



Explore the BASF project for Red Hook, Brooklyn, NY

Co-creating solutions for urban neighborhoods in coastal cities

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Rekindled Hopes for Red Hook

The Red Hook Innovation District is a \$400 million project that would renovate 12 acres in the heart of Red Hook into multi-use structures that would preserve the neighborhood's traditional red-brick industrial look while adding public plazas and park space.

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CHAPTER 3

BASF

BASF's microsite finds new ways to engage an audience through interactive content.

THE BRAND

Founded in 1865, BASF has grown to become the largest chemical company in the world with over 112,000 employees worldwide. BASF focuses on creating “chemistry for a sustainable future,” with an emphasis on environmental protection and social responsibility.



THE VISION

When BASF began planning its 150-year anniversary in 2015, the company decided to forgo the traditional, self-congratulatory advertising campaign. Instead, BASF challenged itself and their employees to explore the role of chemistry within three global challenges: urban living, smart energy, and food. BASF North America focused on the topic of Urban Living, according to Alberto Hernandez, Special Projects Marketing for BASF. In 2012, Red Hook, Brooklyn and the New York area was devastated by Hurricane Sandy, which caused \$32 billion dollars in damage. Therefore, it made sense to use Red Hook as a case study to develop solutions to prevent future damage from extreme weather.

“There are so many challenges facing NYC and its coastal waterfront,” Hernandez says.

“The neighborhood of Red Hook was devastated by Hurricane Sandy. Finding solutions to prevent damage from the next hurricane is paramount for its citizens.”

A 36-page white paper was created as a result of BASF's Creator Space event in NYC. The event brought together Red Hook residents, industry experts, local business owners, scientists, engineers and more—and engaged them in a multi-day, co-creative exercise with the hope of serving as a guide for renovation and preservation of coastal communities around the world. However, it's difficult to get high levels of engagement online for static PDFs, so Hernandez looked to Ion to generate excitement online around the complex project as a company who understands how consumers digest information online.

THE CONTENT

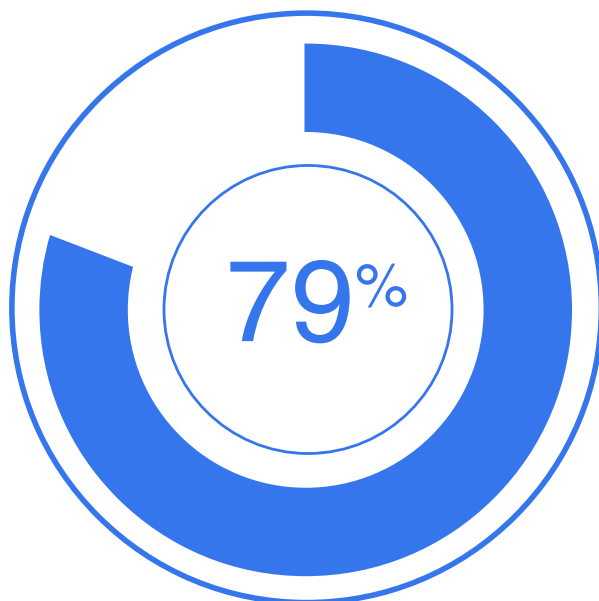
Hernandez was hoping for high engagement around the white paper but knew he probably wasn't going to get the level of interaction he was hoping for by asking audiences to download a multi-page PDF. That's why he turned to Ion. Ion helped BASF to create a highly interactive microsite based on some of the best information from the coastal living studies. "We had to reimagine this 36-page document in a different way," Hernandez says. "Asking people to read a 36-page document online does not support how people consume content in today's digital world."

To get people excited about the content, Ion and BASF took the five main ideas listed in the white paper and created interactive content around the three most salient points. For example, the white paper suggests that creating a coastal park is the most effective way to protect the vulnerable neighborhood of Red Hook from storm surges while preserving its beautiful waterfront views. Ion used BASF's plans for a coastal park to create an interactive map that allows readers to explore the park for themselves on the microsite.

"There were five ideas within the white paper," Hernandez says. "But it didn't make sense to put all five on the microsite. So we chose the three best ideas we felt leant themselves to interactive content."

The microsite's homepage also provides an interactive timeline of Red Hook's history, content re-framed as interactive quizzes, and information on improving coastal resilience. The content is both fun and highly engaging for curious readers who are not highly knowledgeable in coastal resilience and Red Hook. The result leads readers around a circular path of information whereby one fact leads to another.

