climate science, Hornsey and Fielding (2017) named six attitude roots that communicators can focus on in their efforts: ideologies, values, and worldviews; conspiratorial ideation; vested interests; personal identity expression; social identity needs; and fears and phobias. Hornsey and Fielding drew links between these six roots to the rejection of science, identifying the motivating factors and reasoning behind each. These roots will be important in constructing a persona to develop a communications plan for the TNC business partnership program, so a full table of Hornsey and Fielding's (2017) attitude roots and their respective motivations to reject scientific information is included in Appendix A.

An underlying assumption of the jiu jitsu method of communication, that different audiences will have varying levels of willingness to think critically about a topic, is similar to an important premise of the elaboration likelihood model (ELM). The ELM is a persuasion theory that attempts to describe how attitudes change, and the different ways that people process information. It will also be a vital component to construct effective communication material that will reach reluctant eastern North Carolina audiences.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model

The ELM suggests that persuasive message efficacy will vary depending on respondent willingness to elaborate, or think critically about the message's topic (O'Keefe, 2002). This is an important concept because it claims that people's willingness to engage, and in effect their willingness to accept a persuasive message, is not concrete; given the right conditions, someone will be more willing to elaborate on a message, giving the persuasive purpose of that message a better chance at succeeding.

There are two primary routes of thought under the ELM. The central route is the path of deep elaboration, where people think critically and evaluate an argument before making a decision (O'Keefe, 2002). The peripheral route is driven more by heuristic principles, and it doesn't involve deep, critical thought. Lazard and Atkinson (2014) provide an environmental application of the ELM, finding that infographic message format can effectively guide reluctant audiences to higher levels of elaboration.

Three particular heuristic principles that O'Keefe (2002) identified are credibility of the messenger, liking the messenger, and perceived message consensus. These heuristics constitute immediate peripheral thoughts that can determine whether or not an uninterested party will believe or accept a message. In audiences that deny climate change, these can be the basis upon which individuals choose not to elaborate further, instead settling to reject the message in its entirety. This idea is explored by Lombardi et al (2014), who found that individuals' perceptions of source credibility and certainty were better predictors than prior knowledge about climate change in anticipating plausibility perceptions among respondents.

A possible avenue to encourage elaboration over peripheral thought that has not been studied in an environmental context is the use of opinion leaders. Local, well-known messengers could be seen as the trustworthy sources that Lombardi et al (2014) found to be effective. Small business is one of the most trusted industries in the United States. 70 percent of Americans trust small business leaders, compared to 27 percent trust in newspapers and 24 percent trust in other forms of media ("Confidence in institutions," n.d.).

The following section outlines the research questions, method and limitations for this thesis project's research.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS, METHODS, AND LIMITATIONS

Research Questions

Based on the literature review, this thesis project attempted to answer the following questions in order to create a TNC business partnership framework:

RQ1: Are local eastern North Carolina business leaders open to partnering with nonprofit organizations, and what level of partnership are they most likely to engage in?

RQ2: Will small business owners respond to business-related incentives and partner with TNC, even if they personally do not believe in climate change?

This thesis has two hypotheses based on the research questions above. First, small business owners will be open to partnerships, and will be more favorable to collaborative partnerships (Bullis & Ie, 2007) that result in joint value creation as described by Seitanidi (2010). Second, small business owners will likely be reluctant to partner with TNC if they do not personally believe in the science behind climate change, but money-saving incentives will be effective persuasion tools.

Methods

The methodology for this thesis project was two-part. The first stage consisted of in-depth interviews of small business owners in the North Carolina third congressional district. The second stage consisted of partnership framework development grounded in persuasion theory, particularly the elaboration likelihood model and cognitive dissonance theory.

In-Depth Interview

The in-depth interview portion of this methodology was grounded in Grant McCracken's (1988) interview framework. McCracken's framework is divided into four steps: review of analytic categories, review of cultural categories, discovery of cultural categories, and discovery of analytical categories.

This first phase, the review of analytic categories, was drawn entirely from the literature review. As the first step in the interview construction process, the literature review was used to define a consolidated set of problems and concepts that were used to categorize data. Additionally, the literature helped establish a set domain that interviews encompassed (McCracken, 1988). Additionally, during this phase, the literature was used to construct the interview questionnaire, an integral component of the in-depth interview that assisted in collecting data not covered by open-ended interview questions (McCracken, 1988).

In the second phase of the long interview process, review of cultural categories, McCracken (1988) urges researchers to begin by examining their own relationship with the topic (in this case, climate change mitigation processes).

As the recipient of an undergraduate degree in environmental studies and current work in the environmental science and communication dual degree program with the UNC School of Media and Journalism, the category of climate change is important to the author of this thesis.

The author knows the topic quite well, but that proximity also might affect how he analyzes the data.

The in-depth look into personal thoughts and ideas pertaining to the interview topic was used to categorize cultural variables. Similar to the first step, this phase of the interview process informed both the interview construction process and the questionnaire development. Rather than focus on prior literature, however, emphasis was given to overarching cultural factors that played a role in determining success and accuracy of in-depth interview data.

Additionally, this phase was used to ensure the proper distance was created. Distance, according to McCracken (1988), refers both to understanding points where familiarity might blind the interviewer to new data and understanding where respondent familiarity might require deeper digging to truly understand motivations and inclinations.

The discovery of cultural categories phase finalized the questionnaire and open interview guide from the information gathered in the first two steps. The questionnaire (See Appendix B) was composed of biographical questions such as age, place of residence, marriage status, and ethnicity (McCracken, 1988). The primary purpose of the questionnaire was to collect more quantitative data that wasn't be covered in the interview.

The interview portion, unlike the questionnaire, was composed of open-ended, non-leading questions (See Appendix B). The questions was divided into categorical areas, and each category was composed of contrast, categorical, special incident, and auto-driving questions (see Figure 4) (McCracken, 1988).

FIGURE 4: Interview question types (McCracken, 1988, page 35-37)

Contrast	Questions meant to obtain material the respondent did not discuss in depth by using terms meant to give a place to push off and expand upon. Interviewer will only use these questions at the end of each category, and will give preference to terms brought up by the respondent during discussion over terms drawn from the literature and cultural reviews.
Category	The goal of these questions is to find out how the respondent thinks about key components of the topic of the interview. Questions should invite response on respondent views of key actors, central action, audiences, social/cultural significance, and consequences (good and bad).
Special incident	These questions ask the respondent to recall specific incidents pertaining to the interview topic in order to observe how it is discussed and what key components the respondent focuses on.
Auto-driving	These questions utilize a tangible object like a photograph or video

Once the questionnaire and open interview guide were finalized, the next step was selecting interviewees. Six small business owners in the North Carolina third congressional district were selected. Selection followed a snowball sample method, with the first participants recruited through existing contacts in eastern North Carolina and the remainder selected through participant recommendation. Most interviewees were contacted via existing contacts. None of the participant recommendations resulted in successful interviews. McCracken (1988) emphasizes that interviewees must contrast in age, gender, status, education, or occupation categories, and they must not be acquainted with the interviewer. For the purpose of this study, the occupation category was removed from consideration as this thesis is focused exclusively on business owners. A full interview guide and supplemental material can be found in Appendix B.

The final phase of McCracken's four-step process is the discovery of cultural categories. This step is the analysis stage of the long interview process. All interviews were recorded on tape and transcribed, and this paper follows McCracken's (1988) five-step analysis process.

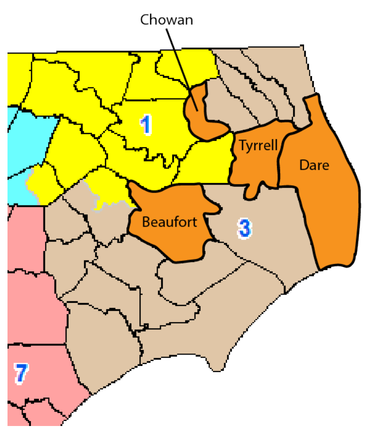
FIGURE 5: Five-step analysis process (McCracken, 1988, page 42-43)

Utterance/Observation	Pick out keywords, key phrases and important ideas and analyze individually, without context. Construct preliminary observations.
Expanded Observation	Develop preliminary observations first by themselves, then in context of the entire transcript, and finally in context of the literature and cultural reviews.
Observation Interconnection	Examine observations in relation to one another. Focus shifts from reliance on the transcript to analyzing the extrapolated observations themselves.
Collective Scrutiny	Analyze observations in their entirety and develop themes for the individual interviews.
Thesis	Combine themes from all interviews to develop overall takeaways.

To determine where to target for interviewee recruitment, the counties in North Carolina's third congressional district were ranked as a function of population size, percent male versus female, percent white versus minority, median household income, per capita income, high school graduation rate, and total number of active businesses. U.S. Census data were used to calculate each of these categories (QuickFacts, n.d.).

Each of the 16 counties in the district was assigned a ranked number for each demographic category (lowest population = 1 and highest = 16, least diverse population = 1 and most diverse = 16, etc). Each county's rankings were added together to produce a total score. The scores were then ranked lowest to highest. To ensure a relatively representative sample of counties, one county on the lowest end (Tyrrell) and one on the highest end (Dare) were selected, and then two were selected from the middle (Chowan, Beaufort). See Appendix D for a full table of county demographics and rankings.

FIGURE 6: Sampled Counties for Small Business Interviews



Map source: "2016 Contingent Congressional Plan - Corrected," 2016.

To ensure interviewee confidentiality, the recordings and transcripts for each interview were erased after the following analysis was completed. The analysis, detailed in the next chapter, first categorizes the interviewee responses into major themes, and then uses those themes to create two customer journeys, one describing the process behind a business owner participating in partnership with a generic nonprofit and one describing a business owner who decides to not engage in partnership.

Partnership Framework

The final stage of this thesis was the development of a communication plan and framework for a TNC business partnership. The framework includes message considerations when communicating with potential business partners, for ongoing communication with partners, and for material that will contribute to messaging between business partners and their local communities. The message frameworks were grounded in the elaboration likelihood model and cognitive dissonance theory as described in the literature review section of this thesis.

Limitations

Because this thesis is focused exclusively on eastern North Carolina business owners, the results cannot be generalized. Since communities differ, TNC would benefit from additional research into different opinion leader audiences, across different regions and for a variety of client organizations.

Additionally, because of time constraints, this thesis includes a communication plan based on the research that includes recommendations for strategies, tactics and the best means for The Nature Conservancy to implement and evaluate them. As it will not observe success after a plan is enacted, measurement of message success or failure is not included in the discussion or conclusion. This portion of the method will be included as recommendations for The Nature Conservancy to implement at later dates.

Finally, the research for this thesis was conducted from late April through May, which is the beginning of the busy tourism season in eastern North Carolina. Because of that, it was especially difficult to successfully recruit interviewees. For this research, 115 small businesses were contacted. Many business owners responded that they were interested in participating but would not have the time until after August or September, beyond the timeframe for this thesis project. Some of their comments, although brief, are included in the results particularly to help clarify perspectives about time limitations. This is important to note, because this limitation for research will also be a limitation for any organizations seeking to partner with these businesses. The additional time required to successfully partner will likely dissuade many business owners.

The following chapter provides the results of the in-depth interviews. Those findings will inform the subsequent communication plan.(need transition paragraph)

CHAPTER 4: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

For this research, 115 businesses were contacted with interview requests. Thirty-five were sent emails followed up by phone calls, 55 were sent physical letters and 25 were contacted in person at their places of business. Many respondents were interested in the research but did not have the time to participate. By the end of May, six full interviews were successfully conducted. In addition, five business leaders who were contacted in person but declined to participate in a full interview took a few minutes to explain why they were unable to participate at the time, and some of their insights are included in the analysis.

Over the entirety of the third congressional district, 55 percent of businesses are male-run, and more than 80 percent are run by Caucasian owners ("QuickFacts North Carolina," 2017). Four of the interviewees for this study are male and two are female. They ranged in age from 30 to 67 years old, and all six are Caucasian. Three were born and raised in eastern North Carolina, and three were born elsewhere and moved to the area later in life. The six interviewees represented two food service businesses, one landscaping company, one fishing distribution/wholesale company, one bookstore, and one adventure tourism company. The businesses ranged in size between two and 30 employees. All interviewees for this study have been in business in eastern North Carolina for more than five years. Detailed demographics were not collected from the 109 small business owners who were contacted but declined to participate in full interviews. Fifty-three of those businesses are male-owned, 32 are co-owned by husbandwife partners, and 24 are female owned businesses. This information was collected from company websites and county chamber of commerce business listings. Ethnicity, age, size and other demographic information could not be determined from the information available.

