

Reining in the Bulls with Michael Marx
Interview with Tzeporah Berman of Stand.earth
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Name: Tzeporah Berman

Current Title: International Program Director

Current Organization: Stand.earth

Title during campaign: Campaign Director

Organization during campaign: Forest Ethics

Name of campaign: Victoria's Secret Catalog Campaign

Date(s) of campaign: 2003 - 2006

Target companies/corporations: Limited Brands



Summary: Victoria Secret was creating a million catalogs a day primarily from old growth forests in Canada. The campaign resulted in the first sustainable procurement policy from a catalog company and created leverage for a large corporate and government moratorium and solutions project on logging in endangered species habitat.

00:03 Michael Marx:

Tzeporah Berman International Campaign Director for Stand.earth. Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed by me.

00:10 Tzeporah Berman:

Nice to see you.

00:11 MM:

Nice to see you as well. We're going to talk about the Victoria's Secret campaign, which I also think is one of the real seminal campaigns in the forest movement, but also in a corporate campaign movement. What was your position and the organization you were with during the Victoria's Secret catalog campaign?

00:35 TB:

I was the campaign director at Forest Ethics, which is now Stand.earth.

00:40 MM:

Alright. And what was the issue with Victoria's Secret that really led to the campaign?

00:48 TB:

Victoria's Secret was making at the time, a million catalogs a day, and the majority of their paper came from old growth clear cut logging in Canada.

01:03 MM:

So, it sounds like the goal was primarily to protect old growth forests in Canada.

01:15 TB:

To protect old growth forests, endangered species and to ensure sustainable procurement policies from the largest paper consumers. In order to do that we needed to find leverage. To tell a story and to build financial leverage with government and industry by turning a customer from a target to a collaborator.

When we first started that campaign, we looked at who all of the different customers were and what was driving old growth forest destruction in the Boreal Forest in Canada. We then did supply chain analysis. We started looking at who the largest logging companies were and who their customers were. We came up with a number of different sectors. There was office paper, there were catalogs, lumber and newsprint.

01:49 TB:

We decided to focus on catalogs because we felt like it was, although still huge, small enough that it could change, they could change and Victoria Secret also had storefronts for organizing direct customer engagement. Our goal was to use the Victoria Secret campaign as an organizing focal point to create a larger conversation in the sector and in fact with other major paper consuming sectors about the need to protect old growth forests and endangered species

habitat, to use their influence for good with governments and companies but also to create procurement policies and a standard in their sectors for more transparency and environmental responsibility.

02:17 TB:

For corporate campaigns, I think that's really important. If you want to have a sector-wide impact, you need to know if there examples you can point to of people doing the right thing? Are there good policies out there? Are there companies already moving? Or if you give them the information, they might move even more. And are the companies who aren't moving who you want to make the poster child of the campaign, do you have some access, some way to influence them, because they very much depend on their reputational capital, like Victoria's Secret, or they have storefronts so you can access their customer base, et cetera. So we did a lot of that analysis. We decided to do the catalog industry. But deciding to focus on Victoria's Secret is actually a funny story. Because we had six catalog companies. We had assessed on a number of different criteria and every one of our six member team wanted a different catalog company. And they all had a really good justification for why it should be that company. And I remember the meeting, I remember one person saying, no, it has to be Eddie Bauer because they talk about being green, but they're using paper from Primary Forest and clear cutting and old growth. We have to go after Eddie Bauer. And then someone else saying, no, it's the mother of all catalogs in North America. It's the Sears catalog, it's the biggest, they're using the most and someone else saying, no, no, no, we should take a low hanging fruit first. Norm Thompson Outfitters, they already have a fairly good policy we can get them to cancel their contract.

