Ekokviz
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NEED/OPPORTUNITY / Slovenian national telecommunications company, Telekom Slovenije, is not only the leading provider of Internet and telecommunications services in the country, it is one of the largest companies in the country. In 2008, Telekom Slovenije received the ISO14001 environmental certificate and committed to place environmental responsibility among its most important CSR activities, which includes taking part in educating others about the environment. As a nationwide company, Telekom Slovenije was looking to create a CSR project that would involve school children all over Slovenia. This population was chosen because internal research had shown that the young audience is not very loyal to the company and is keen on its competitors; therefore Telekom Slovenije wanted to strengthen its relationship with them. In addition, teenagers tend to be a very important decisive factor in families, especially in this field of services.

The team came up with the idea of Ekokviz (Slovene for “Eco Quiz”), an educational quiz on environmental topics for school children all over Slovenia. Ekokviz was executed in cooperation with Eco School network of Slovenia, which is part of European Union (EU) efforts to educate about the environment. Slovenia has one of the highest participation rates in the EU—more than two-thirds of all Slovenian schools are members of the Eco School network. Each year, Eco School prepares a list of projects. In order to remain members of the network and keep the Eco School title the next year, the schools have to select and complete five projects. Ekokviz has been listed among the projects since 2001, but as Telekom Slovenije joined it, the idea was to upgrade it and make it one of the most attractive Eco Schools projects. The proposal for changes was based on a focus group with five mentors who had previous experience with Ekokviz. The main idea was to merge Ekokviz with Telekom Slovenije’s core business and move it online. The mentors agreed this would definitely make it very appealing for the children. However, this was a significant change from the previous Ekokviz; therefore the second part of the task was to inform all schools and school mentors about the new Ekokviz, motivate them and the students to take part in it, and provide mentors with enough support to organize Ekokviz at their schools.

INTENDED AUDIENCE(S) / Primary Audience:

- Mentors who were in charge of Eco School activities at each school: They decided whether Ekokviz would be one of their five eco projects for the given year. Mentors are school teachers, between the ages of 25 and 55, mostly women. Mentoring is an obligation that comes on top of their regular duties; therefore the team presumed they could appreciate activities that were not too time-consuming and that had reliable support provided by the organizers. Some of the mentors are not very computer-savvy, which was an obstacle that had to be overcome to retain the participation of their schools.

- The second group were Eco School pupils, aged 12 to 14. Their motivation level influenced how many would apply for Ekokviz (one team per school was enough for
the school to fulfill the criterion, but the team’s goals were set higher). They also had the power to influence mentors in their selection of Eco Schools projects. The secondary audience reached through the children were their families.

Secondary Audience:
- Media were used as a channel to reach the national and local publics. Their role was to disseminate the *Ekokviz* messages outside primary target publics. The most important milestones of *Ekokviz* were planned regionally; therefore, a great deal of focus was on regional media that were more keen on reporting about this sort of project.
- Principals at schools that were not yet part of the Eco Schools network: The team aimed to convince them to join Eco Schools through *Ekokviz* and complete four more projects. More than two-thirds of Slovenian schools are already Eco Schools members; those that are not have different reasons for not joining, such as lack of resources (financial or human) to prepare and complete an environmental action plan each year that is required by the program. *Ekokviz* had to be attractive enough to overcome these obstacles and convince such schools to join.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES / Although the project already existed, *Ekokviz* 2008–2009 took a much different form than in previous years. For that reason, the overall goal was to create a CSR project that would meet the needs of Telecom Slovenije and provide communication support during all phases, from informing the audience to motivation and action. Measurements were not financial but were clearly defined:

- **Use *Ekokviz* to convey the key messages of Telekom Slovenije’s mission and contribute to its reputation in the mid-term period:** a) The project itself should reflect and confirm the company’s mission: “We enrich our customers’ lives by connecting fun and innovative business content and applications. We bring people together to communicate, share and work together. Our customers talk, laugh, write, communicate—with whomever they want, whenever needed—they are first.” b) The targeted publics should understand the role of Telekom Slovenije in *Ekokviz* and the placement of the project within its CSR program: key messages that state this appeared in all content and at least one-third of media coverage.

- **Inform all Slovenian Eco Schools and all other schools about *Ekokviz* and motivate them to take part in it:** a) All schools that took part in *Ekokviz* in the previous year (164) should also apply in 2008–2009, b) at least 100 schools should participate, c) at least five schools that are not yet Eco School network members should take part in *Ekokviz* and therefore join Eco Schools.

- **Make *Ekokviz* attractive for children, motivate them to take part in it and gain knowledge about the environment:** a) At least 500 three-member teams should take part in school quizzes, b) all teams should score, on average, more than half (15) of all possible points, c) all eight regional winners should achieve at least 21 points.

- **Provide a sufficient amount of information to the mentors and suitable access to all necessary information and materials:** a) At least 75 percent of the mentors should be satisfied with the amount of information they received and the way it was
sent, b) there should be a positive attitude toward moving Ekokviz online (average grade at least 3 on the 1–5-point scale), c) at least 75 percent of mentors say they will take part in the next Ekokviz.