Interview themes

The transcripts from the six interviews conducted were sorted into five main categories: limited time, tourist and local customer dynamics, business values, the "Amazon effect" and nonprofit proactivity. These themes will help The Nature Conservancy effectively communicate and work with small businesses in eastern North Carolina. Limited identifying information was included to ensure interviewee confidentiality.

Theme 1: Time is a significant, and inconsistent, factor

One of the most-important aspects of small businesses for The Nature Conservancy to consider is their owners' general lack of time. All six interviewees said that they generally work well over 40-hour weeks and are pulled in many different directions as they navigate multiple management roles on top of day-to-day structural tasks. But that time crunch isn't year-round. It scales up for the busy summer season and drops back during the winter months. When asked about his typical day at work, one interviewee in the food service industry said:

> *"A typical day. Honestly we're probably at least both of us eighty hours a week, still. All of February and halfway through March, my wife and I were doing 16-hour days, so we decided to hire five more people and make another two other positions full-time and salaried."*

Another interviewee who owns a bookstore described her typical day beginning around 7:00 a.m. with a couple hours of work from home. She used that time for computer work before running errands for her business on the way to work. At the business, she bounces back and forth between helping customers, filing paperwork, ordering supplies, running payroll and preparing for upcoming events. In the course of one day, she plays many different roles, all of which demand significant time and attention.

The potential interviewees I contacted who were not able to participate also shed some light on this theme. Many mentioned that they were interested, but simply didn't have the time until after August or September. The busy tourist season on the coast will be a significant time barrier to any organization working to partner with local businesses, but this also suggests that small business owners will likely be more receptive to communication between the months of September and May.

Tourism is an important source of income for all the business owners I interviewed. It doesn't keep the businesses afloat on its own, but the summer months are busy and lucrative, allowing them to last through slower winter traffic.

Theme 2: Tourism drives profits, but strong relationships with local customers sustain businesses

With any business, customers are a top priority. But for the small business owners interviewed for this thesis, that relationship tends to go much deeper than simply providing goods and services that the customers need. Tourist traffic is an invaluable resource for all interviewees, but they also see their local customers as the bedrock for business success, a lucrative source of promotion and an attentive audience for important information.

With the exception of the adventure tourism company, all business owners interviewed described a strong reliance on a regular local customer traffic to keep their businesses successful. They all balanced heavy tourist traffic during the summer months with loyal customers throughout the rest of the year. The owner of a microbrewery near the coast said:

> *"This winter definitely, we were allowed to survive by the local population. So a lot of our customers come out of that. But craft beer tourism is enormous. We have weekend*

drivers from five hours out every weekend steady. Craft beer tourism right now is extremely large for us."

Additionally, the small business owners interviewed tended to rely heavily on their customers as their main form of promotion. One interviewee noted that small business turnover rate is extremely high, but the people who live in small towns in eastern North Carolina don't tend to move very often. New people aren't moving in, and the majority of the local residents aren't leaving any time soon. She sees making genuine connections with that stable customer base as the key to long-term success for her business. Another interviewee said that he doesn't engage in any paid advertising whatsoever. He said:

> *"We have a customer base which entirely rests on our previous history. We don't advertise. It's all word-of-mouth. We build up a loyalty base with our customers that's dependent on courtesy."*

Many of the interviewees also see their loyal local customers as attentive audiences for issues important to their business' success. Three of the six interviewees had previously engaged in some form of a partnership with environmental organizations. Their explanations for why they partnered with those groups ranged from a core reliance on a clean environment for a healthy fish harvest to a nonprofit organization simply being present and active in the local community. One interviewee, who works alongside the commercial fishing industry, sees his business as a unique platform for environmental messaging to his local community. He said:

> *"We try to educate our customer base on the relevance of the harvest and natural resources and water quality dependence, and we try and make them understand that by consuming this product they are involved in a food chain that depends on the actions of our government and ultimately our elected officials in preserving the quality of those resources."*

He noted that taking the position he does toward the fishing industry has come with significant backlash, though. He said that he is definitely in the minority when it comes to his opinions on government and nonprofit oversight among his peers in the fishing industry. His alliance with environmental organizations, detailed in the next theme, is at its core value-driven.

Theme 3: Business owners seek value alignment in their partners over all other factors

For this thesis, partnership refers to work between a nonprofit and a business that results in mutual value creation, solving problems for both organizations. In interviews, small business owners were not given this definition to allow them to indicate what they think partnership means. All six business leaders interviewed indicated that they had participated in some form of nonprofit partnership. For the most part, their definitions were along the same lines as the one used for this thesis, but they did not emphasize *mutual* value creation, often indicating that most, if not all, benefit from partnership goes to the nonprofit rather than the small business.

While all six interviewees had participated in some form of partnership, not everyone contacted did. Many of the potential interviewees who rejected the request said that they didn't see why they were relevant to this research because they didn't see any benefit to partnering with nonprofits. Even after explaining that both schools of thought are important to the research, one small business owner who runs a construction company simply said,

> *"I build houses. I don't partner."*

For those who do partner, however, the most-important factor the interviewees identified to select a nonprofit is the organization's values. One interviewee said:

> *"If we're going to support somebody with a fundraiser and have a partnership we have to make sure that our values are along the same lines. So when we do a fundraiser we have a sit-down meeting first and we just talk and discuss about what each other's companies are about, what your company values are. If they align then we continue to move forward."*

All six interviewees agreed that value alignment is the number-one priority for partnering with nonprofits. Those values span the gamut from political ideology to local focus. One interviewee described value alignment simply as,

> *"Do our values align. It kind of brings the whole theme that we're a community-focused business. If you're here to help the local community, then we want to help you."*

Another interviewee agreed, saying,

> *"We have some criteria [for selecting partners]. Number one, it needs to be local. I'm not going to send money off to a federal or national organization unless they have a local presence. Other than that, it's pretty much how the guys (employees) feel."*

To many of the interviewees, value alignment also takes the form of industry focus. A bookstore owner, for example, seeks out literacy-oriented nonprofit organizations and local schools to partner with. The landscaping business seeks to provide landscaping services for free to local nonprofits.

A driving force behind the need for value alignment and locality for the business owners interviewed is their perception that partnerships only have one-sided benefits. When asked about business-side benefits, every single interviewee responded that there might be some ancillary benefit, but the majority of the benefit goes to the nonprofit. For example, one interviewee said,

> *"The reason we partner is to help. I can't think of any other reason I would do it—its not like a two-way thing. Whatever I can do to help financially I will."*

Similarly, another interviewee said,

> *"The major benefit ends up with the organizations we collaborate with. We don't get a lot of benefit out of it, but I think its important to continue them because there's an educational component to it that you don't get in a conference room. Working together provides a forum where the barriers get broken down more easily and there's a better understanding of the stakeholders."*

Every single interviewee agreed that there aren't significant benefits to the business in a partnership when directly asked what they get out of partnering. However, all six did highlight significant benefits when asked indirectly. All interviewees were asked questions such as, "have you noticed a change in customer dynamics after partnering for a community event?" or, "what would you say to encourage another business owner to partner?" Their responses to these questions indicated that they did see benefits, and many said that those benefits had significant impacts on their business's success. The main benefit that interviewees pinpointed was the additional promotion that partnership creates, which helps small stores compete with larger corporations that are increasingly taking away small business traffic.

Theme 4: Combatting the "Amazon effect"

Even interviewees said that there are no significant business-side benefits to partnering, almost all continued on to mention the importance of cross-promotion in driving customers to the stores.

> "*We all have a social media presence. We cross-promote each other at the same time. So instead of just having our Instagram followers, we have their Instagram followers and vice versa. So we're hitting a demographics that can't be reached by yourself."*

Another business owner described what she called the "Amazon effect." She has seen a significant increase in shoppers who visit her store only to "showroom," or take pictures of items they like so they can go home and search online for better deals. She said that the practice is becoming an existential threat to her business and many other local stores in her area.

> *"[Showrooming is] the biggest thing, it's so convenient for people to, I mean they can jump on their phone and order anything they want. I think this issue is finally starting to sink home with other businesses too....I know other gift shops downtown that are starting to struggle with the practice of showrooming. That used to never happen."*

That business owner went on to say that partnering allows her to promote her business in a nontraditional way, which really helps combat the "Amazon effect."

> *"It just creates a lot of goodwill. If I go and speak to a garden club and do a presentation and make a donation, it kind of keeps us in front of their mind. So the next time they're thinking, 'Oh I want to get a present for my grandchild, I better go on Amazon,' they might remember, 'Oh that nice woman was at our event last week. Maybe I'll go downtown to her store instead.'"*

Even with this benefit that partnership creates, all interviewees still held that their primary motivation to partner is more altruistic. Regardless, all interviewees were excited about the partnerships they had participated in, and they all indicated that they plan to continue partnering with nonprofit organizations. Additionally, when asked, all interviewees said that they were not the only ones partnering in their local communities. They all listed several businesses they personally knew that also participated in partnerships. While partnership appears to be a common practice, the small business owners interviewed do want to be sought out and valued by nonprofits before working together.

Theme 5: Many small businesses are ready for new partners, but they want the nonprofits to reach out.

Interviewees identified a wide variety of barriers to participating in partnership. These included time constraints, size of the business and locality of the nonprofit organization. The most-common barrier, however, was a lack of personal outreach from nonprofit organizations.

> *"It may just be a communication issue. If people would just start a conversation, I don't see a reason why it wouldn't be possible. But a lot of nonprofits might not reach out. And on the other side, small businesses may feel like they're too small to be able to help or make a difference."*

Perceived ability to affect change was a much smaller aspect. In fact, many of the other interviewees saw themselves as uniquely able to be positive influences in their local communities. One interviewee mentioned that, because his business is focused on the ocean and relies on fish harvests, people in his town are more likely to believe him over an advocacy group when it comes to messages about climate change and overfishing. Unfortunately, on the other hand, he also has noticed backlash from other members of the fishing industry because of his personal advocacy.

> *"Generally, the membership and leadership of commercial fishing organizations has pretty much sketched out a stance of anti-green, anti-conservation. They have made it difficult for individual members of the organizations, such as myself, to be involved directly with NGOs. We are sort of being smeared with the title of 'sleeping with the enemy.'"*

That same interviewee went on to say that even that barrier could be solved with more direct communication. He specifically mentioned physical presence at community events as a good first step toward developing relationships with industry members.

> *"There just needs to be more effort from the organizations to include the coastal people, and certainly the entrepreneurs that are trying to make it in the coastal economy."*

This chapter has identified and provided supporting information about the five themes that emerged from the interview analysis: limited time, tourist and local customer dynamics, business values, the "Amazon effect," and nonprofit proactivity. The final chapters of this thesis, the communication plan and conclusion, will provide TNC with outlines for the tools it needs to put forth the effort that small business owners want to see. It will help the organization work within the constraints of its resources to effectively reach out and create connections with business owners across eastern North Carolina, creating partnerships that will result in widespread, business-led climate change communication.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNICATON PLAN

This communication plan outlines TNC's current situation by summarizing points from earlier sections of this thesis. This plan will then outline the value that implementation will have, both to TNC and to the small businesses it partners with. Focusing on the values that both parties can take away, this chapter also will lay out a set of tactics to implement and tools to measure their impact.

Category, Situation, and Brand Landscape

TNC broadly fits into the nonprofit category. More specifically, it is an environmental nonprofit with a 501(c)(3) designation. The nonprofit category as a whole faces significant uncertainty as the Baby Boomer generation ages out and Millennials begin to take over the donation and volunteer landscape. Feldmann et al (2017) found that Millennials, ages 21-37 (Fry, 2016), see climate change as one of the top five causes for concern, which is a good sign for environmental organizations in general. The Millennial generation still has less spending power than their older counterparts, but they do donate at high rates. As they continue to enter the workforce and secure better-paying jobs, individual donation amount is expected to continue to increase. Like the small business owners interviewed for this thesis, Millennials are more likely to engage with local nonprofits than national ones (Feldmann et al, 2017). This trend should be a concern for TNC, but it can be overcome with increased involvement from state-level chapters and preserve staff in Nags Head.