03:56 TB:

Everyone had these various analysis and Victoria's Secret didn't make as much sense from the intellectual analysis because they were so big, they were held by Limited Brands, \$11 billion company. And, they bought so much, it was going to be very hard for them to shift. In fact, we weren't sure whether there was an alternative paper for them, which it turned out there wasn't in North America, that was more sustainable because of the type of paper they already used. And also because they were so big, a million catalogs a day, 365 million a year. And, yet when we talked about the potential for the campaign, everybody thought it was hilarious. Everybody was excited about it. And so I remember telling the team, you know what? We're not going to decide tonight. Everybody go home, we're going to come back tomorrow. You know, let it settle. And so we came back the next day and I did something that I had never done before, which I do now for every campaign with my staff. I went around the circle and I said, I want to know, what do you have juice for? In my book, I call it the juice factor. What do you have juice for? What are you most excited to work on? What do you look at and think, I want to totally run that campaign. Every single person said Victoria's Secret.

05:24 MM:

What a great way to get down to what really is going to motivate people and empower them.

05:32 TB:

And it turned out to be true of people being interested in the campaign. It was weird lingerie, chainsaws for us. What is going on here? You know? And it was funny, and I never underestimate how many students are willing to put on lingerie and carry paper chainsaws. It turns out -- a lot of them. It's really important.

05:53 MM:

I can see the recruitment tactic. Speaking of recruitment, did you have allies? Did you have other organizations who joined in the campaign? And of course, if so, what were their roles?

06:08 TB:

I don't know of a campaign in 30 years where there has only been one organization that did it all. And if they say they are, they're not being honest. It takes a village. No organization is good at everything. There's some of them that are better at the research. There's some that are better at getting media. There's some that have more offices and spread. There's some that have more volunteers so they can bring out more people in the streets. You know, I always say that one of the first things you have to do is look at the landscape. What do you need? What do you have capacity for? What else do you need to have success on the campaign? Find your allies. So in this case, the allies, there were certainly research organizations. We relied on Borealis before they became a part of Stand.earth.

06:52 TB:

The Borealis did all of our supply chain research. Groups in Canada who provided us with on the ground information: Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Wildlands League, Global Forest Watch, Peter Lee out of Alberta. These groups and indigenous nations, they were the ones that, when we brought Victoria's Secret up to Alberta, they toured the company and they provided us information of what's actually happening on the ground, photos, video, that kind of thing. And then there were a lot of groups in the States who helped with the organizing and the protests.

08:21 TB:

One group was really critical, and I'm not sure if I'm going to remember their name right, but they were a student youth coalition and they had chapters and universities across the country. And they helped popularize the campaign with students. And they were kind of our army. You know, we did over 800 protests in front of Victoria's Secret stores over a 24 month period. It was relentless. And, that had a huge impact on the company because their customers had to walk through protestors before going into their stores. And, that was coordinated by a youth coalition that had chapters in universities.

09:08 MM:

One of the things we see also in these corporate campaigns is tracks. So it sounds like there's a field track, there's a research track that's really informing. Was there a shareholder track, a digital online campaign track at all?

09:33 TB:

I do remember Todd Paglia, at the time, one of our campaign directors, US campaign director. Maybe he was ED by then, I don't really remember, but Todd Paglia from Forest Ethics spoke at a shareholder meeting. So I guess there was some shareholder work. I'm not remembering it extremely well. We had a lot of employee work, which is really important.

10:03 TB:

So we were communicating directly through online chats and also at the headquarters, two employees. And I know from later talking to the senior management when we were in negotiations with them, that did have an impact. We did some fun things. We sent Valentine's Day cards to all the senior management of Limited Brands. Will you be our Valentine and join us in protecting Canada's forest?

10:35 TB:

Joking, things like that. Just to get their attention, to keep it in front of them. So we engaged employees, we engaged senior management, we engaged shareholders, definitely we did all of that. There was some digital campaigning already back then, but certainly nowhere near what it is today. My memory is that campaign ran from about 2003 to 2006. So 20 years ago now, almost.

11:03 MM:

Were there any tactics that when you flash back over the course of that campaign that you go, these were really impactful tactics on any of those tracks?

11:21 TB:

Definitely. We launched that campaign with a full page ad in the New York Times. That ad was the most successful advertisement I've ever done and we've ever done in campaigns. Because Victoria's Secret, their growth strategy was advertising, right? You could not open at the time, you could not open a newspaper without a huge Victoria's Secret model everywhere. And we thought long and hard about that.