- **Establish Ekokviz e-mail as the main communication channel and establish two-way communication:** Before Ekokviz 2008–2009, the primary communication channel was phone; e-mail was secondary. The team wanted the majority of messages from mentors and children to be sent via e-mail. They also wanted them to initiate contact even if they did not have questions but just wanted to share something. The information sent to the mentors had to be useful to ensure responsiveness.

**SOLUTION OVERVIEW / PLANNING**
The communication team was in charge of planning and executing the project. For a nationwide company like Telekom Slovenije, it was important to make a contribution on the national level. Cooperation with Slovenian Eco Schools network was therefore the logical choice. Ekokviz was planned in a way that reflected the most important parts of the Telekom Slovenije mission: bringing together fun and education, joining people, and stressing teamwork:

- The team decided to move the quiz online to make it more attractive and more fun as well as friendlier to the environment.
- In order to enhance mutual cooperation and teamwork, the quiz would no longer be an individual but a team competition. Each team would have three members.
- Ekokviz activities would be tailored to the school calendar.

Once the project plan was prepared, the key messages were defined as follows:

- Telekom Slovenije is responsible to society and the environment, and is engaging others in its activities, educating and encouraging them to do the same. Ekokviz was created to connect fun, environmental education and teamwork.
- Ekokviz is environmentally-friendly, not just in terms of its content, but also in terms of its form at—moving it online saved lots of paper and emissions, and even made it more attractive to the children.
- Apart from educating about the environment, with Ekokviz, Telekom Slovenije wanted to make an additional contribution to environmental preservation and, therefore, donated €10,000 to the three schools with the highest Ekokviz scores. The donations were to be used for the environmental investments at the schools.

**MOTIVATION AND PREPARATION**
Ekokviz was first presented to school mentors at their September 2008 meeting at the beginning of the school year, when they were preparing their yearly plans for Eco School activities. As yearly plans are not final and school quizzes were planned for March, there were still five months left to inform and motivate schools about Ekokviz.

In November 2008, the cooperation contract between Telekom Slovenije and the Slovenian national Eco School organization was officially signed. It marked the beginning of their partnership and invited the media and other partners that cooperate with Telekom Slovenije in their other environmental activities to join.
Calls for applications to Ekokviz were sent to all Eco Schools in Slovenia by e-mail. They were also sent along with some additional information to schools that were not part of the Eco School network in order to motivate them to join.

The Ekokviz web site was launched at the beginning of December 2008 and included all crucial information about the project, such as the time line, quiz topics, quiz rules and contact information. The Ekokviz home page was dynamic: Its content reflected what was currently important for Ekokviz.

The deadline for schools to send their applications for Ekokviz was the end of January. In the middle of the application period, right after the New Year’s holidays, the team reminded schools about applying. Apart from the information that was directed to the mentors, all schools also received packets with three recruiting posters that asked children to join Ekokviz. The posters were prepared in a way that mentors could add information on the time and place that Ekokviz lessons took place at their school and hang them around the school premises. Until the deadline for applications was reached, the mentors received two more mailings, and current news was regularly published on the web site.

On 27 January the online quiz system was launched for the first time at one of the participating schools. Local media were invited to the presentation. Eight different press releases with tailored information on the number of Eco Schools attending Ekokviz from each region were sent to the media in all other Slovenian regions.

After the schools applied, their teams had to register online. Easy-to-follow instructions on how to register were prepared, and all questions were instantly answered.

February was meant for preparation and practice; therefore, the study material and practice quiz questions were gradually added to the web site. This was also a way of maintaining constant interest in the site.

More motivational news and mailings were prepared for the mentors and the teams. They were invited to send photos of their Ekokviz practices to be published on the web site. Practice questions were accessible to all site visitors.

**SCHOOL QUIZZES**

Before the school quizzes (on 11 March), the team focused on providing support to the mentors to carry out the school quizzes. Instructions for the mentors were prepared. On the day of the quiz, a call line was open in case mentors needed immediate assistance.

Unofficial results were available online immediately; official results followed in a few days. The official results were communicated to the mentors, teams, media and on the web site. All children who took part in Ekokviz received small gifts and a diploma, while mentors received confirmations that their school had taken part in Ekokviz.

**FINAL COMPETITION**
The eight regional winning teams and two additional teams with the best scores, along with their mentors and a group of supporters, were invited to the final quiz competition that took place on World Earth Day, 22 April 2009 in Ljubljana.

Ten days before the finals, participants received T-shirts and textile pens so that they could decorate them for the competition. All 10 finalists’ teams were presented on the web site with photos and brief bios.

The first part of the final event was a competition, and the second part was a concert of a popular music group. There was also a video presentation of each participating team.

The awards were presented to the winners by the Eco School national coordinator and a Telekom Slovenije management representative. *Ekokviz* was also supported by the Minister of Environment, who failed to attend the event in person because of illness, but did send a supporting message to be read on his behalf.