With the trends that Feldmann et al. (2017) found in their Millennial Impact Report, nonprofits can expect significant involvement and a growing donor base to replace Baby Boomer support in the coming years. Overall, TNC is in a relatively good position as a well-known, stable nonprofit.

TNC's situation and brand landscape are primarily covered in Chapter 1 of this thesis. To briefly recap, the following SWOT analysis is a condensed version of the full analysis in Chapter 1.

Strengths ● Spending power ● Seventy percent of funds go toward the programmatic expenses ● High ratings from charity watchdogs and accreditation agencies (Our charity ratings, n.d.). ● Conservative and liberal donor base and membership	**Weaknesses** ● Climate communication is a secondary goal, limiting funding and time. ● Climate plan is restricted primarily to digital communication tactics. ● Limited state-level chapter ability to launch and maintain strong localized campaigns
Opportunities ● History of working well with business partners. ● Strong local preserve in Nags Head	**Threats** ● General environmental activist community sees business ties as a threat. ● Stigma associated with "environmentalists" (Foote, 2010). ● Constant competition among nonprofits to secure donations.

TNC can leverage its opportunities for more successful climate change communication with the following plan, overcoming some of the most-significant weaknesses it faces. The following sections describe the value that TNC provides, introduces a persona representing eastern North Carolina small business owners and introduces two distinct customer journeys.

Value for the People

TNC provides a valuable service, not only to its donors, but to all people in the areas it serves. The nonprofit "conserves the lands and waters on which all life depends" (TNC, n.d.). That mission statement covers a wide variety of areas of conservation, including climate change mitigation and adaptation. Specifically in eastern North Carolina, this focus will continue to become more important as the effects of climate change become increasingly apparent. Eastern North Carolina is the most-vulnerable part of the state to climate change, primarily because of its proximity to the ocean. Sea level rise and increased storm strength are two effects of climate change that will damage property and impact communities close to the ocean (Climate impacts on coastal areas, n.d.). It also happens to be a stronghold for politically conservative populations who are more likely to be skeptical of the facts behind climate science (Newport, 2017). Encouraging these audiences to take the step from skepticism to belief is invaluable in the fight to mitigate the effects of climate change.

For TNC to provide its value, this communication plan primarily focuses on an audience of small business owners in eastern North Carolina. The business owners are an avenue to a larger audience, however. Business owners who are well known in their local communities will be ideologically aligned in many other ways with people who still deny the science behind climate change. Rather than climate change disagreement dominating interactions, small business owners will have friendships, community ties and other history with the audiences TNC needs to reach. This aspect of business owner-customer relationships makes them perfect spokespersons for a jiu jitsu communication approach, which emphasizes alignment with target audiences before attempting to change minds (Hornsey and Fielding, 2017).

It can be assumed that people who are already skeptical that climate change is real will doubt any information on the topic that comes directly from TNC and similar nonprofits. The organizations are seen as compromised sources by these audiences because, since they are environmentally focused, they appear likely to give a liberal slant to the facts. Small business owners, on the other hand, are often widely trusted among local communities. In fact, the industry is the most trusted institution in the United States, right alongside the U.S. military (Gallup, n.d.). Because of that, if TNC should work with small business owners in lieu of direct nonprofit-to-citizen outreach to larger audiences.

To effectively create relationships with small business owners, TNC needs to understand what drives their values and motivations. The following customer journey personifies the information collected in the six interviews conducted for this thesis. The purpose of the customer journeys is to highlight the most-impactful points of contact between a nonprofit and its business partner, from that partner's point of view. By displaying the interview data analyzed in the previous section as a story, the emotions of potential partners can be better understood. Points of high emotional contact will be the best places to focus TNC's efforts in order to create genuine connections, which can evolve into partnerships to achieve climate change communication goals.

Persona: Taylor Smith, small business owner in eastern North Carolina

Taylor is 55 years old and lives in Dare County, North Carolina. She was born and raised in eastern North Carolina, and she now owns a small food service business near the coast. Her business purchases fresh seafood daily from local fishermen and either sells it directly to customers to take home or prepares it for customers to eat at its in-store restaurant. The store caters to a mixed clientele of tourists and locals as well as other business owners farther inshore who purchase the seafood in bulk.

Taylor is a registered Republican. She is concerned with environmental issues that affect the fishing industry, however, and believes in conservation. She does not believe in manmade climate change, though, seeing the argument as politically motivated rather than truly meant to help people like her.

The local community is Taylor's primary concern. Her personal politics don't adhere strictly to a partisan line, but she leans Republican when in doubt. Overall, she is wary of organizations that appear more concerned with partisan issues than issues that affect her local community and her business.

She has partnered with nonprofit organizations before, and she personally donates to many. The organizations she supports tend to be local. If she knows someone who runs or works for a nonprofit, she is more likely to donate or work alongside them. She has donated to larger nonprofits like the National Rifle Association and TNC as well, but she isn't emotionally connected to them. Having no experiences beyond donations and mailings, she doesn't have a face to put with the names of these organizations. She has no personal attachment to the larger nonprofits that could help persuade her to take steps beyond donating.

Customer Journey 1: A successful local nonprofit partnership, from the business owner's perspective

Taylor is active in her local community. Locals frequent her business and know who she is. She can be seen often in town, visiting other business, going to church or attending community events.

Through her church, Taylor meets Bill, who runs a local nonprofit. His organization caters to veterans in their town, and it hosts regular local fundraisers to help support that mission. Bill's organization relies heavily on cookouts, silent auctions and other community-focused fundraising events to reach its organizational goal of service to veterans in need of healthcare and food assistance.

A few months after meeting for the first time, Bill reaches out and personally invites Taylor to a fundraiser that his nonprofit is hosting over the weekend. It's a cookout, and the proceeds from the food sales will help fill the nonprofits emergency food pantry.

At the fundraiser, Taylor notices that the event's food is catered by a chain restaurant that isn't particularly noteworthy. People aren't avoiding it, but the food itself isn't an aspect of the fundraiser that will be particularly memorable. She decides that she might be able to donate local food for the next fundraiser from her store. If people love the food, maybe they will donate more and have a better experience, making them more likely to come and donate again.

Taylor tells Bill about her idea and that she is willing to provide the food for free. The chain restaurant gave Bill a discounted price, but it couldn't provide the food completely free of cost. Bill agrees and is excited about working with a local restaurant for his next event. His nonprofit includes Taylor's name and the name of her restaurant prominently on all of their promotional material in hopes of attracting more of the local community.

At the next fundraiser, Taylor notices how appreciative the locals were that she provided fresh, local food. While she served food, many guests thanked her and told personal stories about veteran family members who Bill's charity helps. At the end, Bill mentions to Taylor that he received more donations than usual.

In the month after the fundraiser, Taylor notices that many of the locals who came to her restaurant to eat mentioned the fundraiser and her role providing the food. Taylor decides to actively reach out to another local nonprofit, this time one that focuses on land conservation in the community and its immediate surroundings. Again, she provides local seafood for a cookout-style fundraiser. She brings a small fryer this time and cooks the food herself, personally interacting with members of the community and encouraging donations to the nonprofit.

Taylor notices that her business is beginning to become associated with the local nonprofits, and members of the local community appreciate her and support her business because of it. She plans to work again with the nonprofits she has worked with in the past and is open to creating relationships with others.

Customer Journey 2: experience with larger nonprofits

Taylor is concerned with many prominent issues, including veterans welfare, land conservation, and Second Amendment rights.

Because of her interests, she subscribes to mailed newsletters from several organizations, including TNC, which she knows has significant membership in eastern North Carolina. She makes infrequent donations to TNC, but doesn’t differentiate it much in her mind from other large nonprofits because she has little personal interaction with the organization. She has met employees who work at the Nags Head Woods Preserve, however, and she has attended a handful of their seminars and presentations.

Taylor receives a newsletter from TNC that highlights a new land conservation project on the Black River. The Black River isn’t in her community, but it does run through eastern North Carolina. Taylor has canoed the river before, and she has good memories associated with it.

Wanting to support the river's conservation, she sends a donation to TNC. One week later, she receives a typed thank-you in the mail from TNC's worldwide office in Washington, D.C. She reads and appreciates it, but throws it out and doesn't think about the experience in depth.

A few months later, Taylor receives another mailer from TNC, this time a special report on climate change and its impact on eastern North Carolina. Without opening or reading the newsletter, she throws it out, frustrated by what she sees as political persuasion.

Strategically applying the journeys

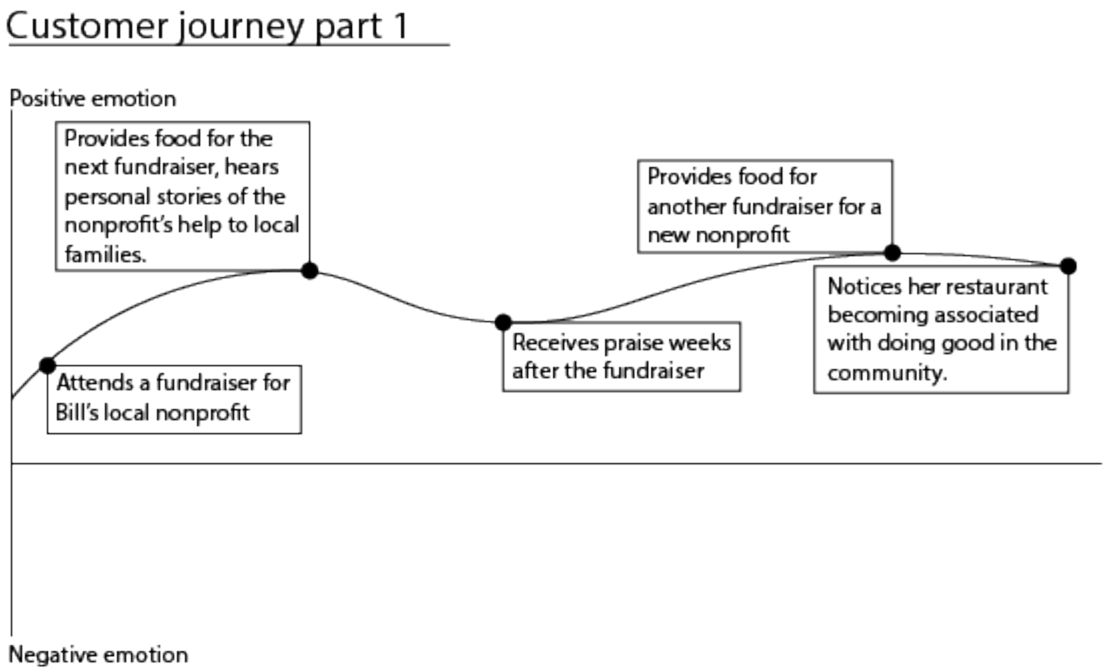
These customer journeys portray generally the paths that small business leaders favorable toward partnership may take when interacting with different nonprofits. By examining the points of high emotional value and practical need, TNC can identify the best areas of focus to create genuine connections.

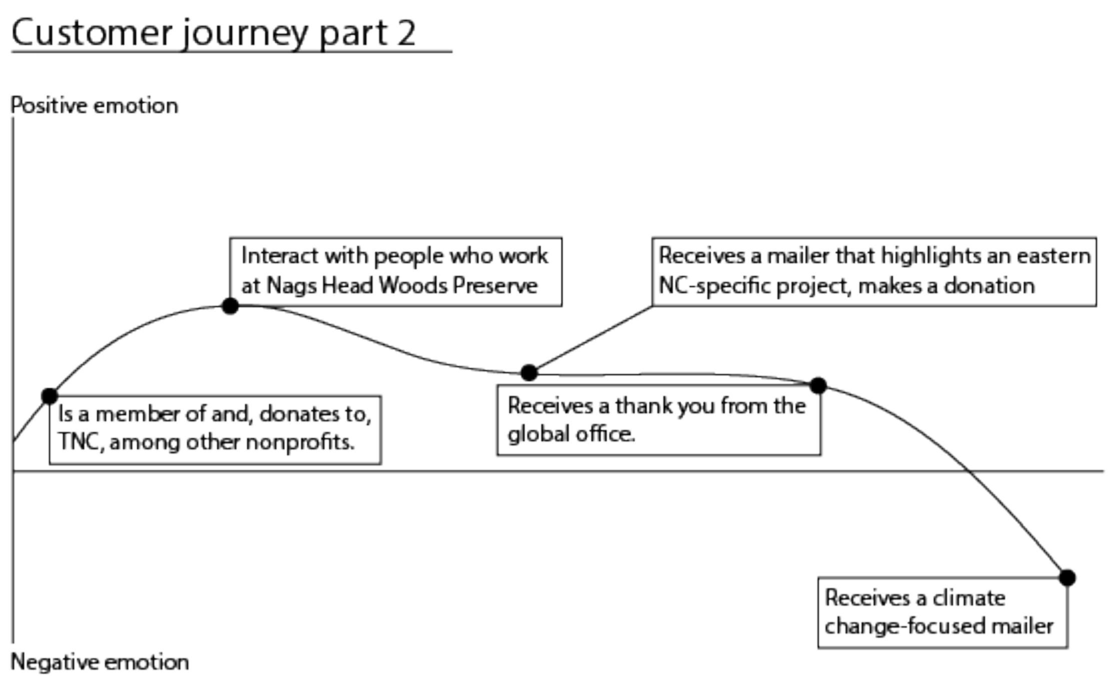
In the first customer journey, the experience between Taylor and the local nonprofits she ends up partnering with overall is positive. There are two points in particular that have significant emotional and practical value, however. The two times that she provides food for fundraisers are the strongest points of connection. Emotionally, Taylor felt like she was contributing to the nonprofit in a meaningful way, and she felt like the Bill genuinely valued her participation. Practically, she also received valuable promotional impact from the partnership and built a sense of goodwill within the local community that gives her business the potential to grow.

