Transportation Outreach Planner

Public Outreach Strategies

Paid Advertising and Public Service Announcements

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Recommended Target Groups

Education
College Education
High School Diploma
No High School Diploma

Language
Creole
Other
Spanish

Disability
Hearing Impaired
Other
Physically Challenged
Sight Impaired

Income
Low Income
Middle to Affluent

Vehicle Ownership
Non-vehicle Owner
Vehicle Owner

Race and Ethnicity
Race and Ethnicity

Age

Seniors

Working Age Adults

Youth

Strategy Class

- General

Strategy Types

- Educational
- Promotional

Description

Advertising is a paid message or announcement that is generally part of a broader media strategy or promotional campaign. It is intended to inform or persuade people to change behavior or take specific action. The most common platforms for paid advertising include television, radio, newspapers, and magazines. Agencies use paid advertising when they need to have complete control over the message that goes out to the public. [1]

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) refer to advertisements that are broadcast or published free of charge in order to publicize a message of public interest. Most television and radio stations are required to broadcast a certain number of PSAs in order to comply with licensing requirements. In some cases, stations also offer free production. However, agencies have little control on the airing of the PSAs. Nevertheless, PSAs can help to complement a broader advertising campaign, particularly by using social media to disseminate the PSAs.

Special Uses

Agencies can use paid advertising and PSAs to: [2]

- Increase visibility or create awareness
- Promote action or change
- Educate the public
- Access non-Englishspeaking populations and hard to reach groups

When to Use

PSAs can be used at any time to help promote a project or policy. They are most useful when an agency is interested in creating awareness, and Social media platforms, such as YouTube and Facebook, can be used to publicize and disseminate the PSAs to the public.? However, PSAs should not be used if an agency needs to control how or when a message is displayed on media outlets.

Agencies should consider using paid advertising when: [3]

- There is a need to guarantee the content and placement of information that is published or broadcast.
- It is necessary to obtain maximum exposure.
- It is not possible to reach a target audience through PSAs or other free forms of advertising.

Cost

* * Moderate ($1000 to $9999)

The cost of advertising can vary, depending on the type of media used and the duration of the campaign. A high profile media campaign that involves prime time spots on television and radio, as well as print advertising can be very expensive. However, an agency can organize a moderate campaign by using low cost media, such as the radio and social media. It is also possible to maximize resources by using PSAs and requesting pro-bono production whenever possible. What is important to remember in purchasing advertising space is that it is always possible to negotiate.

Low (up to $999)   *   *Disclaimer:* The cost estimates provided are intended to be a

Moderate ($1,000 to $9,999)	* *	guide. Project costs will vary depending on the size and nature of the project.
High ($10,000 to $50,000)	* * *	
Very High (Above $50,000)	* * * *	

Time

* 1 to 3 months

Most advertising can be developed in less than a month, depending on the complexity of the ad. The time needed to create an ad includes the development of the message or content, the production of the piece, and the editing and proofing of the final ad. The most time consuming aspect is the production time.

1 to 3 months	*	*Disclaimer:* The time estimates are approximations. The duration of a project may vary depending on various factors, including size and budget.
6 months to a year	* *	
Multiyear	* * *	

Implementation Guidelines and Suggestions

The following serve as recommended guidelines and suggestions for using paid advertisement and PSAs:

- **Develop a budget**. Developing a budget is one of the most important steps in establishing an advertisement campaign. The resources that are available will help to determine the type of advertisement to use and the duration of the campaign. Below are various items to consider when creating a budget:

  - Market research
  - Production
  - Expense of running or publishing the ad
  - Commission to ad agencies or other third parties that may be purchasing the media space. Most television and cable stations provide a 15 percent commission.
  - Discounts provided to government agencies and non-profits

  Agencies should also take into account the use of PSAs and any type of donations or free services that may be available to government agencies and non-profits. For example, agencies can partner with local colleges and universities to produce television, radio, and print ads.

- **Create a media strategy**. A media strategy is a plan for delivering an advertising message to a target audience. It involves identifying the target market, creating the message, and determining the type of advertising that will most likely influence the intended audience. Whenever possible, it is recommended to use a combination of paid adverting and PSAs. When developing a media strategy, agencies should consider the following in order to determine how much paid advertisement they need or can afford: [4]

  - **Reach**: The number of individuals or households that will be exposed to the advertising message over a given period of time.

