

WHCA ACTION GUIDE

World Health Communication Associates



WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

- advocates HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT COMMUNICATION health profes

World Health Communication Associates
European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)
EPHA Environment Network (EEN)
The MediaWise Trust



WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Health and Environment Communication

© 2005 by Mike Jempson, The MediaWise Trust and
World Health Communication Associates Ltd.

All rights reserved. Up to 10 copies of this document may be made for your non-commercial personal use, provided that credit is given to the original source. You must have prior written permission for any other reproduction, storage in a retrieval system, or transmission in any form or by any means. Requests for permission should be directed to World Health Communication

Associates, Little Harborne, Church Lane, Compton Bishop, Axbridge, Somerset, BS26 2HD, UK. World Health Communication Associates is UK limited company no. 5054838 registered at this address; e-mail: whca@onetel.net; tel/fax (+44) (0) 1934 732353.

Cataloguing Information:
ISBN 0-9547620-2-9

This manual is a publication of the WHCA Action Guides Project.

Written by Mike Jempson, The MediaWise Trust, Bristol, UK.

Edited by Franklin Apfel and Carinne Allinson, WHCA,
Compton Bishop, UK.

Reviewed by Génon K. Jensen, EPHA Environment Network and
Tamsin Rose, European Public Health Alliance.

Cover and layout design by Tuuli Sauren,
INSPIRIT International Advertising, Brussels, Belgium.

Printed on recycled, chlorine-free paper with vegetable-based ink.

Much of the material in this booklet derives from *Spot On!*
A handbook for health communicators by Mike Jempson
(EHCN & The PressWise Trust, 2000) and has also appeared in
*From the Margins to the Mainstream: Putting public health in the
spotlight* (WHO, 2003).

Its contents do not necessarily reflect the policies of the
organisations involved except where explicitly stated.

Financial support has been received from
the European Commission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS



FOREWORD BY WHCA	4
FOREWORD BY EPHA/EEN	6
FOREWORD BY MEDIAWISE TRUST	8
CHAPTERS:	
1. MEDIA STRATEGY AND POLICY	10
2. HOW THE MEDIA OPERATE	14
3. PRESS RELEASES	18
4. PRESS CONFERENCES	22
5. MEDIA INTERVIEWS	28
6. HEALTH COMMUNICATION ETHICS	34
7. MEDIA ADVOCACY	42
8. SENSITISING THE MEDIA (MYTHS, STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION)	46
9. RISK AND CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS	50
10. CAMPAIGN PLANNING	58
11. CAMPAIGN EVALUATION	64
12. SOCIAL MARKETING	68
ANNEX: USEFUL WEBLINKS	72
MEDIA CONTACT SHEETS	78

FOREWORD by World Health Communication Associates

Communication as a Determinant of Health

Welcome to this first World Health Communication Associates (WHCA) Action Guide, *Working with the Media*. Our aim in producing this guide is to help health communicators to become more media-wise, to work actively and effectively with the media to advocate for healthier behaviours, choices and policies.

Health professionals, educators, promoters and campaigners who have important information to share often lack the skills and ability to capture media attention and get their messages adequately covered in increasingly competitive health information marketplaces.

We often hear health colleagues complain about the lack of attention they receive from the media: “Good news is no news.” “If they were really interested in helping people they would cover this story, but they are only interested in scandal and selling papers.” All too often, close inspection of health-sector-generated press materials reveals weak and/or inappropriate presentation, excessive use of jargon, and poor understanding of how the media work. As ‘mediated’ health communications continue to expand their reach and increasingly become a determinant of health through the shaping of people’s and policy-makers’ perceptions, behaviours and choices, there is an urgent need for a strengthened public health voice to be heard louder and clearer.

Too frequently, information marketplaces are dominated by hazard merchants, who adversely affect people’s health through the direct promotion of lethal or unhealthy products, the glamorisation of risky behaviours and the ‘normalisation’ of hazard use in every facet of modern life.

To counter these health-compromising messages and make reliable, credible, ethical, evidence-based health information available to those who need it requires knowing the ‘rules of media engagement’. That is what this manual is about. It aims to provide accurate, accessible information and advice in an easy-to-use format. You will find practical advice related to developing media strategies and effective ways to package and present information through press releases, conferences and interviews. We look at ways of proactively sensitising the media to key issues such as stigmatisation, and identify some health communication ethical guidelines developed by journalists themselves. Media advocacy for policy change, crisis communication, campaign planning and evaluation are also covered. The guide is also

a workbook. At the end we include media contact sheets for you to personalise for your own organisation and topic of interest.

Whilst there is lots of good stuff here, this is a work in progress and electronic versions of this guide will be continually updated on our web page, www.whcaonline.org. Please send us your feedback and comments.

Much of the material in this guide has appeared before in European Health Communication Network (EHCN) related WHO publications. We wish to thank all those who were involved with the EHCN and the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) “Tobacco Kills Don’t be Duped” change agent project for their input and inspiration.

Franklin Apfel
Managing Director
WHCA

World Health Communication Associates Ltd (WHCA)

The World Health Communication Associates work to improve health by helping public health advocates and organisations acquire the knowledge, skills and resources to enable their messages to stand out and positively shape health choices, behaviours and perceptions in local, national and global information marketplaces. WHCA focuses exclusively on health and environmental issues and does no product promotion. The Associates are an independent network of active, strategically-placed communicators, with practical experience in health and environment reporting, investigative journalism, policy advocacy, intergovernmental and non-governmental public and press relations, international conference organisation and cross-border campaigning.

For more information, please visit our website at www.whcaonline.org.

FOREWORD by EPHA and EEN

Advocacy and the Media

Communication is at the heart of advocacy. Health and environment organisations and community groups need to be able to communicate as widely and effectively as possible in order to get their message across, gain support and stimulate policy change. The media can be an extremely useful tool to meet these objectives.

Health advocacy NGOs aim to communicate about risks and hazards, prevention and promotion, and lifestyle choices and changes. Sometimes the issues will be complex and involve the translation of scientific data into data that people can understand and use. Health professionals play an important role in making some technical information comprehensible to the public. However, health advocacy groups also need to be involved because doctors and nurses traditionally concentrate on interpersonal communication skills and often have little experience of working with the media.

The benefits for health groups of working with the media extend beyond the important work of communicating public health information and campaign messages. Publicity and visibility via the media can bring important benefits for the profile of an organisation itself.

On the other hand, ignoring the media may bring unpleasant challenges. Lack of coverage, negative framing of health issues and misrepresentation of campaign messages can seriously undermine other advocacy activities.

Despite a clear need to work with the media, many non-governmental organisations do not attempt to do so. This is because it may seem too difficult and complex or because it would require scarce resources and skills that are simply not available.

The *Working with the Media* guide aims to provide a simple roadmap for organisations of all sizes on how to approach the issue. It encourages closer relations with the media by outlining the basic tasks that are likely to bring the biggest rewards.

We hope that the guide will ultimately enable more health groups to develop a media strategy and to communicate more confidently with journalists.

The guide is co-sponsored by EPHA Environment Network and its founder organisation, the European Public Health Alliance, because we recognise the importance of communication and advocacy skills to our membership organisations across Europe.

Génon K. Jensen

Director
EPHA Environment Network

Tamsin Rose

Secretary General
European Public Health Alliance

The European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)

EPHA is the largest network of NGOs and not-for-profit organisations working on health in Europe. It has more than 100 member organisations, including 35 European networks, all of which are committed to improving the health of citizens and increasing their participation in decision-making related to health.

For more information, please visit www.epha.org.

EPHA Environment Network (EEN)

EEN provides non-governmental organisations, professional representative bodies of doctors, nurses and other health professionals, academic institutions and other not-for-profit organisations with a platform from which the links between growing health problems and environmental factors can be brought to the attention of Europe's policy makers.

For more information, please visit www.env-health.org.

FOREWORD by The MediaWise Trust

Getting It Right

The media play an increasingly powerful role in our lives – especially radio, television and the Internet. The constant cycle of round-the-clock news puts pressure on journalists to produce copy quickly, and often without the benefit of fully investigating material or speaking to the key players. Driven by competitive pressures and tight deadlines, journalists are bound to make occasional mistakes, and when such errors could affect the health and well-being of the general public they can be dangerous.

This handbook offers guidance to those who want to help media professionals provide reliable information about public health issues. It is based upon experience from the 'other side' of the news desk.

Too often those who seek to influence the media agenda assume that if they supply some basic information, or a dossier of scientific evidence, journalists will do the rest. Mass communications don't work like that. Especially in the era of interactive media, journalists need personal 'contacts' upon whom they can rely for story ideas, accurate information and illuminating 'quotes'. Even specialist correspondents are expected to cover a wide range of issues, and they cannot be experts on everything.

Health communicators are the experts in their field, and their success in reaching wider publics depends to a considerable extent upon how well they understand how the mass media operate. This handbook provides sufficient background to enable health communicators and their colleagues to design and deliver effective media campaigns. We hope it will also help them to develop new ways of influencing public health policy and practice, and so make their task easier.

Good health!

Mike Jempson

Director
The MediaWise Trust

The MediaWise Trust

The UK-based media ethics charity MediaWise (originally known as PressWise) was set up by victims of media abuse and concerned journalists in 1993. It provides:

- Advice to members of the public affected by inaccurate or unfair print or broadcast coverage;
- Information about how the media operate, and media ethics, law and regulation;
- Research into aspects of media practice, representation of minority groups, and media regulation;
- Training for non-governmental organisations on how to make best use of the media, and for journalists about effective ways of reporting problematic issues.

