



International Aquarium Congress 2012

Hosted by  **Two Oceans AQUARIUM**
CAPE TOWN • SOUTH AFRICA

Engaging visitors in conservation: Communicating for behavioural change

By: Bill Mott and Wei Ying Wong (PhD)

Institution: The Ocean Project

Effective communication speaks to the interests and experiences of specific audiences, and messages tailored to the values of audiences are more likely to resonate and inspire action. The Ocean Project provides aquariums with essential market information so that they can better engage with their audiences and promote conservation. Market research shows us who our audiences are, what messages they will hear, and how to motivate behavioural change.

Five themes emerged from the latest research findings: 1) Concern for the ocean, 2) understanding of the threats, 3) willingness to act, 4) importance of youth, and 5) expectations of aquariums. We will discuss the implications of these for aquariums wanting to communicate effectively about ocean conservation.

In addition to our study of the United States of American public, we will present baseline data on the international community and its relation to ocean and climate conservation issues, and preliminary findings from our upcoming market research project in select Asian countries.

As we expand our work to more countries, we will be better able to support our growing international network of conservation partners in over 75 countries. We will present strategic opportunities for the International Aquarium Congress community to actively participate with us in this expanding global initiative.