

# COMMUNICATING A WORLD FIRST

**becoming the first major food company  
to become Carbon Neutral**

November 5, 2020

**RESEARCH  
STRATEGY**  
GROUP



An aerial photograph of a green tractor with yellow wheels plowing a field. The tractor is moving from the upper right towards the lower left, leaving a dark, furrowed path behind it. A large, dark shadow of the tractor is cast onto the green field to its left. The field is divided into sections of green crops and dark, tilled soil.

**At Maple Leaf Foods,  
our vision is to be the  
most sustainable protein  
company on earth**

# the business challenge

**MLF was launching a marketing campaign to announce that they would be the first major food company in the world to become carbon neutral.**

*"There is simply no more time to waste. The devastating impact of climate change on our planet must be confronted head-on by business leaders with decisive and immediate action."*

—Michael McCain, Maple Leaf Foods President and CEO



# **the research challenge**

**a global food producer confronts sustainability**

**What do consumers REALLY  
understand about carbon neutrality?**

**How do we make consumers care  
about carbon neutrality?**

**Which messages about carbon  
neutrality would grow acceptance  
of their products?**

**Would consumers believe it?**

# the engagement

help Maple Leaf Foods communicate a world first

**the first phase:  
discovery**

in-home ethnography

- incorporating behavioural science

**the second phase:  
validation**

quantitative survey

- incorporating discrete choice modeling
  - determine the most powerful corporate communications
  - identify the strongest on-pack claims



# the first phase: discovery

## distinct behavioural science themes

- 01 diffusion of responsibility & confirmation bias
- 02 leverage the status quo to build trust
- 03 visualize the difference
- 04 in-group bias & reciprocity
- 05 delay discounting – present over future
- 06 the halo effect & leveraging emotional salience
- 07 willful ignorance



# 03 visualize the difference

## observations

- *"This is our primary concern. For Mila's [daughter] sake...That the world will not be in a worse place."*
- *"Well, I go to Edmonton, and I see that 15 bags of garbage every week, and I go, 'Holy crap. What a waste.'"*

theme	statements
<b>People are generally more motivated to act pro-socially when there is a clear target, or a tangible problem they are aiming to solve.</b>	<p>We are now carbon neutral. This is the same as conserving 400,000 acres of forest every year.</p> <p>We are now carbon neutral. This is equivalent to taking 74,000 cars off the road every year.</p> <p>We are now carbon neutral. This is equivalent to the electricity used by 60,000 homes every year.</p>



**example of translating themes from phase 1 into statements tested in the second phase**

# the second phase: validation

The most successful messaging—on-pack or in communications—will hit on all three of these **themes**:

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## **People want high quality food**

- #6 We are making real food with real ingredients.
- #4 Better food. Better care. Better community. Better planet.

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## **People care most about feeding their family, and feel an affinity towards their Canadian in-group**

- #48 We are on a mission to provide wholesome choices to Canadian families that are sustainable for future generations.
- #33 Maple Leaf Foods is committed to the well-being of Canadian families and our planet.

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## **People need to understand what carbon neutrality means**

- #10 We are working towards eliminating pollution, waste and resource depletion by becoming carbon neutral.
- #20 We are now carbon neutral. This is the same as conserving 400,000 acres of forest every year.
- #21 We are now carbon neutral. This is equivalent to taking 74,000 cars off the road every year.



