



## I FOUND SAMMY CLARITA

### RESEARCH/PLANNING

At the beginning of 2017, the City of Santa Clarita’s communications division was tasked with promoting the City’s 30th anniversary. Inspired by the Pokemon Go craze – the communications team came up with a scavenger hunt unique to the City. Instead of searching for Pokestops, walking to hatch eggs or catching a rare water species with a super high CP, this new idea was much simpler. The “Sammy Clarita” scavenger hunt was created to boost social media followers, get people to engage with the City’s accounts, feel pride in the City and encourage people to get out and explore all Santa Clarita has to offer.

The communications team identified families as the primary audience for the campaign, as they comprised the largest demographic in Santa Clarita. In order to engage both children and parents, the concept of a scavenger hunt for a stuffed animal was proposed. Being that Santa Clarita is a city known for its rich western film history and beautiful open spaces featuring multi-use trails, a horse was chosen as the stuffed animal to represent the City. “Sammy Clarita” quickly became the unofficial mascot.

After assessing the City’s multiple social media accounts, communications decided to use Instagram as the main platform for the game. At the time, @SantaClarita on Instagram had the fewest followers out of all the City of Santa Clarita’s accounts, at 5,971. The visual component of Instagram and its newly established “Insights” would also serve the game well.

The overarching point of the game would be to highlight the City’s achievements, provide a way for residents to participate in the 30th celebrations and establish a greater, more engaged social media audience for more important issues, such as emergency communications. Specifically, the communications team aimed to increase Instagram followers by 20 percent by the end of 2017 and create more brand ambassadors.

Multiple estimates for stuffed animals were requested before a reasonable price was found. The City purchased 490 Sammy Clarita dolls, measuring about eight inches tall and sporting a blue shirt with Santa Clarita’s 30th anniversary logo. A total of 1,200 smaller Sammy Clarita keychains were also purchased and 750 tags explaining the game, which were designed in-house, were printed. Advertising for Sammy Clarita was broadcast on a local radio station and ads were also published in the Magazine of Santa Clarita, the Signal Newspaper and the City’s Seasons magazine, as part of the annual budget. The rules of the game were also accessible on the City’s website, at [santa-clarita.com/SammyClarita](http://santa-clarita.com/SammyClarita).

### IMPLEMENTATION

Using “#IFoundSammyClarita,” Instagram was the one-stop-shop for updates on Sammy Clarita’s activities. The rules of the game were communicated through an introductory post and video. Whoever found Sammy got to keep him. However, they were encouraged to post a selfie with Sammy on Instagram using “#IFoundSammyClarita.” This would allow the City to locate these posts and repost them on the City’s Instagram account.

After teasing his arrival on Instagram, Sammy made his public debut at the 24th Annual Santa Clarita Cowboy Festival, which attracts over 6,000 patrons each year. The photo was staged to show Sammy signing the City of Santa Clarita’s 30th birthday card to encourage people to do the same and to give a clue as to where he was hiding. By advertising that the tiny mascot would be hiding at events ahead of time, families had more incentive to attend and to follow the City on Instagram so that they could receive Sammy news. The communications team also used Sammy to encourage residents to participate in 30th anniversary activities, such as signing a giant birthday card.

Sammy made the tour of Santa Clarita and the City’s Instagram feed began to fill up with photos of Sammy at the park, the Amgen Tour of California, Earth Arbor Day, the libraries, local restaurants, schools, Concerts in the Park, on hiking trails, admiring public art, and even at City Council meetings. Each post that went up meant one more community member was now hosting Sammy in their home.



Through social media he took on a personality and a life of his own. Sammy was getting in on trending social media topics such as #NationalFrenchFryDay, when Sammy was photographed in a seemingly endless sea of French fries and given the caption, "Sammy only has fries for #SantaClarita." The week before Halloween, residents were also encouraged to vote for Sammy's Halloween costume. Communications staff fashioned five outfits for the doll. The winning costume was Sammy McFly, which mimicked the Marty McFly look from the Back to the Future movies. This week of voting created a new, fun way to engage with residents.

The quick turnaround between a post and Sammy being found was exciting to see. Once he was perched on a bridge admiring the Hometown Hero banners and only got to sit there for about 10 minutes before a minivan pulled up, dropping off a mom and little girl who sprinted toward the bridge. Their squeals of excitement could be heard as they erupted in joy to have their very own Sammy Clarita.

Campaign results were monitored through Instagram's Insights. Indicators of success were how many times an individual post was viewed, how many unique accounts viewed the post and how many likes, comments and saves a post received. On December 27, the final Sammy Clarita video was shared, which recapped Sammy Clarita's activities in the previous eight months.

## **RESULTS/EVALUATION**

When the City of Santa Clarita's communications division introduced the "I Found Sammy Clarita" campaign, they had 5,971 Instagram followers. Between April 2017 and January 2018, communications experienced a 23 percent increase in followers, exceeding the initial goal of 20 percent and bringing them to 7,768 followers. In the end, 140 posts were published about Sammy Clarita. These 140 posts were seen 416,179 times and 34 percent of the time, viewers commented, liked or saved the posts. In addition, 1,656 large and small Sammy Clarita dolls went home with families. That is 1,656 reminders that the City works on behalf of the residents it cares about!

What the communications division did not expect was Sammy's lasting popularity. Due to popular demand, the communications division purchased a full-size horse costume and made a shirt to match Sammy's. The costume was worn to the final events of the year that promoted the 30th anniversary. Since Sammy Clarita's farewell video, residents continue to message the City to find out when he will be returning.

