



# Commercial Communications Council

## GOLD Case Study

**Agency Name:** OMD  
**Advertiser Name:** Meridian Energy  
**Beacon Awards Category:** Best Communications Strategy  
**Title:** Wind Water Sun

*New Zealanders may be committed to living a sustainable lifestyle, but the majority are confused when it comes to knowing what sustainability and renewability actually mean.*

*When it comes to Meridian it's actually really simple – Wind, Water, Sun.*

*That's it – Wind, Water, Sun are all it takes to make our power 100% renewable.*

*To get our simple message of Wind, Water, Sun across we set out to elevate, hijack and penetrate conversations around Wind, Water and Sun through our media placements.*

*To make sure Meridian was synonymous with wind, water and sun our strategy was to hack the weather. This strategy flowed through to everything we did - hacking traditional media - creating media firsts and new media channels.*

*This included creating a documentary series that for the first time in TVNZ's history used News and Current Affairs talent to front a commercial endeavour, creating a new unit of weather measurement with MetService and NZ's first beer made from 100% renewable energy. We created weather reactive search ad copy and digital creative that responded to weather in real time at a post code level.*

*The results speak for themselves, with all our objectives being smashed and first mention consideration up by 13% by the end of the year and customers growing by 4%.*

### INSIGHT

Selling electricity is a tough gig.

It's the ultimate in commodity product with every electron produced literally identical.

Not only is the saleable product identical but it's impossible to experience the product. It has no colour, taste, smell or texture.

It's little wonder that consumers think about their power company for 6 minutes every year .

But while our electrons may be the same as everyone else, Meridian did have a point of difference.

Meridian was the only NZ power retailer that generated power from 100% renewable sources.

In 2019 Meridian set out to create a less price sensitive trajectory around their unique environmental credentials.

We set a goal of 10% awareness for;

- Meridian is NZ's largest producer of 100% renewable power
- Renewable energy is good for the environment

And to increase our existing benchmarks of "Meridian is clean energy" by 5%.

There's a good reason these sound low – even leading brands are only in single digits in consumer environmental awareness .

Surely that's an easy task with growing interest around sustainability and renewability?

Well it would be if people understood what sustainability and renewability meant.

Despite 95% of New Zealand being committed to living a sustainable lifestyle, 83% said they found the way companies talk about their social and environmental commitments was confusing .

However, in the case of Meridian how they generate their power is actually very simple. They use Wind, Water, Sun and nothing else.

Wind, Water, Sun

These three little, easily understandable words were the key to unlocking customer understanding of what renewable energy meant – and more importantly, why they should choose Meridian.

## STRATEGY

Kiwis are obsessed with weather so conversations around Wind, Water, Sun (WWS) were not the problem.

Sure, we could surround weather moments, but telling wasn't enough. The role for media was to bring Meridian into these conversations in a way that meant that we were indelibly linked with these elements.

Our strategy: HACK THE WEATHER CHAT

To hack the weather chat we ran three interrelated strands concurrently to firmly link Meridian and power generation from WWS in Kiwi's minds;

1. Elevate the WWS conversation - get people thinking about the elements beyond a daily grumble.

To do this we needed high relevance and authority in media while retaining Meridian's involvement. This would require us to hack into previous no go zones in media.

2. Hijack the WWS conversation – get people listening and understanding.

To do this we needed to hack into bold, relevant and adaptive media that captured the attention of New Zealand as we shared our relentlessly positive view on the elements.

3. Penetrate the WWS conversations - get people talking.

To do this we needed to hack into people's expectations of where power and weather collide and create and showcase inherently talkable, tangible demonstrations of how Meridian has used Wind, Water, Sun to make a positive difference in people's lives.

## EXECUTION

Elevate

When you look to authorities on the weather you don't need to look further than MetService and TVNZ1 News. So we set out to not only partner with these two outlets but to use the platforms in ways that had never been done before.

We partnered with TVNZ to create a 3-part series called The Power of Weather.

The series was fronted by TVNZ1 broadcast meteorologist Dan Corbett – and in the ultimate hack it was the first time in TVNZ's history that they have allowed 6pm News staff to front a commercial partnership.

The three-part series delved into each element (with one episode dedicated to each) and how Meridian generated power from each.

Meridian was woven through every part of the show, with Dan getting out of the studio and meeting Meridian experts and visiting their generation locations – all of which appeared throughout the show.

The show itself proved so popular that it ran on TVNZ1, Duke, OnDemand and Dan talked about it during the TVNZ1 News broadcast.

In a market first we created a new unit of weather measurement - the energy forecast.

We combined forecasted weather events with real time generation data from Meridian to provide a constantly updated renewable energy forecast.

To show our energy forecast we created a bespoke hard coded tile which appeared on Metservice pages and converted these into units of power that everyone could relate. For example, today's rain will power 100,000 cups of tea.

#### Highjack

Across digital and digital OOH we used an API feed with hyper local geo targeting that enabled our creative to react to weather and put a positive (and relevant) spin on WWS.

We extended this hyper relevant focus into our SEM – bidding on renewability terms with weather reactive search ad copy.

We took over the background of the Accuweather site and hacked One News Weather – renaming it as the Meridian Power Report.

This was supported by a 60" AV ad (focussing on the power of wind) & national billboards.

#### Penetrate

Wellington is known for its wind, but increasingly it's getting a reputation for its craft beer too. So what better combination than Meridian and Garage Project (who were conveniently located in the valley under the Meridian Wind Turbine).

And so was born Turbine Beer – NZ's first beer to be made from certified renewable energy.

To get people talking about this ultimate demonstration of the power of wind we got people pumped to get on the guest list with a promo with George FM. Joining them at our launch event (complete with wind tunnel for photo opportunities) was a hand-picked group of NZ influencers. We then seeded pictures of the launch with local audiences to create large scale talk. This was backed up with street posters, instore, on pack, video and native content.

The next element to be harnessed – or in this case countered, was the Sun.

Being the barefoot nation that we are, burning hot tarmac is a constant complaint as we dance from the sand to dairy, pub or car.

We took away a literal pain by creating Meridian Sun Spots. These specially designed vinyl circles formed a path and reprieve from the lava-like ground temperatures, saving feet from the heat at popular summer hotspots.

Beyond the 2 million impressions achieved through social, we bought this to national attention with TV3 running an experiment on one of the Sun Spots in Tauranga, proving the reprieve (with chocolate).

## RESULTS

We smashed our targets!

Our Consumer Message targets came in well above their goal of 10%. Our existing benchmarking also hit new highs with all our KPI's growing well above our targeted growth. Meridian's momentum didn't just show up in our tracking.

In the Colmar Brunton Better Futures Report Meridian moved from 8th most sustainable brand in 2018 to 5th most sustainable brand in 2019.

Independent research by the Sustainable Business Council released shortly after our campaign began showed Meridian coming from nowhere to become the #1 most sustainable brand in NZ. Not just in electricity - across all brands.

While not being stated KPI's we saw the following growth from prior to the campaign to December 2019;

- First mention awareness rose 13%
- Meridian Customers (ICP's) grew by 4%
- Meridian share price grew from \$4.24 to \$5 – 2019 hitting record highs