

Death BEE Upon Us:  
An Appeal to Action to Save our Planet's Pollinators and Ourselves

Part I:  
Campaign Topic, Audience, and Preliminary Strategy

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*“Without pollinators, we don't eat—it's simple as that—and, at the moment, large numbers of pollinators are dying. With the world's population projected to exceed 9 billion in just the next 30 years or so, that is not a good position for us to be in.” --USDA*

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**Figure 1** Build it and they will come. Pollinators move in to three different pollinator habitats created by the author.

## Section I: Topic [\[↑\]](#)

### Rationale (Exigency) [\[↑\]](#)

The ‘Death BEE Upon Us’ campaign addresses the momentous phenomenon of our planet’s declining pollinator populations; in particular, the honeybee. According to the USDA, “Without pollinators, we don’t eat—it’s simple as that—and, at the moment, large numbers of pollinators are dying. With the world’s population projected to exceed 9 billion in just the next 30 years or so, that is not a good position for us to be in” (USDA). But, yet we are.

The campaign explains what pollinator decline is; what it means for each of us; the challenges we face as a global society; and immediate and future actions we can take to remediate this problem. The rationale behind this campaign is that human intervention is needed and that intervention begins with individuals and within communities at the local level, working together to find solutions to this problem and sharing their success stories with others. To that end, this campaign will serve as a case study for other communities to put together similar movements that inspire individuals and communities to take action and work together to save our planet’s pollinators, and in the process, themselves.

### Invention [\[↑\]](#)

An important question I had to ask was why my audience would care about my campaign’s message. There are several important reasons why my audience will be favorable to it. First, the problem of pollinator decline is topical; therefore, the subject matter of this campaign has immediate relevance. Journalists are reporting the problem in their literature, on television, and on the radio (ABC Rural; BBC News; PBS NewsHour). Scientists are debating the problem and its causes within their discourse communities. Even the White House has a Pollinator Partnership Action Plan, implemented by a Pollinator Health Task Force (White House). In their collective discourse, all agree that our pollinators are in serious decline and that this is a global problem.

Audiences will also be receptive to the message of this campaign because individuals are becoming more aware of the negative impact human activities have on our environment. They will be interested to learn more, for example, about a class of pesticides known as neonicotinoids, “the world’s most widely used type of insecticide” (Yale). It is believed that neonicotinoids are “one of the leading suspected causes of colony collapse disorder” (Yale), a phenomenon that occurs when the majority of honeybees belonging to a colony disappear.

Another reason audiences will be receptive to this campaign is because the hobby of beekeeping is very popular right now, and globally. According to Tim Lovett of the British Beekeepers Association, beekeeping in urban areas has “boomed in popularity over the past nine years” (BBC News). In Australia, beekeeping is experiencing “a boom in popularity” as well (ABC Rural). And here in America, beekeeping is a “rising trend in major cities” (PBS News Hour).

Finally, the principal audience for this campaign, junior and senior high school students who are thinking about their future career paths, will be interested in learning how they can make career choices *now* that will place them in a position to be a part of finding the solution to this threat to our pollinators and ourselves.

### Arrangement <sup>[↑]</sup>

This is a grassroots campaign, that will start within local communities. While the campaign's main message will always be clear, consistent, and identifiable, its appeals will be arranged according to the audience targeted at each of its three stages. During the first stage of the campaign, for example, message rhetoric will be designed to both inform and to appeal to the sensibilities of those individuals within its general audience who are most likely to be receptive to discussing pollinator decline. This might include, for example, members of local gardening clubs, beekeeping clubs, nature-centered clubs, and the like. During the second stage of the campaign, persuasive words and expressions will be chosen that will encourage participation in collaborative workshops.

At the third and final stage of the campaign, rhetorical tone will be adapted as it moves into school and youth club settings. It is in these settings where it must appeal to its principal audience – junior and senior high school students.

## Section II: Audience Analysis <sup>[↑]</sup>

### Demographics <sup>[↑]</sup>

The general audience for this campaign are members of the local community. It is not possible, for the purposes of this campaign, to conduct a thorough demographic analysis of this community. It is possible to come up with a “general profile” (Pullman 72), or picture, of a few individuals that can be representative of the general audience. A few questions were asked to imagine who these audience members might be; for example, what does she do for a living and what extracurricular activities does he engage in within the community. Imagining the answers to these questions helped to put together a “fictional” representation (Pullman 72) of the a few general audience members as follows:

- She is a farmer;
- He is a teacher;
- He is engaged in a [community gardeners program](#);
- Her children are involved in the local [4-H club](#);
- She is engaged in a community [giving garden program](#);
- He works at a [local food bank](#);
- He is thinking about what field to go into after high school.

Keeping this mental picture of a few general audience members in mind helped in considering how to formulate persuasive messages for the campaign. Interestingly, although this area consists of large farming communities, it is one of the few areas in Northwest Arkansas

where it has been difficult to maintain a local beekeeping club. Whether the reason is lack of interest or ineffective bee club advertising, it is worth fleshing out the reason for this, as the answer could be useful in designing campaign literature.

The general audience profile was also used to decide on campaign timing (*kairos*). Considering the general audience's "persona" (Pullman 72) and that they live in a primarily rural agricultural area, it might be best to deliver this campaign message in the spring, when farming activities are starting up after the winter break. Also, at this time, crop production and pollination are more likely to be in the forefront of a person's mind. In addition, many non-farmers may be thinking about gardening or nature in general, as they are able to get outdoors more after the passing of winter. Any who are thinking about growing food will, therefore, be more ripe for conversations about pollinator decline.

