

Our Growth Issue

As we embrace summer in the North, Tait has numerous clients that are doing wonderful things to grow their organizations and expand their scope of operations. There is a great acknowledgement that even during challenging times, economic or otherwise, an organization must ensure that it's still connecting with its stakeholders, listening to its customers, and keeping its eyes open for the right pieces to fit into its operations. In this issue, we profile some of the work we're doing for clients to help them continue to further the economic interests of the North with their investments and opportunities.

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Tait has a new home!

In August, Tait moves into its new home just around the corner! The result of an exhaustive search for the perfect space, the former Byrne building on 47th Street will be our new head office. Thanks to extensive renovations, the new space will provide a fresh new look for the company. Phone and fax numbers still the same – be sure to stop by!



From l to r: Nicole Were, Mike Bradshaw, Marsha Walker, Leanne Tait, Jacki McKinnon and Yose Cormier toast their new digs.

Three Territories and Tait

This past spring, Tait began work on a pan-territorial Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) prevention and awareness project for the three territorial governments.

FASD is debilitating and has no cure. But it's 100% preventable. And the challenge handed over to Tait was to develop a strategy for the three northern territories to help pregnant women get the support they need to be alcohol free during pregnancy.

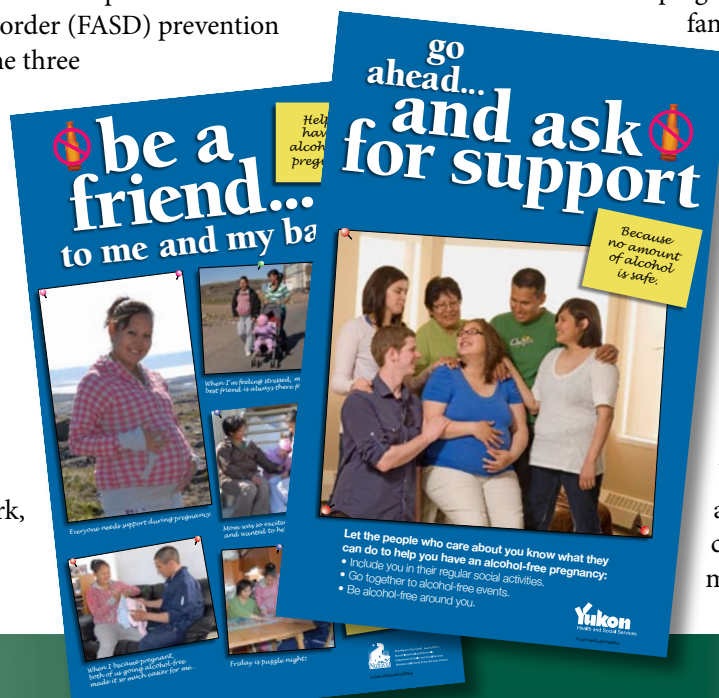
The three territories had extensive *individual* experience with trying to create awareness around FASD. To build on this work, they decided to try a unified social marketing approach.

Social marketing works to understand what's behind a person's behaviour, and what can be done to motivate behaviour change.

Our team talked to pregnant women and their friends and families throughout the North. We

learned that people want to support their pregnant friends – but they need to know what type of support is wanted, and they need to be asked for support. The campaign is based on these findings.

The goal is simple – to show a pregnant woman that she is not alone, that her pregnancy does not preclude her from being involved, and that her support network will be there to help her have a safe and alcohol free pregnancy. Look for the campaign to launch in the next few months.



Is your strategy in place?

Tait has an unparalleled record in helping organizations determine their strategic direction. Through facilitation, management and planning, our experience encompasses the logistical coordination and marketing of small gatherings, multi-day conferences, annual general meetings, public workshops, forums and national conferences. We design, deliver, report and evaluate the success of every assignment.

In 2008/09, the NWT Chamber of Commerce began to work with Tait on a new strategic direction. There had been many changes since their previous strategic planning sessions, including a new Executive Director, a number of new Directors, a Board with a renewed sense of urgency, and escalating financial constraints. They met with Tait to review existing strategic direction, operating conditions and goals for a board planning exercise. During the exercise, their needs were identified as revenue development, member relations, perception of duplication (with YK Chamber) and recruitment and competitive advantage. Through a series of strategic planning steps and directives, Tait helped the Chamber determine where it was, where it wanted to go, how it was going to get there over the next

three years, and tools to help it evaluate its success once it has reached its goals.

In 2009, Tait delivered an electricity review workshop for 50 delegates from small and remote NWT communities. We were responsible for developing the agenda, moderating and facilitating the workshop, and reporting the outcomes and evaluation. The workshop dealt with complex issues, and we designed a process that helped attendees better understand a technical topic and ensured that everyone had the opportunity to contribute.

In 2009, Tait facilitated a strategic planning session with Skills NWT (NWT chapter of Skills Canada) to help it identify a new strategic direction. Skills NWT is currently undergoing a transition from a 'club' to a strong non-profit. Keeping the established momentum, continued growth, board consistency of vision and evolution top of mind, we helped it identify where it had been, where it was currently, its future identity, and establish a strategic direction to achieve its goals.

