

What began as an idea in the late 1960s on the shores of Vancouver, BC has evolved into a multinational organization with a sophisticated corporate structure and a multimillion dollar annual budget. A long distance has been covered by Greenpeace, from scrounging up money for its maiden voyage- today Greenpeace has a fleet of 3 ships and permanent offices in 55 nations (1). An organization that was founded on the principal of 'bearing witness' (2), has become at times famous and at times infamous for its active protests around the World. From the desecration of historical sites in Peru, (3) to actively working with fortune 500 companies to develop strategies to combat climate change (4), a contradicting narrative forms regarding who Greenpeace is and what they want to achieve. Often seen as the lone vanguard, the following analysis evaluates the evolution of Greenpeace, its impact on the Canadian Climate change debate and questions if it is time for Greenpeace to make some strategic friends.

Greenpeace began as a group of activists protesting the Nuclear weapons testing that was being conducted by the American Government in Amchitka, off the coast of Alaska (5). Originally named 'Don't Make a Wave,' the group eventually adopted the name Greenpeace in 1971, a name that reflects equal parts the social culture of the time and the hope of the founding members (6). The Amchitka voyage was initially perceived by the group as a 'disaster' (6), wrought with internal disagreements and having been intercepted by the US Navy without even making it to their destination, the groups' emotions best summed up by Bob Hunter, "we had lost, and I was angry" (6).

The world opinion for the Amchitka voyage however differed from what the group thought. The World media watched with curiosity as a small boat went to stop the world's most powerful military from testing nuclear weapons, waging its own David and Goliath struggle. While the nuclear tests went on, the group of activists that went to 'bear witness' brought the world media along with them and succeeded in drawing attention to the danger of Nuclear Weapons testing. With the increased media scrutiny and the world watching, the test program at Amchitka was discontinued 5 months later- "The trip was a success beyond anybody's wildest dreams"- Bob Hunter.

Today Greenpeace is a multinational organization headquartered in Amsterdam, Netherlands. It has grown its portfolio of issues to include Climate Change, protecting Forests and Oceans, Sustainable Agriculture, combating Toxic Pollution and Protesting Nuclear weapons and energy. Their mission statement reads much like an adaptation to the corporate world they are now part of, "Greenpeace is an independent campaigning organisation, which uses non-violent, creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems, and to force the solutions which are essential to a green and peaceful future." (2).

Greenpeace is largely funded through donations. To maintain its autonomy Greenpeace does not accept donations from large organizations, governments or any entity that would influence its missions and goals. Local and regional Greenpeace offices raise money through fundraisers and donation which can then be re-distributed across the Greenpeace network. Greenpeace Canada is reliant on donations for 94% of its revenue (7). The remainder of its revenue comes from Stitching Greenpeace Council, the International Greenpeace body, and from investments.

While Greenpeace is heavily reliant on donations for operations, the members that contribute to their revenue are largely passive and not actively involved in its' activities. Greenpeace has a core team of employees who are responsible for carrying out most the groups initiatives and activities. Regional offices function with a great level of autonomy, largely coordinating themselves while getting some direction from the international organization. An international workforce of over 2,565 employees with a dedicated volunteer base of over 18,300 and an estimated 3 Million financial supporters worldwide (8) Greenpeace has grown in size and has a large base of supporters. In Canada alone, Greenpeace received donations from over 68,956 individuals (9) with a combined workforce in North America amounting to 222 employees (8). While most of the organizations initiatives are carried out by a dedicated workforce, volunteers and supporters lend critical support to their campaigns.

Greenpeace has evolved from the "Don't make a wave" group to a multinational organization with a sophisticated strategy and arsenal of instruments to help 'force the solutions' for their campaigns. The organization brings attention to issues through regular press

releases, releasing reports on critical, often overlooked, issues and engaging with media sources. Examples of their work include reports, podcasts and statements aimed at drawing attention to the climate change debate in Alberta (10). To emphasise the nature of an issue, Greenpeace also employs its characteristic 'direct action'. Examples of this strategy include activists occupying the Shell upgrader expansion site in Fort Saskatchewan in 2009 (11). The intention of such actions is to draw media attention to the cause and motivate the offender into changing behavior. In addition to its 3 dedicated ships, a Cessna aircraft, a helicopter and a hot air balloon, the organization has groups dedicated to monitoring international agreements. Currently holding consultative status with the United Nations, Greenpeace extensively lobbies governments to move on environmental issues. An organization dedicated to drawing public attention to environmental causes, they actively conduct public education and engagement campaigns. Greenpeace has also made impressive strides into funding scientific research into environmental issues, the organization has subject matter experts who often work with governments and private organizations in the development of new environmentally friendly business practices and policies. (12)

As an organization with a growing corporate footprint, Greenpeace tactics have evolved to have a two sided approach for achieving its mission. Public shaming as a form of 'direct action' followed by private cooperation by working with organizations to lessen their environmental impact. Termed the "Corporate Spanking Machine" (12), Greenpeace's participation in the process to help companies change has been lauded as being professional and pragmatic (12). Unfortunately, the strategies Greenpeace employs to draw attention to a cause may be the very thing that prevents them from being invited to the table. The public campaigns carried out by Greenpeace are done in an attempt to put pressure on an organization by threatening their brand equity- an example being head and shoulders campaign to draw attention to deforestation (12). While some organizations are willing to overlook the accusatory nature of the campaign and work with Greenpeace, this strategy has been less effective in its impact on the Canadian Tar Sands, an industry not unfamiliar with public shaming.

