

**Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators – POLICE
PARTNERSHIP AWARD**

Application

***“Attachez-vous à la vie”* Seatbelt Campaign, June 8 to 14, 2009**

Sûreté du Québec

SERVICE DE LA SÉCURITÉ DES RÉSEAUX DE TRANSPORT

[Transportation Network Safety Service]

February 25, 2010

PREAMBLE

The *Sûreté du Québec* (SQ) is Quebec's provincial police force. It acts under the jurisdiction of the Quebec Minister of Public Safety (MSP) and has the authority to prevent and curb violations across Quebec and to enforce the by-laws applicable to the municipalities it serves.

The SQ's police map is divided into 10 districts, each with its own headquarters, a varying number of regional county municipalities (MRCs), MRC detachments, and highway detachments. This territorial distribution allows it to offer high-quality police services in all regions of Quebec.

Under the *Police Act*, the SQ's mission is as follows:

"The *Sûreté du Québec*, as the national police force, contributes throughout the territory of Quebec, to maintaining peace and public order, preserving life, safety and fundamental human rights, and protecting property. The *Sûreté du Québec* also supports the police community, coordinates major police operations, contributes to the integrity of governmental institutions and ensures the safety of transport networks under Québec jurisdiction."

The SQ is submitting its application for the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators-Police Partnership Award for its *Opération Ceinture 2009* seatbelt campaign.

1 *Opération Ceinture 2009* Background

The proper use of restraints by vehicle occupants is the most cost-effective way to reduce death, injury and loss of income following a collision. However, the SQ's findings are key precursors to the development and implementation of an aggressive awareness campaign:

- In fatal collisions, more than 30% of the drivers who died were not wearing their seatbelt.
- In 2008, 44.6% of drivers aged 25 to 34 who died in a collision were not wearing their seatbelt.
- In 2008, 32.5% of passengers under 25 years of age who died in a collision were not wearing their seatbelt.
- In 2008, 46 fewer deaths and 92 fewer serious injuries would have occurred across the entire SQ territory had all the occupants of vehicles involved in collisions been wearing their seatbelt.
- Roadways with a posted maximum speed limit of 80 km/hr or less are those on which the highest percentage of drivers and passengers who have died or were seriously injured failed to wear their seatbelt.

According to statistics compiled by the *Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec* (SAAQ), a 1% increase in seatbelt compliance would save on average eight lives in Quebec every year.

2 Description of *Opération Ceinture 2009*

Since the implementation of the SQ's *Énoncé d'orientations en matière de sécurité routière 2006-10*¹ [Statement of Road Safety Directions for 2006-10], the priority in daily police operations has been seatbelt compliance, excessive speeding and impaired driving.

Given that summer is the highest-risk period in terms of traffic collisions, the SQ chose the month of June to step up its offensive to increase seatbelt compliance rates.

With the knowledge that public awareness campaigns can shape individual attitudes and that these are an essential component of any comprehensive prevention program, the SQ launched its seatbelt campaign, one of many it has conducted. However, prevention campaigns generate little media interest. To counter the lack of media interest, *Opération Ceinture 2009* used an innovative approach that resulted in a strategic partnership with a well-known and well-liked public figure in Quebec.

2.1 Objective of *Opération Ceinture 2009*

Opération Ceinture 2009 is an SQ initiative aimed at raising public awareness about the importance of wearing seatbelts and taking action against offenders. The slogan for this operation was "*Attachez-vous à la vie!*" (Attach yourself to life!)

2.2 Strategic partnership

To ensure significant penetration of the educational content of the message in *Opération Ceinture 2009*, the SQ worked with these partners:

- Humorist Martin Matte as spokesperson for the awareness campaign

It is public knowledge that Mr. Matte's brother suffered serious injuries in a collision, which gives Mr. Matte a high level of credibility in terms of the message conveyed. The humorist created a foundation to assist victims of head injuries.

- The *Ministère des Transports du Québec* (MTQ);
- Honda Canada;
- SAAQ.

¹ The purpose of the statement is to help the SQ meet the challenges it faces in terms of road safety in order to improve the road safety record in Quebec. The document sets out the priority activities to be carried out.

2.3 Intervention strategy

The intervention strategy that was used focused on two streams: public awareness and police checkpoints. During the intensive awareness period from June 1 to 14, 2009, the SQ organized nearly 70 regional clinics aimed at child car seat installation and regulations. Police checkpoints were organized from June 8 to 14, 2009, to verify seatbelt compliance by vehicle occupants.