11:52 TB:

I remember our communications director saying, we have to find a model who looks like a Victoria's Secret model, but she's just not hot enough because we were brand jamming them. And funny thing, months later when I'm sitting with the senior manager of Victoria's Secret, they say, or Limited Brands, they say the thing that drove us crazy, that model was just not quite hot enough to be a Victoria's Secret model.

12:21 TB:

So there's our Victoria's Secret (campaign ad) with this woman in lingerie and they didn't like it. But, that ad was a woman in lingerie holding a paper chainsaw. Victoria's got a dirty secret. Well, everyone wanted to know what the dirty secret was. And that full page ad, I think my memory is it was \$30,000, which for us at that time was an enormous amount of money. It was

practically a person for a year. And, we gambled on it. And, we estimated later that that was worth millions of dollars in publicity because it was such a controversial ad. And Victoria's Secret was such a big known brand that in the news that night, I can remember it was like Tom Brokaw and some the US News Channel and this ad today in the New York Times, talking Victoria's Secret, showing the ad on the news.

13:17 TB:

And then USA today did a story about the campaign and the ad, and reproducing the ad in USA today in the print newspaper. So we ended up getting, a rollover of actually millions of dollars of publicity for the campaign from the one \$30,000 ad that was really important. I've already mentioned the protest in front of stores, absolutely critical. The organizing that we did with students on university campuses, and we made it so fun. I can remember in a couple of them, there's this whole thing about Victoria's Secret models arriving in limousines to the stores when they did these pink carpet things.

13:53 TB:

So we did our own green carpet things and we had, you know, people in lingerie arriving to the stores on bikes. And then we had people in lingerie riding to the stores. And even for one big event in San Francisco, we rented a limousine. But coming out of the limousine were all these students carrying paper, chainsaws, wearing lingerie and stuff, it was fun. People wanted to do it. They thought it was hilarious. And so those protests in front of stores were really important.

14:26 TB:

Ultimately, the tours on the ground, you know, we used to have a saying, take the forest to the people or the people to the forest. We did both, we took images of what was happening in the forest to the protests in New York and San Francisco, et cetera. We sent images of what was happening to all the senior management of Victoria's Secret. And then we brought Victoria's Secret and their senior management from Limited Brands to Canada to tour the clear cuts on the ground. And that tour had a really big impact.

15:01 TB:

And we invited the companies, we invited the government, it became this massive tour. And a picture is a thousand words. Well, actually standing in the middle of a clear cut, if you've never seen industrial logging like that before, walking through one of those beautiful wetlands or forests and then standing in the middle of the clear cut. It has a massive impact on people and the individuals. A man named Tom, who was the senior vice president of Limited Brands, he told me later that that just had left such a huge impression on him. He couldn't believe logging like that was still happening and had a massive impression.

15:43 MM:

I remember at a forestry conference one time where speakers were saying, we just need to tell a better story because they had invited some of us who had been involved in forest campaigns. And I said, well, we just have to show a picture of a clear cut.

16:00 TB:
That's right.

16:02 MM:
And just like silence, it was like, yeah, try telling a better story. When this is what you've got to make look good.

16:14 TB:
Well, exactly.

16:15 MM:
So negotiation. When did you really begin any kind of discussions with the company? Did it start in the beginning with some discussions or happen later?

16:28 TB:
So what I think is really critical for all corporate campaigns is that the discussions start before the campaign has even started. You have to give people the opportunity to do the right thing. And a lot of people don't. You know, we had an element of surprise mean an element of surprise. You don't have to tell them exactly what you're doing, but you have to give them the opportunity. So we did, they were not interested. Oh, it's same we heard from other customers.

17:01 TB:
It's not our problem. We're sure it's all sustainable, it's the best price point. We're not dealing with it. So we attempted several times, then we launched the campaign. As soon as we launched the campaign, we contacted them again. You know, first of all, that's always useful because you want them to see what you're doing and don't assume they're going to see what you're doing.

