
publicity strategies

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Prepared for
The Office of Juvenile
Justice and Delinquency
Prevention

Arthur D. Little, Inc.
Washington, D.C.

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ACQUISITIONS

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ARTHUR D. LITTLE, INC.
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INTRODUCTION

It is not enough to say your juvenile justice program needs attention because it is doing good work and deserves public recognition. The public more or less assumes you are doing a reasonable job. Going to the public in a publicity campaign must be justified for more specific reasons. You need to determine why your program needs publicity. Defining the "whys" will help to focus your efforts on particular segments of the public, to choose the best way to conduct your campaign, and to set realistic goals for success.

- Public Education is a valid reason for a campaign. However, you must know exactly what you want to communicate. For instance, maybe you want to alert the public to conditions in local detention facilities or to how status offenders are processed by the courts. Perhaps you want to soften the public attitude toward juvenile offenders. If changing attitudes and spreading specific information are your goals, you will want a strategy that touches every corner of the community. In addition to mass media, you will also want to use more defined outlets like community organizations and in-house publications.
- Recruiting Volunteers can be done through a publicity campaign. Pinpoint the kinds of volunteers you need, such as teenagers, parents, teachers, and the skills they should have. Different kinds of volunteers, obviously, are reached through different media. Teachers are easily contacted through school district bulletins; teens might respond to an appeal on a local rock radio station.
- Attracting Funding can be accomplished through a publicity campaign. As with other goals, you need to specify your audience. A campaign for a larger share of the United Fund will be conducted differently than if you are soliciting support from corporate foundations.
- Lobbying Public Officials, who in turn will enact laws and regulations to help your program, is a tangible reason for a publicity campaign. As with the public education campaign, you will want to inform the public about certain key issues and also arouse their interest to the point where they will become active participants by circulating petitions writing letters and holding meetings. Your goal, for instance, may be to introduce legislation prohibiting detention of status offenders.
- Enlisting Community and Public Support can happen through a publicity campaign. However, you should be clear about the kind of support you are seeking. Examples of different types of support are parental cooperation in a new approach to

dealing with status offenders; community support for more halfway houses in residential areas; or teacher participation in teen rap sessions.

DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

Your campaign will require a lot of organizing. Each goal, each step and each result should be carefully mapped out before you begin. The elements below should be part of your plan of action:

1. Goal(s): Define as specifically as possible what you want the publicity to produce or cause to happen. A clear goal statement will allow you to determine how successful your campaign has been upon its completion. Example: Reduce by half the number of status offenders referred to the juvenile department.
2. Theme: Define as simply as possible the basic idea(s) or theme (s) you want to communicate. Avoid complicated or involved themes that require elaborate explanations. The theme should emanate from the goal. It may be a single phrase or sentence and should capture the spirit of what you are attempting to input. Example: Status offenders do not need to be locked up: they are not serious criminals and are not a threat to the community.
3. Audience: Specify the kinds of people or groups you want your campaign to reach. Of course, your efforts will be noticed by a large spectrum of people even though the campaign should be aimed at the defineable group. By identifying the audience as specifically as possible, you will be better able to develop media methods which will interest them. Example: Parents of teenagers, schools, and police.
4. Geographic Areas: How extensive will your campaign be? Pin down where your target audience is located geographically. The location of your target audience may suggest the kinds of methods which will be most useful. Example: The suburban counties surrounding Washington, D.C.
5. Budget: Set a dollar figure for the maximum amount you can spend on the campaign and determine specific purposes for which the money will be spent. For most small programs, there will be little if any money set aside for public relations activities. Most of what you will do will rest on donated resources and your own initiative and creativity.