# example communications



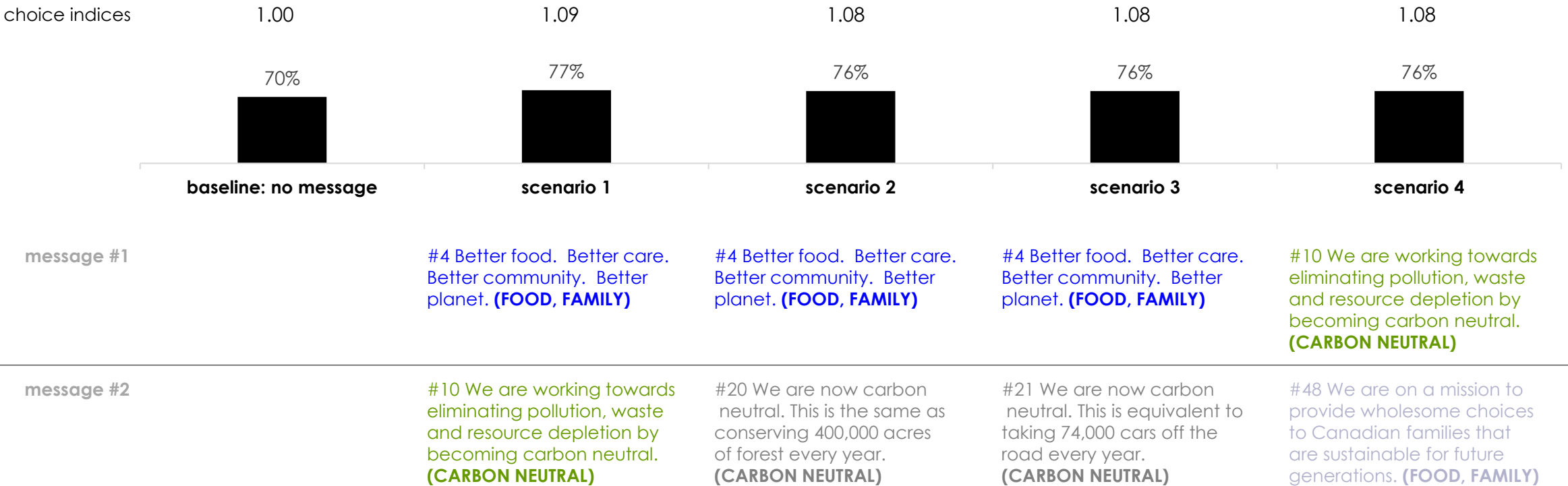
At Maple Leaf Foods, we care passionately about **the food Canadians feed their families.**

As part of our responsibility to taking care of Canada and the planet, **we are now a Carbon Neutral company.** This means that if we emit carbon into the atmosphere we take the necessary steps to pull it back.

In real terms, this is **the equivalent of conserving 400,000 acres of forest each year.**

# corporate messaging

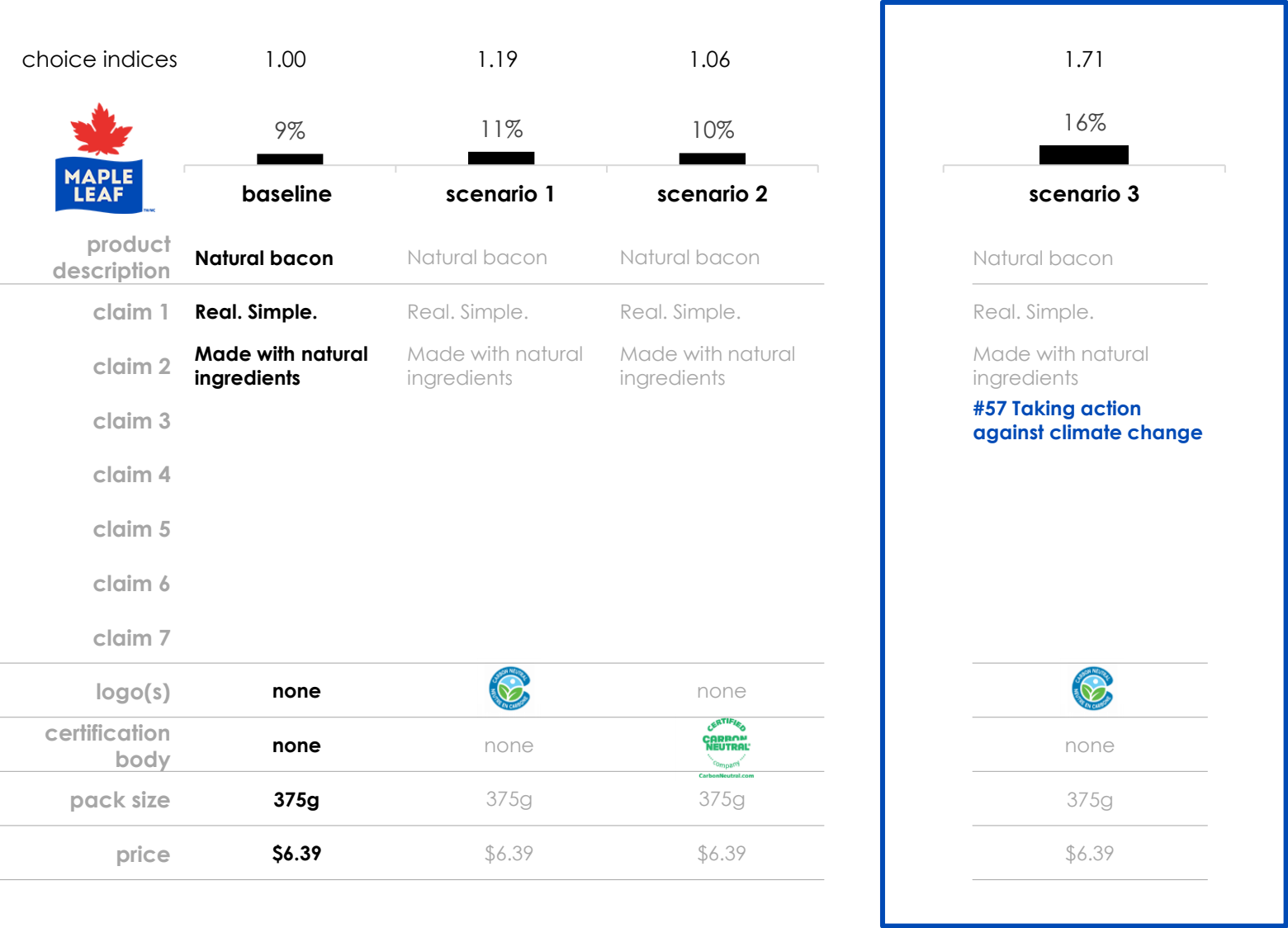
research proof points: choice probabilities among total respondents