17:25 TB:
Because, we talk to our own tribes, to the converted all the time. Who's on our email list, who's talked to who, who generally follows that kind of news, et cetera. I mean, when we did the New York Times ad, they saw it, but we tried to talk to them all the way along. I think with Victoria's Secret, I think we actually ended up in discussions very early on, earlier than I would've thought, the campaign was still building momentum.

17:56 TB:
But, like most companies, they were convinced that they could get us to stop. Yes, we want a solution, we want to have less impact, we want to work with you, we want to protect, let's just do that. And so we said, great. Let's do that. Here's what we think. And they were like, but you have to stop the campaign.

18:17 TB:

Oh, so you're just going to stop buying from Canadian Forest then until we reach an agreement? Well, no, we can't do that. We're making a million catalogs a day. We have to keep buying. Okay, well then we'll keep our campaign. And those are the hard conversations, you know, they think we're in discussions, you can just stop, but then you lose all your power. Don't stop. So we didn't stop. And that was difficult. So then they stopped wanting to meet with us for a little while. And there was a transition period I remember where they were kind of dragging their feet. And then we started in serious conversations that the problem was they couldn't do the right thing.

18:54 TB:

Like there was no one making catalog paper in North America that had recycled fiber. And the amount that they required was so massive that they couldn't get enough, you know, ecologically sustainable pulp, et cetera.

19:16 TB:

And so we had to create a, we had to be creative. We had to sit in solutions processes for a while and try and strip it back. So we were talking to them not only because we wanted them to reduce their ecological footprint, but because we wanted them to use their influence to stop some of the logging of critical caribou habitat, endangered species habitat that was about to happen by some of these logging companies that they bought from. And so we ended up brainstorming with them and helping them create a procurement policy, which would lead their suppliers to eventually create the right paper.

19:51 TB:

So their procurement policy had a digital strategy, do more online, produce less catalogs. It had a commitment to increase content of recycled fiber in a curve over time. It had a commitment to no longer buy from any endangered species habitat, you know, so we brainstormed a number of commitments. Each of those commitments started a cascade of impacts. So when all of their suppliers see a procurement policy that says we have to have this much recycled content tomorrow and has to increase over time, they have to figure out how to retool. We actually retooled entire factories across North America to produce recycled catalog paper. It wasn't made at the time. And, so that actually has a huge impact on other companies as well, because now they have the availability of recycled catalog paper.

20:42 TB:

That was one thing. But they're saying, and we crafted this very carefully, we won't buy from any endangered species habitat or any company that is logging an endangered species habitat. Well, that actually nets out at the time, every Canadian logging company and the government was dragging its feet on just even mapping endangered species because they knew it would mean that they're supposed to increase protected areas. And they didn't want to because companies didn't want them to. So Victoria's Secret was such a huge customer, I don't remember the exact figure, but I think it might've been close to a hundred million dollars a year

that they, when Victoria's Secret says, well, unless you can prove to me you're not logging in endangered species habitat, we can't buy from you.

21:29 TB:

Then that created huge processes across Canada to map it, to set it aside, et cetera. One of the smartest things we did in those negotiations is we forced Victoria's Secret to commit to an implementation program that included joint meetings with us and every level of government in Canada and the companies. And those were the funnest meetings of my life.

22:02 TB:

I have a memory of walking into a meeting with the Ontario government, a premier Dalton McGinty, and I can't remember the name of the minister at the time. So it's the premier of the province, a number of ministers. And in I walk with this guy from Limited Brands. So this is an \$11 billion company. He's flown over there in his private jet, wearing an Armani suit. He walks into this government meeting and he leans back and they do their whole song and dance: "but bears like clear cuts and our logging is great."

22:37 TB:

And you know, he doesn't say a word. And then he leans forward and he goes, "I think this can be a pretty short meeting. I don't think you understand. Until she's happy, we're not happy. And if we're not happy, we're not buying from you." And then he goes, "So Tzeporah, let me know how the meeting goes. I gotta get back." "Okay, Tom, thanks very much." And he walks out of the room. Wow. And their jaws are on the floor, right. And I was like, so this is what will make us happy. Talk about using the power of the marketplace. Like he just handed it to us. He was like, it's in our agreement. Just work it out with her. So it was a fun campaign.