Members of the first three teams received awards, diplomas and cups, while their mentors received donations for their schools from Telekom Slovenije. After the competition, all teams were sent a thank-you note and photos.

The final competition was broadcast live on the *Ekokviz* web site and some multimedia portals of Telekom Slovenije. Later, the photos and videos were published on the *Ekokviz* web site.

During the summer holidays, additional content was prepared for the web site about how to use old CDs (making up these ideas was one of the tasks at the final competition).

**IMPLEMENTATION AND CHALLENGES** / First and foremost, the main challenge was to design a CSR project that would be in line with Telekom Slovenije’s strategic guidelines and follow its business mission. After the project proposal was prepared, the team had to plan, implement and manage demanding communication with a large number of schools and mentors who first had to be informed about the project and motivated to take part in it. After that, they needed support so that they could carry out *Ekokviz* at their schools.

The Web presented the team with new challenges: Previously, *Ekokviz* only had three major communication milestones. Moving it online required constant information flow, responsiveness, the addition of new content, the use of audiovisual content and two-way communication. The challenge involved in media relations was selectiveness of reporting on issues such as corporate social responsibility, the environment and sponsorships.

**TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES**

Due to a main server error, only 250 teams managed to finish all 30 questions at the school quizzes on 11 March. Roll-out of the quiz was monitored with a special computer system, and the team opened an emergency call line during the school quizzes. These
channels enabled them to see the trouble instantly and respond rapidly. Mentors were informed that the quiz was stopped, an explanation was given as to the cause and an apology was issued. The new date for the school quizzes was determined, and all teams, no matter the outcome in the first quiz, were given the opportunity to take part again. Despite their initial negative response to the troubles, mentors were satisfied with the decision and expressed their satisfaction.

**EDUCATING THE MENTORS**

Moving *Ekokviz* online was an advantage, but also one of the biggest tests: Many of the mentors had trouble using PCs and the Web. There was a risk that this group of mentors would choose another project over *Ekokviz*; therefore, the team prepared simple and easy-to-follow instructions with screen shots for every task that needed to be completed online. They also encouraged mentors to continuously address all troubles they had to the team e-mail address. Answers were prepared regularly, and all information that could be useful for others was included on the web site.

The financial dimensions of the project are confidential; however, most of the funds were used for the preparation of the infrastructure, project implementation, prizes and donations. Telekom Slovenije estimates the funds were used efficiently and contributed to increasing the awareness about environmental protection among school children and the general public in Slovenia. *Ekokviz* will continue over the next few years and will be based on the same infrastructure.

**MEASUREMENT/EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES** / Measurements included analysis of the mentors’ messages, analysis of the survey they completed, media monitoring and analysis, and examination of participation rates. Comparison between the initial goals and objectives and outcomes showed the following:

**The target audiences should understand the role of Telekom Slovenije, strengthening its reputation:**

- The content of all *Ekokviz* communication materials was based on the key messages document that was prepared at the beginning of the project. By doing this, key messages were consistently and frequently repeated. Between November 2008 and May 2009 *Ekokviz* was mentioned in 36 reports in 26 different media outlets (since many were regional media, not all of them were detected by the media monitoring provider). All reports included key messages about *Ekokviz* and moving it online. Half of the media reports also included information about Telekom Slovenije being the main sponsor of *Ekokviz*; this objective was exceeded by 42 percent. The team also decided to keep *Ekokviz* in the same format for the following year.

**Response of schools:**

- All Eco Schools that took part the previous year (164), plus some additional ones also applied this time. Altogether, 180 schools applied, which is 10 percent more than in the previous year.
• Motivated by Ekokviz, seven schools that were previously not part of the Eco School network applied. This objective was exceeded by 40 percent, which is an important success as these schools needed to fulfill four other projects apart from Ekokviz to become part of the eco school network.
• Eighty-three percent of mentors said they would take part in Ekokviz again. This exceeded the objective of three-fourths of mentors. It is equally important that none of the mentors said they would not take part in Ekokviz again.

Appeal for children and mentors:
• School quizzes were completed by 1,035 teams (exceeding the objective by 107 percent) and 3,105 children, respectively. This is 27 percent more than the year before. Despite the troubles experienced during the first school quiz, the team managed to maintain the motivation of the teams for a second quiz and even got more teams to take part.
• The average result of the teams in the school quizzes was 16 points (reaching the objective).
• All regional winners scored at least 24 points (exceeding the objective by 10 percent).
• On a scale of 1–5, mentors estimated the appeal of the online quiz for the children was 4.5 (objective exceeded by 50 percent).

Providing information and support to the mentors:
• Ninety-three percent of the mentors said they had enough information about Ekokviz, which is 20 percent above the set objective.

Establishing e-mail as the primary channel of two-way communication:
An average of 2.7 e-mails from each mentor were sent to the Ekokviz e-mail address. The team replied to all of them on the same day or the next day at the latest. During the Ekokviz peak periods, they were replying constantly, including weekends and evenings. All problems and inquiries were addressed successfully. In the survey, more than 94 percent of the mentors listed e-mail as their primary communication channel. This objective was exceeded by more than 30 percent.