Effective Greenpeace campaigns include the recent announcement by Lego to discontinue its partnership with Shell who is dedicated to exploring oil reserves in the arctic (13). The executive director of Greenpeace UK recognizes that “Shell is trying to piggy back on the credibility of other brands” and while Lego group discontinued its partnership with Shell, the CEO of Lego group maintains that Greenpeace should have approached Shell directly. Greenpeace strategically targeted Lego, a company that had much to lose with the loss of their child-friendly brand image, making no allies in the process. While Shell recently suspended plans to drill in the Arctic, the motivators for that decision were more economic rather than a result of the Greenpeace campaign (14). Industry insiders expect that as the price of oil recovers, Arctic drilling will continue to be explored. Another notable campaign was the fight against whaling, where not only was Greenpeace able to help create the International whaling commission but in 2002 they also helped prevent Japan from reintroducing commercial whaling (15). Recently however, Greenpeace has come under scrutiny for failing to recognize the rights of Inuit communities in their traditional hunting and fishing rights (16). While the organization apologized to the community, they have lost a level of trust and good will with their actions. The negative sentiment has a tangible impact on the organizations campaign against oil exploration in the Arctic. Greenpeace’s approach of not building sustainable relationships, no permanent friends, now endangers their efforts as they lose their own brand equity, described as a “thoroughly discredited brand” by Madeleine Redfern the former mayor of Iqaluit (16).

To have the moral high ground that would enable Greenpeace to act as the accuser, judge and jury, its own brand equity becomes of paramount concern. In the absence of any other organisation whose brand they can ‘piggy back’ on, the Greenpeace brand becomes essential to their goal. Instances such as the very public destruction of a national heritage site in Peru has dealt Greenpeace another notable blow. In 2014 Greenpeace had to issue an apology to people of Peru when a demonstration supporting sustainable energy desecrated a national heritage site, the Nazca lines (3). While Greenpeace cooperated with the authorities in their investigation, the organizations reputation suffered a major setback and the damage had been done. Recognizing the autonomy of the regional offices, it can be understood that such campaigns may not be approved by the international governing Greenpeace body, as was the

case in Peru, however the impact on their reputation remains. Such an incident highlights the fine line often being crossed by the actions of the members of Greenpeace. It is the damage to this perceived moral high ground that lays the foundation for the Canadian RCMP to label Greenpeace as a “Radicalized Environmentalist” group (15). Greenpeace, having no permanent friend, has few advocates that can speak to their legitimacy or come to their defence in these organized attacks.

While Greenpeace stands to be a large contributor in the discussion of Climate Change, especially within the Canadian context, the large corporate interests involved are not new to public shaming campaigns, nor have such campaigns historically proven effective in moving the conversation forward. Given the damage to Greenpeace’s brand and their tactics they have been relegated to the fringes. While they have released many reports to different Governmental, public and corporate agencies, little change has been seen in the conversation in the Canadian context. Additionally, while a well hung banner has an impact on the local community, and gets some reaction from the media, the question must be raised about the effectiveness of these strategies in the Climate Change debate in Canada in the long run. The issue of Climate Change in Canada is not the ‘David and Goliath’ struggle of a few lone activists fighting against Nuclear Weapons testing in the Arctic. After experiencing notable public embarrassments, the industry actors are employing the same shaming tactics to diminish the brand equity of Greenpeace itself.

It is perhaps ironic that the government in the country of its origin has not only ignored climate change but has tried to make Greenpeace itself a national pariah and label it an extremist group. However if Greenpeace is genuine in its mission of protecting the environment, then perhaps it is time for Greenpeace to re-evaluate its strategy. The loss of its brand value may have had impacts that are far reaching for an organization that has no permanent partners or organizations for support. In a brand fight with an industry with far greater resources and many allies, finding a new strategy to bring the offending parties to the negotiating table may be the only way that Greenpeace can remain relevant in the climate change discourse. It may in fact be the missteps made by Greenpeace that can help them to find humility and common ground with the industry they hope to influence. An organization

that has gone through one major transformation, from a small group of activists to a large multinational, it may be time for Greenpeace to self-reflect and reconsider its core values and the role they want to play in the climate change discourse. It may be time they started making friends with their foes if they hope to have a lasting and relevant impact on climate change or they risk become irrelevant.

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