

Project Brief

Title: On Top of the World: Skiing for Climate Change Awareness

Client: Grundon Waste Management

Objective: To promote the story of Ed Salisbury, Jon Moy, and their team as they attempt to ski the world's seven highest peaks. The goal was to highlight their efforts in raising awareness of climate change and spotlight Grundon's crucial sponsorship of this environmental initiative.

Target Audience: Existing and potential Grundon customers who value environmental sustainability in their service providers.

Approach: By employing a Q&A format and focusing on a flowing narrative, the article was designed to draw readers into the adventurers' world, making the complex issue of climate change relatable and understandable. This project underscored the power of storytelling in conveying critical issues and demonstrated the significant role sponsors like Grundon play in supporting environmental initiatives.

Audience: General - **Knowledgeable** - Expert

Formality: Casual - **Neutral** - Formal

Domain: Blog - **Article** - Email - Case Study - Press Release - Guide/Booklet - Event Collateral - Activity - Product Descriptions - Social Media - Video - Website Content

Intent: Inform - Describe - Convince - **Tell A Story**

Tone of Voice: **Inspirational, accessible, urgent**

H1: On Top of the World: Skiing for Climate Change Awareness

H2: Grundon proudly supports 'The Last Ride Project', an extraordinary endeavour for climate change awareness

Keywords: *Climate change, Highest peaks, The Last Ride Project, Grundon Sponsorship, Climbing, Skiing, Documentary, Climate change awareness*

Grundon is a proud sponsor of '**The Last Ride Project**', where three intrepid explorers are taking on the challenge of being the first to conquer the highest peaks on all seven continents...and then skiing down them. As they brave the elements, Ed Salisbury, Will Tucker, and Jon Moy are capturing their daring escapades on film and calling attention to the impact of climate change on the natural world. With three peaks already under their belts, they're on a mission to ignite a sense of adventure and shed light on the incredible actions taken by individuals worldwide to combat climate change. Join us for an engaging

conversation with Ed Salisbury and Jon Moy as they share their experiences and insights gained on this remarkable journey.

Mt. Elbrus – Glaciology Research

“How did ‘The Last Ride Project’ get started?”

Ed: “Our goal was to spark people's imagination and educate them about the climate crisis, explore what solutions are out there rather than focusing on negativity. The start of the project was very much from a skiing perspective. All of us have been around Glaciers all our lives and when you see them disappear - it's scary. It's our way of connecting to the issue. It's about educating and engaging people, showing how the climate crisis will affect their passions and lives, and hopefully come up with some solutions that they can implement.”

“How did your team cope with the physical demands of the first climb?”

Ed: “It's something that's so much further beyond what any of us have done before, and each mountain has its own challenges. We really had to make sure that we've armed ourselves with research and understanding what we need to make sure that we get up there as a team and come back down as a team.”

Jon: “Altitude sickness on Mount Elbrus was quite unnerving. I couldn't seem to warm up, I became quite dizzy and began to slur my words. I couldn't even pop open the ibuprofen packet. Before our sponsorships, our gear was dangerously under-layered. With frostbite, if you can't regain your temperature then you can't carry on, so 5100 meters was my limit on that one. It's important to not get too hung up with the ultimate goal of trying to get to the summit at all costs. And although I didn't hit that summit, it meant that we were all still around to try to do the next one.”

“Following your descent, what climate change insights did you learn from your discussions with Professor Solamina?”

Ed: “One important takeaway from our Russian expedition was questioning whether climate change is solely a man-made phenomenon. With the professor, we examined ice glaciers and tree rings to gauge the glacier's history. Drilling an ice core is akin to a tree trunk - each ring represents a year, and we were able to see the dark ring marking the start of the Industrial Revolution. The big issue faced by the ‘Ice Memory Project’ is trying to drill and preserve ice cores from numerous global locations before they vanish. They’ve just drilled off Everest's balcony, where they’ve unfortunately already lost 200 years' worth of invaluable records due to the rapid deterioration of these locations.”

Mt. Kilimanjaro – Restoring Indigenous Forests

“What challenges did you face in your next climb at Mt. Kilimanjaro?”