The Trust has devised and delivered training programmes for journalists and non-governmental organisations in over 25 countries, and run partnership projects on reporting of children, ethnic minorities, asylum seekers and refugees, health issues and suicide.

Visit our website www.mediawise.org.uk for more information.

1. MEDIA STRATEGY AND POLICY

Every practitioner and organisation concerned with health services and public health needs to deal with the media. While needs will differ from time to time, it is best not to wait for a crisis before deciding on strategic objectives and day-to-day procedures for handling media relations.

Media strategy – How, when and why are we going to work with the media to get our messages out?

Media policy – Clear internal procedures about who handles the media and how.

Dealing with the media requires skill, tact and knowledge – of the media as well as the organisation's aims, messages and specific expertise. All managers, staff, volunteers and members need to know about the organisation's approach to media relations, and who is designated to communicate information to journalists.

First of all the organisation needs to be clear about what sort of public communication it wants (eg education, policy change, publicity) and why. Then it must work out how it is going to get it, and how it will make best use of the results.

The following questions will alert you to issues you need to resolve when devising a media strategy and policy:

RATIONALE

1. Why do we want/need public communications?
2. How often do we communicate and for what purpose?
3. How often are we approached by journalists and what do they want to know?

RESOURCES

1. What resources (human and financial) can we afford to spend on achieving our media objectives?
2. What budget has been set aside to cover publicity campaigns and media relations? How has it been calculated?
3. What resources (human and financial) are available to achieve our strategic aims?
4. Do we have a database of contacts in all the relevant media outlets – newspapers, magazines, trade journals, websites, radio, television?



© Photo by Erik Luntang/ep-images

Are your spokespeople prepared to meet the Press?

5. Do all documents issued by the organisation clearly state the objects of the organisation?
6. Do all documents issued by the organisation contain reference notes to indicate the evidence in support of any claims made in the document?

PEOPLE

1. Whose job is it to keep our media database up to date?
2. Have we designated or appointed someone as our Press/Public Relations Officer?
3. Does s/he have easy access to everyone within the command structure of the organisation?
4. Is it the responsibility of the Press/PR Officer to determine who is the most appropriate person to represent the organisation, and to brief that person, when press conferences are being organised or requests for media interviews are received?
5. Do those entrusted with the responsibility of handling media enquiries have the right skills to deal effectively with journalists?
6. Do we provide media training for appropriate staff and managers?
7. Have we made arrangements for a skilled person to brief members of our management/staff/clientèle if they are going to be interviewed by the media?

PROCEDURES

1. What are the most appropriate and practicable procedures for dealing with enquiries from the print and broadcast media?
2. Are they written down? Do the staff and management have copies?
3. Have clear policy guidelines been laid down about formal (and informal) contact with journalists?
4. Do our public communication/publicity events reflect the core values of the organisation? For instance, if we are seeking sponsorship, are there guidelines to ensure that our objectives are not compromised by the activities of potential sponsors?
5. Are organisational messages 'tested' (eg for relevance, clarity, cultural appropriateness, etc) on representative persons before being released?
6. Do all public statements on behalf of the organisation have to be cleared by a Chairperson or the Chief Executive, and issued in their name/s?
7. Do we have guidelines to ensure that the personal details of our clientèle are not divulged to the media, unless they have given their express consent that their story can be used for publicity purposes?

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

1. What are our procedures for managing media relations in times of crisis?
2. Are all the staff/members familiar with them?
3. In the event of an emergency, are arrangements in place to ensure that the Press/PR Officer and the Chief Executive are available to provide the media with up-to-date and relevant information?

EVALUATION

1. Have we established an effective system of monitoring and/or evaluating our dealings with the media — for example, keeping a record of media coverage, and responses to it (requests for information, donations, criticism, further media enquiries)?
2. Is there an annual management review of the cost and effectiveness of our media strategy?

OUTLINE MEDIA STRATEGY AND POLICY FOR A NON-GOVERNMENTAL HEALTH ORGANISATION

Our aim is to improve public health and to increase public awareness of (the causes, cures and preventative measures for a particular disease, for instance).

To achieve this objective we need a positive public profile both to attract funding and to convince the authorities and the general public that our approach is effective.

We shall seek publicity for all aspects of our work by:

- developing a database of media contacts and journalists
- issuing regular news releases and authoritative background briefings
- producing accessible summaries of our research findings
- responding promptly and professionally to all media enquiries

An appropriate amount shall be set aside in the budget each year to ensure the implementation of this strategy.

Responsibility for devising and issuing press releases, organising public events and publicity campaigns, and handling media enquiries will rest with the Press and Publicity Officer (and staff) in consultation with the Chief Executive.

Whenever possible, publicity should focus on the agreed priorities of the organisation at any particular time.

All media enquiries must be directed to the Press and Publicity Officer. The private numbers of clients or committee members must not be issued to journalists.

2. HOW THE MEDIA OPERATE

DEADLINES

All media operate to deadlines. There is a certain point at which it is physically impossible to change what is to be printed or broadcast if it is to reach its intended audience at the right time. Once the stories and pictures for a morning newspaper have been assembled, it has to be designed and printed overnight, and distributed to sales outlets in time for readers to buy it the next morning. Magazines may have much longer preparation time, but they will often build up a stock of features well in advance of the publication date.

A radio or TV programme has to be edited and made ready for broadcast often well in advance of its spot in the schedules. For pre-recorded programmes, for example, all the footage has to be examined, edited and combined with commentary, music, credits, etc, which takes time. So when journalists talk about deadlines, they are REAL and you must respect them if you want to make use of media opportunities. Having production schedules and deadlines will help you time submissions and queries appropriately.



Knowing production schedules and deadlines will help you time submissions and queries appropriately. The newsroom at the Belgium National TV station RTBF.

FORWARD PLANNING

Most media have a Forward Planning Department, which makes 'early' decisions about what upcoming stories they want to cover, to allow time for the development of feature articles or shows. Learning about the planning cycle of your chosen media will help you get your event onto their calendar.

MAKING CONTACT

Reporters, photographers and researchers are the media operatives who are most likely to be your point of contact. Their job is to assemble all the material needed for a successful production. But remember, they do not always choose (or know much about) the stories they work on, and their work will be scrutinised by others (sub-editors and editors) before it is published.

If you want to make use of journalists' services, the best way is to get to know them and make sure you are in their Contacts Book. They are human beings too: they respond well to compliments (so tell them if you think their work is good) and can be valuable sources of information. However, they are rarely 'off duty' and expect to get stories from their contacts.

Don't be afraid of making the first telephone call, but be patient — everyone else wants to talk to them too, and 'news' is no respecter of time.

By becoming one of their 'contacts' you will gain their confidence if you are reliable and honest with them. Most will happily share their knowledge of the media to help you in your communication efforts. Find out from them about their deadlines, and audiences — which will differ from publication to publication and programme to programme.

Some journalists are pleased to be offered a background briefing about complex issues, so they can produce more authoritative stories. It is sensible to be even-handed about this, and not to favour one publication or broadcasting company over another.

Journalists are skilled in communication, so they may be willing to advise on your communication needs, but do not compromise their integrity. Inviting an experienced journalist to join a campaign committee will be useful, and if they are well-known may add kudos to your project, but it will identify that person with your cause and s/he will no longer be considered impartial.

Some may be willing to offer professional advice for a fee. If you take this route do it formally so there is no conflict of interest. Journalists receiving payments from special interest groups should always declare an interest or better still, leave the reporting to colleagues.

For national and international coverage, news agencies distribute information to thousands of (usually language-specific) news outlets around the world. There are many internet-based communications agencies concerned with public health and environment issues, who could be valuable partners in spreading good news and good practice. Time spent cultivating such relationships is time well spent. (See Weblinks section for list of Press Agencies and other contacts.)

GAINING ATTENTION

The most conventional way of seeking media attention is by issuing **press releases** (*see chapter 3*). However, every media outlet receives hundreds of these each day, so yours will have to compete with all the others. There is no easy way to guarantee that yours will receive the attention you seek, but knowing someone in the newsroom always helps. A follow-up call to check that it has been received and read provides you with an opportunity to expand upon its contents to your newsroom contact.

The important thing is to know your audience — both the media professionals you want to take up your story, and the readers or viewers the media reach and with whom you want to communicate.

Facts and figures and theories can be very boring unless they are linked to human stories that will capture people's attention. All journalists like a bit of 'colour' — events and people who can help to illustrate the information you want to communicate.

Radio needs good (or unusual) voices that can capture the listeners' attention with a compelling story. TV needs strong imagery — not just 'talking heads' but interesting locations or activities to film. For printed media, photographs and other illustrations will draw attention to stories on the page.

But most of all the media respond to stories which explain a human predicament. This is the way to attract interest and attention from readers, listeners and viewers — or to put it another way, increase circulation or audience ratings.

So if you want media interest, always look for people with stories to tell (people who can explain how they will benefit from what you are doing; celebrities who can explain why they are supporting you; experts who have a good way with words or who can stand up to tough questioning).

And always look for images that might speak louder than words: for instance, if you have a compelling logo, make sure it appears in your publicity materials so that people will associate it with whatever you are doing.

WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

For a variety of reasons your media campaign might not produce the results you want. Sometimes this is accidental, sometimes deliberate. Sometimes it will be the media's fault, sometimes yours.