23:30 MM:

Did they then subsequently map the endangered species forests, et cetera?

23:39 TB:

We ended up with a moratorium on -- I can't remember -- tens of millions of hectares of endangered species habitat across the country. We ended up in processes with mills across the country to produce recycled paper. Victoria's Secret produced the first procurement policy, significant ecological procurement policy of any catalog company in North America. And then several other catalog companies followed suit because they had set a precedent.

24:13 TB:

And, there were some additional protected areas as a result of that. In the longer term, the mistake that the Boreal campaign made in Canada is that the groups and the funders decided the markets campaign had been so controversial and there'd been so much backlash about contracts lost, et cetera. And now everybody was at the table doing the mapping. So we didn't need the markets campaign anymore. And so in the following year, a number of the groups like Greenpeace and Stand, who do customer work, didn't get funding to work on Boreal Forest

because the theory of a lot of the funders was, well, now we just need the scientists and the mappers and the solutions people.

24:58 TB:

And I kept saying, no, the companies will backslide. But anyway, so that's what they did. And so although we, because of the pressure of Victoria's Secret and other companies, we got the Canadian Boreal Forest Alliance, which was a commitment by logging companies, government and NGOs to map all of the endangered species habitat, to overlay that with logging plans to ensure protected areas so that that endangered species habitat is not logged, to work with First Nations to ensure that the protected areas address indigenous rights, reflect indigenous rights, and ensure that any logging happens outside of those critical areas.

25:43 TB:

That was what we had agreed to through this whole long negotiation process that happened after the Victoria Secret campaign. But then the team to implement that was only the scientists and the mappers and the conservation groups that don't do boycotts or markets campaigns. And within two years it completely fell apart and the logging companies started logging again in a lot of the caribou habitat.

26:08 MM:

So it really made the mistake of believing that they had already got the commitments from the companies and you didn't need to maintain the pressure on them to actually get it implemented.

26:22 TB:

That's right.

26:23 MM:

Which really comes back to that lesson of talking is not stopping. You don't stop a campaign just because you're talking, you stop it once you have a final agreement and you see it's being implemented.

26:39 TB:

That's right.

26:40 MM:

Okay. So there was a huge ripple effect though. I mean, it sounds like it rippled through the catalog companies.

26:52 TB:

And then even into other paper.

26:55 MM:

Yes.

26:56 TB:

And, into other forms of paper because it was one of the most high-profile paper campaigns in the world. And, maybe because of the lingerie/chainsaws for us, it was just so odd and obviously so photogenic, the women in lingerie holding chainsaws. And that it really catalyzed multiple conversations. So it had, as you said, the ripple effect within what the logging companies do, what the government is considering, what the pulp and paper companies do.

27:33 TB:

Then the paper manufacturers, what kind of paper they were producing over time. It definitely changed the face of recycled paper in North America because there was no catalog paper with recycled content being produced before that. And, then it kickstarted change in other catalog company policies. Big companies who then came to us like, well, there's a number of companies who came to us, and (said) I don't want to be Victoria's Secret. Can we talk to you? What do you suggest on our policies? Where should we get our paper? So we ended up in conversation with 10 or 12 of the largest catalog companies in North America, helping them develop their policies, et cetera. And then office paper, there were a number of companies then who kind of stood up and took notice. And they'd had various campaigns and protests that we had organized against them for various reasons in the past. Great Bear Rainforest or Boreal, Office Depot, Staples, those kind of companies and they started moving much quicker as well,

28:39 MM:

And moving to a higher percentage of recycled fiber, if not just more offerings of paper.

28:45 TB:

Yeah. And, netting out some of the worst stuff, old growth, et cetera.

28:51 MM:

Good. So when you look back on this campaign, what are some of the big lessons learned that that future campaigners should take into account?