In the second customer journey with a larger, national nonprofit organization, there is one point of personal contact, but it doesn't reach the same level of emotional or practical value as the first, mostly because there wasn't the option for Taylor to play an active role in anything. Additionally, there was a point of negative emotion, too, because she was sent a mailer that she perceived as pushing a political viewpoint that she disagrees with from an organization she supports.

There wasn't a built-up sense of goodwill between her and the nonprofit before getting to the topic of climate change. Referring back to the jiu jitsu persuasion method (Hornsey and Fielding, 2017), the nonprofit had not created enough value alignment to successfully engage in persuasion. Because of that, the persuasive mailer failed. Figure 7 outlines the emotional path that each customer journey followed and shows the potential value of building positive relationships.

FIGURE 7, Customer Journey Emotional Touchpoints





These emotional maps show the most-important positive and negative emotions experienced during the two customer journeys. Positive emotion is important to leverage in relationship building. Based on these maps, times when a business owner feels he or she has provided a necessary service and times of direct personal interaction will be important points to focus tactic around. Additionally, TNC should seek to minimize the one negative emotional point; the part when Taylor received climate change information before she was primed to receive it.

Leveraging the insights from these journeys will help TNC elevate the points of positive emotion during journeys it takes part in by replicating the overall positive experience Taylor had with local nonprofits. Capitalizing on strong positive emotional points will help create loyalty to TNC's brand, making it easier to recruit small business owners into action to reach TNC's goals related to climate change communication. Additionally, focusing on the fact that TNC is not just a national entity, it has statewide and local staff, as well as emphasizing work on land and water conservation will help build positive relationships.

This section described perceptions and benefits of partnership to business owners. The following section provides potential opportunities for TNC.

Value for TNC

TNC's defining purpose is to conserve valuable land and bodies of water. The organization sees conservation as valuable not only to a diverse natural world, but also to the existence and enrichment of humanity. As a part of its mission, TNC also combats the effects of climate change through mitigation programs and communication efforts. Because the science behind climate change has become a polarized issue, communication efforts are especially difficult, and science denial is hindering actual mitigation.

TNC needs a successful communication program in eastern North Carolina that can circumnavigate the invasive political rhetoric and build relationships. To do that, it needs to enhance its local presence, building from the Nags Head Preserve staff in eastern North Carolina's rural communities, allowing it to show that its values align with those of the local people. Community presence alone is a significant value, and face-to-face interaction is a great way to have in-depth discussions that reveal where people do agree with one another.

Insight

The words "climate change" are TNC's biggest problem in the context of this thesis. Some of the interviewees for this thesis believe in climate change but don't even know it. They are witness to its effects every day, and many even notice significant changes in their lines of work. But when confronted with the words "climate change," they still disagree with what they have been conditioned to see as a politically motivated misinterpretation of science. This cognitive dissonance is what communication based on the literature review for this thesis will combat.

This means that engaging in science-based conversation alone won't change audiences' minds. This is a significant issue, but it also opens new doors for TNC to reach reluctant audiences in new and engaging ways. Most importantly, these new ways won't come from the mouths of "ivory tower" scientists who don't understand eastern NC residents' viewpoints and experiences. Small business owners, as part of the most-trusted institution in the U.S. (Gallup, n.d.), are valuable potential opinion leaders and spokespersons for a new approach to climate change communication. Reaching small business owners, however, has its own problems and opportunities.

Small business owners in eastern North Carolina are pressed for time, especially during the spring and summer months. They are also wary of larger organizations like TNC, and prefer to work with local nonprofit organizations. TNC has staff located across North Carolina, which can help it create personal connections by attending events and being present in local communities. Additionally, TNC has a history of working well with business (Working with companies, n.d.).

Small business owners interviewed for this thesis across the board did not see partnership as a lucrative venture, however. They participated in partnership, but only as a gesture of goodwill, not perceiving it as a smart business strategy. This reveals a "blue ocean," an area of marketing that has yet to be explored or harnessed thoroughly (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005). Approaching partnership with TNC as a profitable business move is a wide open opportunity that other organizations have not taken, especially in the small business sphere. Business owners may not even realize that it is a possibility. If TNC can successfully convince small business owners that working together is not only a socially responsible thing to do, but also a profitable venture, the organization can capitalize on this blue ocean.

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

The research for this thesis points to a strategy of in-person, regular contact with small business owners throughout the third congressional district. With TNC's budget and staff, however, that is likely impossible to implement. Staffing a program to reach every small town in the district in person would be a monumental task, so instead TNC must communicate in a way that mirrors the personal attention a boots-on-the-ground approach would provide.

To simplify the recommendation, the stronger the relationships are that TNC creates, the better the chances are that climate change communication will be successful. This idea comes directly from Hornsey and Fielding's (2017) jiu jitsu method of communication. Relationships are built on commonalities, which open doors to communication about other, more-divisive topics like climate change. Hornsey and Fielding identified six different attitude roots to align with. This thesis specifically recommends focusing on the personal identity expression and social identity needs roots.

Personal identity refers to the need to express one's self-image, and social identity refers to the ways that groups in close contact assimilate their self-images, beliefs and behaviors. Based on the findings from this thesis, it is clear that small rural communities in eastern North Carolina have strong social identity roots, meaning that small business owners will have many points of contact with their customers. With the strong assimilation that occurs among local communities, small business owners will be uniquely positioned to minimize points of differing self-image (i.e.

climate change belief or disbelief), relying on the foundation of strong social roots to promote trust and fruitful conversation.

In small, rural towns, personal and social identities are strongly influenced by the community. If TNC can integrate itself in those communities, it will have a root commonality that it can emphasize to create relationships with small business owners. Those business owners will already have strong identity roots in common with the rest of the community. That will be the key for more widespread climate change communication. As members of the local community, the business owners will be aligned with the underlying identity roots of their local customers.

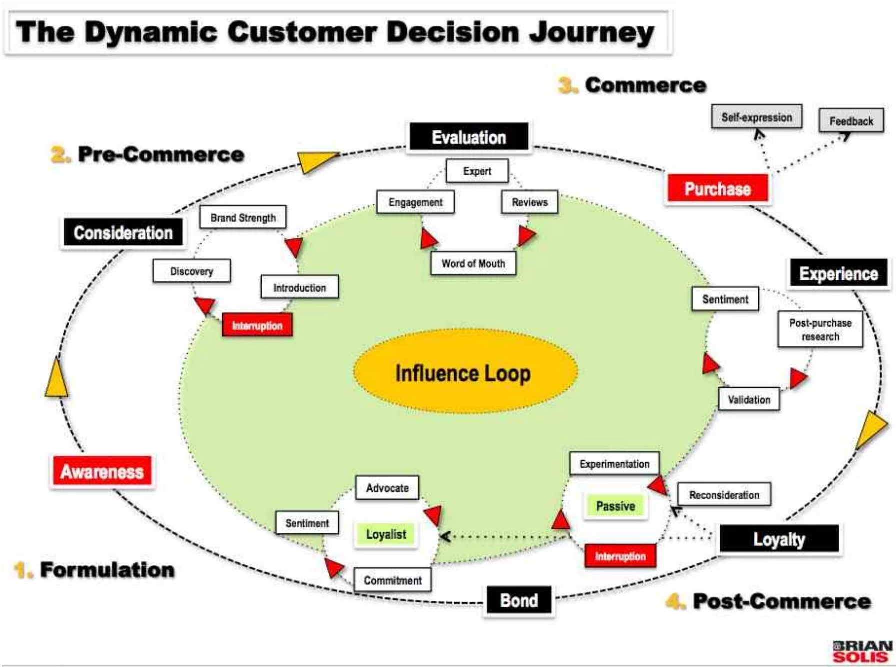
The identity roots of jiu jitsu persuasion have a lot in common with the messenger credibility heuristic of the elaboration likelihood model (O'Keefe, 2002). When parties share common attitude roots, they see each other as credible sources, especially if they know and trust one another. Because small business owners are more present in their local communities, they will appear as more credible sources to their audiences compared to TNC.

While communicating digitally and through other proxies for personal contact in addition to in-person face time when possible, TNC should promote the idea that partnering can be profitable while emphasizing other values, such as healthy fisheries, that it already has in common with the small business owners. All the while, TNC should tread lightly when using the words "climate change." Whenever possible, address some other, visible effect of the phenomenon rather than outright using the phrase itself. Phrases like "sea level rise," or "invasive species from warmer climates" will likely draw less immediate pushback than simply saying "climate change." Additionally, TNC should factor in explicit "what's in it for me" statements about why invasive species and sea level rise will be problematic for small business on and near the coast.

Referring to Bulis and Ie's (2007) phases of partnership, TNC's goal should seek to enter the collaborative phase with business partners, where there is mutual value creation. Small businesses can find ways to adapt to environmental concerns that allow them to increase profit margins, encouraging further involvement and a sense of loyalty to the TNC brand.

To reach mutual value creation when communicating with business owners, the tactics laid out in this section will roughly follow the stages of the dynamic customer journey (Solis, n.d.). The journey follows four broad stages: formulation, pre-commerce, commerce, and loyalty. For small businesses in this context, formulation will mean beginning to think about the idea that TNC is good for small business. The pre-commerce stage will be where small business owners begin to think about partnering with TNC. The commerce stage is where a partnership is enacted, and loyalty comes when small businesses work time and time again with TNC and begin to see themselves as intertwined with its mission and vision. These stages are a good tool to help organize tactics and understand just where they fit into the broader communication plan. Each tactic hits one or two of the stages of the dynamic customer journey, helping move partners and potential partners toward brand loyalty (See Figure 8).

FIGURE 8: The dynamic customer journey



(Solis, n.d.)

TNC doesn't have to reinvent the wheel with this communication plan. Even at the national level, the organization is already focusing on storytelling. Finding narrative avenues to convey climate change to reluctant audiences is the primary recommendation from this thesis. The difference is that the stories should be told by small business owners, not TNC staff. The following tactics outline some ways that TNC could implement this plan.

Formulation Stage: Use TNC's network to its advantage

TNC already has an active network of members throughout North Carolina. Through that membership, it can recruit people, particularly those in eastern North Carolina, who do believe the science behind climate change to act as "TNC ambassadors." TNC should create a brief training for members who agree to be ambassadors that outlines strategies for making TNC more visible to small business owners. The goal here is for TNC to become more visible within local communities. It would be ideal for these ambassadors to be business owners themselves, but that isn't necessarily a requirement. They should, however, be considered credible opinion leaders in eastern North Carolina.

Instead of using "climate change" in conversation, "sustainability" is a good alternative phrase that is less politically charged and will likely draw less immediate pushback among reluctant audiences.

Strategies for ambassador outreach include:

- Encourage ambassadors to wear TNC shirts, hats, etc., to community events.
- Provide talking points about TNC's work with businesses and the benefits of sustainability to business for ambassadors to discuss with others.
- Provide ambassadors with state- and region-specific material like brochures, links to webinars, etc., that they can give to business owners in their community.
- Encourage ambassadors to create clubs or other groups within their local communities that focus on small business sustainability.

