

Enriching institutional communication: the “Click FUNDESNAIP”

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Case Studies

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Introduction

The Foundation for the Development of the National System of Protected Areas of Bolivia -FUNDESNA- decided to undertake a photography contest called “el Click FUNDESNA” to promote the National System of Protected Areas (SNAP) as a Bolivian heritage from the point of view of park guards. The first contest was launched the year 2007 in coordination with the Bolivian Association of Conservation Agents –ABOLAC- and the National Service of Protected Areas –SERNAP.

The contest is aimed at park guards from national, departmental and municipal protected areas as competitors, seeking to obtain images from protected areas that are usually never seen and, most importantly, images that reflect their point of view.

The photographs compete in three main categories: enhance nature, raise awareness and show people way of living and working inside protected areas. They must also comply with aesthetics parameters such as composition, lighting and focus.

Activities

The following activities were carried out to launch the contest:

- An agreement was signed with the Bolivian Association of Conservation Agents (park guards) - ABOLAC-.
- Coordination with the National Service of Protected Areas of Bolivia -SERNAP- for spreading the official announcement and selecting winning photographs.



It was important to involve ABOLAC since it is the entity that represents park guards at the national level, and SERNAP as the head of the state sector in charge of protected areas in the country.

For the first pilot photography contest (2007) the following activities were part of the process:

- FUNDESNA financed disposable cameras with three film rolls that were given to the park guards.
- FUNDESNA coordinated the distribution and logistics with each protected area and park guards that registered for the contest.
- Park guards were given a three month period to take photographs before returning the cameras to FUNDESNA.
- FUNDESNA, ABOLAC and SERNAP invited the Training Center for Filmmaking (CEFREC), FAMA Producciones and the Journalists Association for acting as jurors. These six (6) institutions were in charge of picking the winning photographs.
- La Prensa, a national newspaper, supported the contest with an advertising campaign in their newspaper during nine (9) days with an estimated value of \$US 770.

Nine (9) protected areas took part of the first contest with a total of sixty four (64) park guards who participated with disposable cameras, making possible to have more than 1.000 photos that responded to theme, concept and esthetics parameters. As a result, nine (9) park guards won the contest, each with one winning photograph in three categories: nature, awareness and people on protected areas and each category with three places (1st, 2nd, and 3rd).

This first pilot photography contest was mainly financed by FUNDESNA who covered the cost of the disposable cameras, film rolls, costs of delivering the cameras to each park guard registered, printing of the photographs, award ceremony and awards with an approximately cost of \$US 7.000

The awards given at the ceremony consisted in three camcorders for the park guards who obtained the first place in each category; three digital cameras for the park guards that obtained the second place in each category and finally three analog cameras for those park guards who obtained the third place in each category.

In 2008, a second version of the contest was launched. For this version the following activities were carried out:

- FUNDESNA, with support of The Nature Conservancy, bought 30 digital cameras.

- FUNDESNAPE along with ABOLAC and SERNAP made the official announcement inviting park guards to register for the contest. This time, due to a short supply of digital cameras (30), each protected area could register only up to two park guards.
- FUNDESNAPE coordinated the distribution of the cameras with each protected area and park guards.
- Park guards were given a three month period to take photographs before returning the cameras to FUNDESNAPE. This time, park guards had a 2GB memory on the camera for taking photographs.
- FUNDESNAPE, ABOLAC and SERNAP invited partner institutions to participate as jurors. This time, the National Film Academy, Reciprocity Foundation and The Nature Conservancy were part of the panel.

In this second version of the contest twenty seven (27) park guards participated from fourteen (14) national protected areas.

This second version of photography had the support of The Nature Conservancy who donated 30 digital cameras (Samsung 7.1 megapixels, 2GB memory card) with a total cost of \$US 4.500. This time, FUNDESNAPE financed the costs of delivering the cameras to each park guard registered, printing and framing of the winning photographs for public exhibition the night of the award ceremony, award ceremony and awards with an approximately cost of \$US 8.000.

The awards given at the ceremony consisted in three camcorders for the park guards who obtained the first place in each category; three digital cameras for the park guards that obtained the second place in each category and finally three analog cameras for those park guards who obtained the third place in each category.

As a result of these two versions of the contest, FUNDESNAPE had more than 2.000 photographs that are part of our institutional communication materials such as annual reports, website and several bulletins.

In 2011, a third version of the contest was launched, this time the activities were the following:

- FUNDESNAPE, along with ABOLAC and SERNAP, made the official announcement inviting park guards to register for the contest. Due to a limited amount of cameras, each protected area could register a maximum of two park guards.
- FUNDESNAPE coordinated the distribution of cameras with each protected area and park guards.
- Once again, park guards were given a three month period to take photographs before returning the digital cameras to FUNDESNAPE.
- The jury was composed by FUNDESNAPE, ABOLAC, SERNAP and the National Film Academy.
- FUNDESNAPE contacted private and public institutions for supporting the contest, important institutions have agreed to cooperate in different items: ENTEL (National Communications Agency) will provide the salon for the ceremony, BOA (National Airline) will transport winner park guards, ABC Color will donate a camcorder and Delizia will support the printing and framing of the winning pictures for exhibition.
- At the time, the winners of the contest have been identified and the awards ceremony is pending.

This third version had the participation of eighteen (18) park guards from eleven (11) national protected areas.

This version was initially financed by FUNDESNAPE, who covered the costs related to delivering the cameras to each park guard registered. The costs for food and drinks for the award ceremony, lodging for the winner park guards and remaining awards (2 camcorders and 6 digital cameras) will be also covered by FUNDESNAPE; these items have an approximately cost of \$US 7.500.

Results

As outcomes of the contest experience, FUNDESNAPE is about to launch a line of products for commercialization that includes the editing and annual commercialization of an Exclusive Photography Book from Bolivia's protected areas, an online commerce platform (for image commercialization) and the supply of printed images to different users on demand. For achieving this, the costs of printing of the first Photography Book will be covered with the income generated from the sales, this is possible since FUNDESNAPE generated an understanding with the printing company that allows paying for the product with the earnings obtained from the sale. The surplus will help launch the commercialization line (website, other products like calendars and postcards and commercialization costs).

The sustainability of the contest lies in the commercialization of the images and also relies on the commitment from sponsoring companies and organizations, both are considered the main challenges.

The funds to be raised with the commercialization of products will benefit the Bolivian Association of Conservation Agents (ABOLAC) and the development and sustainability of the contest.

On the other hand, the contest viewed as a communication effort allows to raise public awareness of and opinion about our cultural and natural heritage, in addition to the enhancement of the appreciation and dissemination of information on the work of the park guards in protected areas in Bolivia. So far, it is possible to appreciate that this kind of initiatives are attractive to private entities which become interested in promoting their corporate social responsibility program through this kind of activities; with their support, it is possible to get public attention for promoting the line of products nationally.

At present, the success of the contest can be measured in the response to and the expectation of continuity that was generated in the park guards. Their interest in participating shows the importance of these kinds of initiatives related to the appreciation of their work.

An unexpected result was the quality of the photographs since the jury came to realize that the content of the photographs taken by the park guards is not easily available. Moreover, the quality of the produced material is very rich, both in photographic technique and in the variety of images.

A video of the contest is available on line:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XLHIL02Ufg> (Spanish)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VjXkW7tBB0> (English)