29:08 TB:

I think one of the really big ones is to be clear what you want. And it sounds really simple, but it's not easy. So we started this campaign because we wanted to protect more endangered species, specifically caribou habitat in the old growth forest in Canada. And that led us to a power analysis that led us to Victoria's Secret. But as we built allyship around the Victoria's Secret campaign, there's a number of organizations who aren't from Canada, and they want Victoria's Secret to produce less catalogs.

29:49 TB:

They want Victoria's Secret to use post-consumer waste. They want Victoria's Secret to do whatever, various other things. And then there's other groups in Canada who are like, yes, conservation's important, but actually our primary concern is an environmental justice concern. Can indigenous peoples have full decision-making control over their traditional territories?

30:19 TB:

Well, what if those indigenous peoples want to log caribou habitat? Are we okay with that? Who gets to make that policy decision? So if Victoria's Secret says, we'll stop buying until the indigenous people tell us it's okay, is that good enough? And what if the indigenous people have taken a deal with the logging company? What if Victoria's Secret says, okay, we'll stop buying from endangered caribou habitat, but we're not going to use any recycled content. Is that good enough? So really you need to be very, very clear on what your end goal is and what your negotiating envelope is.

30:56 TB:

And you need to share that with your network partners and with your coalitions, and make sure that you have shared goals, that you're aligned on your goals before you end up in a position where companies and government are trying to wheel a deal and end your campaign.

31:11 TB:

What ends it and who has the right to end it? Who has governance over those decisions that are being made at the negotiating table? Which is not to say that you have to negotiate by consensus with 20 organizations, not workable. But you do have to be clear and transparent and accountable around who is at that table and who they represent and how they're making decisions. Create a small steering committee.

31:42 TB:

Get everyone to agree that this steering committee is going to be responsible for this part of the campaign. Create a document with a tiered set of demands. Make sure that you're socializing it within your movement and network. Being in a position where you're using the power of a movement to make change is a tremendous responsibility. And we shouldn't be taking that lightly. So know what you're asking for and be clear that you have consensus and alignment around your asks.

32:10 TB:

That's critical. Secondly, in this campaign, one of the best campaigns I've ever seen to use humor, it was funny. It had a lightness and a fun to it that just drew people to it. It made everyone talk about it. These issues are depressing. They're hard and we sometimes just make it harder. And no one wants to be on the bumper bus. They want to be on the party bus. So, making a campaign fun, making it accessible for people. Here, take an hour out of your day. You don't want to show your body fine. Throw on a negligee over top your suit. Let's go down to Victoria's Secret and have some fun. You know, like, it was just fun. People wanted to participate in it.

33:04 TB:

Thirdly, think through the other questions on other issues ahead of time and what you're going to do about them. As a feminist, I really struggled with the Victoria's Secret campaign, and I remember thinking, we can't do this. We can't have women, people in lingerie. And the objectification of women and Victoria's Secret is so horrible that way and da da da. And so I

called up Gloria Steinem and Judy Rebick, the two most famous feminists I knew, for advice. So another lesson to young campaigners, reach for the stars. You are less than six degrees away from absolutely anyone you need. And, whether you're fundraising or just asking for advice, you're giving them the opportunity to participate in this cool thing. And you know what, people want that. I had deep conversations with both of them, and they both said to me, you know what, go for it.

33:59 TB:

We ate that company. And, by doing that, as long as you're careful around how you're portraying women, so we had people of all types, people of all genders, of all sexes, wearing lingerie in front of those stores. We were kind of taking the stuff out of it as we did it. We were trying to be careful that way. We had qualifiers on the ads we had, so we played with it a little bit, but I also did research to find out what are their labor practices?

34:37 TB:

What are their transportation practices like? So two things about that: the mistake people make when they start looking at intersectionality and multiple issue areas is that they have to work on them all at once. You can't eat an apple whole. You have to take a bite. So we were very clear our bite was going to be reducing their impact on what's left of our old growth and endangered species habitat in North America. One of the most important places in the world, the Boreal Forest, the nesting ground of all of North America's songbirds. And yes, these other things are important. We can't do everything. This is what our piece is going to be. Because if you don't have doable objectives in your campaigns, you won't have wins and you'll just burn people out.