2.3.1. Public awareness

The communications strategy relied on multiple collaborators. *Opération Ceinture 2009* was launched at a news conference during which special guests—including Richard Deschesnes, Director General of the SQ, Johanne St-Cyr, Vice Chairperson of Road Safety, SAAQ, and Martin Matte, Foundation Chair—addressed the media. Mr. Matte’s presence helped garner excellent media coverage.

A vehicle rollover simulator² was used during the news conference to clearly illustrate the consequences of not wearing a seatbelt.

Copies of the poster, presented on the cover page of this document (*in the original French version*) were distributed in each SQ detachment, Rôtisserie St-Hubert restaurants, all Honda dealerships in Quebec and in more than 100 local community service centres. The poster was also shown on giant screens in La Cage aux Sports restaurants.

The *Société des ponts Jacques Cartier et Champlain* and the *Société des traversiers du Québec* also contributed to the campaign by posting a variety of messages containing seatbelt reminders for users of these infrastructures.

In addition, in each SQ district, efforts made by road safety officials, the communications and community relations unit, and information officers helped to ensure a continuum of penetration for the seatbelt safety message.

² The rollover simulator was acquired by SAAQ.

In addition to cooperation with the various stakeholders, information technology was used to create an electronic link between the MTQ, SAAQ and MSP intranet portals, providing access to all available information on *Opération Ceinture 2009*.

2.3.2. Police checkpoints

During the week of June 8 to 14, a total of 1,983 police operations were specifically conducted to check for seatbelt compliance, and each of these operations lasted at least one hour. In total, 1,582 traffic violations were issued in the course of these operations.

In addition, during “regular” police patrols, tickets issued also included seatbelt-related violations. However, these tickets were not included in the figures for *Opération Ceinture 2009* in particular.

3. Benefits of a Strategic Partnership

The benefits of this strategic partnership include penetration of the seatbelt safety message. *Opération Ceinture 2009* is different from all other police awareness campaigns owing to the diversity of channels used to transmit the message and the performance of these channels.

With Mr. Matte’s involvement, the message was highly effective given his credibility with the public. The more credible the source, the more persuasive the message. His message about seatbelt safety also had an emotional impact that resonated with the targeted public in this awareness campaign. Finally, Mr. Matte’s celebrity status helped to generate greater media interest, which resulted in broader media coverage.

In terms of television advertisements, Mr. Matte has been associated with Honda for a number of years. Honda commercials in which Mr. Matte emphasizes the fact of putting on his seatbelt have helped to promote safe habits among the public.

Through the partnership with the MTQ and SAAQ, we benefited from the contribution of professional skills and institutional technical support. Various message panels were used across the Quebec road network to transmit the seatbelt safety message through the duration of *Opération Ceinture 2009*. SAAQ covered the costs of promotional tools and provided a kit with documents on seatbelt safety.

The significant commitment of the partners and relevance of such partnerships contributed greatly to providing the conditions for the success of public awareness activities. The rapid message penetration strategy resulted in a high frequency of exposure to the message.

The communications-related effects of the awareness campaign will only truly be known once the 2009 road safety record is released. Unfortunately, this information has not yet been published.

4 Effective and Ongoing Commitment in 2009

Even though the intensive seatbelt safety operations were held for a limited period, SQ patrol officers will continue to be vigilant in enforcing seatbelt compliance by vehicle occupants.

The *Énoncé d'orientations en matière de sécurité routière 2006-10* guides the patrol officers' actions, highlighting three directions and nine activities on which the SQ would focus its efforts throughout 2009.

Some of these activities have had a direct impact on improving the road safety record. They include:

- The implementation of operational strategies across Quebec with quarterly follow-up. This is to carry out activities to control excessive speed and curb impaired driving on all roads served by the SQ in cooperation with the officials in each district's surveillance office and in partnership with other police forces.
- The development of a strategic alliance to ensure the safety of heavy vehicles. The purpose is to emphasize the partnership with *Contrôle routier Québec* to reinforce joint or complementary strategic interventions for the safety of heavy vehicles.
- Strategic monitoring of road safety technologies. The SQ deployed a new technology—a licence plate recognition system—and implemented a photo radar pilot project in partnership with the MTQ, MSP and Quebec *Ministère de la Justice*.

5 Member Designated to Accept Award

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