Don't be afraid to complain if you have strong grounds for doing so — for instance if information you have provided **in writing** is completely misrepresented. Your first call should be to the journalist concerned to find out what went wrong.

Never make accusations unless you are sure of your facts — there is no point in causing friction and losing friends you might need on another occasion.

If there are important points of principle at stake, especially in terms of public health issues:

- contact the appropriate editor and seek a correction;
- put out a press statement explaining what is wrong — and provide evidence to back your claims;
- make a complaint to the media regulator.

Whatever the outcome, examine your own materials and communication techniques critically to make sure you avoid making the same mistake again — and that may mean finding new contacts in the media.

3. PRESS RELEASES

INFORMATION is not the same as NEWS. However accurate your facts and figures, to a journalist they are simply 'data'. What journalists need is 'context' – and preferably access to someone with a story to tell that will illustrate the significance of the issue or information you want to publicise.

Journalists are not publicity agents; but if you have a good story to tell they will be interested in passing it on to the public.

Issue a **Press Release** when you have something new to tell the public – but remember, the journalists to whom you send it are your primary audience. It needs to be written to excite and engage their interest and be perceived to be of value to their audiences.

A. DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRESS RELEASE

The Advisory or Calling Notice gives advance warning to the media that something will be happening soon – so they can make a note of it in their diary and plan accordingly. It must be followed up with a more detailed News Release.

The News Release provides the basic information needed for journalists to understand 'who', 'what', 'why', 'when' and 'where' – the launch of a new campaign, the results of a study, or the opening of a new building, for example.

The Photo-call announces that there will be some opportunity, at a certain time and place, to illustrate a story with photographs of a relevant person or location, so the film crew or photographer can come and get good pictures. This information could also be included in a Calling Notice or a News Release.

The Press Statement gives your immediate response to a recent news event or announcement from another organisation. It is your contribution to the debate and could offer support or a different point of view (with evidence to support it).

Press Briefings are more substantial (but not complex) documents providing background information to an issue or an event. They are designed to help the journalist understand the significance of an issue or an event and explain it to members of the public. Journalists who are interested but not expert in your field will find these very helpful and they can increase your credibility as a source or contact.

Embargoed press releases are issued well in advance of the official publication of a report or launch of a campaign, in order to allow journalists time to investigate and

develop their coverage before the actual launch. Always note the exact nature of the embargo on a news release with date and time in GMT, eg 'embargoed till 25/12/05 at 12.00 noon GMT'. Make no exceptions with embargoes and treat all journalists equally. Use embargoes only when they are strictly necessary, then you can expect journalists to adhere to them. Hold journalists accountable when they do not.

Never take it for granted that your press release has been received or read. Always follow it up with a phone call to the appropriate person on the programme or publication in which you are particularly interested. Ask if they have seen it and try to get their interest – be ready to send more information if requested.



B. WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

Well-designed headed notepaper establishes a 'brand image' that is immediately recognisable – so put your Press Release on your headed notepaper. Neat, well-presented copy is easier to read, so is more likely to get a second glance among the hundreds of releases sent to the media each day. Coloured paper may stand out in the pile, but it can be difficult to read, photocopy, or scan.

Design your release so that it can be distributed in hard copy or by e-mail. And make sure it contains your distinctive logo and/or campaign slogan.

TEN THINGS TO AVOID

- Do not assume the reader will already know about your concerns.
- Do not obscure your message by including complex or figurative prose or irrelevant details.
- Do not use both sides of a sheet of paper – the reverse side is likely to be overlooked.
- Do not use repetition, clichés, jargon, or abbreviations.
- Do not exaggerate, or make claims you cannot prove; overstating your case is more likely to weaken than strengthen your position.
- Do not include defamatory statements – you are liable for libel.
- Do not send anything out until a colleague has checked it for sense and accuracy – spelling mistakes damage your credibility.
- Do not ignore media interest generated by your press release – you have sought their attention so return their calls.
- Do not use irony – it seldom works with strangers, and wit is more effective.
- Do not assume your press release has been received until you have spoken to someone who has read it.

TEN TOP TIPS FOR PRESS RELEASES

1. Use headed notepaper to give authority to your message and make sure it includes all your address, telephone, fax, e-mail and website details.
2. Include the date of issue, a reference code (so you can identify it later), and the name or title of its intended recipient.
3. Give it a short, simple headline that catches attention and try to keep the overall communication to a single page.
4. Try to answer the essential questions 'Who? What? When? Where? Why?' in the first paragraph.
5. In the rest of the release provide more detailed information which explains the significance of the subject matter. A footnote with 'Notes for the editor' is a good way of adding background details or references.
6. Include a 'quotable quote' which contains your key message, with the name and status of the speaker.
7. Always give a contact name and telephone number (24 hours if possible).
8. If you can provide journalists with images to illustrate the message of the story, mention this in a short footnote and suggest a time and place for a photo-opportunity.
9. If you want to communicate with a local audience, use the local media. A good journalist will recognise a story that might also be told or sold to a wider (regional/national) audience.
10. Always write your press release so that your intended audience will understand it. Only send highly technical material to specialist publications that will understand its significance.

4. PRESS CONFERENCES

A PRESS CONFERENCE is a gathering called with the specific intention of providing the media with opportunities to question key figures about important, new information. It is a waste of everyone's time if the information could be supplied to journalists in a simpler way, such as a press release or a phone call.

To be effective, a Press Conference needs to be planned carefully and run efficiently. If it is run well you gain publicity and both journalists and the public learn something new.



© Photo by Erik Luntang/eurp-images

Effective press conferences, even large ones, leave plenty of time for questions.

PLANNING

Before you decide to have a Press Conference, ask yourself the following questions:

- Why are you calling a Press Conference?
- Is there an easier, and cheaper, way of informing journalists (press releases, phone calls)?
- Do you have the resources to make it an impressive event?
- Have you got something new to present? (A report; new evidence about an important issue; a celebrity or expert to promote your cause?)
- Is it visual enough to attract television and photographic interest?

If you decide to go ahead, think carefully about:

TIMING

- Check that it does not clash with any other scheduled event (political, cultural, sporting, etc) which might overshadow your news.
- Make sure you organise it to fit in with any follow-up plans you have. (It is no good announcing a campaign if the campaign literature is not ready to go out.)
- Make sure you set it on a day that fits in with the deadlines of the publications and programmes you want to attract.
- Set it at a time that will allow journalists to get information back to newsrooms ahead of deadlines. (It is a good idea to get on the lunchtime radio/TV news – items used then are more likely to be used again later.)
- Invite people to arrive 30 minutes before you intend to start, to allow for latecomers (and refreshments – a convivial atmosphere allows people to talk and network, one of the most important aspects of the event).
- Make sure your key speakers will be available to do interviews later on the same day. (Journalists won't be happy to find that potential interviewees rush away as soon as the presentation is over.)
- Plan for the formal presentation AND questions to last no more than an hour; if you have a panel of speakers, each person should speak for no more than five minutes – journalists can read their speeches, but they want to be able to ask questions.

VENUE

- Make sure the location of the press conference is accessible, easy to find and well marked (provide a map if necessary).
- Make sure it is big enough for your purposes (there needs to be room for TV cameras to set up and photographers to move around).
- Ideally, have a reception area outside the room where the presentation will take place, for registration, refreshments, and greeting latecomers without disturbing the main event.
- If possible, make sure there are quiet places where one-to-one interviews can take place if required.
- Raised platforms at the back of the room allow television cameras a view without obstructing other participants.

RESOURCES

- Make sure your materials (reports, leaflets, stickers, etc) will be ready and available on the day.
- Make sure your equipment (microphones, computers, projectors, videos, lights, etc) has been tested and is working before the event starts (and make sure there are power sources available for media technicians).
- Make sure you have enough people to greet your speakers and register (and if necessary check the credentials of) the journalists and accommodate their needs (some will want to book interviews, etc).
- If possible arrange for name badges (in large type) so that everyone knows who is who.
- If you are offering refreshments either serve them as soon as people arrive, or announce that they will be served immediately after the presentation.

SPEAKERS

- Choose someone to chair the event who is a confident public speaker and knows enough about the topic and the other speakers.
- Make sure your speakers are properly briefed – ahead of the day and again on the day itself. They need to know the purpose of the event, what points they need to emphasise (and possibly what NOT to say), and whether they might be expected to do interviews after the event.
- Ask speakers to help you prepare a written version of what they are going to say – a brief document that can be distributed to journalists on the day and which they can ‘check against delivery’ and quote with confidence.
- Journalists do not want to hear long speeches, they want to be able to ask questions; speakers should focus on a couple of important points and refer journalists to the printed version of their speech.
- Make sure speakers are prepared to answer questions about everything that is in their printed speech, not just the points they emphasise when speaking.
- Think about what OTHER issues (related stories that are happening at the time) might be raised by journalists and prepare speakers to deal with them (or refuse to deal with them!).

ANNOUNCING THE EVENT

- Send out press notices well in advance – explain what the event is about and why it is important to attend (to receive copies of a new report, or campaign materials). Ask journalists to tell you if they are coming – most will not, because they have so many other things to deal with, so call the ones you really want to attend and persuade them!
- Don't just send the notices to the media. There may be other civil society organisations (eg non-governmental organisations – NGOs) or public bodies that would like to know what you are doing and who may want to send along observers. This can make for an interesting mix at the event and allows journalists to get quotes from other interested parties.

