

HOW TO LAUNCH A RECORD-SETTING RADIO CAMPAIGN

March of Dimes & Goodwill Communications Educate the Public About the Problem of Premature Babies

by
Suzanne Cale-Young

With more than 500,000 premature infants born each year in our country – or one out of 8 new births - this major medical problem is having a serious impact upon our health care delivery system. It adversely affects the parents of the newborn, employers who often shoulder much of the cost, and on society as a whole.

With a cost differential of nearly \$40,000 per birth between full term babies and those born prematurely, the cost to society is just over \$26 billion annually.

The March of Dimes has been a leader in the fight to address premature births by launching a multiyear, multimillion-dollar national campaign to help the nation reduce the rate of premature births from 12.1 percent to the national Healthy People 2010 objective of no more than 7.6 percent.

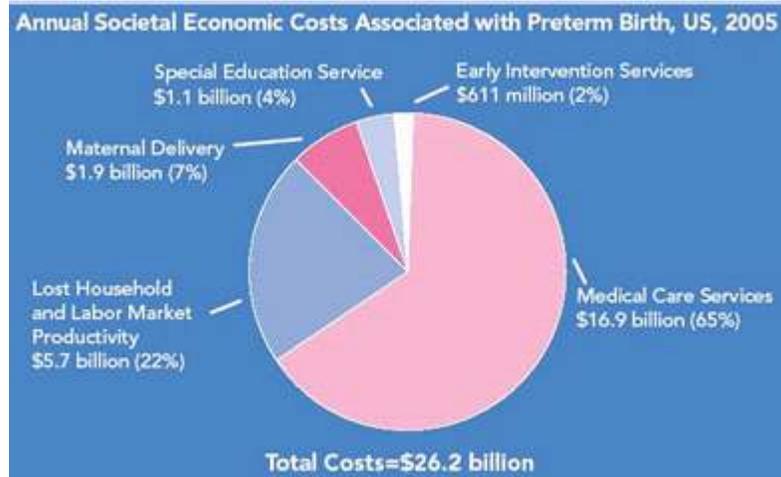
Specifically they have been:

- Funding vital research into ways to prevent and treat premature birth
- Educating women about risk reduction and the signs of preterm labor
- Assisting health professionals in evaluating patient risks
- Expanding access to health care

Why Radio?

Radio was the perfect medium for us to use in this campaign for several reasons:

- We had very specific audiences we wanted to reach with our message and it permitted us target our messages effectively.
- We launched the campaign during the spring months just prior to vacations, when so many people would be traveling in their cars, at the beach and on the run. Radio goes with them.
- African-American parents – one of our key audiences – have particularly high radio listening levels
- Radio was much less expensive than TV to produce and distribute



Personal Messages

To make our radio spots resonate with busy audiences, we had personal stories from moms, dads, African-American and Hispanic parents. Each of these spots told poignant stories about how premature births affected their families and the help they received from March of Dimes. To provide radio stations with optimum scheduling flexibility, we also produced the PSAs in three different lengths - :60/:30 and :15s.



Promotion/Chapter Liaison

Engaging both our chapters and allied organizations was an important objective for the campaign. As a “chapter-centric” organization, March of Dimes always tries to engage its chapters in national programs because they are out there in the communities where the real work gets done.

To achieve this purpose, Goodwill Communications created a custom [website](#) with various features to engage our chapters in several ways. The site:

- Provided them with an EmailGram with facts on the premature birth issue they could use as talking points in their outreach efforts.
- Included distribution lists of the radio stations to which PSAs were sent for follow-up activity.
- Listed links to various allied organizations which could help us spread the word.
- Provided a link where they could review an article with tips about making local outreach calls.

In a few words, we provided our chapters with all the tools they needed to get engaged in the national campaign and bring about change at the local level – a key to any successful national education effort.

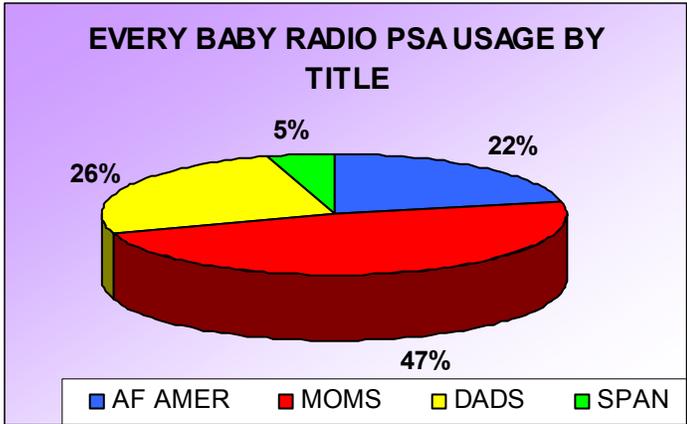
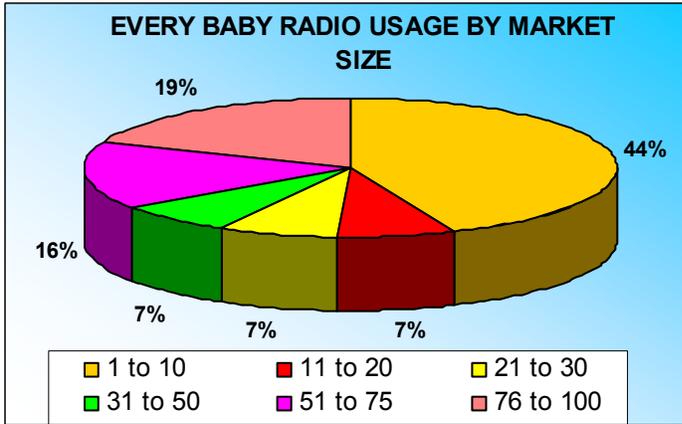
MARCH OF DIMES LAUNCHES PREMATURETY RADIO CAMPAIGN
Cost of Premature Babies Exceeds \$26 Billion Annually

