

Media/Public Relations Campaign

2019 Winner: Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation

Entry Title: Shattering the “Bass Ceiling”: Moving an Industry to Get Moms Hooked on Fishing and Boating

Project Overview

Every day, women are underrepresented in the c-suite, in the media, in sports. Nowhere is this truer than in the outdoor industry. Six in 10 women can't come up with a single outdoor female role model, and this gender inequality is particularly apparent when it comes to fishing and boating: only one in five women and girls believe they represent a typical angler.

As the fishing and boaters population continues aging out of the sport, recruiting young, diverse anglers are critical to the longevity of this shared tradition.

According to the annual Special Report on Fishing and Boating, conducted in partnership between RBFF and the Outdoor Foundation, more than 82 percent of current anglers cast their first line during childhood. So to secure the fishing and boating industry's future, it's imperative to introduce young people to the sport.

To get kids hooked on fishing and boating, who do you turn to? Dads, right? After all, the outdoors are traditionally seen as a masculine pursuit. But perception and reality are not the same.

According to a study from the Aquatic Resources Education Association, moms play an essential role in the fishing and boating industry that goes largely unrecognized: kids are actually more likely to go fishing and boating with their mom than they are with their dad (yes, both boys and girls). This surprising insight, which directly contradicts the conventional wisdom that fishing and boating is dad's turf, provided the creative spark for Making Waves. Armed with this revelation, Exponent and RBFF sought to show an entire industry that the future of fishing is female.

Goals/Objectives

Planning Strategy

Our goal was simple: influence the target audiences to embrace female anglers, thereby increasing overall participation in the sport.

In order to achieve this goal, we laid out three complementary objectives:

- 1) It only takes one to start a revolution, but it takes everyone to carry it to success. If we were to truly get more women fishing and boating, we would need to get the entire industry onboard. To influence thought leaders across the fishing and boating industry to follow RBFF's lead, we leveraged the news media to spread the word about Making Waves all summer

long. The goal—a 50-percent year-over-year increase in summer media placements—was lofty, but we were up for the challenge.

2) For Making Waves to succeed, we would need to do more than just offer women a chance to see themselves represented on the water—we would need to create an active role for them to play. By empowering real women to take part in the campaign, Making Waves gave the fishing and boating industry a serious dose of girl power. To measure the campaign's success in mobilizing women, we set a goal of driving 50 thousand meaningful digital engagements through the campaign.

3) Getting butts in boats, influencing industry leaders and driving digital engagements are all well and good, but at the end of the day, it's the ultimate goal that counts. Thus, the definitive measure of Making Waves' success would only be found out on the water: new female participants.

At the crux of our efforts was the Making Waves anthem video.

But to bring the campaign to life and carry it throughout the summer, we supplemented the video with a newsmaker survey, nationwide vote, and grassroots engagement with industry and local leaders.

Strategy/Tactics

We knew we needed the news media's help to influence industry leaders to support female anglers; the question was how to gain the media's attention. To inspire media contacts and audiences alike, RBFF launched the Making Waves campaign on Mother's Day with a powerful anthem video. Featuring a strong, female-led soundtrack, the short film kicked off the reinvention of a timeless outdoor tradition. With a confident and bold tone, the rallying cry video was shared throughout the media, sending a signal to the entire industry that the tides of change had arrived.

If the Making Waves anthem video gave women a call to action, then the rest of the campaign needed to give them a chance to make their voices heard. RBFF and Exponent created a perfect opportunity for this through the Top Mom-Approved Places to Fish and Boat, a list of 50 family-friendly fishing and boating destinations around the country—made entirely by moms, for moms. Celebrity mom, actress, and avid fisherwoman Alexa PenaVega announced the list to media nationwide, giving many moms their first chance to finally see themselves represented in the fishing and boating industry. To extend the momentum, RBFF leveraged Alexa's announcement to call upon moms to vote for the Top 10 Mom-Approved Places to Fish and Boat in the nation.

Knowing that increasing female participation in fishing is a challenge faced industry-wide, we sought to ignite change by recruiting advocates industry-wide. From trade publishers to equipment manufacturers to wildlife agencies, organizations across the industry recognize RBFF as a trusted voice. To leverage RBFF's strong reputation, we enlisted RBFF leaders to engage one-on-one with influential outdoor professionals at industry events throughout the summer. We even involved RBFF's state-level partners

by developing custom publicity toolkits, equipping local advocates with all they needed to rally votes for the Top Mom-Approved Places.

Success Metrics/Results Achieved

All objectives were exceeded.

Objective 1: Generate a 50-percent year-over-year increase in summer media placements Making the water more inclusive for women is not a job that can be done alone, which is why inspiring the entire industry to take up the mantle was critical to our success. To get industry leaders onboard, we targeted news media nationwide with an inspiring anthem video. The short film caught fire among the news media, and Making Waves quickly blew past the goal, achieving an 82-percent year-over-year increase in media placements, far exceeding our goal. The Making Waves video started a powerful rallying cry across the entire fishing industry.

Objective 2: Drive 50 thousand meaningful digital engagements. Mobilizing female anglers was key to achieving the campaign's momentum. We created an active role for moms to play in Making Waves through the Top Mom-Approved Places survey and nationwide vote, giving moms a reason to become invested in the campaign. The goal was to drive 50,000 digital engagements, and we delivered above and beyond. Between the 6,000 new email subscribers, 32 thousand votes and 80 thousand website visits generated by the Top Mom-Approved Places, Making Waves drove 118 thousand digital engagements, nearly two and a half the goal.

Objective 3: Engage new female participants. The water is open to everyone. The campaign drove thousands of people to RBFF's digital properties, but the real impact is happening where it counts the most—right on the water. Female participation in fishing is growing; women now make up 45 percent of new fishing participants. Thanks to Making Waves, RBFF is forging a path ahead for the entire industry to follow. By tackling a barrier head-on, we helped empower women from all walks of life to grow the sport, change an industry and Make Waves.

Learn more

[Click here to view:](#)

FY19 Public Relations Recap

Take Me Fishing Video Take

Me Fishing Ad

Association Website:

www.takemefishing.org/corporate