35:31 TB:

You need doable objectives. So you do need to focus, but that doesn't mean we didn't research labor policies, research all these other environmental issues, contact those other organizations, let them know what we were doing. There were other campaigns that were being run against Victoria's Secret.

35:48 TB:

We wanted to learn from them. What did Victoria's Secret react to and not react to? We also wanted to understand if we were going to be competing against them. And then we also wanted to understand if there was any way without dramatically expanding our scope and our capacity, which we didn't have more capacity, is there any way that we can support their objectives? Maybe there's a mention that we can make in a speech. Maybe there's a mention that we can make in negotiations. Maybe, you don't know until you start trying to build the relationships and have the conversations, but just ignoring those other things that doesn't work either.

36:24 MM:

So a big part of a successful campaign is anticipating the range of kinds of issues, the range of players that you may be up against and that could create some tensions down the road,

planning on them but again, really, working through the relationships with them and thinking more in terms of a collective, of a movement perspective.

36:50 TB:

And also in order to build your power and strength, you need to know who your allies are. You need to understand how the world is going to respond to you. Good campaigning is about getting the world to respond to you, creating and forcing a debate and creating a frame that change that makes change. So prior to a decision being made that makes ultimate change, a law, a policy, you know, whatever, there is a conversation that has changed. You're widening and changing a conversation. In order to do that, the world needs to respond to you. And, people forget that. I see a lot of 'issues swimming.' People are like, I went to all the meetings on carbon credits and I've been to all the events on this, and I'm an expert. We don't need more experts. 'Issue swimming' is different than driving an issue. We need more campaigners that are building power to create change. And so I think it's really critical that we think about how are we building our power? How are we building our tent, and what events or proposals or reports or ads are we putting out there in the world that then decision makers respond to us.

38:23 TB:

If you're forcing a response from a decision maker, then you're campaigning. If you're just out there spewing out facts about how you're really right and you're really wrong, you're not campaigning. You're just complaining.

38:37 MM:

An important distinction. You're talking about building power. You know, I recall that Forest Ethics really was birthed by the Great Bear Rainforest campaign, which preceded this, but it feels like the Victoria's Secrets campaign really established Forest Ethics as a force in the forest movement. How did it contribute to the evolution and the role that Forest Ethics would ultimately play?

39:14 TB:

It put the organization on the map as having the ability to move major, multi-billion dollar corporations to play at that level. It also, I think, pulled back the curtain on the supply chain and the responsibility that everyone along that supply chain has for irreversible, ecological and social harm. I think that that was really critical. And again, 20 years later, I meet people all the time and they're like, oh, you ran that Victoria's Secret campaign, that was 20 years ago. I've run 20 years of campaigns since then. But this is the campaign that sticks in people's minds. And that was really important because it inspired people and we won. And there was a lot of pressure internally and within the coalition, not to declare a win. Wins are hard. Oh, there always is, Michael, because in the era of environmental crisis and decline and the climate crisis, all wins are insufficient.

40:38 TB:

There's always so much more that a government or company could be doing and should be doing given the scale of the crises we face. And, it's hard for those of us who understand the

extent of the threat we're currently facing to call a win when we know that there will still be harms. Like, did Victoria's Secret or worse, its parent company, Limited Brand, become a paragon of ecological and social responsibility? No, likely a lot of that lingerie is made from polyester, that comes from fracked gas. Likely they're transporting their products around the world using fossil fuels. Likely, likely, likely. And did the government permanently protect all caribou habitat right away? Absolutely not. But did we get the first environmental procurement policy, significant environmental procurement policy from a catalog company in North America?

42:02 TB:

Yes. Did that procurement policy help to green the entire trade of catalog paper across North America and ensure that new paper was being made with more recycled fiber? Absolutely. Did it slow down and stop some of the logging of endangered species habitat in the old growth forest in the Boreal? Absolutely. Did it create new conversations that then forced governments at the table with First Nations and scientists? Absolutely. So we gained quite a bit but we didn't, we didn't solve the crisis of logging in North America or endangered species decline or green the entire empire of the Limited Brands.