As an organization dedicated to the health of babies and families, we are alerting you about a new campaign launched by the March of Dimes aimed at reducing the number of premature babies born in our country each year. With more than 500,000 premature infants born each year – or one out of 8 births - this major medical problem costs our society just over **\$26 billion annually**. This EmailGram has additional facts on the problem and we would greatly appreciate your spreading the word about the campaign on your website, in your newsletter, magazine or other external communications vehicles.

With more than 500,000 premature infants born each year in our country – or one out of 8 new births - this major medical problem is having a serious impact upon our health care delivery system, on the parents of the newborn, employers who often shoulder much of the cost, and on society as a whole. As the graph below indicates, given the number of premature births occurring in our nation each year, and a cost differential of nearly \$40,000 per birth between full term babies and those born prematurely, the cost to society is just over \$26 billion annually.

How to Place Public Service Advertising in Your Community A Primer on Local PSA Outreach By Bill Goodwill

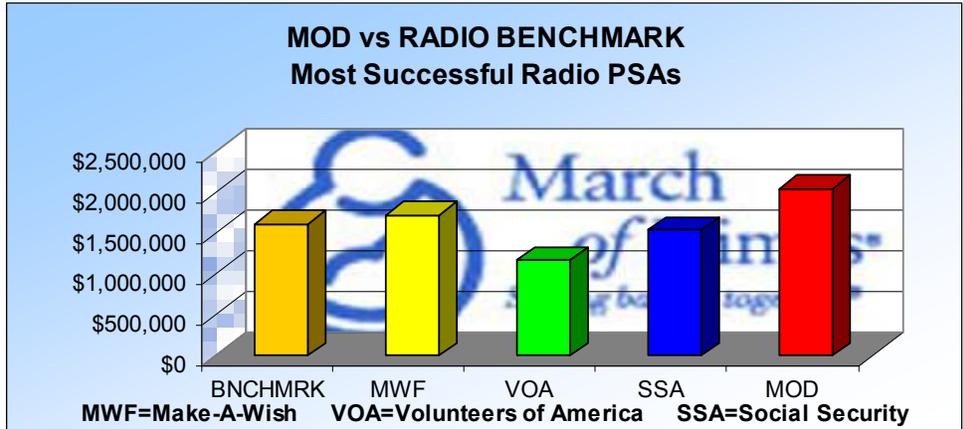




Our online reports also included key trends graphs so we could see where our PSAs were getting exposure by market size. This in turn shows how well our PSAs are reaching population centers.

Another graph showed usage by the various radio program formats to see how well we reached our primary target audiences.

We also had a benchmark graph comparing our campaign to others that Goodwill Communications distributes. As shown by the graph below, the MOD radio PSA generated more exposure than any other campaign Goodwill has distributed in the past 27 years, surpassing the next most successful effort by 21%



What Made the Campaign a Success?

- The Clear Channel endorsement
- A bifurcated distribution strategy to engage Clear Channel stations
- A custom-website to involve MOD chapters
- A map by state so chapters could see where the PSAs were sent
- An interactive map to show where PSAs were getting various levels of usage
- A widget to permit website visitors to listen to PSAs
- A mailgram with links to the site, the widget and links to other allied sites
- A promotional effort to get others to communicate our message to their own stakeholders including the 50 state broadcast associations
- An article posted to the custom website with tips on how local chapters can conduct effective local media outreach

The Take Away

There are several lessons to be learned from this campaign.

- First, in this social-media-only-works world, radio is still a viable medium to reach busy professionals on the go. You won't – or certainly shouldn't – see many drivers stuck in rush hour visiting Facebook.
- Secondly, when they are well produced and flexible, radio stations will broadcast your message, because they want to be good community citizens.
- Next, when you combine an important issue with creative promotional tactics, and a solid distribution plan, good things will happen.
- Finally, by engaging your communications partners from campaign inception through evaluation, they become agents of change.

For a case history on the campaign, go to:

http://www.goodwillcommunications.com/gc_support_client_corner-march_of_dimes.asp

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