  - **Frequency**: The number of times that the target audience will be exposed to the advertising message. As a general standard, people need to be exposed to an advertisement an average of six or more times before they take action.

  - **Cost per Thousand (CPM)**: The cost of advertising per thousand people. This is a standard method used to compare advertising costs in print media.

  - **Cost per Point**: The cost of buying one rating point in broadcast media. One rating point is equivalent to one percent of the target audience.

- **Use a mix of advertising in order to ensure maximum reach and frequency of exposure**. Depending on the budget, agencies should use at least two or more types of media when conducting an advertising campaign. Below is a description of the most common forms of advertisement and various factors that should be considered when determining the advertising mix.

  - **Radio** represents one of the most cost effective forms of advertising. This media format can have a wide reach, but can also be used to target specific groups (i.e. teenagers, seniors, sports enthusiasts, Spanish speakers,

etc.). Most ads are 15-seconds, 30-seconds, and 60-seconds long. Because radio advertising is less expensive per announcement than television or print ads, it is possible to achieve greater repetition through this medium of communication. The greatest captive audience can be reached during drive times (rush hour); however these are also the most expensive time slots. A less expensive option is to purchase Run of Station (ROS) commercials, or rotator spots, but there is no guarantee with this option of when the commercials will air. Some spots may be aired during drive hours, but others will be aired during fringe times. In terms of production, most radio stations will produce the ads at no additional cost.[6]

- **Television** is one of the most powerful forms of advertising in terms of captive audience and reach. It can be targeted by geographic areas or by demographics. However, television advertising can be expensive. Nonetheless, it is possible to negotiate the price, depending on the air time, the amount of spots that are purchased, and the length of the ad. Ads can be 20-seconds, 30-seconds, and 60 seconds long. It is also possible to purchase longer time slots for infomercials. Often, television stations and cable companies are willing to provide a discount if they are also hired to produce the commercial. It is also important to note that advertising on cable television is less expensive than on local channels. Caution should be taken against purchasing rotator ads. Most experts do not recommend purchasing air time in this manner if it is important to have control of when the commercial goes on the air.[7]

- **Print** advertisement generally takes the form of display ads in newspapers or magazines. Agencies may also wish to use community newspapers or specialty publications, such as church publications or organizational newsletters, to reach a specific target audience. The reach and cost of print advertisement vary depending on the publication's distribution or subscriber list. Most print publications sell ad space according to the page layout (i.e. quarter page ads, half page ads, and full page ads). However, advertising is not limited to display ads; it is also possible to insert flyers, coupons, or other promotional pieces in the print publications. Although the internet has caused some print publications to close, this medium still offers an effective form of advertisement to reach targeted geographic areas and demographic groups.[8]

- **Web and Social Media** advertising offer yet another option to reach a specific target market. Not only is it possible to advertise on a website, it is also possible to advertise through social media platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube, or through cell phones and other mobile devices. Ad space can be sold in the form of a banner, sidebar, pop-up window, videos, floaters, etc. There are also a variety of ways to pay for the advertisement. These include, but are not limited to: 1) cost per impression (CPM) or the cost per 1000 views/impressions, 2) cost per click (CPC) or the number of users that click on the ad, and 3) Cost per Action (CPA) or the cost per completed transaction, such as a sale. The cost of such advertising is generally inexpensive compared to the other advertising formats. However, it is best to test the various advertising options to see which generate the best results.[9]

- **Outdoor advertising** can reach a large amount of people by being able to offer consistent exposure. Outdoor advertising includes billboards, bus benches, rooftop balloons, etc. Most contracts are for a minimum of a month. Although this type of advertising can be expensive, it has proven to be effective. The limitation is that it only reaches people in the geographic area where the ad is placed.

- **Utilize PSAs to complement the use of paid advertisement**. Although PSAs are generally aired during off-peak hours, they serve as another mechanism to help get the message out to the public. In some cases, stations may be willing to be proactive in a campaign that has local impact by agreeing to air the PSAs in better time slots and providing media coverage to discuss the issue. For example, if bicycle fatalities are a problem, a station may be interested in airing announcements throughout the day regarding bicycle safety and include a segment in the news about local efforts to reduce accidents. [10]

- **Produce your ad and meet ad placement deadlines**. Whether an agency is outsourcing the production of the ads or using in-house staff to produce the advertising, there are certain steps which should be followed before publishing or broadcasting any piece: [11]

  - Check for accuracy and proof read all the writing for typos, misspellings, and errors.