- message themes:
- current message
  - "halo effect" & leveraging emotional salience
  - in-group bias & reciprocity
  - leverage status quo to build trust
  - willful ignorance
  - diffusion of responsibility & confirmation bias
  - visualize the difference
  - delay discounting (present over future)

data source: discrete choice model results based on choice probabilities

# on-pack communication



By adding both a carbon neutral logo and a qualifying claim MLF can drive much stronger purchase interest vs. current on pack messaging.



A photograph taken from a dark space, looking through an open doorway into a brightly lit room. The room has a window with sheer curtains and a television on a stand. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

“Not Just Little Things”  
advertising campaign premiered  
during Super Bowl LIV

# 2020 Q1 Carbon Neutral campaign more than doubled consumer awareness for MLF's carbon neutral status



Leveraged “the right tone”, high impact tactics, timed for seasonality, and invested to generate buzz about achievement

## TV/OLV ad



## Influencer content



## Tribute flyers



## PR media



the message.

Maple Leaf Foods quietly promotes sustainability during Super Bowl



## Research Themes addressed:

1. Diffusion of responsibility (take action to help)
2. Brand trust
3. Visualizing the difference
4. The present matters

## AWARENESS



- ✓ Via TV, delivered 140M+ impressions (10M on Super Bowl night alone)
- ✓ Engaged online audience, with 50% viewing the ad in entirety (double CPG average)
- ✓ Wave 2 of PR efforts generated 14M+ impressions, with over 135 pieces of media coverage across media
- ✓ Collaborated with influencers, driving 30K+ impressions, with most viewers watching 92% of all posted content
- ✓ Partnered with customers to prominently feature carbon neutrality announcement message in tributes
- × All ML brand POS has been standardized to include CN logo, but has had less impact in store due to limited display signage
- × Cut off support during COVID, preventing more “stickiness of awareness”