The goal for ambassadors isn't to necessarily talk about climate change directly, but to improve TNC's image as present in local communities. For this to work well, TNC needs to be prepared to show other small business owners that it wants to work with them.

Age is an important consideration with an ambassador-style program. Millennials are mentioned multiple times in this thesis, but retirees may be the best age range to target for this tactic. It by no means should be limited to older volunteers, but they do have more free time than those in school or with careers, they are generally seen as figures of authority compared to

Millennials, and they are more likely to be well-known among their local communities. Retirees who have led successful lives will also be seen as more credible to current small business owners compared to Millennials, who may not have any real business experience yet.

Community is another important consideration. When it comes to concepts that could be controversial like communicating climate change, a community of like-minded supporters is important. A good example of successful localized community from a larger organization is The Chive ("The Chive," n.d.). Content aside, The Chive has a network of local community groups that host local get-togethers and create content that is shared on the centralized nationwide organization's website. There are two takeaways from The Chive that are pertinent to TNC. First, allowing local groups to host their own events and create their own content has been immensely successful in establishing a wide following. Second, those local groups are not held to strict brand and content guidelines. They are allowed to use The Chive's logo, but don't have much in the way of other restrictions. This has allowed local Chive organizations to develop their own "personalities," which encourages membership and participation. This framework could be used by TNC, led by local volunteer ambassadors, to create localized business owner organizations that can host their own events and meetings and create their own content. If TNC helps these type of community organizations get started, giving them access to branding but a wide berth when it comes to activity and messaging, they could become great recruiting tools to encourage other small business owners to get involved.

This ambassador tactic is a good way to engage small business owners in the formulation stage of the dynamic customer journey. Livesey and Graham (2007) argued that even simple conversations that don't directly result in sustainability action are significant steps to making environmental conversations the norm. Ambassadors can provide the kind of personal interaction that will drive small business owner awareness that TNC is a potential partner, starting the consideration process. An added benefit to this strategy is that it will also build loyalty among the TNC members who do become ambassadors. With a sense of ownership and responsibility, passive members are more likely to become loyal activists for the TNC brand.

Pre-Commerce Stage: Directly include businesses in programs you already have

Whether it be a dinner at the Nags Head Woods preserve, a tour of a TNC property, or a visit from the Durham office to the coast, TNC already does a lot in eastern North Carolina. Those who don't follow its social media accounts or receive it newsletters may not have any idea about its work locally, however. Anything TNC does down east that reflects the values and goals of the local communities nearby can be used as an opportunity to give small business owners a sense of involvement, helping make them loyal advocates for the brand. One thing that many interviewees for this thesis mentioned was how good they felt after helping a nonprofit that has a local impact. TNC should capitalize on that emotional feeling and widely share both the ideas that partnering is beneficial to both the business and the nonprofit involved and that TNC, as the nonprofit, does considerable local work.

At a Nags Head Woods event, TNC should start by having a local business cater food, and then go a step further. Include a thank you in the event remarks and on any signage promoting the event. After, TNC should also post on social media thanking the owner. This tactic heavily depends on what TNC can do within its social media guidelines. If TNC can't directly post about a specific company, then individuals like State Director Katherine Skinner, Communications Director Debbie Crane, Regional Steward Aaron McCall, or others could post from their personal accounts, mentioning and tagging both the business and TNC (if the business has social media accounts). A simple post on social media is quick and easy, and it can go a long way.

To further develop the relationships TNC creates with small business owners, it should have signs that can be placed in storefronts. A simple sign saying "Proud TNC Supporter," or "TNC Business Ambassador" would be great tools that would help business owners feel like they are making a lasting difference, that they are part of the TNC community, and that TNC is part of their community.

Another great way to encourage involvement with TNC will be to amplify those small business owners who are already making a difference, if they want that recognition. Profiling business owners is one way to do this. A simple profile, recorded on camera and written up for print, can be shared on TNC's website and on the social media accounts for both the business and TNC. Additionally, to provide value to the business owner, these pieces, including a TNC advocacy message, should be submitted as letters to the editor to newspapers in the owner's local community. Doing so will provide free promotion, something the interviewees saw as having significant value to their businesses.

This tactic will drive formulation and pre-commerce activity among small business owners. Actually purchasing goods and services is a great way to get TNC's foot in the door with new potential partners. In doing so, TNC will be operating on their turf, giving the business owners both a sense of responsibility and a sense of control. Following up, showing appreciation, and highlighting good actors will prove that TNC values the business owners as more than transactional assets, and a positive post-experience evaluation will lead to the commerce stage of the customer journey: partnering in a climate change communication-focused manner.

Commerce Stage: Webinars

To engage directly with businesses, TNC should set up a regular series of localized webinars about sustainable practices that help small business owners—specifically those in the community—save money. Saving money and ensuring business success are top priorities for small business owners. Webinars are valuable as a form of continuing education that can help business owners meet those goals. These should exclusively focus on small businesses, and should highlight success stories in North Carolina. TNC can recruit small business owners who have already taken steps toward sustainability and help them tell their stories and teach others. This is the tactic most relevant to TNC's blue ocean to create and promote mutually beneficial partnerships. Webinars and other means of disseminating information that can actually help businesses save money is valuable to their owners, and having material from the mouths of small business owners that can be shared widely will be a great way for TNC to communicate to many people without significant costs.

Potential topics include webinars on the financial benefits waste reduction, renewable energy payoff, and the importance of maintaining healthy fisheries. Programs should have options as far as length goes. For the most-interested audiences, there should be links to more thorough resources or a longer webinar. For marketing purposes, however, TNC must consider the least-responsive audience. For these small business owners, webinar content should be short and succinct. The content should have suggestions and benefits listed upfront so that audiences are incentivized to seek the financial benefit that each webinar has to offer, and those suggestions and benefits should also in text along with each video webinar.

Offering webinar content in many different formats will be important, especially because access to the internet isn't consistent throughout eastern North Carolina. PDF downloads that can be printed out, audio-only versions, and download-friendly video (as opposed to video that can only be streamed, like on YouTube) are three options that TNC could consider.

Additionally, webinars don't have to be directly about climate change. With messages on a wide variety of sustainability topics, centered around successful business practices such as waste reduction, they will help TNC prove that it is aligned with the values of small business owners in eastern North Carolina.

The most-effective way for webinars to work will be for the information to come directly from the mouths of other small business owners. The American Sustainable Business Council has a series of webinars that target business owners. This is a good resource to reference but note that many of its webinars come from people outside of the business world. They include programs by legislators, nonprofit heads, and others who might not appear as credible to business owners compared to their industry peers.

Webinars that come from other small business owners will help combat the cognitive dissonance reactions that Stoll-Kleeman (2001) found in their climate change experiment. Even when respondents believed climate change messages, they heightened perceived costs, set blame on others, or emphasized doubts that action really needed to be taken. If a small business owner tells another small business owner that he or she saved money, perceived cost is less likely to be heightened. Framing webinars in a context of business success and profit removes the blame and timeliness arguments—most business owners are seeking ways to gain profit, no matter who is to blame for climate change, and most would prefer to increase profits now rather than later.

FIGURE 9: Webinar example screen

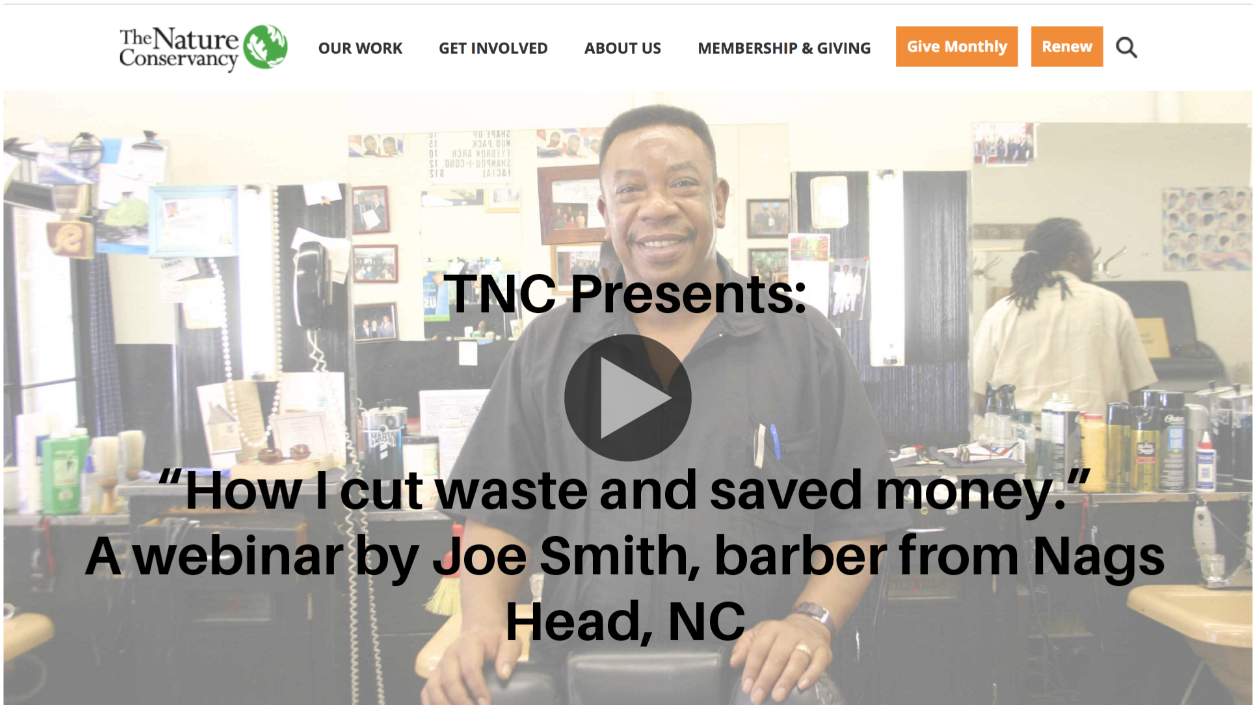


Photo courtesy of Elvert Barnes (2006), edited for use. See also, "How wind strengthens Eastern NC," video by the Environmental Defense Fund.

Webinars can serve multiple purposes. Primarily, they engage the commerce stage of the dynamic customer journey for small business owners who already have been taken through the formulation and pre-commerce stages of the dynamic customer journey by other TNC tactics. Producing material with TNC will give them a sense of ownership and a stake in TNC's mission.

Additionally, webinars will educate other small business owners who are already curious, bringing more to the commerce stage of the customer journey. Webinars can be long (as much as an hour or more to fully cover the content), however, so TNC should also consider taking a full-length webinar and cutting it into many different, more digestible, clips running one to three minutes that can be shared widely on websites and social media to bring other small business owners in.

TNC should also encourage those who watch or participate in webinars to share the videos with friends, post them on social media, and join a business-oriented listserv that TNC can create. Since a listserv is a one-way form of communication, it will be important that it is oriented to small business owners' needs. There needs to be a strong reason for them to want to join the listserv. For example, the listserv should be used to send notifications when new webinars are published, share relevant news articles and share messages written by other small business owners in the same communities.

To best disseminate the information in webinars, they should be re-produced in multiple formats. This is a great way to capitalize on TNC's investment as well. A webinar can be reformatted with only audio to be a short podcast, which lends itself to easy listening during a commute, for example. Additionally, the strongest points of a webinar should be typed out in bulleted fact sheets and overviews to 1) give new viewers a taste of what they will be learning and 2) provide an easy reference for small business owners who are implementing tactics to refer back to.

On social media, the webinars provide one of many ways to take this thesis plan from TNC-to-business communication and drive the ultimate goal of producing business-to-customer communication. Customers might not watch or enjoy a business-oriented webinar, but just seeing online or via storefront signage that the coffee shop down the street or their favorite bar partook in a sustainable webinar it was just featured in will help them associate that establishment with sustainability. Referring again to Livesey and Graham (2007), small conversations and reminders about sustainability can go a long way in normalizing environmental topics in everyday discussion, priming audiences for more in-depth conversation.

Webinars are relatively easy to produce. Jasch (2017) and 6 Best Free Webinar Services (n.d.) are two great resources to help TNC get started. They are a low-cost method of distributing information in a way that will grab other business owners' attention. While the main purpose won't be to directly talk about climate change, it can be a good avenue to include climate-related information when appropriate. TNC can invite business owners who do believe the science to give a short message at the end of their webinars such as, "I also do this because I am deeply concerned with rising sea levels and the impact that they will have on our coastal economy. Fortunately, the changes I have made also save my business money while I'm working to better the planet! It's not just the right thing to do, but it also makes financial sense for me and my business."