ON THE DAY

- Make sure you have press kits containing all the information you want journalists to take away (copies of reports, speeches, stickers, notepads, etc).
- Make sure your platform is properly arranged. There should be water for speakers, in case they dry up. Tables should be covered to the floor, to avoid unfortunate photos of people's legs.



© Photo by Erik Luntang/eup-images

Don't judge the success of a press conference by the number of attendees, rather by the outlets they represent. One agency news reporter can generate thousands of articles around the world.

- Most important of all, the table cloth, lecterns and backdrops should carry a logo or wording that helps to get your message across. 'Branded messages' stand a better chance of staying in people's minds if they appear in film and photographs of the event.

FOLLOWING UP THE EVENT

- Make sure you check what the newspapers, magazines and programmes that have attended publish about the event.
- Collect clippings, including of web-based coverage: Google searches of key words should give a feel of extent of coverage.
- Thank those who gave you good coverage and make use of it in future publicity materials.
- Correct those who got things wrong (and supply them with evidence to support your case).
- Try to measure the impact of the press conference. What level of coverage have you had? How many calls have you received about its content? How many people have asked for campaign material? How many invitations have you had to speak at other events?
- Have a meeting of everyone involved to discuss the relative success or failure of the event and what lessons you have learned for future occasions.
- Try to assess the real cost of the event. Has it been a wise use of human and financial resources, both in terms of publicity and public education?



© Photo by Erik Luntang/eyu-images

*Ensure that spokespeople are available for interviews after the press conference.
Conducting interviews outside meeting halls can add visual interest.*

5. MEDIA INTERVIEWS

When you are approached by a journalist for an interview, you can ask questions before agreeing to participate. Find out precisely what they want, who else they are interviewing, and who they consider their audience to be.

You are under no obligation to take part, but if you have invited media interest in your work, you should be prepared and welcome their interest.



© Photo by Erik Luntang/ep-images

You should already have done some simple research about the publications and radio and TV programmes most likely to use your material. When you are planning a campaign, listen to all the radio stations and watch the local news output on TV. Which programmes are likely to attract the type of audience you want to reach? You can target these publications and shows. Magazine programmes may be easier to get into than news bulletins, which tend to be much shorter. A few phone calls should give you the names of the relevant producers and journalists.

Pick your medium based upon your skills and the issues at hand. A good talker — with something interesting to say and an interesting way of saying it — can hold an audience far

better on radio than a 'talking head' on television. Television prefers stories with good visual elements. Local radio stations are always keen to interview local and national 'personalities' about local, and national, events and issues. They need you as much as you need them.

BE PREPARED

Make sure you have time to prepare. When the calls come in, give yourself time to get ready. If necessary tell them you will call them back, but make sure you do, and quickly — media agendas can change without warning.

- Check your facts, figures and source material — quoting reputable research adds authority to your case.
- Write down two or three key points you want to make — and use every opportunity to repeat them during the interview. Try out different ways of expressing them, so you can fit them into answers to any question (think about how politicians do it!).
- Think of brief anecdotes, preferably based on your own personal experience, that illustrate the points you want to make. 'Human interest' stories stick in people's minds and help to convince them that you know what you are talking about.

BUT:

- Do NOT learn a prepared script — you will sound insincere and you will become nervous about forgetting your 'lines'.
- Never walk out once an interview has started. Stand your ground.

REMEMBER

- The interviewer is not necessarily expressing a personal point of view (so don't get angry).
- The point of an interview is to get you to explain and defend your position. If you cannot do that, either your position is weak or you have not prepared properly.

Good journalists do their homework and know what they want to get out of an interview. They usually prepare some initial questions, but will allow the interview to develop from your answers.

- Before the interview starts, try to agree on what topics are likely to be covered. Explain the message you want to get across and ask what the first question will be.

- The reporter may have been told what to get from you, but any interview is better than none, so don't be afraid to negotiate.
- There is nothing wrong with recording the interview for your own records. Explain that to the reporter; it will help ensure that you get a fair interview.
- Make the reporter/TV crew at home — offer coffee, etc — and make sure you have a quiet place where you will not be interrupted. It helps to make sure that appropriate visual aids are at hand (campaign posters on walls, etc). Reporters and cameras notice everything — including the pictures of your family or inappropriate images. If you don't want the whole world to see them, make sure they are out of sight before your interviewer arrives.
- Radio presenters on live shows will have to deal with a wide range of topics and are unlikely to be as expert as you — or to have prepared as much as you will have. They are relying on you to make their programme interesting, so don't be afraid to take the initiative. If they get things wrong, correct them politely and with good humour — don't forget, listeners have a loyalty to them and you are the guest.

PRE-RECORDED INTERVIEWS

- One reason for pre-recording programmes is to make sure the topic is handled in a balanced and serious way. It is in everyone's best interest to make a good programme, so don't be afraid to ask for a chance to repeat your answer (especially if you made a mistake).
- Often the final edited version will not include the voice of the interviewers, so avoid one-word answers. Interviewers normally ask open-ended questions, but even if they ask a question that invites a one-word answer you should repeat the question at the start of your answer; this will make editing easier. For example: In answer to the question "How many people do you expect to come to the rally?" don't say "One thousand", say "We expect about a thousand people to join the rally". If you are asked "When do you expect the Minister to make a statement?" do not say "Next Tuesday", say instead "We expect the Minister to issue a statement next Tuesday".

DURING A BROADCAST INTERVIEW

- Be friendly in your replies and put a smile into your voice — you are trying to have a conversation with the listeners, not lecture them.



© Photo by Erik Luntang/eur-images

*Margot Wallström Vice-President of the European Commission being interviewed.
Pick places for interviews where you will be comfortable, away from distracting interruptions.*

- Keep your message simple and try not to confuse the listeners (who may know little about the topic or your organisation).
- Avoid jargon and abbreviations — you could lose your train of thought if the interviewer has to intervene and explain what you are talking about.
- Try not to talk too quickly and watch the interviewer for signs that you are going on for too long — that may be the reason s/he interrupts you. Casual listeners to a radio programme lose concentration if the same voice continues for too long (more than two minutes). In recorded interviews long, complicated answers may be edited out, which could reduce the effectiveness of your comments or even misrepresent your case.
- Don't be afraid to say "I don't know" or to apologise for mistakes — it will gain you more respect than pretending you know something when it is evident that you do not.
- Try to get someone to record your interview, then you can listen to it or watch it and learn how to be even more effective next time!
- If the programme goes well, ring up and congratulate those involved — it is a good way to be remembered and increases your chance of being asked back!
- If you feel you have legitimate complaints about the way the topic was handled, make sure you tell the broadcaster but always make sure your criticisms are rational rather than emotive. Use the formal regulatory mechanisms if a serious injustice has been done.

GOING ON TV

- Smart casual is the best dress code. Too formal and you could seem 'stuffy'; too casual or flamboyant and your message may not be taken seriously. Avoid wearing jewellery that might catch the lights and distract attention.
- Staff at the station will tell you if you need to be 'made up' – to deal with high colour or a gleam on your skin that might detract from your image.
- If you need to have documents with you, don't fiddle with them. Have a pencil and paper handy to jot down notes.
- If you have good visual aids (charts, pictures) let the producer know in advance so they can arrange to display them properly.
- Do not watch the monitors in the studio – you will be told which camera/s will be on you. However, you will be engaging in a conversation with an interviewer or other studio guests, so look at them and address them as you would in a normal conversation.



© Photo by Erik Luntang/eur-images

Even under pressure, try not to lose your cool – getting angry makes good TV, but detracts from your case.

- Try not to 'lose your cool' – getting angry makes good TV but detracts from your case. Stand up for yourself but try to find a way to express your indignation that will win sympathy from the audience. If someone is being rude or abusive, tell them and suggest that this is no way to discuss such an important topic.
- If there is a studio audience, don't play up to them but acknowledge them if they are supporting you – not by waving but by saying that people in the audience seem to agree with you.

PHONE-INS

- Radio and TV phone-in programmes are a really good way of airing issues and communicating important messages. If you hear that one is taking place that might provide an opportunity to get your message across, call up other campaigners and suggest that they try to get through and 'spread the word'.
- If you are invited on as a guest, remember that the callers are the important people – let them have their say and be considerate in your answers, and make sure the studio has a telephone number or e-mail address that people can use to get more information.

6. HEALTH COMMUNICATION ETHICS

Members of the public increasingly rely upon mass media for their information about public health issues. It is vital, therefore, that such information is as accurate and reliable as possible. That is a responsibility shared by health professionals, health advocates and journalists alike.

The ten simple clauses of the European Health Communications Network (EHCN) Guidelines (see below) provide a useful reminder that all health communicators must be prepared to take responsibility for the consequences of their output. Such guidelines work best when they become second nature to those working in the field; that requires taking 'ownership' of them through discussion, analysis and practice.

When inaccurate or exaggerated stories about health issues make headlines, journalists, who may not be experts in the field, will often blame those who provided them with the information in the first place. If your task is to communicate reliable messages to the public via the media, it is vital that you are confident that the messenger has 'got the message' and uses it in ways that are consistent with your own ethical guidelines.



© Photo by Corbis/Van Parys Media

Never intrude on private grief ... If this were your child, would you want the whole world to see her or him?

WHO EUROPEAN HEALTH COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK (EHCN) GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL HEALTH CORRESPONDENTS

First drafted in 1998 by the media ethics charity MediaWise, these guidelines were developed in consultation with health communicators, health correspondents and the International Federation of Journalists, over two years. The final version was adopted by the WHO European Health Communications Network as guidance for good practice.