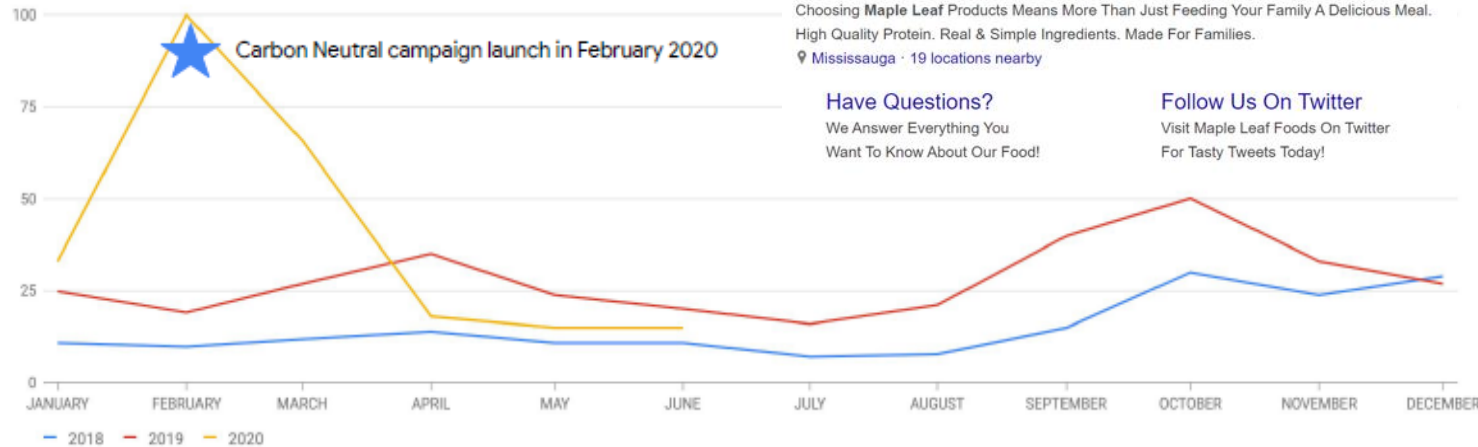
# Campaign drove the highest spike in “carbon neutrality” related search since 2006

Consumers who searched for carbon neutrality were redirected to learn more from ML website



## Google Search

Seasonal trend by Searches for carbon neutrality



Ad www.mapleleaf.ca/

Maple Leaf Is Carbon Neutral | Learn More | MapleLeaf.ca

Reducing Our Environmental Impact Brings Us Closer To Providing Real Food For Canadians. Choosing **Maple Leaf** Products Means More Than Just Feeding Your Family A Delicious Meal. High Quality Protein. Real & Simple Ingredients. Made For Families.

Mississauga · 19 locations nearby

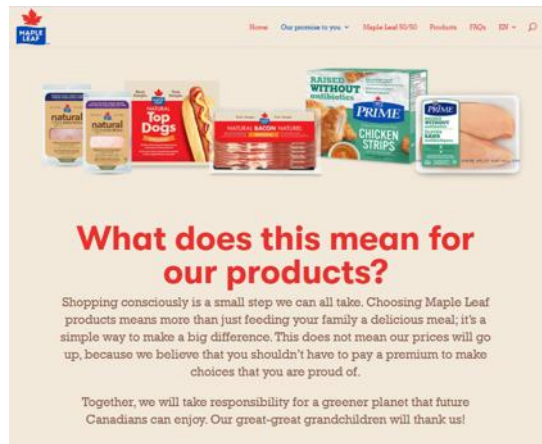
Have Questions?

We Answer Everything You Want To Know About Our Food!

Follow Us On Twitter

Visit Maple Leaf Foods On Twitter For Tasty Tweets Today!

## Website content



### Research Themes addressed:

1. Brand trust
2. Visualizing the difference
3. The present matters
4. Willful ignorance

### MOTIVATE

- ✓ After campaign launched, searches for 'carbon neutrality' peaked in Canada, with Maple Leaf becoming synonymous or **inextricably linked** with the term (!!!)
- ✓ Created new landing page to share consumer-friendly educational materials on carbon neutrality, increasing website traffic by **+125% in Feb 2020** vs YAGO. **Time on site 5X, and sentiment in social 95%+ positive**



# In short-term, we have developed carbon neutral related content tracks to support sustainability-focused conversations.

This channel will enable us to maintain transparency and educate consumers via more digestible visuals.



## Eco-friendly Family

Demonstrate to parents how simple and accessible it is to make conscious choices to reduce family's carbon footprint.



## Sustainability at ML

Show how we're working towards being the most sustainable protein company on the planet via our work and future plans.



## Climate change 101

Provide engaging, digestible content that educates but also provide tools to educate our Real Parenting community.



## We're in this together

Amplify the stories of changemakers who are paving the way to make a difference (reactive content).



Let's talk climate change. We know it's not the easiest conversation to have with your kids, but it's an important one. Here are a few tips to help you get started:

- 📖 Educate yourself first.
- 👦 Empower your kids to get involved in your community.
- 🌱 Stay positive! Show your kids that there's hope for their future.
- 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦 Lead by example and work as a family to take small steps every day that will lead to big change.
- 👂 Listen. Your kids have access to resources online and at school. Allow them the space to educate you.



# any questions?