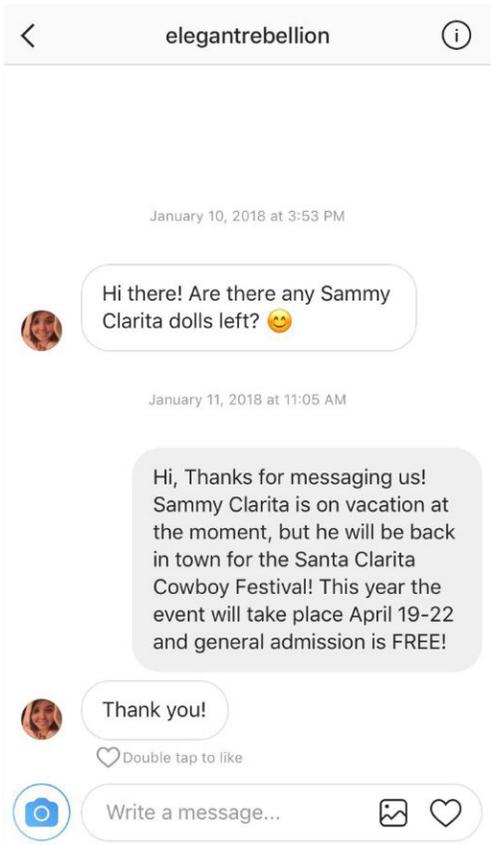
Ultimately, the "I Found Sammy Clarita" campaign highlighted the City's achievements, gave residents a way to participate in the 30th celebrations and established a greater Instagram audience.

## **BUDGET:**

Communication tools and tactics of the comprehensive campaign included:

- 490 Sammy Clarita stuffed dolls - \$2,441.86 (\$4.98 each)
- 1,200 Sammy Clarita keychains - \$5,791.50 (\$4.98 each)
- 750 tags, tied to each stuff doll, explaining the Sammy Clarita game (\$213.43 - \$0.28 each)
- Local radio advertising on KHTS - \$1,000
- Local print advertising in The Signal newspaper and Magazine of Santa Clarita (\$2,400)
- Advertising in the City's Seasons magazine - \$0
- Webpage created on City website at [santa-clarita.com/Sammy Clarita](http://santa-clarita.com/Sammy Clarita) - \$0
- Press Releases

The total campaign cost amounted to \$11,846.79.



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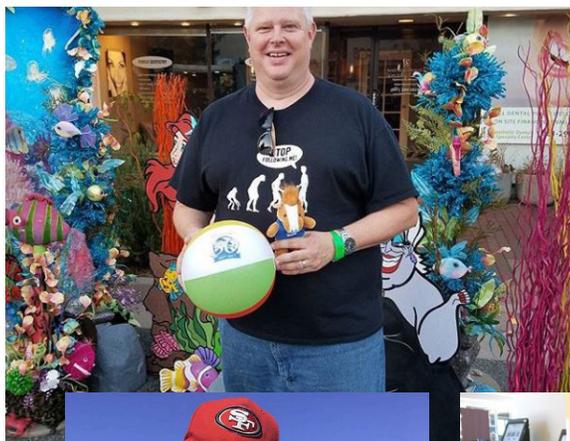
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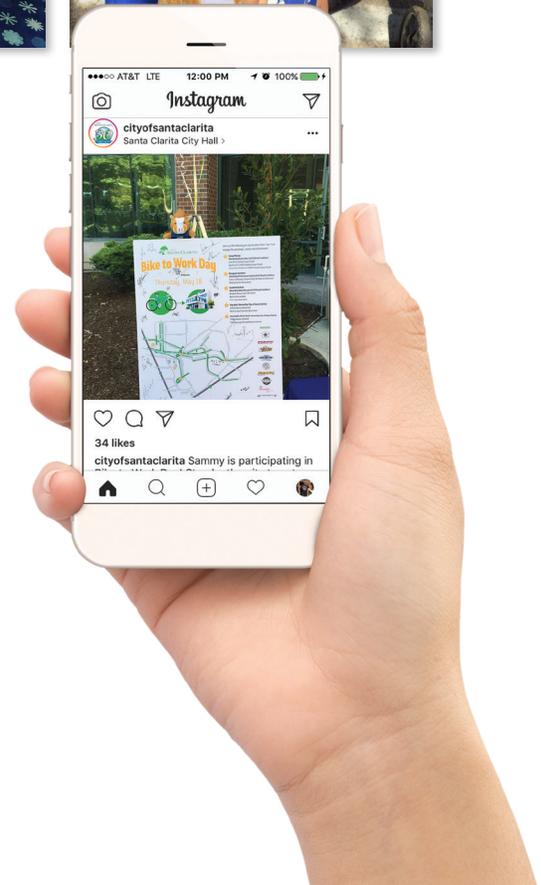


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#ifoundsammyclarita



Instagram

cityofsantclarita Santa Clarita City Hall

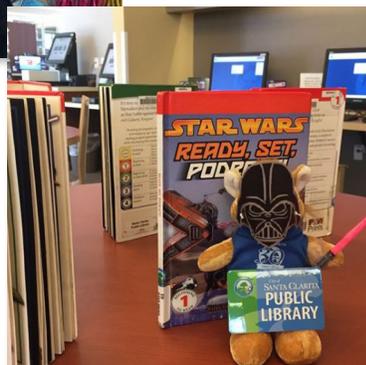
Bike to Work Day

34 likes

cityofsantclarita Sammy is participating in



pacificcoralandseashell



STAR WARS  
READY, SET,  
PODDERS

SANTA CLARITA  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY

