



Mark Pilipczuk
Vice President of Marketing
World Wildlife Fund

World Wildlife Fund

How one of the world's largest conservation groups conserves its own precious marketing resources

Industry

Nonprofit

Business Issue

Increase effectiveness of marketing and membership programs while saving precious resources.

Solution

SAS® provides the access and answers needed to make smart marketing decisions.

Benefits

WWF saves on direct mailing costs, pinpoints attrition causes and sees substantial IT savings with SAS.

Don't let the cute logo fool you. The giant panda has some serious teeth behind that endearing smile and fuzzy black-and-white face. Likewise, the nonprofit it represents thrives in a competitive environment, proving time and time again its ability to stand the test of time.

With FY05 annual revenues of \$123.9 million in the United States, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is one of the world's largest and most successful conservation organizations, protecting endangered species and their habitats around the globe. While scientists and other staffers get their hands dirty working on conservation projects in more than 100 countries, support offices in some 30 countries are the backbone for this field work, from championing conservation causes in the corridors of government to keeping the organization connected and informed through the latest technology.

In WWF's Washington office, SAS® software is one of the behind-the-scenes players, putting teeth into the organization's US-based membership and marketing programs. Like any successful organization, savvy marketing is key to WWF's overall success.

"I'm proud and I respect the wonderful conservation work our organization does, but to me, the only difference between World Wildlife Fund and any well-run, for-profit company is the mission and the tax status," says Gregory Smith, Vice President of Information Technology and CIO of World Wildlife Fund. "We run IT like a business and strive to get the big-bang for our technology investments

so that we can make a difference in the field." And run it like a business they do.

A world-class solution

With more than 1 million contributors in the United States and another 4 million worldwide, WWF is a powerhouse in its ability to secure and retain donors to its conservation cause. In fact, this membership base is one of the organization's most important assets. Legislatively, that kind of membership gives you a voice that otherwise wouldn't be heard, explains Mark Pilipczuk, Vice President of Marketing for WWF-US. It also enables the organization to encourage industries in the private sector to make good decisions. "Our membership numbers add legitimacy to our voice. When your membership numbers count for so much, you need to know your current numbers, and you need to know how to maintain those numbers," Pilipczuk says he now knows those things and a whole lot more, thanks to SAS.



"Just a couple of years ago, there was not a separate marketing analysis group, and the marketing analysis that was done was not done on the same level as the private sector," remembers Smith. The organization's marketing staff had no easy way to know specifics about contributors, nor could employees easily understand the impact of any



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given marketing effort. Before they had SAS, says Pilipczuk, many queries were sent to an outside contractor. “As a result, turnaround time and the cost were both substantial.”

To make better use of the organization’s US membership data while avoiding what WWF considered an unwise use of time and money, the decision was made to invest in business intelligence software. SAS was an easy choice, says Smith, because it was an obvious favorite of the consulting companies they spoke with. “In their proposals, they all had SAS modeling,” Smith says.

In that same time frame, Pilipczuk was hired to head marketing for the US arm of the organization. “When I came on and learned that we had SAS, well, that was great. I was excited to have the use of a world-class tool.”

This world-class tool puts power into the hands of the marketing analysts themselves rather than keeping it isolated in IT. Smith explains why he believes a partially decentralized approach works best: “There’s no IT bottleneck! Technical staff no longer holds up the information flow when too many ad hoc requests come in. IT staff can focus on maintaining database integrity and the data management infrastructure, while marketing analysts can turn and burn on the data that’s been made available to them.”

SAS® power users

Smith is a firm believer in power users, saying they are the way of the future. “Business users are becoming increasingly more savvy about

the technology, and IT professionals already know that they have to understand the business side,” says Smith. “The organizations in which the business and IT lines are blurred are the ones that will thrive into the future.”

At WWF, Smith says, the two sides already work as a team, looking into new technology together and always building a business case before any new technology is implemented. In this case, technology from SAS is being put to good use on a daily basis, providing the access and answers needed to make smart marketing decisions. “The staff sees more and more data. They ask more and more questions. And because they get good answers, they’re asking better questions,” says Pilipczuk. “This means we’re making better marketing decisions and yielding increasing ROI on our marketing efforts.”

Recently the marketing team sent a request to the printer for more WWF calendars. “It’s a fairly expensive piece that we send to major donors, Partners in Conservation and other key constituencies,” says Pilipczuk. “The printer needed the print quantity the next day, but I wanted to refine the mailing list and make sure we sent the calendar only to those who would respond to the mailing. So I asked our marketing analysis team to do some quick ad hoc analysis using SAS to see how people had performed after receiving the calendar in past years. I concluded that we had been printing and mailing too many copies. Between paper, printing and distribution costs, we saved about \$40,000 on one direct mail project – with one quick query.”

Panda or polar bear?

Some intelligence gleaned from membership data allows WWF to tailor entire marketing programs. For example, Pilipczuk says he knows if people respond better to seeing a polar bear alone, a snow leopard alone or both together. “That’s the kind of thing we can figure out really quickly: In fundraising efforts, does featuring single-species adoptions work better than multiple-species campaigns?”

Individual communications, too, are enhanced by easy access to information. Transactional membership data can be combined with data overlays to determine if one particular member has an interest in tigers, for example. “Once we know what members are interested in, we will be sure to make every effort to get information pertinent to that interest to them. Members who receive communications concerning issues in which they are interested are more likely to maintain their relationship with us for longer periods of time, and support us not only in finances, but also in advocacy efforts. That’s basic member relationship management,” says Pilipczuk. “I like to think of SAS as a force multiplier for common sense.”

Smith adds that WWF can predict membership attrition and growth rates 12 months out – in the near future, possibly up to 24 months ahead – so it can be proactive rather than reactive. “That information allows us to play ‘what if.’ We know if we need to work more on retention or more on acquisition,” Smith says.

Savings crucial for nonprofits

Another way in which SAS is expected to save money for the nonprofit is by replacing a piece of outdated proprietary software that has been part of the direct mail programs. “We are committed to unwinding it and replacing it with industry-standard software,” says Smith. The answer is a SAS and Oracle combination that Smith estimates will result in six-digit savings for WWF.

While for any business, seeing a significant return on IT investments is crucial, in the nonprofit arena it may be an absolute necessity. Especially since any financial savings can be used in other areas. “There is plenty of conservation work that can be done with any leftover money,” says Smith.

Add to the equation the fact that World Wildlife Fund – as well as other nonprofits – relies on donated funds, of which there is a limited supply and ample competition, and WWF is very careful in how it spends its funds. “The millennial generation tends to look at charitable giving as an investment, and needs to know that donating is a smart investment. We spend an absolute bare minimum so that 83 percent of World Wildlife Fund donations go to the programs,” says Pilipczuk.

“After all,” says Pilipczuk, “when your product is intangible, as is ours, your members have to know that you are using their gifts wisely. They ask: ‘What am I getting for my dollar?’ And we can answer: ‘A bright future for our living planet.’”

WWF works on the ground, around the world

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) leads global efforts to protect the world’s threatened wildlife and the habitats it needs to survive in more than 50 countries across five continents. WWF International is headquartered in Switzerland, and the main office for WWF-US is based in Washington. As the largest member of the WWF network, WWF-US works on a global scale, supporting conservation projects around the world as well as domestic conservation in the United States.





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