



## BENCHMARKS – WHY THEY MATTER

By Bill Goodwill

One of the most frequently asked questions we get when evaluating PSA campaigns, is how are we doing? The simple, but not helpful way to answer the question is to respond: “compared to what?” While it is a simplistic response, it forms the backdrop for the need to compare any non-profit PSA campaign to a standard.

### Our Evaluation Process

One of our newest PSA evaluation procedures is aptly titled: “Benchmark Report,” because it compares any given client campaign to 64 national TV broadcast PSA campaigns we have distributed since 2010. The reason for beginning in this year is because that is when most TV stations migrated to “Hi-Def.” As part of that process, each station got up to six sub-channels, many of which are used to air PSAs. This fact, in turn has resulted in a very significant increase in our client campaigns from 2010 onward.

Using the benchmark data, our software computes an average of these campaigns, against which the client campaign is compared. To keep the data uniform for comparison, we select similar tracking periods, and we use only data resulting from the Nielsen SIGMA tracking service, which is the most accurate available.

The real reason why this is a valuable exercise is not just to see how well any given campaign is performing against the standard; it is to do this analysis early in the months after the campaign was distributed. We think the answer to why we do this is obvious, but just in case it is not, if you wait until the campaign has run its course, it is too late to affect change.

### Other Near-Term Measurement Tools

As the campaign is maturing, we have two other tools to give our clients a clear picture of how well their campaign is performing:



***“PSA evaluation for the sake of data collection is a  
meaningless exercise.  
It is what you do with the data to affect a more positive  
outcome that is important.”***

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*Bill Goodwill has supervised the distribution and evaluation of over 1,000 national PSA campaigns on behalf of 167 non-profit organizations and federal agencies.*

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