

Planning a Public Outreach Campaign

Thorough planning increases the chances that an outreach campaign will be effective in getting the right message to the right audience, and so contribute to the desired end result. This Guide sets out the key steps involved in the planning process and gives links to further information. It covers how to:

- establish an outreach strategy with clearly defined objectives
- identify the target audience
- use research to formulate an effective message (including tips on publicly available market research)
- develop a communications program

<http://www.wipo.int/ip-outreach/en/tools/guides/planning/>

Outreach Campaign Planning - Communications Program

Once the outreach strategy has been formulated, the campaign goals and objectives decided, the target audience identified, and the appropriate research undertaken, then a communications program for the campaign can be established. The following nine steps can help in planning communications program *.

Set the objectives

The objectives of a communications program should clearly identify the target audience and the purpose of the communication. The objectives should always keep in mind the desired outcomes, that is, the overall outreach goals and objectives of the campaign.

Examples of communications objectives are:

- Encourage middle-school science students to take part in an invention fair.
- Educate SMEs regarding the benefits of patent registration.
- Warn travelers about the risks/penalties for bringing counterfeit goods into the country.

Develop potential messages

Information about target audiences is extremely helpful while brainstorming potential messages to communicate objectives. In fact, research is an essential component in determining messages that will appeal to, and influence the target audience.

Solid information regarding the needs, desires, and current perceptions of the target audience facilitates the decision of what type of message to use in the communications program. Broadly speaking, there are three types of messages to consider:

- *Rational* messages aim to show the target audience that the behavior to be promoted will yield certain benefits. For example: "SMEs that patent their inventions increase their licensing opportunities."
- *Emotional* messages aim at provoking positive or negative emotions in order to motivate a target audience to adopt a desired behavior. For example: "Young inventors are admired and respected." With emotional messages, balance is very important – in particular when dealing with fear. Studies have shown that messages that seek to instill fear may be counteractive or filtered out by target audiences. In addition, research has shown that scare tactics are more effective when they are accompanied by real, effective enforcement. Furthermore, while advertisement conveying strong negative emotions may be powerful at first, their effect tends to wear out quickly with exposure.
- *Moral* messages relate to what the target audience already believes is right or wrong. For example: "The trade in counterfeit goods has links to international terrorism."

See [Tips for Creating Effective Messages](#)

Make the message noticeable

Due to the large amount of information that we encounter on a daily basis, we have developed a way to almost unconsciously select information and messages that may interest us from those that probably won't. For messages to reach a target audience, this selective attention issue must be overcome.

At this stage it is again important to know as much as possible about a target audience, in terms of interests, needs and desires. This knowledge can help in the identification of people, images, words and even colors that can act as a hook for the audience to tune in to a specific message.

Choose the tone, context, headline and argument style of the message

The tone of the message can vary from serious to casual and even humorous. The importance is to choose a tone that works with both the target audience and the message itself.

The context of the message can vary from showing a glimpse of someone's life, to creating a fantasy or mood, to showcasing a well-known personality or technical expert,

to providing scientific facts and figures. Again, the chosen context should both appeal to the target audience and effectively communicate the message.

Six types of headlines can be considered:

- *News* ("One millionth PCT application filed at WIPO")
- *Question* ("What is a Trademark?")
- *Narrative* ("Members of the SCT met on Tuesday in Geneva to discuss the future of the TLT")
- *Command* ("Stop Piracy!")
- *1-2-3 Ways* ("Three simple ways to protect your new product:")
- *How-What-Why* ("National patents do not protect your invention abroad")

When deciding whether the message should provide a conclusive statement or present a one or even two-sided argument, it is once again vital to understand the target audience. Here, the audience's intellect, perception of the communicator, current views and involvement in the behavior being sought, can help guide the decision.

- *Drawing conclusions* (clearly telling an audience what to do) can be more persuasive than leaving the conclusion up to the audience. However, this is not the case when the target audience is highly intelligent or when the communicator is not already perceived as trustworthy.
- *One-sided arguments* (only highlighting the benefits of the change in behavior being sought) work well when target audiences: are less educated; already have favorable views towards the behavior; have little exposure to counter propaganda; and have a low current level of involvement in the behavior.
- *Two-sided arguments* (addressing both the benefits and costs of the change in behavior being sought) work better when target audiences: are highly educated; don't currently favor the behavior; have high exposure to counter propaganda; and are already highly involved in the behavior.

Overcome distortion

There is a tendency for all of us to add to or reinterpret messages based on our past experiences, our bias, our culture, etc. This tendency can distort a message so that its intentions are not the same as what is actually perceived by the target audience.

Pre-testing a message on a few random members of the selected audience and adjusting it if needed can minimize distortion. Furthermore, special care should be taken in the use of symbols (anything from role models to colors) to make sure that their intended effect and their perception are the same.

Increase the chances of the message being retained

Catching an audience's attention is not a guarantee that the message will be retained. Repetition of the central message (often in different media such as posters, TV advertisements and a web page) increases the potential of message retention. Linking the message to something already known may also help.

Choose communication media

There is a wide range of communication tools that can be used to deliver messages to target audiences. Choosing the right mix of communications tools will increase the chances of the message being noticed, retained, and thereby lead to the desired outcomes of the communications objective.

Evaluate and select the best message

Based on the list of potential messages developed in point 2 (above), and the decisions regarding style, tone, headline, argument and media, it is now time to select the single, best message to deliver the communications objective.

To assist in the decision, a small focus group of the target audience can be asked to evaluate each of the messages that make it to the final list.

Integrate all the elements and execute the program

In order to ensure a consistent message and increase the chances of retention through effective repetition, all elements of the communication program (website, posters, advertisements, brochures, etc) should have a similar "look".

Tips for Creating Effective Messages

Research has shown that target audiences respond better to messages that are:

- *Clear and simple:* Messages should be in plain language and present only one theme at a time. Such messages have a better chance of holding the attention of the target audience and getting the message across.
- *Personalized:* Messages that directly show target audiences how a certain activity can affect them personally are more powerful than those that concentrate on the general/social effects of an activity.
- *Communicated through various sources:* Different people learn in different ways and are exposed to different media. In order to reach more people, there is a need to have different means of communicating the message (print, TV, radio, Internet, peers, etc). The more times target audience members see the message, the more they absorb it. Target audience members may also be more inclined to believe the message when it is repeated by different sources.
- *Consistent:* It is important that the message being presented in a campaign not be contradicted by other sources. Furthermore, all communications from the campaign should have the same "look" and message.

Create a Media Relations Strategy

Coordinated media strategies with multiple media outlets will help push forward every campaign component. The three most common examples of media strategies are:

- Social (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc)
- Earned (articles placed in news outlets at no cost)
- Paid (ads and information you pay for)

Specific media strategies should always fit the goals, target audiences, and resources available to your campaign. Media should support the other components, not vice versa.