6. Appoint a Publicity Director: One person should be responsible for directing and carrying through the campaign. Any publicity, from setting up an information booth at the county fair to issuing statements to the press, should be cleared through this person. In small programs this person will, more than likely, be the program director. In any case the director should supervise the public relations effort.
7. Methods: Set out what you will do to generate publicity. This step is one of the most important planning phases because much of the campaign's success rests on how it is implemented. You have many different methods to choose from -- select those best suited to your overall plan. Examples: information brochures, speakers in schools and at PTA meetings, press conference at the detention center, public service announcements on all news radio and on teen rock programs, press releases on changes in the treatment of status offenders. (These methods are discussed in more detail later.)
8. Time Frame: Construct a schedule for the time you will be actively conducting the campaign. The schedule can be a simple milestone chart indicating specific tasks and completion dates. Establishing short and long term deadlines is essential to monitoring the implementation of the effort. Keep in mind that any campaign shorter than six months may not have enough time to gain attention and momentum and any campaign over a couple of years tends to lose interest and dribble off.
9. Anticipated results: Think through in specific, measurable terms, what you want your campaign to accomplish. Normally, anticipated results are developed as outgrowths of your program goals. Example: Fewer status offenders processed by the courts and increased parental participation in workshops dealing with status offender problems. Look out for any result that may boomerang and damage your program or hurt an outside individual or group. For example, if your campaign is to help status offenders, do not inadvertently bring criticism on the police for picking up these kids, thus alienating a group which can be potential supporters of your program.
10. Evaluation Method(s): Determine how you are going to measure whether or not your campaign was a success.

CHOOSING YOUR METHODS

Before weighing the different media and public relations techniques you might use, assess your agency's strengths and weaknesses so you can better match your needs and your resources with different campaign methods.

- How large is your staff? How many people are available to work on the campaign? Do you have staff members who have special skills that can be used in the campaign? (e.g., writers, artists, photographers, or people with media experience or special contacts.) You should question staff about hobbies -- you may have someone skilled in public relations that you never suspected of having talent.
- How large a budget do you have for the campaign? What existing resources can be used? Can funds be solicited for a campaign? What donated resources are available?
- What media are available in your area? Are there organizations and companies willing to help? Are there newspapers, magazines television and radio stations operating in and for your community?
- Where is your target audience located? is it urban, suburban or rural? What influence will this have on your methods?
- What is your program's community image? Is your program completely unknown? What does the community already know about your work? Have you received positive recognition lately? Can you build on your past image or should you start fresh?
- Are there similar programs in the area competing for public attention? Can you work with other organizations in a joint effort?
- Has your agency previously undertaken a publicity campaign? What were the results?
- Does your group have any significant or unique strengths, weaknesses, or problems that should be considered?

NARROWING THE CAMPAIGN: AVOIDING THE SHOTGUN APPROACH

"Publicity campaign" is a large label that can include dozens of diverse activities. You cannot do them all, and a shotgun approach may deplete your resources on unprofitable endeavors. It may lead you to leave out simple, effective and complementary methods. There are three basic strategies to consider: mass media campaign, public relations, community relations. Below each method is discussed.

Mass Media

This campaign utilizes the popular press to inform and interest the general public about your work. Its resources include newspapers, magazines, television, and radio. These are its basic pros and cons:

- It attracts the most attention, by reaching the broadest possible audience.
- It can be inexpensive if the paper or television station develops the news. It is more expensive if you have a writer to develop the story.
- The image and basic message it depicts is ultimately determined by the medium, not by your organization. That is, the form and substance of your message is ultimately decided by writers, editors, and commentators over which you have little or no control.
- It can be unpredictable. Promised stories and reports are not always published or aired.
- It requires time and persistence to develop stories and media contacts; your idea of what is newsworthy may not parallel the media's notion of an interesting story.
- The competition for print and air space is fierce.

Public Relations

This campaign involves almost direct contact between your organization and the general public or selected segments of the community. Your organization plays the lead role in designing public relations activities which can include information, dissemination, public education, and general image building. These are its basic pros and cons:

- It can project a strong, positive image.
- A lot of information can be communicated.
- In-house resources are essential and, depending on the availability of such skills and money, can make or break the effort.
- It requires creativity to develop attention-catching materials, and may require professional help.
- It can include a fund-raising drive, which has the added benefit of replenishing your coffers.
- It must be professional and well organized, if not, the campaign may not attract sufficient attention.

Community Relations

This campaign involves working with individuals and groups within the community that are interested in your work or have similar goals. These are its pros and cons:

- It can bring tangible benefits to groups other than yours.
- It can have deep-rooted, long-lasting affects.
- It strengthens ties between your organization and the community.
- It requires service organizations and/or community groups (Junior League, Kiwanis, church societies, neighborhood leagues, professional associations) that are willing and able to lend time, volunteers and resources to your campaign.
- It requires staff time to work with community people.
- It is ususally a low-key campaign and lacks the drama and punch of public relations and mass media efforts.