1. First, try to do no harm. Human rights and the public good are paramount.
2. Get it right. Check your facts and your sources, even if deadlines are put at risk.
3. Do not raise false hopes. Be especially careful when reporting on claims for 'miracle cures' or potential 'health scares'.
4. Beware of vested interests. Ask yourself, 'Who benefits most from this story?'
5. Reject personal inducements. Always make it clear if material is being published as a result of sponsorship.
6. Never disclose the source of information imparted in confidence.
7. Respect the privacy of the sick, the disabled and their families at all times.
8. Be mindful of the consequences of your story. Remember that individuals who may be sick or disabled – especially children – have lives to live long after the media have lost interest.
9. Never intrude on private grief. Respect the feelings of the bereaved, especially when dealing with disasters. Close-up photography or television images of victims or their families should be avoided wherever possible.
10. If in doubt, leave it out.

The EHCN Guidelines provide a useful starting point for discussion with colleagues about how to engage responsibly in public discourse about health issues. Many may feel that these Guidelines already reflect their personal concerns and motivations, but some may also find that the constraints of their work environment make full compliance challenging.

1. FIRST, TRY TO DO NO HARM...

This sums up the social responsibility of all good communicators. However, doing no harm does not mean pretending that everything is fine, or hiding unpalatable information. It is far better to share information about problems rather than try to hide them. In attempting to tell the truth, journalists may expose unpleasant facts and the evidence to support them. It is one of the functions of a free press.

Press freedom is a responsibility journalists exercise on behalf of the public, but that freedom does not include the right to shout “Fire!” in a crowded room. You can help journalists to avoid causing unnecessary alarm or perpetuating myths by supplying them with the best available evidence in relation to the topic at hand.

2. GET IT RIGHT...

Journalism is not supposed to be about spreading rumours, but about seeking truth and backing up all claims with reliable evidence. However, in the digital age deadlines have become tighter, and journalists face growing pressure to ‘get the story’ – and get it first – which means increased chances of mistakes being made.

There is no such excuse when health professionals are seeking to communicate health messages. You will have had time and access to expertise to ensure that the information you offer is accurate and reliable. By building trusting relationships with media professionals, you should be in a strong position to challenge ‘myths’ and make evidence-based arguments for health.

Because the consequences of error in health or environmental issues can be so far reaching, it is important that health communicators provide reliable evidence to support their claims and to counter ‘scare stories’ based on ignorance or misrepresentation.

The media get the blame for the confusion that arises when conflicting claims are made by government departments, or different companies, and health campaigners. When conflicting health messages hit the headlines, make sure you draw the attention of journalists to the scientific evidence and encourage them to challenge those making the claims.

3. DO NOT RAISE FALSE HOPES...

Don’t be persuaded to give simple answers, when the answers should be complex. Good headlines win support for expensive research, but how many hopes have been dashed by media stories about ‘miracle cures’ that turn out to be illusory? It is far better for health communicators to make absolutely clear the precise status of claims, than to allow journalists

to leave with false impressions. And if false claims are published, challenge them immediately – provide evidence to back up your complaint and demand that corrections or clarifications are given equal prominence.

4. BEWARE OF VESTED INTERESTS...

Journalists should scrutinise the claims of campaigners and commercial companies, just as they would the promises of politicians. One of their first questions should be – who is paying for this and who benefits most? If you are seeking sponsorship for a campaign, always think about the extent to which the campaign might be harmed as well as helped by association with a particular sponsor.

Journalists have an instinct for conflicts of interest. Always make it clear where funding has come from and think through any weaknesses that might accrue to your project if it can be shown that someone is benefiting commercially from the campaign. It may not detract from the validity of the campaign, but it can call the motives into question.

Sometimes it is very difficult to know how to distinguish between well-researched, state-of-the-art medical ‘fact’ and claims that are unsubstantiated, over-optimistic or downright false. Your task is to ensure that the gullible are not hoodwinked – and that includes journalists.

Few journalists are skilled enough to be able to analyse the conflicting claims of rival manufacturers effectively. Most are unaware of the complex vetting regulations that surround patenting of medicines, validation of alleged cures or preventative measures, or the testing procedures for prescription drugs. Your knowledge may help them to reach balanced judgements. Nonetheless, the conventional journalistic test is to question the motives of those who seek to persuade the public.

5. REJECT PERSONAL INDUCEMENTS...

Public trust in journalists depends upon them being seen to be independent of vested interest. There is a clear distinction between the journalist who reports on a campaign with knowledge and conviction and the one who has been bribed or otherwise induced to back it.

Health and environmental stories have such a fundamental impact upon the public that it is vital for readers, viewers and listeners to know that the information they receive has not been influenced by corrupt practices. In order to be able to form their own conclusions it is important that they know all the facts – including where the money has come from for the campaign, article or editorial.

It is important to distinguish between facts that a journalist has verified through independent sources and information that has been supplied by a health authority or a commercial concern. There is a fundamental difference between publishing the results of tests to verify the claims of a manufacturer, for example, and simply promoting the claims of the manufacturer. It helps no-one if the public becomes cynical about the motives of journalists who promote particular products, health regimes, or environmental programmes.

The public respond differently to paid-for advertising and to editorial material, for example, which is why a clear differentiation is normally made between the two. You should not offer the 'carrot' of advertising revenue in return for favourable editorial coverage.

6. NEVER DISCLOSE SOURCES...

This is one that applies to you as a source. If you are the 'well-placed source' who has alerted a journalist to a scandal, for instance, it is a matter of professional integrity for journalists to protect you – otherwise there would never be whistleblowers and many important pieces of information would never reach the public domain.

If you are supplying journalists with information that could only have come from you – about dangerous or unethical practices in hospitals, or pharmaceutical companies, for example – it is important to make sure they know that you must not be revealed as the source.

On the other hand, you should not try to hide your identity if you are promoting a cause, especially if you are well-known. Your authority and integrity lend weight to your message.

7. RESPECT THE PRIVACY OF THE SICK...

No-one wants to be sick; and few would choose a life stigmatised by exclusion or pain. Yet illness and disability fascinate readers and sell newspapers.

If you are responsible for a campaign that will point the spotlight on people who might normally not receive such attention, it is much better to find some individuals who are willing to talk to journalists, and to act as the intermediary, than to leave it to journalists to find their own 'examples'. It can be annoying and time-consuming to be asked to find a suitable representative at short notice, but if you are seeking publicity you have a duty of care both to the media you have contacted and to those whose predicament you are seeking to publicise.

Plan ahead; collect 'case studies' (but obscure people's identities when supplying details to the media) and make sure you know who is willing to talk openly and who is willing to talk if their identities can be protected. Media training can help make these 'case reporters' even more effective.

8. BE MINDFUL OF THE CONSEQUENCES...

This is one area where you can help by advising a journalist of the potential consequences (especially if harmful) of reports about people whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

Of course the best thing to do is to ensure that the vulnerable are protected from intrusion from the outset – never introduce journalists to people who have not given their consent in advance to being interviewed or photographed. News is often about the unusual, and the more unusual or strange something may seem, the more risk there is that it will be sensationalised by the media.

When people do agree to tell their story as part of a campaign, talk through the potential consequences and make sure they are prepared for the questions that might be asked.



© Photo by Erik Luntang/eur-images

Never disclose sources ... This prison guard (with face hidden from camera) appeared in a television interview to talk about mental stress in the workplace.

9. NEVER INTRUDE ON PRIVATE GRIEF...

Death is the most private thing, although it may take place in the most public circumstances. It is important that the media report about disasters, but they cannot know before making an approach whether the bereaved will welcome such attention or find it intrusive and objectionable. This is where friends and health professionals can be helpful intermediaries. Your contacts might prove useful if you want to get a message through to those journalists who may wish to approach the bereaved.

Where large numbers have died, there are legitimate questions to be asked about the circumstances of death, whether it is a major transport accident or the result of an epidemic. Health professionals and health communicators can become a focal point of media enquiries. The best guide to your responses is your own reaction to the tragedy and your sense of what would be appropriate if a member of your own family were involved. What would you want to know, what does the public need to know, and how would you want the circumstances to be reported?

10. IF IN DOUBT, LEAVE IT OUT.

Few journalists will take this clause literally – it is far better to go in search of fresh information than to speculate. However, it can be perfectly legitimate to report speculation, provided it is properly sourced and clearly presented for what it is.

However, this should be an absolute rule for health communicators. You should never make false claims or allow journalists to leave with an impression which you do not have the facts to substantiate. Far better to tell them where there is doubt or controversy, and to encourage them to make the uncertainty clear, than take the risk that they will misinform the public – or distrust you in future.

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Based upon a selection of Public Relations Codes from different countries, notably the new guidelines issued by the National Union of Journalists (UK and Ireland) in September 2004.