Ed: “Mt Kili is the poster boy of this project: walking across the desert 5,700 meters and just hitting a 40-foot block of ice. Like someone's plonked ice cubes on the beach. We had the larger production team but unfortunately, I had a very bad bout of gastroenteritis; I was a shell of a man for a week up the mountain. You're burning four and a half thousand calories a day, barely taking in a thousand, and you lose a lot of weight. There were lots of serious conversations about how to get me up there. Because the glacier is formed on top of a volcano, the darker rocks absorb more heat, causing the area to expand. It's an eight-day climb with no snow and when planning the route for skiing, the main concern is the ice. There are three or four 10-foot drops that we have to land safely. Those landings can leave your stomach in pieces. You look back at the videos now of skiing down there and you think, oh, it's almost a wasted opportunity of being, to my knowledge, the first people to ski down the Eastern Icefield. I could have skied it better. Will was the first to ski down the Eastern Icefield, the Big Breach Glacier and to our knowledge, he's the first man to ski off the summit as well. It's likely that Will is going to be the last person to ski the big breach.”

“What did you learn from the activists hoping to preserve Mt Kilimanjaro's glaciers by restoring indigenous forests?”

Ed: “Due to deforestation, the rain patterns around the mountain are erratic and unpredictable, affecting the snow on higher elevations of the mountain.”

Jon: “During the British colonial period in Tanzania, the introduction of non-native softwood trees depleted significant amounts of moisture from the ground, transforming the once rich and lush rainforest soil into barren deserts. We met with various charities and non-profits involved in the area, including Sarah Scott, who is working on the Kilimanjaro Project to restore the surrounding areas through reforestation.

Ed: “They're not trying to completely stop the [lumber] companies, their solution is to wait until areas are cut down and then suggest a local native tree that grows just as quickly and is just as good of a softwood lumber source. It's a good example of pragmatic solutions that integrate within an existing developing world.”

Jon: “If it brings back a reliable rain system, then hopefully it'll bring back a reliable snow system on the top of the mountain, which will give a glacier more time. Those glaciers will be gone because of global warming, but they can at least bring back an ecosystem around the mountains so people can live and survive.”

Mt. Denali in Alaska – Dark in the Light

“How did the long daylight hours on your third trek up Mt. Denali affect your experience?”

Ed: “You can ski at three o'clock in the morning - It's like it's 12 o'clock in the afternoon. We didn't sleep as well and had less energy, but while it felt less desolate, it took the fear factor down a little bit. However, it can be more dangerous due to the warmth, especially on the lower mountain where there is a risk of ice bridges collapsing and crevasses being more open. The colder temperatures that you'd hope for in the night hours are not quite what you'd expect. You travel in two rope teams so that if anyone falls down later, then you've got a partner or such who can pull you out. You've got to travel the speed of who is in front of you. You can't let the rope go too slack or too tight. So it definitely keeps you switched on the whole time. It's a lot of back pain and being jolted around constantly.”

“What did you learn about how permafrost affects Alaska's mountains?”

Ed: “The most surprising thing we learned throughout this journey was permafrost. Permafrost refers to the permanently frozen ground that has stored carbon for a long time. Unfortunately, with Arctic amplification, it's warming three degrees quicker around the Arctic than it is on the equator and this frozen ground is beginning to thaw. Because it's a natural process, the release of carbon from permafrost is not accounted for in the US carbon budget, as it is not typically caused by human activities. Measuring the exact amount of carbon released from permafrost melt is challenging, but estimates suggest it could exceed the entire carbon budget for the US economy in a year. This discrepancy greatly impacts the required reductions to meet carbon targets. Unfortunately, there is limited research and solutions for addressing this issue. It is not like planting trees, as the complexities make it difficult to mitigate. Surprisingly, cattle farming can provide some assistance by compacting the ground and extending the frozen state to some extent.”

Jon: “Generations of families and villages have been in these regions for thousands of years, it's their entire culture and way of life. However, as permafrost melts, their existence is slowly vanishing, being swallowed by the cold depths of the earth. The sheer scale of this issue globally is vast. We were there speaking to several scientists about it and there's no tangible solution to this because there hasn't been enough research into it. You look at a glacier and you can physically see that glacier receding up a mountain. But the scary thing about Permafrost is that the threat isn't as visible.”