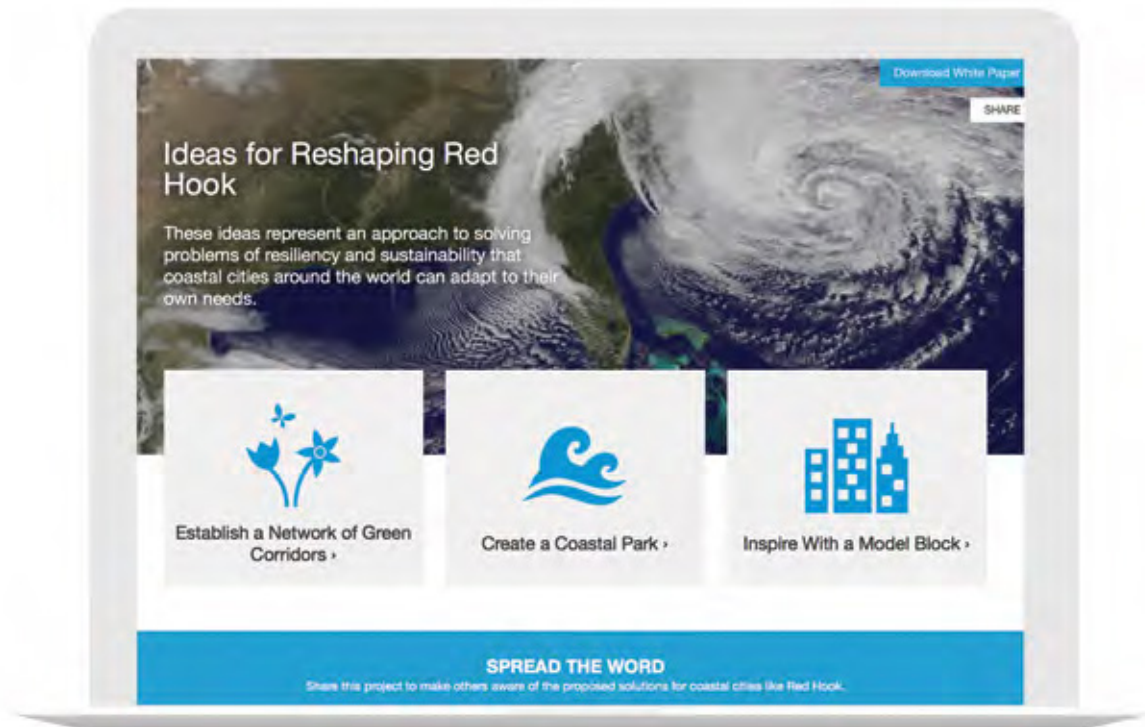
"Microsites are a great tool to bringing topics, such as Red Hook and Coastal Resilience, to life in a fun and engaging way", Hernandez says. "If someone is searching for 'Costal Resilient Solutions,' they will find our white paper and no matter which topic the reader chooses first, the interactive content flows in such a way as to encourage the reader to spend time with other assets on the site. We didn't want people to go to one topic and click out. We wanted to create a flow that seamlessly led to the other two assets."



Did You Know - 79% of content marketers agree that interactive content results in repeat visitors and multiple exposure.*

"The fact that the average reader spent 12 minutes on the microsite tells me that not only is the site engaging, but also people are spending time going through the information. The content is engaging the reader."

- Alberto Hernandez, Special Projects Marketing for BASF



THE PERFORMANCE

Linking the disparate parts of the coastal living research with interactive content has significantly boosted engagement on the microsite and downloads of the white paper. The average time spent with the microsite was 12 minutes and 23 seconds, which made Hernandez hopeful that the audience is both digesting the complicated subject matter and becoming curious about the white paper and BASF.

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The CTA to download the white paper in the upper right-hand corner of the microsite is winning attention as well, with 16.78% of visitors clicking and 57.73% of those converting.

WHAT'S NEXT

As Hernandez shares information about the BASF coastal cities project at events around the country in the second half of the year, he'd like to see more site visits as well as shares. Initial enthusiasm for the site among colleagues and visitors alike has made him hopeful that more attention is still in store.

“Everyone who's seen it, loved it,” Hernandez says. “By December, we're going to focus on driving traffic from Facebook and Twitter. We're also going to work on ways to continue the conversation with people who come to the site. The microsite has really gotten colleagues and managers to think differently about the ways we engage the audience with interactive information.”