Commerce Stage: Weatherbots

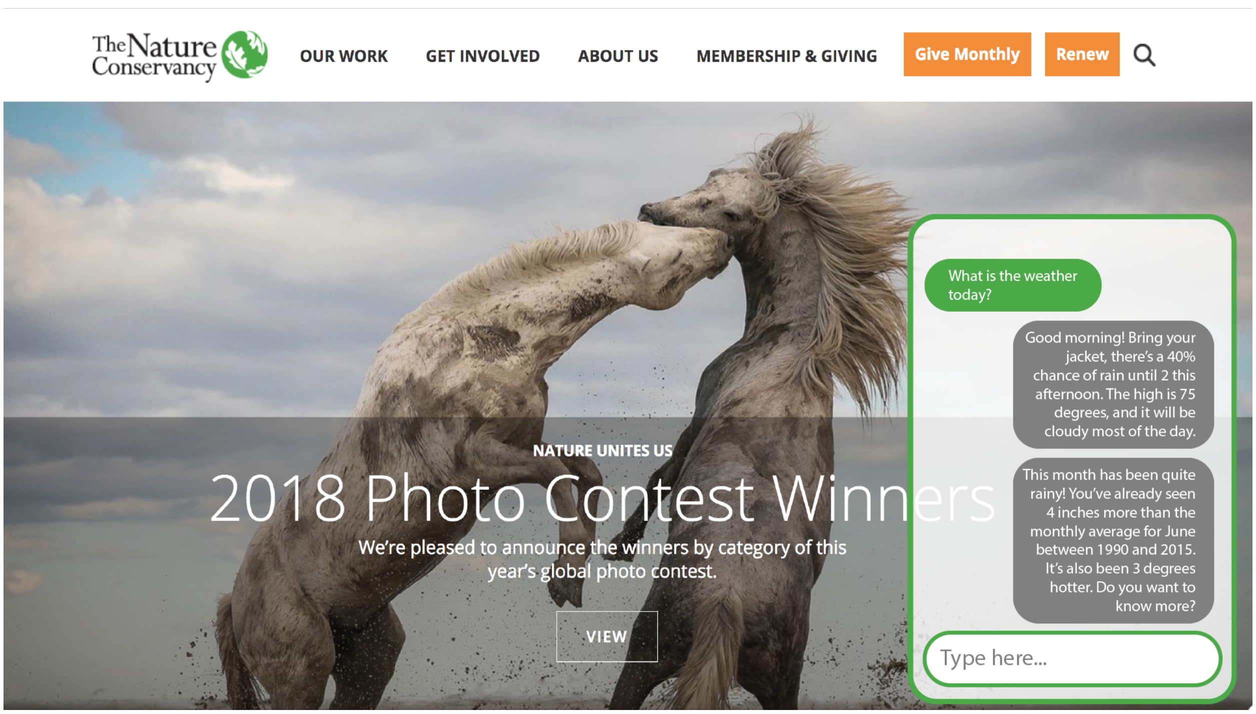
Bots are semi-personal, automated computer programs that can do simple tasks such as tell a person the weather forecast. TNC can create its own weather bot that would not only give today's weather but also include a simple message about climate change.

A good example of a weatherbot was created by OpenWhisk, which can be found at https://text-bot.ng.bluemix.net/. Most software developers can easily build weatherbots. A good list of developers can be found at BotMakers.net.

Weatherbots, once built, are easy and simple to distribute. The code can be embedded into a website so that it will show up on anyone's page. This is a great option for TNC because it can distribute a weatherbot to any and all interested business owners to put on their own websites without much additional cost. A particularly good target for this tactic would be businesses like charter fishing companies, on-the-water tourism businesses, and surf shops. Small businesses that are weather-dependent often distribute weather reports on their websites anyway, so a weatherbot will simultaneously fulfill a need for those businesses and help TNC reach its organizational goals related to climate change communication.

In a conversational way, a TNC weatherbot would first give customers the information they need. What is the weather going to be like today? What should I prepare for before I go out? Then, it will go further and give them relevant climate data. Without saying the words "climate change," it can lead them to information about how much hotter it is this month on average, how much more rain we've seen, whether it is normal to have a hurricane at this time of year, and so on (See Figure 10).

FIGURE 10: Weatherbot example screen



Every time a weatherbot gives information, it should ask, "Do you want to know more?" Doing so allows interested customers to dive deeper into climate information while allowing less-interested customers to exit before becoming annoyed or overwhelmed. If a customer does want to know more, the weatherbot can first send more climate change information directly through the chat box, eventually inviting the customer to visit TNC's website.

It would be best to leave a bot relatively unbranded by not including TNC's logo, but rather allows the small business to identify as the host. The demo above has TNC green trim, but no logo or other identifying information is included. With TNC branding, people who are skeptical of climate science will be more likely to ignore the service and the information it provides. Relevant information delivered directly from a small business will help align that information with the needs of the customers, and the information will have come from a trusted source. Without mentioning the words "climate change," weatherbots can get people to think about the changes they are personally experiencing in a perspective directly relevant to them.

This tactic, like webinars, is a service that will help engage the small businesses in the commerce stage of the dynamic customer journey. It will give them an easy way to engage customers with climate change information, which is the goal of this thesis. More than the webinars, a weatherbot is designed to be a tool for small businesses to engage with their customers and begin the climate change discussion. As a more long-term tool, integrated in small businesses' websites, this tactic will also help bring commerce-ready organizations into the loyalty phase, where they begin to see themselves as interconnected with TNC and its mission.

Commerce and Loyalty Stages: Communication packages

Once small business owners are ready and willing to communicate climate change to their customers, they will need guidance. TNC should prepare packages of material tailored to the small business environment in eastern North Carolina that will arm the owners with the tools they need to be effective communicators. Packages should include brochures, talking points, conversation suggestions, factual information, and sources. See Figure 11.

FIGURE 11: Sample brochure for communication packages

This brochure was created for TNC while this thesis' author interned at its Durham office. It is a good piece of material for business owners to share. Because it is TNC-branded, it should supplement direct contact from the business owners.

Small business owners will be encouraged to display the TNC-branded material in their stores as well as unbranded material meant to enhance the owners' ability to directly communicate accurate information in impactful ways. When material is given out, it would also be a good idea for the business owner to include something of their own, like a sticker, so that the customer remembers where the information came from. This thesis focuses heavily on downplaying TNC's name to allow contact with reluctant audiences, so it is important that branded material just be used as supplements to direct conversation rather than in lieu of it.

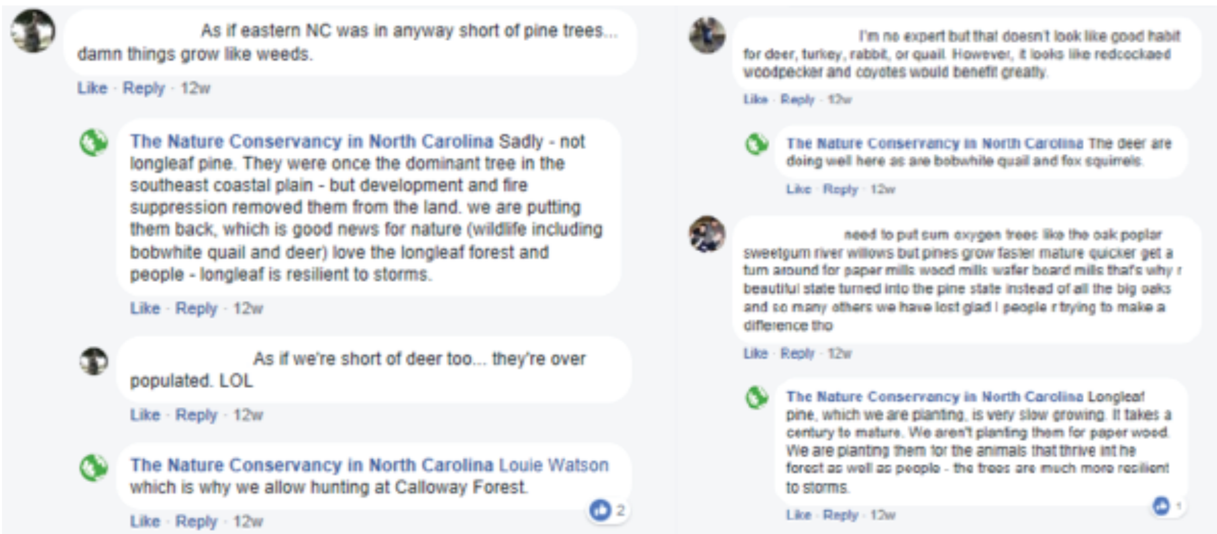
These packages will help small business owners in the commerce and loyalty stages of the dynamic customer journey successfully communicate with their customers. They will help TNC guide what small business owners say and how they go about saying it. To further show that TNC is personally involved, it would also be a good idea to give business owners a direct line to someone they can consult with, either a TNC employee or a trained volunteer, depending on time and ability to handle many different contacts.

Using Social Media

It will be important for TNC to use social media, not necessarily as the primary method of communication, but as a supplement to the tactics above. Webinars can be shared on social media, as can shout-outs to businesses, profiles of business owners, videos of successful sustainability practices, and links to weatherbots. TNC's Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/TNCNC/) has 21,445 followers and 21,830 page likes. This is a huge community that can be reached. Unfortunately, TNC's engagement doesn't reflect that following. Most posts have less than 20 likes, a couple comments, and few shares.

One social media aspect that TNC is very strong in is engagement with comments. TNC responds well to comments in an informative, succinct manner. Two examples are included in Figure 12.

FIGURE 12: TNC social media engagement



One suggestion that might help TNC increase engagement is boosting posts locally; that is, paying a relatively small fee to increase visibility of particular posts among certain demographics for varying lengths of time (DeMers, 2018). If TNC has a story from Nags Head, it might consider boosting that post for a week specifically to the Nags Head area. It will be locally relevant to the people who see it, which will help boost TNC's presence in the community.

Additionally, encouraging engagement can help on a broader level. Asking questions and offering timely information can help accomplish this. Lazard and Atkinson (2014) suggest using infographics on social media to engage audiences. Figure 13 includes sample business-specific posts that TNC could use.

FIGURE 13: TNC business-oriented posts

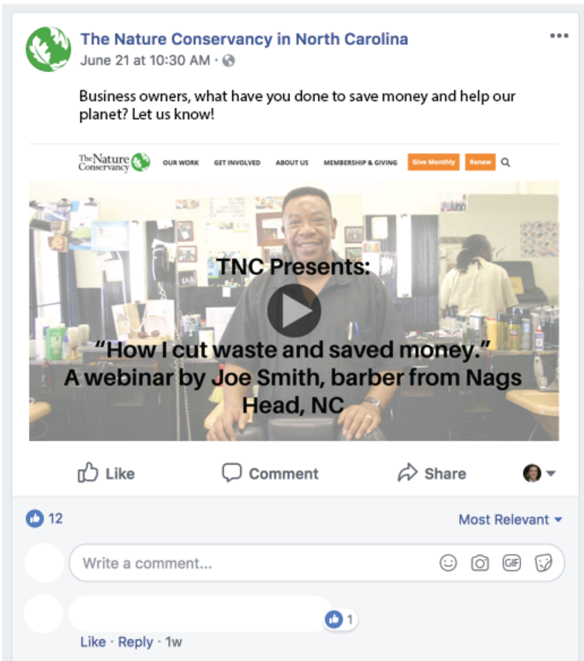


Image source: Eira Tansey, July 2009

Tagging business owners and their business’s Facebook page will also help TNC engage its followers. By tagging someone, all of their friends and followers will also see your post, increasing the post’s audience.

This is another tactic where age should be a consideration in the decision-making process. On all social media platforms, the younger generations dominate. But the older generations (Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, and Generation X) use Facebook more often than Twitter and Instagram (York, 2017). SproutSocial provides a good breakdown of social media demographics and how to segment for better message development.

All of the tactics in this thesis will rely on timing to be successful. The interviewees all mentioned lack of time in the summer, and it will be important to schedule tactic implementation accordingly.