In 2009, the Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority (SHSSA) hired Tait to assist with their strategic direction. After five years in existence, they determined that a new strategic plan was needed to optimize service delivery, communication and resources for the five communities it served. The project began with interviews with key stakeholders in each community, which will lead into board and senior management workshops to determine goals and future direction for the Authority.



Crisis Communications

do you know what to do when events are managing you?

Every company that provides a product or service to any type of consumer (so in other words, every company) needs some kind of crisis communications plan, because you never know what will happen or when, and what the magnitude will be. So be ready!

Imagine if you were the CEO of Maple Leaf Foods, and you're moving through your daily routine, overseeing your company that provides wholesome, convenient foods to families, looking to the future with new products and plans. Suddenly, you receive the news that several people across the country have taken ill, and it goes from bad to worse when there are some fatalities. And *your* products are source of the issue. CEO Michael McCain put his face and name to the crisis, and kept reassuring the public with full transparency that they were immediately addressing the problem through recalls, sanitization, and full investigation, and cooperating with the families of the victims.

The company's reaction to the crisis was well executed and fascinating; they stayed on message and involved the country with every step it took to address the issues. McCain initially held a press conference and expressed sympathy for those affected. He then went on to explain what Maple Leaf Foods was doing during the 'crisis' time, using the phrases 'accountability' and 'well beyond required regulations,' and 'Listeria is pervasive' repeatedly. This demonstrated knowledge, action and credibility, and answered the majority of questions surrounding the crisis.

They went on to '...continue to actively meet with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), in addition to external

industry experts...' to assure the public that they were following proper channels to address the problem.

Through its consistent messaging, the company positioned itself as positively as it could in the face of such a crisis. One of the most noteworthy quotes from CEO McCain was, "Going through the crisis there are two advisers I've paid no attention to. The first are the lawyers, and the second are the accountants. It's not about money or legal liability; this is about our being accountable for providing consumers with safe food." This was a bold statement, and positioned Mr.

McCain as a corporate juggernaut whose sole desire was the safety of his company's products for the people of Canada.

Finally, their delivery of the message involved every medium, so they were again positioning themselves as plugged into where the public receives its information and creating the perception that they were reaching every audience. They created a 'crisis' page on their website, with information, links and specific contact information. They were broadcast nationally through both paid advertising and reporting, on radio, television and print. They produced company information pages, available to all. And they posted videos on YouTube, placing themselves in front of a younger market that may not have been paying attention to that point.

Ultimately, Maple Leaf Foods had a tremendous and comprehensive crisis communications plan in place that was instantaneously put into action when the issue emerged. This kind of crisis could have easily destroyed the company had they not been accountable, transparent and proactive immediately.

"Going through the crisis there are two advisers I've paid no attention to. The first are the lawyers, and the second are the accountants. It's not about money or legal liability; this is about our being accountable for providing consumers with safe food."

Michael McCain, CEO, Maple Leaf Foods

Here are some basics to consider in putting together your crisis communications plan:

- Be realistic:** Make sure that the processes in your crisis communications plan accurately represent the real-world way you do things. If you do not ensure this, it can boomerang on you – if you insert a process that is not a part of your organization's regular operation, there is more room for error, missteps and misspoken statements;
- Be simple:** Do not use lengthy narrative in your plan to describe the role of communications and how it works. Users of your crisis plan want simple, step-by-step instructions that clearly tell them what they must do and when, and what the responsibilities of their fellow managers will be;
- Be proactive:** Once the finger is pointed at you, take public steps to fix the problem before it becomes a larger problem;
- Have a spokesperson:** Build the crisis communications plan around having a hands-on communications chief involved throughout the process. Make sure you have back-up systems so that if the primary communications person is not available, someone else is;
- Be consistent:** Concentrate on creating a system for communications that kicks in at the outset of the crisis and repeats itself for the duration of the event, even if the crisis takes days or weeks to resolve. The plan should spell out how the team will be brought together, how they will communicate with each other, gather information, process it, approve it, and disseminate it;
- Be open and on message:** Anticipate the difficult questions that will be posed, and answer them truthfully with prepared messages. Stick to those messages throughout the crisis;
- Don't be afraid to seek outside counsel in developing your plan;** often an objective perspective can identify vulnerabilities and threats!

Our Team

In the last year, we've had talented people come through Tait's doors, some stopping in for a few months doing some great work on key projects, and others settling in and becoming part of the Tait team. With the growth of our staff, we now have experience in a number of different sectors: energy and electricity, the airline industry, government, healthcare, tourism, housing, shipping and logistics, publishing, and the not for profit sector. Our team also has a broad range of skills across the spectrum of social marketing, facilitation, business and strategic planning, communications planning, branding, web development, video production, and writing, design and production of anything you might need. Our team means many heads on one project, which brings experienced perspectives, knowledge and tactical information to any piece of work.