## Segments [\[↑\]](#)

### Gatekeepers [\[↑\]](#)

Gatekeepers are teachers, parents, school board members, and the like; individuals who must agree with the campaign's message before the campaign can be put before its principal segment (as detailed below). The campaign's rhetorical appeals must be effective in reaching this audience so that they are inclined to open the gate and allow access to the campaign's principal segment (see 'Obstacles' below.). The rhetorical device of pathos will be used to communicate with this audience in such a way that they will appreciate what is at stake for future generations (our children) if we, the gatekeepers, fail to take action and solve this problem. Pathos will be used in arguments to emphasize that our children *are* the future.

### Junior and senior students [\[↑\]](#)

(Principal segment) Juniors and seniors are at a juncture in their lives where they are considering life after high school. They are engaging in conversations with their parents, teachers, peers, and university representatives about possible careers paths. They are in the right place, mentally, to be appealed to and persuaded to make choices that will put them in a position to contribute to finding a solution to our pollinator problem, to add to the body of knowledge, and to help solve the problem.

### Freshmen and sophomores [\[↑\]](#)

Secondary to juniors and seniors are freshmen and sophomores for the same reasons as juniors and seniors. However, this segment is also at an age where they can be persuaded to become involved *now* in extracurricular, youth-based, activities that allow them to become active members of this grassroots movement. Using the rhetorical appeal of logos, this segment will be persuaded to take the campaign's message to their local 4-H Cooperative Extension, an organization that allows students to "complete hands-on projects" in areas such as science and agriculture (4-H). In doing so, this segment will be taking immediate action and, therefore, are a part of the solution.

The best time to deliver the campaign's message to both the junior and senior student segment and the freshmen and sophomore student segment might be when school begins in the autumn (kairos). During the spring, students are eager to get out of school and their minds are on summer activities. In the autumn, students may be more receptive to the conversation simply because they are looking for extracurricular school activities to become involved in.

## Section III: Preliminary Strategy <sup>[↑]</sup>

### Goals <sup>[↑]</sup>

This campaign's message will be delivered in three stages. The first stage is designed to introduce its general audience to the campaign. The second stage is to get the general audience involved in the conversation by inviting and encouraging them to attend campaign workshops. The campaign's third and principal stage is to bring the campaign into schools and youth clubs.

#### Stage 1 <sup>[↑]</sup>

The first stage of the campaign will propagate the important message of pollinator decline throughout the community. It will bring the campaign to the attention of its general audience members and the gatekeeper segment. Propagating the campaign message will be achieved by initiating and actioning the following:

- creating a recognizable campaign identity, or personality;
- promoting and propagating the campaign and its message throughout the community;
- *inviting* community members to attend workshops.

#### Stage 2 <sup>[↑]</sup>

The next stage in the campaign will be to organize workshops and arrange for keynote speakers and guest speakers, who are experts in the field of entomology and pollination, to attend and give talks. Experts and keynote speakers are in the best position to provide sound, comprehensible information to audience members. By making knowledge of a complex field accessible, experts can help audience members conceptualize the problem in a practical way. The campaign's success depends on audience members taking action based on a sound understanding of what's at stake in order for them to successfully support the campaign and to carry its message out into the wider community. Experts will also increase the campaign's credibility (ethos).

#### Stage 3 <sup>[↑]</sup>

The final and principal stage of this campaign is to bring the campaign message into local schools and youth clubs. At this stage, there are three primary objectives:

1. To persuade high school junior and seniors that their participation in the ongoing conversation about declining pollinator populations is not only important, but also necessary; as they are our future decision makers;

2. To encourage high school junior and seniors to consider future fields of study whereby they can contribute to the body of knowledge that will eventually end pollinator decline;
3. To challenge both student segments to take immediate actions *now* that will offer aid to our ailing pollinators.

### Key outcomes [\[↑\]](#)

It is hoped that exposure to this campaign's message will trigger several changes in behavior and thinking among individuals in both its principal audience as well as its general audience. There are two key outcomes desired at Stage 1, which are:

1. The general audience will become emotionally connected to the campaign's message;
2. The general audience will want to know more and will be motivated to attend campaign workshops.

There are three key outcomes desired at Stage 2:

1. The general audience will take immediate action and create personal pollinator habitats;
2. The general audience will take immediate action and create **community** pollinator habitats;
3. The general audience will become proactive pollinator advocates and will be motivated to propagate this campaign's message.

There are three key outcomes desired at Stage 3:

1. The principal student segment will select career paths that allows them to contribute to the body of knowledge that will eventually end pollinator decline;
2. Both student segments will create individual or community pollinator habitats;
3. Both student segments will become proactive pollinator advocates and propagate this campaign's message.

### **Obstacles** [\[↑\]](#)

Within the context of this rhetorical situation there are a few constraints, or obstacles. Where the campaign's general audience is concerned, there is one straightforward obstacle; and that is, simple disinterest. Campaign branding might fail to pique the level of interest required to motivate this audience to want to know more.

Gatekeepers to the campaign's principal segment (junior and senior high school students) are a major obstacle. Before the opportunity to deliver the campaign message to students can be realized, the message must first persuade teachers, parents, school board members, and the like. These gatekeepers need to first be effectively persuaded, for it is they who decide on student's behalf if students will want to hear this message.

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