THE CAMPAIGN: WHAT TO DO

Mass Media Campaign

The mass media can play an important role in any kind of campaign you develop. "Media" is an all encompassing term that includes newspapers, magazines, television, and radio, each with its different practices and requirements. However, some general guidelines can be appli d to working with all media:

- Make personal contact through a visit or over the telephone with the media person who will be handling your information. If you are issuing a press release to newspapers, call each one to find the name of the person you should contact. It may be the metropolitan editor, calendar editor, or news editor, depending on the nature of your release. With magazines, you probably will be dealing with the managing editor. Television stations may refer you to a community affairs director; radio stations may give you the name of the production manager or news editor.
- Develop a professional working relationship with your media contacts. They can help you with suggestions and guidance for getting into print or on the air, and you can provide them with the information and news they need. To develop such a relationship you may want to invite them to the

program simply for general information and background. Later, when you have a story, they will have a contact in which to place it.

- Learn the working procedures of the media you are dealing with. Find out writer's deadlines so you can send your material in on time. Weekly newspapers, Sunday editions, and monthly magazines all may have deadlines way in advance. Television and radio talk show/interview programs may draw up their schedules weeks or months ahead of time. Every news person has a few hours or day of the week when they are not pressured by deadlines and are more accessible.
- Do not try to use press releases or your media contacts for free advertising. When sending them information, make clear on the release whether it is a news item, an announcement of an upcoming event that may fit into the calendar section, or a soft-news item such as an update on your programs. What distinguishes all this from advertising is how often you request space for non-news items and what the affect of the report may be, such as increased contributions to your program. Remember the press never has to run anything you send them. Also, they may rewrite the information into a story you might not have anticipated.
- Try to become a valuable news source for your media contacts. As a person involved in juvenile justice you encounter a lot of information about trends among youth and the community that may interest the press. It may have nothing to do with your particular program but passing it along to the press through a telephone call or a brief note establishes you as a knowledgeable source who is interested in more than just promoting his or her own program.
- Be considerate of the press. Do not bother your contacts with constant telephone calls that have no purpose, with questions about when your item will appear, with demands to see copy before it is printed or broadcast, or with requests for clippings or tapes.

Putting Together a Press Release

This is the basic form of communication with all media. While most releases are rewritten by the press, the fewer corrections or changes which must be made the better your chances of having it run. Here are some basic guidelines for putting together press releases.

1. Ask the paper or magazine if they have a style sheet outlining their requirements for releases.
2. Use white, bond paper typed double spaced on one side.

3. At the top of the page, give the name, telephone number, and address of your press contact person.
4. At the top on the other side of the page, state when you want the information released. Write either "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE" or specify the day and/or time.
5. Give the release a heading that summarizes the subject.
6. Begin the release with a two-sentence paragraph that catches the reader's attention and provides basic information. Include the who, what, when, and where of the subject.
7. Keep your sentences and paragraphs short and simple. Avoid stilted, pompous language, elaborate images or excessive adjectives.
8. Keep your release less than two pages long. End with the symbol ####.
9. Include human interest information to make it more readable.
10. Do not circulate carbon copies. Use a duplicating machine. Keep a copy for your files.
11. Check the accuracy of names, dates, times and places.

Feature Stories

Feature stories are not necessarily news items but in-depth reports on people, issues, trends, and unusual aspects of your program. A story's angle is determined by the individual publication. Some magazines prefer the story to coincide with a recent news event but from a new or different point of view. Some magazines are eager to report on people through "personality profiles" of individuals, famous or not, who might interest other readers. Sunday newspaper magazines like stories of community activities which cover unknown, unique or noteworthy subjects.

If you believe you have the idea or material for a feature story, obtain copies of publications to which it seems best suited. Naturally, you will be attracted to the national magazines. However, study them carefully to see if they would be interested in your kind of story. Do not overlook other magazines: regional or city magazines, Sunday newspaper magazines, magazines published by companies and distributed to employees, trade journals, in-flight

magazines, shopping center handouts, controlled circulation magazines distributed only through the mail and supported by advertising, not by sales, and weekly tabloids.

Next, develop a "query letter" to send to the publication you think most apt to print your story. Keep the letter to one page and begin with why an article on your program should be written (Example: "Everybody demands law and order for juvenile criminals but when it comes to status offenders the non-criminal juvenile offenders, the public ignores them.") Tell the editor what you think the article should include, offer some interesting details to "tease" his interest, give some background information on your program, and mention if photographs are available.