Embracing Challenges: The Journey Towards Change

“What's your experience been like filming a documentary?”

Ed: Traveling Circus. But it's a fantastic way to travel because without making a film, there's no way we'd have found ourselves in the conversations that we had. The best thing about making a film is the doors that it opens and how welcoming people have been to bringing us into their own lives, whether that be CEOs of large companies, people in a political sphere or

just individual farmers in a remote little village that just want to sit down and give us a tea and tell us about what they've learned about the issues that are facing their communities.”

Jon: “The way that you work as a filmmaker and the way that you work as a mountaineer, they clash. We have to work together to make sure that we get the material that we want, but we also need to stay safe. A constant battle between practicality and creativity.”

“What’s the biggest problem you’ve faced when trying to raise awareness for climate change?”

Ed: “People don't know how to talk about it. The term ‘activist’ is quite a loaded thing, and a lot of people might have an issue talking in an environmental space because they feel like they're going to get called out for being misinformed. Ed, Will and I are perfect examples of that because we didn't start as climate activists, we're skiers trying to do something fun. And then slowly but surely the process of trying to achieve that goal is educating us more about what the issues are. We're spreading that message outside of skiing, mainly within outdoor activities, because I think that spending time in these places helps you to connect with them and understand the importance of preserving them. Whether that's skiing, hiking, birdwatching, or just going for a walk with your grandkids, anything that gets you outside and helps you to have a look at what's around you. I think that that's probably the best thing about the project, mountaineering is a great vehicle for trying to tackle something more important.”

“How have you addressed your own carbon footprint from this project?”

Ed: “It’s important we acknowledge our carbon footprint, and we aim to reduce it as much as possible. It’s really about breaking down the carbon footprint metric and finding ways to offset our emissions. People need to enjoy their lives, go outside, and explore without guilt. The focus should be on channelling passion for the outdoors into educating oneself about environmental issues and taking action.

Jon: “It's important that you take quite a pragmatic approach. There is a dangerous amount of idealism within activism saying we need to shut down everything that's bad. All plastic needs to be banned, but it's not feasible. The only way forward is to find realistic alternatives. It’s a process of understanding the potential problems of our actions and comparing them to the positive outcomes that can be achieved by broadcasting this narrative, which brings about a deeper understanding of what we’re trying to do.”

“Your next climb is set to be Puncak Jaya, the tallest mountain in Oceania. Any updates for us?”

Ed: "Our original plan was to climb this mountain in October 2022, but we've been facing challenges with permits, and the process has become even trickier over time. It's a complex issue with the country's long history of extractive industries and civil war, which makes working in that context incredibly challenging. It's not easy working in that kind of environment, and it makes us appreciate the fact that we don't have to deal with it on a daily basis. It also makes us worry about the people who do have to live in that world. It's hard to fully grasp the situation from an outsider's perspective. We can only play a small part in shining a light on the issues they face. It almost feels selfish to go there and climb the mountain, but at the same time, it's exactly what this project is all about. The process of achieving a world's first is about pushing boundaries, tackling the unknown, and solving problems. For now, the island is closed, and we play the waiting game and continue to plan the logistics for Aconcagua and Mt Vinson for December 2023."

"If you can tell anything to the next generation of climbers who are going to ski in your footsteps (if they can), what would it be?"

Ed: "For me, that's the driving force behind my passion and what propels me forward - the desire to ensure ski mountaineering remains accessible for future generations, including my own. Respect your surroundings, try and learn as much as possible and be involved as much as possible because climate change is everyone's fight. Don't take a single turn for granted and use what you love about it to do something to help save it."

The team's efforts to ski down and climb these extraordinary mountains now serve as a powerful reminder of the environmental challenges we face. The project has taken on a new and crucial mission, inspiring others to take action and protect our fragile planet. The Last Ride Project is leaving a mark on mountaineering history while championing the urgency of climate change. Join us in following their journey on their Instagram page [@thelastrideproject](https://www.instagram.com/thelastrideproject) and their official website: [TheLastRideProject.com](https://thelastrideproject.com). Together, we can conquer mountains – and conserve our planet for generations to come.