Timing

An important consideration for all of these tactics is timing. If they are implemented in the middle of July, they are likely to have very little effect because small business owners will be so busy. TNC should focus the bulk of its effort in the offseason, between November and May. By building relationships during that time, it can then continue with them through the summer. Figure 14 provides a sample calendar for ambassadors and TNC.

FIGURE 14: Sample Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
28	29 TNC Ambassador contact w/ Pizzas R Us	30	31	1 Nags Head staff lunch at Pizzas R Us	2	3
4	5	6	7 TNC Ambassador contact w/ Pizzas R Us	8	9	10
11	12 Dinner presentation at Nags Head Woods: Catered by Pizzas R Us	13 Thank you message to Pizzas R Us. Letter and Facebook Post	14	15	16	17
18	19 Contact with Pizzas R Us. Inquire about filming webinar about grease recycling program	20	21 Film Pizzas R Us webinar	22	23 Sent Pizzas R Us communication package	24
25	26 Pizzas R Us webinar published on website, boosted on social media in Nags Head	27	28	1	2 Integrated weatherbot with Pizzas R Us affiliate Surfs R Us's website.	3

TNC should develop a thorough calendar with all of the tactics it chooses to implement so that they reach their target audiences at times when they are most likely to respond. With well-timed implementation, TNC should see positive results of efforts drawn from this thesis. To know for sure whether or not the tactics TNC implements are working, however, it needs to actively measure the effects of everything it does.

Measurement

This subsection contains measurement tactics for TNC to track its success in working with small business owners to communicate its mission and key issues, including climate change. The tactics are divided into the four main sections of the dynamic customer journey: formulation, pre-commerce, commerce, and loyalty.

In the formulation stage, TNC will use brand ambassadors and in-person events to engage directly with small business owners. The primary metrics to track here are reach and impressions via traditional media (in person, mostly). How many small business owners are hearing TNC messaging, and how many have been open to repeated contact, either from TNC employees or TNC ambassadors? Measure this by closely tracking and mapping activity from TNC ambassadors and by keeping tabs on the work done between TNC and small businesses for sponsored events. Additionally, TNC can track keyword searches such as “TNC small business North Carolina,” “TNC business partnership NC,” and others relating TNC’s work with small businesses.

Additionally, TNC should track social media metrics whenever it makes posts related to the formulation-stage tactics. These include reach, impressions, likes, shares, brand mentions, and audience growth rate. TNC should also experiment with boosted posts and track the impact they have versus non-boosted posts.

In-person work with small businesses also falls into the pre-commerce stage. The webinars are, in part, a pre-commerce strategy as well. To measure the success of these tactics, TNC can focus on web and social media analytics. It is important that TNC measure a baseline before implementing any tactics for comparison. With webinars posted on TNC's website and on social media, the organization can track visits, views, new vs. returning visitors, bounce rate, visit duration, and pages per visit. Again, likes, shares, reach, impressions, mentions, and audience growth on social media are important to track here. TNC should seek to see increases all of these metrics

To supplement online tracking, TNC should also keep tabs on how its in-person partnership is working. Are small businesses excited to work with TNC? To evaluate that question, track how many small business owners are working with TNC, and distribute surveys to ask directly. Is TNC working with the same businesses many times, and are those businesses building loyalty? Is TNC engaging with more businesses this month than last? This can be measured both by observing the dynamics of interactions between TNC employees and the small business owners they work with and by simply implementing customer experience surveys. Smith (2018) provides a good sample customer experience survey. Directly asking small business owners how they feel about TNC after working with them will be a great way to get honest feedback.

In the commerce and loyalty stages, TNC should focus on conversions. How many small business owners are taking the step of communicating climate change to their customers? How many businesses are engaging with TNC time and time again? This is relatively simple to track. How many small business owners has TNC helped create webinars, and how many have signed up to either create their own or receive others' material?

These are not all the measurement tactics TNC could implement, but they should provide an encompassing overview of how well the organization's efforts are working.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Overall, the main takeaways from this thesis are that TNC should seek out untraditional spokespersons—local figures rather than scientists and nonprofit staff—to take the lead on climate change communication, that the words "climate change" alone make up one of the biggest communication challenges in this field, and that mutually beneficial partnership is a wide-open field that few nonprofits have capitalized on.

This strategy is at its core a way to localize messages. TNC, as a global organization, has significant standardized messaging, developed at the world office and disseminated for state and regional chapters to post. This thesis shows that those standardized messages don't have a significant impact, especially on those who still do not believe the science behind climate change. Localized messages are necessary, and TNC must allow for that localized messaging to happen.

Partnership appears to be a promising strategy for TNC to find this new and more-effective way of communicating with reluctant audiences. By engaging eastern North Carolina's small business owners to act as spokespersons rather than using TNC staff to communicate directly, TNC's messaging can be local, aligning more closely with the worldviews of their community audiences.

With this strategy, TNC and its spokespersons should stay away from using the words "climate change." Even among small business owners interviewed who are favorable towards conservation, the words alone created tension and shifted the conversation away from facts, science, and action, and re-framed it in political rhetoric. A few of the interviewees even said that they have noticed firsthand things like sea level rise, a direct result of climate change, but then went on to say that they don't believe in climate change itself. Additionally, small business owners who feel like TNC is asking them to take a political stance will be more reluctant to participate. If TNC shows that it genuinely wants to work with small businesses to better their local communities, it is more likely to have much greater success.

Some small business owners in eastern North Carolina already partner with nonprofits, and they are open to partnership in general. TNC needs to actively recruit those small business owners, however. They want TNC to reach out to them, and they want to feel like they are appreciated for the efforts they make.

This strategy will likely help engage audiences who are currently resistant to any and all climate change communication. The effects of climate change in eastern North Carolina will be the most impactful in the state, and it is incredibly important that those who will feel the effects not only believe in the science but also start preparing for the changes to come.

APPENDIX A: ATTITUDE ROOTS AND HOW THEY MOTIVATE CLIMATE SCIENCE REJECTION.

Attitude Roots	**Definition**	**Link to the motivated rejection of science**
Ideologies, values and worldviews		
- Hierarchical vs. egalitarian worldviews	Individuals high in hierarchical values have greater acceptance of privilege based on static social strata, whereas high egalitarians endorse social order free of social class.	Higher hierarchical worldviews associated with rejecting scientific findings that threaten elites (e.g., climate change).
- Social dominance	Individuals high in social dominance endorse social hierarchies as natural, normal, and valuable.	Those high in social dominance reject scientific findings that threaten dominance of ruling classes (e.g., humans over nature).
- Individualistic vs. communitarian worldviews	Individuals high in individualism prioritize self-reliance, independence, and freedom; those high in communitarian values prioritize collective interests.	Higher individualistic worldviews associated with rejecting scientific findings that threaten freedoms (e.g., climate change regulation).
- Free-market ideology	Individuals who endorse the free-market believe that markets should be unconstrained.	Free-market ideology associated with rejection of scientific findings that imply government regulation at the expense of free markets (e.g., climate change mitigation).

- System justification/belief in a just world	Individuals high in system justification are motivated to justify and maintain the societal status quo; those high in belief in a just world see the world as just and orderly with rewards and punishments delivered to those who deserve them.	Those high in system justification and/or belief in a just world more likely to reject scientific findings that threaten the status quo and the sense that the world is as it should be.
Conspiratorial ideation	Individuals high in conspiratorial ideation believe that it is possible for vast networks of people to execute malevolent plots in near-perfect secrecy.	Those who engage in conspiratorial ideation reject scientific findings if they are perceived to be a fabrication of conspirators with hidden agendas (e.g., reject climate science as part of a socialist conspiracy to curb the influence of industry).
Vested interests	Investment in an attitude because of the personal or group gains that accrue from holding that attitude.	People are more likely to reject scientific findings that have personal or group-level costs (e.g., high carbon lifestyle individuals reject climate change science to maintain their lifestyles).
Personal identity expression	Using attitudes to communicate to the self and others one's preferred self-image.	People can reject scientific findings as a way to express a particular personal identity (e.g., as nonconformist; as whimsical).
Social identity needs	Social identification leads to group members assimilating their attitudes, beliefs, and behavior to those of the group. The need for positive self-enhancement and group distinctiveness can polarize in-group attitudes away from outgroup attitudes.	People can reject scientific findings if they do not align with in-group norms and/or are embraced by rival outgroups.

Fears and phobias	Blood-injection-injury phobia is a phobia of hospitals, injections, surgeries blood, dentists, etc. Obsessive compulsive disorder is characterized by intrusive, recurrent and unwanted thoughts, some of which relate to contamination.	People can reject medical science as a way to avoid and/or rationalize fear of Western medical procedures or scientific advances that relate to contamination fears.

Note. Reprinted from Attitude roots and jiu jitsu persuasion: Understanding and overcoming the motivated rejection of science by Hornsey and Fielding (2017) Page 462.

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM, QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW GUIDE

Nonprofit-business partnership research consent form

This is a research study being conducted for a UNC Chapel Hill School of Media and Journalism graduate thesis project.

The purpose of this study is to assess how small businesses in North Carolina interact with nonprofit organizations and their openness and ability to engage in partnerships. This study intends to document perceptions of nonprofit-business partnerships to develop a framework for successful partnering.

If you agree to be interviewed, I will ask you questions about your business and its partnership history as well as your perceptions of nonprofit partnership, including perceived benefits and costs of various types of partnering. With your permission, I will record this interview. The recording and a transcription will be stored in a locked external hard drive and will be encrypted to ensure that your information remains confidential. The recording and transcript will be erased after completion of this thesis project.

Your participation and the responses you give will be kept confidential. I will be the only person with access to the recordings and transcripts. I will document relative frequency of answers in reporting for this project, so it will be impossible to determine who you are from the report. If any quotations are used, they will not be accompanied with your name or any other identifying information.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate without explanation or penalty. You may decline to answer any questions that you do not want to answer or stop the interview at any time without explanation or penalty. You may decline to be recorded or you may request that the recorder by turned off at any point during the interview.

If you have any questions about this research in the future, please contact Brady Blackburn, the principal investigator for this study, at bradymb@live.unc.edu. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the Institutional Review Board at the UNC Office of Human Research Ethics at 919-966-3113.

If you have any questions, please let me know. Do you agree to participate in this study and allow our conversation to be recorded?

I, _________________, consent to take part in this research study under the conditions stated above.

Signature _____________________ Date: ___________________

Interviewer's signature ______________________ Date: _____________________

Questionnaire

Date: Interviewer:
Location: Start time: End time:
Interviewee I.D. ________________

Gender: _______________

Age: _____

Birth Place (city, state) _______________________________

Ethnicity/race: _______________________________

List the last three locations (city/town, state) where you have lived.

____

____

____

Name of business owned or managed: ____

Business address: ____

List up to five previous jobs you held before assuming your current positon:

____

____

____

____

____

Highest level of degree earned: ____

Specialization of degree (if any): ____

Political party affiliation *(note: the answers to all questions in this questionnaire will be kept confidential, and identifying information like name & place of business will be removed):*

Republican   Democrat   Other ________________________

Please mark which of the following political issues are of importance to you:

Issue	**Not at all importan t**	**Somewhat unimportant**	**Neutral**	**Somewhat important**	**Very important**
Second amendment rights	________	__________	______	_________	________
Size of the federal government	________	__________	______	_________	________
Environmental protection	________	__________	______	_________	________
Economic freedom	________	__________	______	_________	________
Immigration	________	__________	______	_________	________
Climate change	________	__________	______	_________	________
Russian election interference	________	__________	______	_________	________
Pro-life/pro-choice	________	__________	______	_________	________
Gun control	________	__________	______	_________	________
Free speech	________	__________	______	_________	________

National security	________	__________	______	_________	________
Border security	________	__________	______	_________	________
Net neutrality	________	__________	______	_________	________

Interview Guide

1. *Openness to partnership*
    1. Tell me a bit about your business. What is it, and how did you get into the position you are in today?
        1. How long have you been the owner/manager/etc of (business)?
        2. Has your business passed down through your family, or did you start it?
        3. What is your business's structure
            1. Ownership
            2. Managers/staff
            3. How many employees?
        4. Have you done any other work in this area before starting/taking over as this business's owner?
    2. Could you walk me through a typical day at work for you?
        1. In office, out of office?
        2. Who do you personally interact with?
    3. Describe your typical customer
        1. Local or tourist?
    4. How would you describe the relationship between your business and its customers?
        1. What community role, if any, do you see your business playing?
    5. Has (name of business) ever partnered with other businesses or organizations for events, fundraising, or other purposes?
        1. If so, what organization and why/for what purpose?
        2. If not, why?
        3. What are some barriers that you can think of that would prevent businesses like yours from entering partnerships?
        4. What are some examples of benefits that you think can come out of partnerships?
    6. [IF NO PARTNERSHIP HISTORY] Is corporate social responsibility a topic of discussion in your line of work?
        1. What about among other small business owners you know?
        2. If you think about your business incorporating social responsibility into its framework, can you identify any benefits or costs of doing so?
        3. What would you say the primary role of business is in your community?
    7. [IF YES TO PARTNERSHIP HISTORY] From the partnerships you have been involved in, what were the biggest costs and benefits to your business?