If the editor is interested, he may do one of three things: (1) assign a staff writer to the piece in which case you would provide this person with information and interviews; (2) suggest you contact a freelance writer; or (3) suggest your organization write the article. In any of these cases, you have to write the piece "on speculation" meaning the editor, although interested in your article, is not committed to either buying or publishing. There is a risk of working on speculation since three months of research and writing may never see print, but it may be the only way an editor would consider an article about your program.

It is also possible that an editor will not answer your query letter, or say he does not think the story is "right" for his publication. In either case, do not drop your idea but submit it to another magazine.

Public Service Announcements/Community Affairs Programs

Almost all media set aside air time or publication space that is donated to community projects. These may be 10 to 60 second radio or television spots or small advertisements appearing in newspapers or magazines. These "public service announcements" are run at the convenience of the media and there are not guarantees as to if and when they will appear. However, the media makes a concerted effort to provide time and space to the non-profit, community service activities in their area.

As with all media, there's lots of competition for public service time/space. Your organization, as the recipient of donated time/space, is responsible for providing the necessary copy, advertisement, radio tapes or video tapes for television. Here are some suggestions for developing public service announcements.

- Contact the television and radio public service directors or public affairs directors to introduce yourself, your program and to find out their needs. Ask for guidelines for the public service announcements they accept. At newspapers or magazines, the community affairs or public affairs representatives are the people to contact for suggestions on how to develop your public service campaigns.
- Print media usually requires attractive art work as well as an accompanying copy. Keep the message short and punchy. Do not forget to include the name of your organization. Consult an art director or commercial artist for help in preparing your advertisement.
- National television, requires highly professional advertisements. If you are aiming for national markets, your work must be on the same level as national commercials. Also, it is the most expensive kind of public service announcements. (Three television spots, start to finish, may cost between \$15,000 and \$30,000.) If you have the money, hire a professional advertising agency to develop and produce your commercial. If your budget is severely limited, ask local stations if you can use their studio for taping television spots. You will need an experienced producer. It is possible that local television stations do not require video tape and may accept 35 mm color slides and accompanying copy for their public service spots. You may want to consider going to local colleges or schools for free assistance in putting together a spot. Another source of low-cost help is through local advertising councils which help community programs find pro bono services.
- Radio announcements are usually under 60 seconds and contain a brief message. Find out from the station the kind of tape that is required. Rehearse your announcement before taping. Instead of a one-voice announcement, consider a short dialog between two people to highlight your program. Maybe background noises or music can improve your announcement.
- Public affairs programs -- talk shows, interviews with community people are always looking for interesting subjects. Find out the names of these programs in your area (check the television or radio schedules) and contact the program's producer. Have a particular subject, controversy or trend as your area of expertise. Your first contact with the producer may be by letter outlining your qualifications and topics for interviews.

- If you have no money, try to rent or borrow public service announcements aired or printed by other organizations or the federal/state government, and insert your group's particulars.

Other Media Possibilities

- Press Conferences: These should be used sparingly and only for very important news that is most appropriately released in-person to give the press an opportunity to ask questions. If the news is not noteworthy, the press will not show up for another conference. Here are some general guidelines for a press conference:
 - Notify the press, if possible, a few days in advance so they can schedule someone to cover it.
 - Make sure the meeting room is large enough with a microphone for your speaker and electrical outlets for television and radio reporters.
 - Consider conducting the conference in a place somehow connected with the news, such as at the detention facility.
 - Prepare hand-outs for press with additional information and background material.
 - Make the conference visually appealing, slides, flip charts, or different speakers may increase interest.
 - Make sure the main speaker is well prepared and can handle all kinds of questions.
- Regular Newspaper columns: Contact the editor of your local publication about a regular column for youth or about youth. Your organization could become a major source of information.
- Letters to editors may bring attention to your program or a particular issue surrounding it. Watch the editorial page for subjects to which you can respond or which affect your program.
- Learn from your media experience by keeping a scrapbook of all clippings and all print publicity. It is a useful record and it may help with the next campaign.