  - Make sure all issues related to licensing and copyrights have been addressed, particularly if using photographs, images, and music.

  - Test the piece to make sure the message is clear and that there are no issues that may have been undetected. It is best to test the piece on people who are similar to the target audience.

- Deliver the ad on-time or before the deadline. If an ad is delivered late, there is a good chance that it will not be aired or published, as most advertising deadlines are not flexible. Timely delivery is particularly important for ads that are time sensitive. If possible, it is best to deliver the ad prior to the deadline. This will allow time to address any issues that may arise.

- **Monitor response to the advertising to determine whether the message is reaching the target population**. Agencies need to develop a method for tracking the response to their advertising. This can be done in several ways. Ads can direct people to go to a website to obtain more information, making it possible to measure how many people visit the site. If an agency is encouraging transit ridership, it should be able to determine if ridership increased during the advertising campaign. Tracking the effectiveness of an ad will help agencies determine their return on investment (ROI) and identify ways to improve advertising strategies in the future. [12]

Recommended Target Deomographics

Paid advertising can be targeted to reach any demographic group. Media outlets collect a great deal of demographic information regarding their viewers/readers and conduct extensive studies on their behavior and preferences. As such, the media outlets can be of great assistance in helping to develop a campaign that reaches the desired target market. It is also possible to target public service announcements if the media outlet is willing to work with an agency. The following can also serve as a guide:

- Newspapers: Tend to attract a higher percentage of men, older adults, and more educated and higher income persons. [13]
- Radio: Wide demographic that can be loosely targeted by programming. [14]
- Television: Wide demographic that can be targeted by programming and psychographic profiles. [15]
- Websites and Social Media: Wide demographic, but can be used to target specific groups. Tends to attract more educated and higher income persons. [16]

Lessons Learned/Challenges

Below are key points to keep in mind when using paid advertising and PSAs: [17]

- **If an agency has limited resources, it needs to focus on advertising mediums that provide the greatest reach and frequency of exposure for the dollar**. The more that people see or hear the ad, the more likely that it will be successful.
- **When creating an ad, agencies need to be sensitive to the needs of the target market**. The language and images that are used on advertisement should be carefully selected and tested to ensure that they are well received by the target audience.
- **Before starting production, contact the media outlet to obtain their requirements**. It is important to know the specifications for formatting, preferred length, etc. in order to avoid costly changes. Agencies also need to know the deadlines and the point of contact.
- **If using television or radio advertising, the script should be shorter than the allotted time to ensure that the ad does not get cut off at the end**. The following are industry standards that can be used in developing a script for a television or radio ad:

  - 10 second ad: 20 to 25 words
  - 15 second ad: 30 to 35 words
  - 20 second ad: 40 to 50 words
  - 30 second ad: 60 to 75 words

- **There is great competition among non-profits and government agencies for PSA slots**. Therefore, agencies should not rely on PSA air time.

Case Studies

The Alaska Mobility Coalition developed a statewide multi-media campaign regarding the benefits of transit service in the state of Alaska. The campaign included print, radio, transit and internet advertising. It helped to create public awareness regarding transit use (http://www.transitmarketing.com/promo_samplealaska.htm). [18]

The Morongo Basin Transit Authority in Joshua Tree, California created a marketing campaign to promote their intercity

services. They targeted service workers, college students, military personnel, and seniors. The campaign included newspaper and radio ads as well as collateral materials (flyers and ads on the college schedule). Through the campaign, they were able to educate people on the cost saving benefits of using transit service (http://www.transitmarketing.com/morongo.htm). [19]

For Further Information

AdGlossary: Provides definitions for terms most commonly used in online advertising (http://www.adglossary.com/). [20]

Advertising Law: This site provides information on advertising law and includes links to other useful resources, such as the Federal Trade Commission Division of Advertising Practices (http://www.hg.org/advert.html). [21]

Fact Sheet, Advertising:? Serves as a guide and fact sheet for using advertising. It includes worksheets and suggestions for establishing an advertising budget (http://ohioline.osu.edu/cd-fact/1276.html). [22]

Preparing Public Service Announcements: Provides useful information and tips for creating public service announcements (http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/chapter_1005.aspx). [23]

Sources

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