

What Makes a Successful PSA Campaign?

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Books have been written about this subject, and space limitations do not allow me to probe the topic deeply, so I am going to point out a few things that I believe result in a good PSA – one that most TV stations will air. And if properly executed, you might even hit a home run in terms of usage. Here are my thoughts on the subject:

Quality

People remember a dramatic or entertaining spot which is beautifully produced. This does not mean that high budget PSAs are always the most effective. Simplicity sometimes works best. But the intelligence, sensitivity, and imagination reflected in that 30 or 60 seconds does much to influence the public perception of the sponsoring organization, and the importance of the issue.

Variety

Use different arguments, characters, tones, and bits of information, and allow programmers to rotate spots so that they do not become annoying to viewers. The most successful campaigns approach different parts of you, hit you in several different ways.

Different Media

TV, radio, websites, brochures, pamphlets, comic books, signage, posters, refrigerator magnets, tee shirts, etc. reinforce each other in a campaign. Words, images, statistics, testimonials, that appeal to self-interest, the public good, your family and friends are most effective. Messages designed to change the most deeply seated prejudices, habits, and beliefs take time. Sudden massive behavior changes are very rare.

Repetition

Research indicates that the more often the audience hears or sees the message, the more likely they are to get it, and campaign planners should use a wide variety of media to deliver the message, since they all have different strengths and weaknesses.

Multicultural Approach

Hispanics are becoming the largest minority, and prefer to be addressed in their native language. Every ethnic culture has its unique range of values, prejudices, interests, filters. If your budget does not permit doing production in both English and Spanish, at a minimum be inclusive in your packaging or promotional efforts.

Delivery Platform

In our digital society, there is no such thing as hard copy delivery when it comes to PSAs. Media gatekeepers – like most of us – want their content delivered via some digital, online platform, and that is the only way to roll. If you are still sending hard copy tapes to TV stations you should think about where the horse and buggy is now, in terms of transportation. In the front page article of this newsletter that James Baumann authored, he discusses the importance of digital delivery and how it works. These days, there is no other option.

Aggressive Marketing

Newsletters, blast emails and post card notifications will help get some usage. Add an articulate and persuasive phone call and you will get more. Add a call from a powerful local community representative noting the importance of the PSA to the local community, and you will do even better. If you go to www.psaresearch.com and click on **Articles**, and then click on **Community Outreach**, there are online tips about how to reach engage the local media in your campaign

Thorough Evaluation

It is good to have the numbers telling you when PSAs were used, how many, where and their value. But qualitative assessments are very valuable too - things such as how many people took the call to action in your campaign are equally as important.

The bottom line is that PSAs are a complicated process and you want to have people on your side who thoroughly understand the process. Our firm has been creating award-winning PSA campaigns for three decades and to see our work, go to: <http://www.alhadv.com/>