Public Relations

Public relations is a broader, less concentrated kind of campaign. If you are conducting the campaign without professional help, be wary of surrounding your program with too much "puff" that ignores tough issues and serious problems and just promotes a "Pollyanna" picture of your program. These activities can be part of your public relations effort:

1. Slogan and/or Logo: Take some time to brainstorm with your staff to develop key words, important phrases, visual symbols and target audiences that will give your program character and a unique image.
2. Pamphlets, fact sheets, brochures, hand-outs: Basic information about your program, and the people involved should be immediately available and widely distributed to interested persons. Collect statistics, program history, funding details, that can be used in part of a publications effort.
3. Newsletter: This should be the main part of any publications program. It should come out regularly (otherwise it just becomes a special bulletin) and contain information about all facets of your program. You can write about changes in the program or in its funding, new developments among the staff, on legislative issues that affect your program, and about juvenile justice trends in general. The key to a successful newsletter is an up-to-date and accurate mailing list. Keep thorough records of the people who should be receiving notices about your program. In addition to staff and juvenile justice people, the list should also include names of elected officials, media contacts, volunteers, and educators. You also may want to solicit these people's input to the newsletter.
4. Direct Mail: This is usually a large scale campaign with a specific goal, such as raising money or developing a letter-writing campaign. It is a good opportunity to send out either detailed letters or individual postcards with short messages. If the work is done in-house, it can be time consuming --if done by outside experts, a full blown direct mail campaign can be expensive. Regardless of who is conducting it, an effective direct mail campaign can include costs for the following: renting the names of people who receive the mailing (the "mailing list") outside those who are on your regular mailing list, developing the message, creating a flyer or letter that elicits a response, stationery supplies, and mailing costs.

5. Billboards, posters, bumper stickers: A good way to draw attention to your campaign is through strong visual images of a catchy phrase. If your group has an attractive logo, or an appealing slogan, consider having it put on posters, bumper stickers (one well-known example developed by one youth service office was: "Have You Hugged Your Kid Today?"). Billboard companies may donate their space if the board would otherwise be vacant. City buses and subways might also let you use their space.

Community Relations

Community relations is a cooperative effort from which everybody can benefit. You will give people a better understanding of your programs and goals as well as improve your relationship with the community as a whole. Community relations can help your program become an accepted, and supported activity. Here are some activities that can be part of your campaign.

1. Speakers Bureau -- The experts of your staff should be available to speak before meetings, schools, and public forums. Professional associations are also interested in speakers who can brief them on an area that affects their work. It is important that the people comprising your speakers' bureau are knowledgeable about juvenile justice and are interesting speakers. It is best to use people who have had some public speaking experience, and who enjoy it. Circulate their biographies to interested groups. These individuals also may want to develop slides or other visual aids to form a packaged presentation.
2. Special Events -- This is a large category of activity that can include information booths in public places, fund raising activities, one-time projects for youth, dedication ceremonies, guided tours of your facilities, debates and sports activities.
3. Advisory Council -- Involve community people in your program. Appoint representatives from business, government media, and other organizations to serve as advisors to your program. A separate group of editors, advertising executives, art directors, and the general public may serve as media advisors.
4. Publications -- Use your newsletter, and the publications of similar community organizations to show that your program is an active, and vital part of the community. Write guest editorials, offer to trade mailing lists, suggest joint special events, ask the readers to volunteer. The point is to communicate, on as personal a level as possible, with the people in your community.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Very little has been written about juvenile justice programs and their relationship with the media. Nevertheless, the practices and techniques used by other community projects and other justice offices are directly applicable. These materials provide additional details of media-related activities and examples of actual campaigns.

- The Media Manual (The Pyramid Project, Walnut Creek, California)
A how-to manual for developing a complete media campaign. Includes examples from a drug abuse/drug prevention media project.
- Communicating: How? (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Public Health Service, Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration). An in-depth case history of a media campaign for mental health and mental retardation that made extensive use of a professional advertising agency and electronic media.
- Publicity Handbook (The Sperry Hutchinson Company, Consumer Services) A very elementary handbook on how to deal with the press. A good primer for an organization with no media experience.
- "How To Be a News Source," "The Washington Post Guidelines for Newsmakers" (The Washington Post, Washington, D.C.)
Tips for providing information to a large metropolitan newspaper.
- Articles on community relations programs: Police Chief (International Association of Chiefs of Police, Gaithersburg, Maryland). "Programming for Citizen Participation in Police Action Programs"
"P.R. Stands for Public Relations"
"Kiwanis Launches second year of 'Safeguard Against Crime' Program"
"A Low Budget Public Relations Program"
"A Community Relations Program for a Small Department"
- Mediability: A Guide for Nonprofits (Taft Products, Inc., Washington, D.C.) An excellent guide for all phases of a media program.



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