42:47 TB:

Absolutely not. So you need to be very careful about when you call it a win. But if we don't ever call wins, if we don't ever declare victory, first of all, we're weak because people aren't afraid of us. I've heard companies say, ah, you can just sit them out, they'll lose capacity eventually. I have too. And you know, they're right. Because you can keep students excited for 24 months, which is not easy on a particular issue. Really hard longer than that. They graduate; they will move on to another issue. Something significant happens in the world, you know, Gaza and then they're not working on climate or forest, they're working on Gaza.

43:37 TB:

So how you maintain the momentum of a campaign is difficult. I think it's really critical for campaigners to design anchor moments. So every quarter there's something that galvanizes the world towards your work, that's how you keep the momentum going. But I also think it is absolutely essential that when you get a win, you play it for its worth. You throw that party, you put out that press release. I stood on a stage and thanked Victoria's Secret and gave them an award. So many people attacked me for that. But being on that stage, it was at the Globe Conference in Vancouver, jointly with the senior vice president from Limited Brands, was probably one of the best things that I ever did for Forest Ethics' reputational capital, because there was vice president of a multi-billion dollar company and me, and he was talking about how much he had valued our journey from conflict to collaboration and how effective Forest Ethics was to a room full of thousands of business leaders in governments.

44:48 TB:

So then we're no longer the strappy little activist group that runs corporate campaigns. We're sitting peer to peer with these multi-billion dollar corporations. And I think you need to be on

the inside and on the outside and you need to take some wins and then move on. I mean, we don't stop the work.

45:09 MM:

We don't. That seems like the perfect place to end the interview, although I'm pretty sure it could go on for another hour. What a great story and what truly a seminal campaign, Tzeporah, thank you.

45:24 TB:

We did a good job.

45:25 MM:

You really did a good job. And it really positioned, I think, Stand.Earth, which was the result of Forest Ethics, as really one of the premier corporate campaign organizations in the world. So it's clear that the organization has really built on these kinds of experiences and the credibility that came from it. So thank you for the lessons learned.

45:56 TB:

Thank you.

45:57 MM:

Alright, so we'll end it there. I really appreciate it. Thanks.

Why they became involved in the movement

47:11 MM:

Why did you get involved in this movement and why did you stay involved?

47:35 TB:

I got into this movement because of a love of forest. Because being in the ancient temperate rainforest on the west coast, you know, was the first time I really felt at home and inspired and, and then seeing the devastation and the clear-cut logging, it wrecked me. And I feel like since that moment, I have been, for 30 years, on a journey to try and figure out how to make change when something moves you that deeply.

48:18 TB:

I got onto the journey of the markets work and the corporate campaigns in part also because I love those forests because I was so inspired by all these people, nurses and doctors and teachers who were standing up and getting hauled off the road and getting arrested and for what, the logging just continued. And I remember after the blockades ended in Clayoquot Sound, saying to myself, I'm going to make sure they didn't go to jail in vain. I'm going to make sure we find a way to impact these companies and governments. But then what kept me going all these years is how fun, it's the success of it. People ask me a lot lately about hope because,

you know, I work on climate change now and the climate is so serious. We're starting to see the floods and the fires, extreme weather in our daily lives. And, what I realized talking to you about this work is that hope is what we create through this work.

49:29 TB:

When I am the most overwhelmed, depressed, anxious and worried about the state of our environment or the climate crisis, I put on hope like a sweater as Barbara Kingsolver says. I turn on my computer and I figure out what I'm going to do today. And that shared sense of common purpose, that feeling like you can, not just that you can, but you have a responsibility to act, is what keeps me going.

50:13 MM:

Perfect. Thank you Tzeborah. I really appreciate it. This was very inspirational as always.

50:21 TB:

Oh great. I can't wait to see what you're going to produce. It's going to be so useful to so many people.

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