        1. Who were your partners?
            1. What size were they (local, statewide, national)
            2. Were they other businesses, nonprofits, or government agencies?
        2. Are your partnerships ongoing, or were they one-time ordeals?
            1. If one-time, would you do it again?
        3. What would you like any future partnerships for your business to look like? In terms of structure, level of involvement, and who you would partner with.
            1. What would be different from past partnerships?
            2. What would be the same?
2. *Type of Partnership*
    1. [If no partnership history]
        1. If you were to partner with a nonprofit in this area, what do think that would look like structurally?
            1. Would you be more open to one-time events like fundraisers or more long-term partnerships like sponsorships?
        2. For short-term partnerships like fundraisers, can you identify some pros and cons for your business?
            1. What about with longer term partnerships?
        3. Are there other businesses in your area that you are aware of having partnerships, specifically with nonprofit organizations?
            1. [If so] what are they, and what does their partnership look like?
            2. [If not] why do you think that is?
    2. [If yes to partnership history]
        1. What have your partnerships looked like? Have they been more short-term, like fundraisers, or more long-term, like sponsorships?
            1. Were you happy with this partnership?
            2. If you could change anything about it, what would that be?
        2. For short-term partnerships like fundraisers, can you identify some pros and cons for your business?
            1. What about with longer term partnerships?
        3. Are there other businesses in your area that you are aware of having partnerships, specifically with nonprofit organizations?
            1. [If so] what are they, and what does their partnership look like?
            2. [If not] why do you think that is?
3. *Incentive structures*
    1. What in particular would motivate you to enter a partnership with a nonprofit?
        1. What incentives could nonprofits offer that would encourage you to enter partnerships?
    2. Thinking about short-term donation-style partnerships, where there is some sort of one-time event for fundraising purposes but no ongoing interaction, what benefit could you imagine your business taking away from this kind of partnership?
        1. What are the costs?
    3. Thinking about longer term partnerships, where there is some sort of ongoing interaction and sharing of resources between your business and a nonprofit

partner, what benefit could you imagine your business taking away from this kind of partnership?

    1. What are the costs?

4. What incentives would encourage you to enter short-term partnerships?
5. What incentives would encourage you to enter long-term partnerships?
6. What kind of financial incentives can you imagine existing for entering partnerships?
7. What kind of non-financial incentives do you think could come from entering partnerships?

REFERENCES

6 best free webinar services to host webinars easily (n.d.) *ezTalks*. Retrieved from https://www.eztalks.com/webinars/free-webinar-services-to-host-webinars-easily.html

About 350. (n.d.) *350.org*. Retrieved from https://350.org/about/

About us. (n.d.) *The Nature Conservancy*. Retrieved from https://www.nature.org/about-us/index.htm?intc=nature.tnav.about

Barrett, W. P. (2016). The largest U.S. charities for 2016. *Forbes*. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/williampbarrett/2016/12/14/the-largest-u-s-charities-for-2016/#3b6a1ef4abbc

Bergstrom, G. (2018, April 30). Who are opinion leaders and why do they matter? *The Balance*. Retrieved from https://www.thebalancesmb.com/who-are-opinion-leaders-and-why-do-they-matter-2295976

Blackburn, B. (2017). Small town solar. *The Nature Conservancy-North Carolina Chapter*. Retrieved from https://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/northcarolina/placesweprotect/small-town-solar.xml

Bullis, C., and Ie, F. (2007) Corporate Environmentalism. The debate over corporate social responsibility. In May, S., Cheney, G., Roper, J. *The debate over corporate social responsibility.* (pp. 321-335). New York: Oxford University Press.

Chatbot development agencies for hire. N.d. *Botmakers.* Retrieved from https://botmakers.net/chatbot-developers/in/usa

Climate impacts on coastal areas. (2017, Jan. 19). *United States Environmental Protection Agency*. Retrieved from https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climate-impacts/climate-impacts-coastal-areas_.html

Climate Stories NC. (2017). Willy Phillips: Seafood market owner. Retrieved from https://vimeo.com/143675329

Confidence in institutions (n.d.). *Gallup*. Retrieved from http://news.gallup.com/poll/1597/confidence-institutions.aspx

Corporate social responsibility. (n.d.) *Business Dictionary*. Retrieved from http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/corporate-social-responsibility.html

DeMers, J. (2018, June 12). The Facebook boost post button: How to use it and get results. *Hootsuite*. Retrieved at https://blog.hootsuite.com/how-does-facebook-boost-posts-work/.

Doing well by doing good. (2014, June). *Nielsen*. Retrieved from https://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/nielsenglobal/apac/docs/reports/2014/Nielsen-Global-Corporate-Social-Responsibility-Report-June-2014.pdf

Fallon, N. (2017). What is corporate social responsibility? *Business News Daily*. Retrieved from https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/4679-corporate-social-responsibility.html

Foote, P. (2010, November 11). Why environmentalism is a conservative concern. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/environment/cif-green/2010/nov/11/environmentalism-conservative

Fry, R. (2016, April 25). Millennials overtake baby boomers as America's largest generation. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/25/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers/

Guess, A., Nynan, B., and Reifler, J. (2017) You're fake news! Findings from the Poynter media trust survey. *Poynter*. Retrieved from https://poyntercdn.blob.core.windows.net/files/PoynterMediaTrustSurvey2017.pdf

Gunther, M. (2017, February 16). Why won't American businesses push for action on climate? *Yale Environment 360*. Retrieved from http://e360.yale.edu/features/why-wont-american-business-push-for-action-on-climate

Heath, R., and Ni, L. (2008, September 25). Corporate social responsibility. *Institute for Public Relations.* Retrieved from http://www.instituteforpr.org/corporate-social-responsibility/

Hettche, M., and Walker, P.D. (2010). B-harmony: building small business and small nonprofits partnerships that thrive (a framework for collaborative competition). *Competition Forum. 8*(1). Retrieved from https://search.proquest.com/docview/760999250/abstract/A581D2FF58143B7PQ/1?accountid=14244

Hornsey, M. J., and Fielding, K. S. (2017). Attitude roots and jiu jitsu persuasion: Understanding and overcoming the motivated rejection of science. *American Psychologist (72)*5, 459-473. Retrieved from http://psycnet.apa.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/fulltext/2017-29745-009.pdf

How wind energy strengthens Eastern NC. (2018). *Environmental Defense Fund.* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSDDmpLT_p8&feature=youtu.be

Jaksch, M. (2017, October 17). How to run your first webinar (with no skills, no stress and no budget). *SmartBlogger.* Retrieved from https://smartblogger.com/your-first-webinar/

Klein, N. (2014). *This changes everything. Capitalism vs. the climate*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.

Lazard, A., and Atkinson, L. (2014). Putting environmental infographics center stage: the role of visuals at the elaboration likelihood model's critical point of persuasion. *Science Communication 37*(1), need pages.

Livesey, S., and Graham, J. (2007). Greening of corporations? Eco-talk and the emerging social imaginary of sustainable development. In May, S., Cheney, G., Roper, J. *The debate over corporate social responsibility.* (pp. 321-335). Oxford University Press.

Lombardi, D., Seyranian, V., and Sinatra, G. M. (2014). Source effects and plausibility judgements when reading about climate change. *Discourse Processes 51*(1). 75-92. DOI 10.1080/0163853X.2013.855049.

McCracken, G. (1988). The long interview. *Qualitative Research Methods. 13*

Nature's make or break potential for climate change (n.d.) *The Nature Conservancy*. Retrieved from https://global.nature.org/initiatives/natural-climate-solutions/natures-make-or-break-potential-for-climate-change?intc=nature.hp.news3

Newport, F. (2017, June 2). Public opinion and Trump's decision on the Paris Agreement. *Gallup*. http://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/211682/public-opinion-trump-decision-paris-agreement.aspx?g_source=ENVIRONMENT&g_medium=topic&g_campaign=tiles

Nisbet M., and Kotcher, J. (2009). A two-step flow of influence? Opinion-leader campaigns on climate change. *Journal of Science Communication 30*(3), 328-354. DOI 10.1177

O'Keefe, D.J. (2002). *Persuasion: Theory & research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Our charity ratings (n.d.) *The Nature Conservancy*. Retrieved from https://www.nature.org/about-us/our-accountability/charity-ratings/index.htm

QuickFacts North Carolina (n.d.) U.S. Census Bureau https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/nc/PST045217

RE100 (n.d.). *The Climate Group*. Retrieved from http://there100.org/

Ries, T. E., Bersoff, D. M., Adkins, S., Armstrong, C., and Bruening, J. (2018). 2018 Edelman trust barometer. *Edelman*. Retrieved from http://cms.edelman.com/sites/default/files/2018-02/2018_Edelman_Trust_Barometer_Global_Report_FEB.pdf

Leonard, K. (2018, June 29) Four types of corporate social responsibility. *Chron*. Retrieved from http://smallbusiness.chron.com/four-types-corporate-social-responsibility-54662.html

Seitanidi, M. (2010). *The politics of partnerships: A critical examination of nonprofit-business partnerships.* New York, NY: Springer.

Seitanidi, M., and Crane, A. (2009). Implementing CSR through partnerships: Understanding the selection, design and institutionalization of nonprofit-business partnerships. *Journal of Business Ethics. 85*(2), pp 413–429. DOI 10.1007

Smith, S. (2018, May 14). Customer satisfaction survey questions: 5 sample templates you can use today. *Qualtrics.* Retrieved from https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/customer-satisfaction-survey-questions/

Solis, B. (2011, July 6). *The Dynamic Customer Decision Journey*. Retrieved from https://www.flickr.com/photos/briansolis/5909243790/

Sustainable signals: new data from the individual investor. (2017). *Morgan Stanley Institute for Sustainable Investing*. Retrieved from http://www.morganstanley.com/pub/content/dam/msdotcom/ideas/sustainable-signals/pdf/Sustainable_Signals_Whitepaper.pdf

Swift, A. (2016, September 14). Americans' trust in mass media sinks to new low. *Gallup*. Retrieved from http://news.gallup.com/poll/195542/americans-trust-mass-media-sinks-new-low.aspx

Tansey, E. (July, 2009). *Picnic in Audubon Park, New Orleans*. Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Our_pre-July_4th_picnic_NOLA.jpg

The 2018 world's most ethical companies honoree list. (2018). *Ethisphere*. Retrieved from http://www.worldsmostethicalcompanies.com/honorees/

The Chive (n.d.) The Chive. Retrieved from http://thechive.com/category/humanity/chive-nation/

The extinction crisis. (n.d.). *Center for Biological Diversity*. Retrieved from http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/biodiversity/elements_of_biodiversity/extinction_crisis/index.html

The Nature Conservancy. (2017). *Charity Navigator*. Retrieved from https://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=search.summary&orgid=4208

Trachtman, P. (2003, August). Fire fight. *Smithsonian Magazine*. Retrieved from https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/fire-fight-88634003/

Walker, J. (2008). The Climate Group: advancing climate change leadership. In Sullivan, R., *Corporate responses to climate change.* New York, NY: Greenleaf Publishing Ltd.

What is corporate social responsibility? (2017, July 3). University of Edinburgh. Retrieved from https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/your-future/options/occupations/csr/what-is-csr

Working with companies (n.d.). *The Nature Conservancy*. Retrieved from https://www.nature.org/about-us/working-with-companies/businesscouncil/ilc-main-content.xml

York, A. (2017, March 6). Social media demographics to inform a better segmentation strategy. *SproutSocial.* Retrieved from https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/

Zatepilina-Monacell, O. (2015) Small business-nonprofit collaboration: Locally owned businesses want to take their relationships with community-based NPOs to the next level. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing 27*(2). DOI 10.1080.