Getting ready to paddle our way around Frame Lake on a Thursday afternoon in early summer.

Leanne Tait – fearless leader, can do (almost) anything that's tossed at her, from facilitation to social marketing, shares her love of chocolate through her shop, the Chocolatier;

Marsha Walker – protects and holds paramount the interests of Tait, the general manager knows everything there is to know about Tait, and she keeps everyone in line;

Mike Bradshaw – the tough communications expert, Mike has worked in energy and electricity, the airline industry, and thinks he's really good at telling jokes;

Yose Cormier – the writer extraordinaire, Yose has his hands in everything, especially with his new son Mathieu;

Tennille Read – fresh from her performance in *Pride and Prejudice* at the Alumni Theatre in Toronto, Tennille has a natural flair for anything performance – video, radio, writing. And she can always be counted on for research and project coordination;

Nicole Were – arrived from New Zealand at the beginning of the winter (she is extremely happy to see summer arrive), she is an experienced project manager in marketing, communications and new media, bringing many fresh ideas to the firm;

Jacki McKinnon – from marketing the 2008 Arctic Winter Games, Jacki joined Tait in January with versatile project management skills in healthcare, tourism and event management.

And there's room for more...!

We need an **office administrator** to help keep us organized, supplied and provide us with the administrative support we all need...

We need a **communications coordinator or two** to help us with all the different aspects of our work, from research to writing to coordination on our projects, someone who wants to learn the art of strategic communications from some of the leading professionals...

We need a **senior communicator** to lead some of our projects with strong skills, initiative and experience that will help us grow in a more diverse and dynamic direction...

Give us a call!



Recent Visuals

We work with some wonderful gifted designers that always produce the highest quality work with us. Rather than having a designer on staff, we source our design work through a number of talented designers to bring fresh perspectives and design styles to our pieces. This provides us with greater flexibility, greater range, and lower overheads, which all benefit you, the client.

Here are some examples of our work.

GNWT ad campaign

to help communicate and strengthen the public's understanding of the strategic plan:

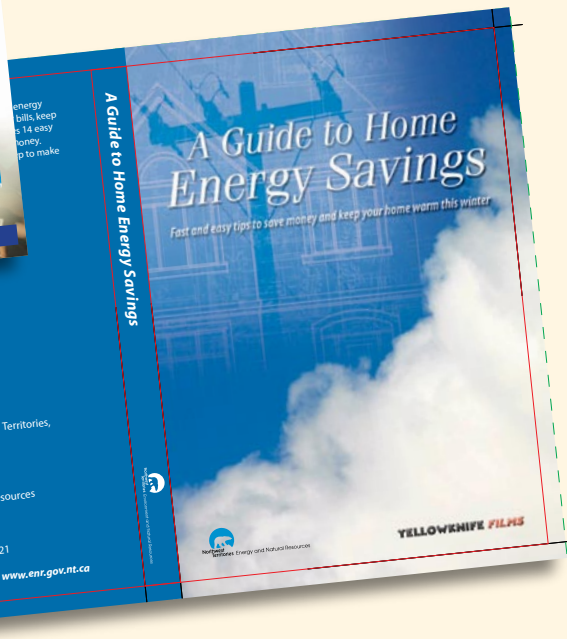
Get Active Champion's Toolkit

helps the local community champions stimulate activity and generate excitement around the Get Active program:



ENR DVD

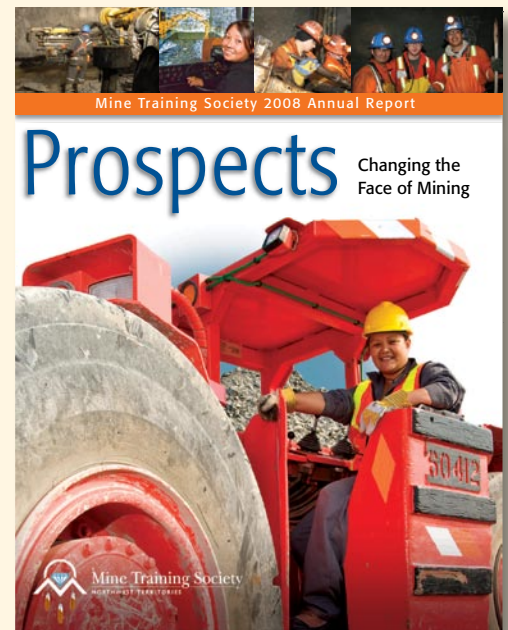
designed to provide information on new energy saving technology:



NTPC Performance Measurement Scorecards

were created to help explain the role of NTPC, its initiatives and its corporate responsibility to the public:

MTS Annual Report 2008:



5. Plug air leaks in walls
6. Fix air leaks around windows
7. Install a programmable thermostat
8. Adjust water heater temperature
9. Insulate hot water pipes
10. Insulate hot water pipes
11. Replace furnace filter regularly
12. Put heat shrink plastic around windows
13. Install a water flow aerator
14. Seal electrical outlets

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