1. Public relations and information officers should observe the highest professional and ethical standards in performing their duties.
2. They should defend the freedom of the press and the right of the public to balanced and reliable information at all times.
3. They should deal fairly and honestly with the public, their employers or clients and colleagues in the media.
4. They have a duty to ensure that their employers or clients acknowledge that goodwill and reputation are based on trust, and that effective public relations practice depends upon enhancing the organisation's reputation by truthful means and by ensuring that information disseminated is accurate and fair.
5. They should refuse to disseminate false or misleading information and should take care to avoid doing so inadvertently.
6. They should not engage in any practice likely to corrupt the integrity of the public relations profession, the organisations they represent, or the media.
7. They should not seek to 'buy' editorial space or air time, either by direct bribery or by promising to buy advertising space. Hospitality should not exceed normal courtesy. When producing material for 'advertorials' or advertising features, they should insist that the material is clearly identified for what it is.
8. They should provide independent professional advice to their employers or clients without fear or favour. Whether it is accepted or not, they should be willing to explain and defend decisions by the organisations they represent in truthful terms.
9. Those working in local or national government bodies should maintain professional political neutrality at work, unless their conditions of employment specifically allow otherwise.
10. Political considerations should not be an excuse for altering or modifying technical information when it is communicated to the public.

7. MEDIA ADVOCACY

Advocacy is speaking up, drawing attention to an issue, winning the support of key persons/organisations in order to influence policies and spending, and bring about change. Successful advocates usually start by identifying the people they need to influence and planning the best ways to communicate with them. They do their homework on an issue and build a persuasive case. They organise networks and coalitions to create a groundswell of support that can influence key decision-makers. They work with various media to help communicate their messages.¹

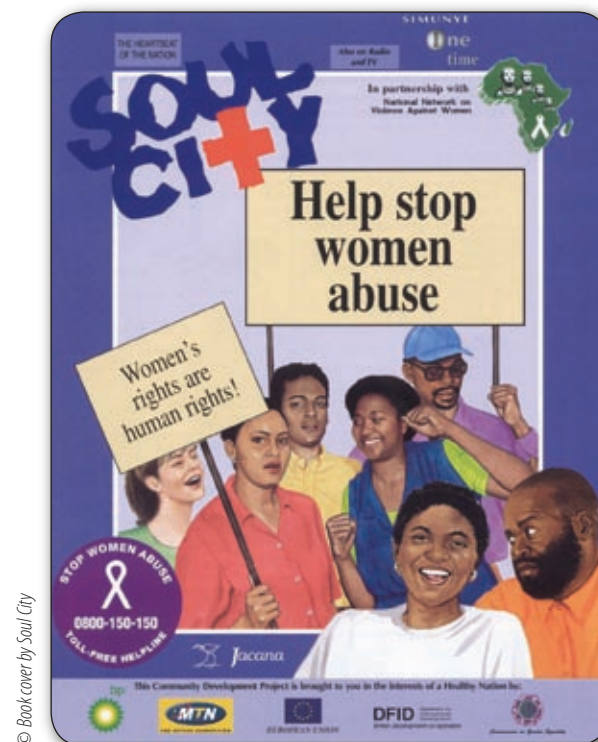
The challenge for health advocates is not just about aiming messages at people – telling people what to do and what not to do. It is much more about engaging people in being agents of their own change; to foster debate between citizens and between people and government; to focus more on the social context which encourages ill health rather than on individual behaviour.

Obviously, political protocol, media etiquette and social values vary widely from country to country: advocacy tactics that work in London might not be appropriate for Bishkek¹. But effective ideas and approaches can be taken across borders if advocates creatively adapt and apply them to their own situation and campaigns.



Demonstrating for workers' rights, Brussels, 2005.

¹ Adapted from *TB Advocacy - A Practical Guide* 1999. WHO 1999. <http://www.who.int>, accessed 20/10/05.



© Book cover by Soul City

Soul City's Violence against Women Booklet.

Soul City is a dynamic and innovative multi-media health promotion and social change project. Through drama (soap opera) and entertainment, Soul City reaches more than 16 million South Africans. For more information see www.soulcity.org.za.

Effective media advocacy is strategic. It means using different media in relation to and in support of, rather than instead of or isolated from, other approaches.

Policy struggles are not easily or quickly won, so community organising is an important way to build support for your desired outcome and apply pressure on those whose decisions you are trying to change. You must assess various policy options and see which have the best chance of success in your political environment and scout out potential allies and enemies in your effort. Then use your media to influence those who can influence the people able to make health-generating policy changes.

FIVE KEY 'MEDIA ADVOCACY' QUESTIONS

(adapted from Wallack, L, Woodruff, K, Dorfman, L, Diaz, I, 1999. News for a Change. An Advocate's guide to working with the Media. Sage Press.)

1. What is the problem?
2. What can be done about it?
3. Who has the authority to do this?
4. Who can influence this authority?
5. What 'mediated' messages will make these influential people act?



© Photo by EEN

A visual demonstration of a problem and its solution provides a good opportunity for the media.

One simple example would be to identify a particular health issue: for instance, traffic accidents around schools. You might be able to provide not only statistics and scientific data but also, more importantly, some particular case studies. You may work with parents, teachers, students from different neighbourhoods and help them find their voice. Stories about action by parents and children who are trying to do something about the problems may influence local politicians to introduce traffic restrictions, for instance. You may find the local media will make your campaign theirs.

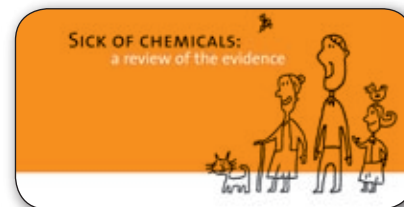
Shrewd campaigners will be sensitive to local trends and to public figures who are espousing important causes. If a local celebrity (musician, actor, sportsperson) is backing your campaign, you are more likely to win publicity. And if that person is committed, they will be willing to take part in events that will attract publicity and could even be your best advocate to encourage journalists to take up the issue.

10 TIPS TO PRODUCING EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY PUBLICATIONS

- Determine who you need to reach and why.
- Don't let several messages compete for your audience's attention, or your main message could be lost. Remember, you may only have a few seconds in which to catch their attention.
- If you are asking someone to take action (donate money, write a letter, make a phone call, etc), make it very clear how their action will have impact.
- Highlight the human aspect of the issue you're presenting. If an audience feels connected to or affected by the issue, they will be more willing to take action.
- The design will speak louder than words. Use compelling photographs, an unusual size or format, or some other novelty.
- If you need to present technical or scientific data, present it in layman's terms. Use only the data needed to support your message and avoid jargon.
- Don't assume that a publication needs to be glossy. Simple may be more effective.
- Too much information can overload the reader. A lengthy publication is not usually as effective as a concise one.
- If your publication appears regularly, brand it with a logo, stamp or regular features.
- If you invest a great deal of resources in researching and writing a publication, invest sufficient resources to ensure it is well-designed and extensively distributed.

"Sick of Chemicals" pocket-sized booklet provides journalists with information about the links between certain chemical agents and chronic diseases, such as bladder cancer and asthma. This brightly-coloured mini-guide gives greater insight into a subject that was being left out of debates on European

chemical safety - namely, the threat to health of many chemicals that are currently in use.



© EEN

8. SENSITISING THE MEDIA (MYTHS, STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION)

Most journalists are independent and inquisitive characters who dislike being told what to do – how to think, how to write, or how to present information – especially by people from outside the media. To the outsider this 'know-it-all' attitude may seem like arrogance. More often it is a defence mechanism adopted as a means of survival in what is a highly competitive and unforgiving trade.

Some journalists are indeed experts in their specialist field, but most have to 'pick things up as they go along'. They all appreciate informative advice, especially if it enhances their skills or their knowledge of a specialist subject, and you may be in a position to influence their attitudes – and use of language – especially about coverage of issues you know more about. In doing so you can improve public awareness, too.

Here are four examples of ways in which you can help journalists to be more effective:

1. MYTH-BUSTING

Consider producing simple 'myth-busting' information sheets that explain what is incorrect about some stereotypes and common misrepresentations about your area of concern (mental health, exercise, air-pollution, nutrition, etc).

It is always important to cite authoritative sources, so that journalists can check the veracity of your claims (you should encourage journalists to do so). Myth-busting panels can make excellent illustrations for print and broadcast features.

2. USE OF LANGUAGE

Language is a crucial element in the way people perceive, understand and respond to issues, so the choice of language by media professionals is very important. Journalists tend to use the language their audiences understand, but sometimes that can mean perpetuating myths and stereotypes (see above) that deserve to be challenged. Old habits die hard, however, and the notion of 'political correctness' has itself been devalued by misrepresentation.

If your issue tends to be presented in language that is unhelpful or inaccurate – find ways of explaining why different language could be used. And make sure that your material uses appropriate language.



SEEME CAMPAIGN, SCOTLAND

The Scottish SeeMe campaign aims to reduce stigma around mental health issues. Action/activities include a media watch group to monitor media reporting, the production of a set of guidelines for journalists on reporting mental health issues, and building up a resource bank of people who are willing to talk to the media about their experiences of stigma. Surveys of public attitudes towards people with mental health problems are carried out every two years and show a dramatic fall in the percentage of people who think people suffering from mental illness are dangerous since the start of the campaign.

For more information see website: www.seemescotland.org.

In many countries people with disabilities have begun to insist that journalists and public figures should take note of the way they see the world as a guide to more inclusive language. Here is a summary of some advice offered by disability groups:

- **Put the person first, not the disability**

Say 'Alexa Plovdiv has a physical disability which means she must use a wheelchair' rather than 'Unlike most people Alexa Plovdiv is confined to a wheelchair.'

Or 'Ivan Cracow has a mental illness' rather than 'Mentally-ill Ivan Cracow...'

Say 'People with physical disabilities find it difficult to enter public buildings with long flights of stairs' rather than 'Disabled people find it...'

- **Be accurate and specific – it helps people to appreciate the facts**

'Maria Digitalis is a person with Down's syndrome', she is not 'a mongol'.

'Rudi Turando has learning difficulties', he is not 'a retard' or 'thick/stupid'.

'Jovo Schokolov is dyslexic' is more accurate than saying he is 'wordblind'.

Homes or toilets designed to accommodate people with disabilities are 'accessible' not 'disabled homes/toilets' (think about it).

- **Being negative shows disrespect**

Stereotypes often develop from and rely upon negative and offensive terms – like 'crippled', 'handicapped', 'deformed' or 'defective' – which separate rather than include people. Simple, objective terms do not.

Consider your response to the following:

'Alexa Plovdiv is stricken with cerebral palsy'

'Alexa Plovdiv has cerebral palsy'

'Alexa Plovdiv is a spastic'

Some everyday expressions encourage negative attitudes to people with disabilities. Instead of saying 'blind to the truth', or 'deaf to reason', why not say 'unaware' or 'does not understand' or 'does not listen'?

- **Don't be afraid of disability**

A disability may be caused by a disease (like polio or rubella) but the disability is not the disease and disabilities are not contagious. Even if there are risks of infection it is more appropriate to relate the situation to the individual rather than the risk to others.

The Social Model of Disability is used by the majority of organisations of disabled people. We believe that it is society's physical, sensory, attitudinal and behavioural barriers which make us disabled, it is not our particular conditions or impairments. Society has also chosen language which is not what those of us in the Disability Movement would generally use.

Greater London Action on Disability (GLAD), UK

Which do you think is better:

'Jana Kodinski is HIV positive'

'Jana Kodinski is an AIDS carrier'

There is a big difference between exciting interest and inciting pity. Rather than relying upon emotive terms like 'unfortunate', 'pitiful' or 'plight', it should be enough to draw attention to the problems faced by people with disabilities because the world around them has chosen not to take their needs into account. When making comparisons why not say 'people without disabilities' rather than 'most people' or 'normal people'? What is 'normal', anyway?

There is nothing wrong with using everyday expressions like 'Shall we go for a walk?' when addressing a wheelchair user, or 'Do you see what I mean?' to a blind person.

See *Interviewing people with disabilities*

http://www.presswise.org.uk/display_page.php?id=704

3. GUIDELINES FOR MEDIA PROFESSIONALS

Journalists know that every special interest group has its own agenda. They may find your suggestions helpful but they prefer to work to their own rules. Like most of us, they object to approaches that blame them for the ills of the world.

Guidelines for reporting difficult issues, developed with the input of people affected by the problem, can create a community standard and in some cases even 'save lives'. For example, in the context of reporting suicide, 'sensitive reporting' would include:

- consideration for the feelings of relatives;
- avoiding detailed descriptions of suicide methods to prevent 'copycat' suicides;
- acknowledging the complexities of suicidal behaviour; and
- providing information about where help and advice can be found.

4. PROVIDE RELIABLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION

As with most issues, public health has many different 'angles'. Don't expect journalists just to take your word on trust. Provide them with alternative sources of reliable information so they can check for themselves.

9. RISK AND CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

COMMUNICATING 'RISK'

Attempting to provide members of the public with information about how best to avoid risks that might have a negative impact on their health can itself be a 'risky business', especially if 'one-size-fits-all' mass communication techniques are employed - using general advertisements or public relations campaigns, rather than one-to-one communications via leaflets or consultations.

Journalists are very likely to pick up on 'public health warnings' because they have potential as 'good stories' with eye-catching headlines. The challenge for health communicators is to get their messages across without generating ill-informed 'scare stories'. Yet rare and unusual stories are the ones most likely to be published. Journalists and the general public are going to want some indication of the 'level' of risk, and great care must be taken about what figures or comparators are offered. The skill is to provide journalists with what they need – clear and reliable information and evidence – without falling into the tempting trap of supplying them with what they might prefer – sensational stories and statistics.



Journalists covering SARS epidemic.

Risk communication attempts to provide information that helps people make the best possible decisions about their well-being as it relates to some event or threat, while accepting the imperfect nature of their choices. Special care must be given to both planning and execution of public information campaigns, when communicating risks that could result in 'scare stories'.

In such cases it is vital to ensure that:

- sufficient authoritative detail is provided;
- there is clarity in explaining apparent contradictions in evidence or disagreement among experts; and
- the public are made aware of what actions the authorities are planning and why.

FRIGHT FACTORS

(Communicating about Risks to Public Health: Pointers to Good Practice, UK Department of Health pamphlet, p.5, 1999)

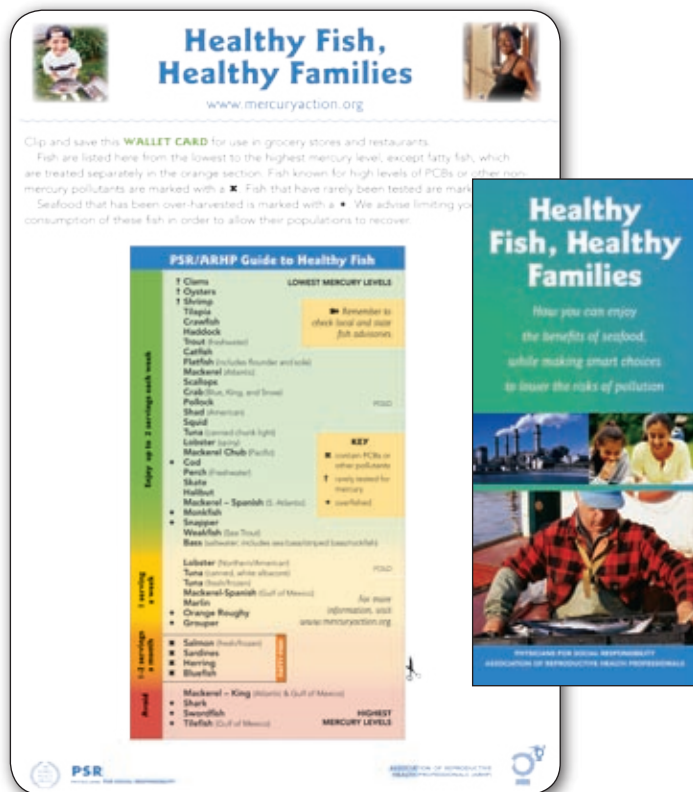
Risks are generally more worrying (and less acceptable) if perceived:

1. to be **involuntary** (eg exposure to pollution) rather than voluntary (eg dangerous sports or smoking);
2. as **inequitably distributed** (some benefit while others suffer the consequences);
3. as **inescapable** by taking personal precautions;
4. to arise from an **unfamiliar** or **novel source**;
5. to result from **man-made**, rather than natural sources;
6. to cause **hidden and irreversible damage**, eg through onset of illness through many years of exposure;
7. to pose some particular **danger to small children** or **pregnant women** or more generally to future generations;
8. to threaten a form of **death** (or illness/injury) **arousing particular dread**;
9. to damage **identifiable** rather than anonymous victims;
10. to be **poorly understood** by science;
11. as **subject to contradictory statements** from responsible sources (or, even worse, from the same source).

When planning to announce information about risks it is important to consider inferences that might be drawn from the nature of the material supplied to journalists and the way it is presented.

Inevitably the media will devote more time and space to stories that:

- relate to large segments of the population;
- display strong 'human interest' values;
- titillate; or
- hint at wrong-doing.



Risks are perceived as less worrying if there is some action that individuals can take to protect themselves and their families.

MEDIA TRIGGERS

(Communicating about Risks to Public Health: Pointers to Good Practice, UK Department of Health pamphlet, p.17, 1999)

A possible risk to public health is more likely to become a major story if the following are prominent or can readily be made to become so:

1. Questions of **blame**;
2. Alleged **secrets** and **cover-ups**;
3. **"Human interest"** through identifiable heroes, villains, dupes, etc (as well as victims);
4. Links with **existing high-profile issues or personalities**;
5. **Conflict**;
6. **Signal value**: the story as a portent of further ills ("What next?");
7. **Many people exposed** to the risk, even if at low levels ("It could be you!");
8. Strong **visual impact** (e.g. pictures of suffering);
9. Links to **sex** and/or **crime**.

When communicating risk it is important to remember that the key task is not to prescribe how people should behave, but to engage with a variety of 'publics' so that people are able to make their own decisions about how to counter the risk.

The way different groups of people respond to risks and information is bound up with wider values, including how the message itself is framed (eg 'lives lost' versus 'lives saved'). Attitudes to risk depend critically on perceived benefits – or lack of them.

Knowing your audience is the best way to avoid added problems of misinterpretation. Develop a portfolio of messages with conclusions supported by different lines of argument as well as styles of delivery to assist different social and economic groups to appreciate the risk to them.

Use appropriate media (this may mean specialist or 'niche' media rather than general news outlets) to reach target audiences. Supplying reliable information from sources they trust is essential. It might have to include explanations about the significance of any disagreements there may be among 'experts'.

SEVEN CARDINAL RULES OF RISK COMMUNICATION

(Covello, V and Allen, F, 1988, as summarised in US Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Risk Communication Primer edited by Max Lum and Tim Tinker, 1994.)

1. Accept and involve the public as a partner

Your goal is to produce an informed public, not to defuse public concerns or replace actions.

2. Plan carefully and evaluate your efforts

Different goals, audiences, and media require different actions.

3. Listen to the public's specific concerns

People often care more about trust, credibility, competence, fairness, and empathy than about statistics and details.

4. Be honest, frank, and open

Trust and credibility are difficult to obtain; once lost, they are almost impossible to regain.

5. Work with other credible sources

Conflicts and disagreements among organizations make communication with the public much more difficult.

6. Meet the needs of the media

The media are usually more interested in politics than risk, simplicity than complexity, danger than safety.

7. Speak clearly and with compassion

Never let your efforts prevent your acknowledging the tragedy of an illness, injury, or death. People can understand risk information, but they may still not agree with you; some people will not be satisfied.

MEDIA MANAGEMENT IN TIMES OF CRISIS¹

Crisis communication is different from risk communication. In a crisis, scientific evidence forms only part of the decision-making: media and political considerations also have to be addressed.

¹ Adapted from WHO Regional Office for Europe, Sixth Futures Forum on crisis communication. www.who.euro.int (accessed 05/03/05)

One of the most important lessons is not to wait for a crisis to occur before developing a 'crisis communications plan'. Careful preparation and planning can help you to respond quickly and deal with the stressful emergency while avoiding common mistakes.

Crisis communication is a basic responsibility of professionals and authorities and the goal should be to use communication throughout the crisis to inform, to persuade and to motivate. Each crisis is different in terms of context, timing and the stakeholders involved, so a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is not possible.

However, the basic principles about crisis communications include:

- Being proactive about communicating: start as soon as possible.
- Combining information about risks and exposure with practical information about what people can do for themselves.
- Communicating simply, transparently and in a non-judgemental and timely way.
- Being clear about what you know and what you do not know (yet).
- Being consistent in your messages and accurate with facts and figures.
- Respecting individual and media concerns and addressing the public interest.
- Organising structured contacts with press and, where possible, joint media events with relevant authorities and stakeholders.

BAD PUBLICITY

Sometimes an organisation can find itself in the news for all of the wrong reasons. This can result from or provoke a period of crisis. For example, there might be allegations of wrongdoing, negative commentary, public attacks by opponents, a spill-over from an internal conflict, etc, which can undermine the credibility of your organisation and limit your ability to operate. Under these circumstances, it is critically important that communication is used effectively.

An organisation that is able to address public concerns about an issue or negative publicity about itself has an opportunity to acquire greater visibility and improve its reputation. Mishandling of a crisis, refusing to deal with media enquiries or confusing and contradictory statements lead to a perception of having something to hide.

There are a few key points to bear in mind:

- Be available to answer queries – silence only encourages rumours.
- Announce new developments as they occur – keeping quiet sounds like you have something to hide.

- Be consistent in media relations — use a single spokesperson and make sure that they are fully briefed.
- Agree on key messages to be communicated and stick to them when responding to media questions.
- Don't get involved in personal attacks against other individuals or organisations.
- Avoid being defensive; put the issue or problem into a wider context.
- Clarify inaccuracies or factual mistakes.
- When genuine errors have occurred, acknowledge them.
- Outline what is being done to rectify mistakes and ensure that they will not happen again.
- Understand that crises are temporary and they should not define your communication strategy.

When the crisis recedes or the situation is resolved, it is a good idea to evaluate how well you communicated and update your crisis plan. You could follow up the media contacts established and explore what other stories the journalists might be interested in and how best you can support them.



© Photo by Carbis/Van Parys Media

A suction pipe is used to clear crude oil from the beach on the Pembrokeshire coast, Wales, UK. Pictures of people doing something to overcome the 'environmental disaster' can convey a sense of hope.

10. CAMPAIGN PLANNING

Few campaigns ever capture the popular imagination – unless the campaigners are imaginative, persistent and have a persuasive argument, or a lot of money! And even expensive advertising campaigns can fail.

Just because YOU decide to run a campaign doesn't make it newsworthy. People are always running campaigns and campaigns can run out of steam because they 'become part of the landscape', unless campaigners keep finding new ways of reminding the public of the importance of the message. If you have lots of money you can produce leaflets, posters, newspaper, magazine, film and TV adverts, and employ PR companies. The problem usually is how to do it with limited funds . . . and earnest campaigners often think the media will, indeed should, do it for them.

Mass media won't. It is not their job. If you cannot afford to buy advertising space, you have to demonstrate that your campaign is newsworthy.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR CAMPAIGN NEWSWORTHY

Make it unusual, amusing, or even shocking.

Is there something genuinely new about the message you are trying to communicate?

For instance, is it based upon new scientific information or upon a recent discovery that this issue is peculiar to a particular area or group of people?

Are you providing a new way of looking at the issue?

Understanding how public health issues are 'framed' and perceived by the general public will be crucial to the success of any campaign. 'Framing' relates to the 'spin', the way perceptions related to an issue are managed and manipulated. Frames create the context within which policy debate takes place. Simply put, if you get people asking the wrong questions, the answers do not matter. For example, marketing people hired by the tobacco industry have been very successful in framing tobacco issues around freedom, autonomy, and choice as opposed to public health. Key to the success of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control was the ability of public health advocates to reframe the issue around public health concerns, eg "Tobacco Kills, Don't be Duped".

Different target groups may be working from different frames. Understanding dominant frames allows us to create appropriate messages.



© Poster WHO

Adapted from a poster developed by the California Department of Health, the 'Bob' posters were used as part of the campaign to support the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control which has now come into force and gives the world an instrument with which to systematically tackle all aspects of tobacco control, including agriculture and finance, trade and commerce, education and health.

Is the campaign taking some unusual form?

For instance, are you asking people who support you to wear something distinctive? If you are planning something like this always make sure that from the start you have plenty of people in the public eye willing to wear the campaign emblem, especially local media workers, public figures and politicians – think of the AIDS red ribbon.

Is there a celebrity willing to help launch the campaign?

Make sure you choose someone whose personality, skills and image will enhance the campaign – a sportsman with a history of domestic violence may be a good person to promote counselling services for men but he may not be the best advert for a campaign about healthy living.

Is there something visually exciting about the campaign or its launch?

If you want TV coverage you must make sure you have something visual to offer – in which case the papers and magazines will want pictures too. Devise a good photo-opportunity: release lots of colourful balloons, organise a fancy-dress mini-marathon, get the Mayor to do a bungee jump, or get a well-known local celebrity to autograph a gigantic banner...

How much can you afford to spend – and where is the money coming from?

Think very carefully about budgets – a campaign can fail if you suddenly find you do not have enough money to complete it. Try and devise a detailed budget that takes everything

into account — printing, travel, extra staff, telephone and postage costs; be clear about where you are getting your funds from and what the sponsors want from you in return for their investment.

Do you have the right people to make the campaign work?

Campaigns depend not only on staff but also on volunteers (to hand out leaflets or take part in publicity stunts) and experts who can back up the message you are trying to communicate. It is no good launching a campaign when key experts will not be available — check their holiday plans!

Have you thought about follow-up activities?

Successful campaigns will generate interest and requests for help and information if someone sees an article, a poster, or TV programme or hears a radio piece about it. Have you made arrangements for someone to handle enquiries? Have you prepared (enough) information packs to deal with anticipated demand — and do you have a contingency plan so that they are not wasted if the calls do not come (for instance a mini-campaign, delivering them to schools or colleges or workplaces at a later date)? Have you made arrangements to record these inquiries, and to follow them up to find out what they thought of the campaign and how useful they found the materials?

FITNESS FOR PURPOSE

All of this requires careful planning and the first question must be:

What do we hope to achieve?

Make sure you have a clear answer that everyone connected with the campaign understands.

Don't be too 'clever' in your campaign slogans — remember, you probably know a lot more than the people you are trying to influence, so try to understand your slogan and message from their point of view. There are many different ways of expressing a simple message, and many ways of receiving it. Who the message is coming from may determine people's reaction to it.

How are we going to achieve it?

Your answer will depend to a large extent upon the human and financial resources at your disposal. By making best use of limited resources some campaigns can be very effective without being too costly.



© Poster by ICN
The International Council of Nurses selects a theme for International Nurses Day each year. This theme is adapted by their member associations on a country-by-country basis.

Students love stunts, for instance, and fifty to one hundred people can make an impressive and photogenic crowd if they all turn up outside a well-known location wearing the same colour clothes, or carrying the same posters or releasing helium-filled balloons for a photo-opportunity — especially if you can give added significance to the numbers (fifty deaths on the roads in one week, or a hundred new hospital beds needed in the region).

Another technique is to organise a letter-writing campaign — to the media or to public figures and politicians. Draft a letter expressing your concerns and get supporters to send them in as their contribution to the campaign.

The very fact that lots of people are writing similar letters could be newsworthy in itself. They can get politicians very nervous about whether they are missing an opportunity to win friends/votes. If your letter gets published in the press, organise people to respond, supporting or even challenging your point of view. This is a great way to deliver information and messages and may persuade editors to look into the issues — and become advocates in their own right.

How are we going to measure our effectiveness?

You need to have some means of evaluating your campaign. This is one of the best ways of persuading sponsors that your efforts are worthwhile. Build in time and resources to allow you to measure the relative success or failure of your effort. Lessons learned from one campaign will inform your next one.

THE HIV/AIDS MEDIA AUDIT CHECKLIST

1. Is HIV/AIDS being covered in the news? By whom? In which channels?
2. What are the main themes and arguments presented on various sides of the issue?
3. What's missing from the news coverage?
4. How are issues being framed?
5. Who is reporting, campaigning, advertising on HIV/AIDS or stories/products related to it?
6. Who are appearing as spokespeople?
7. Who is writing op-ed pieces or letters to the editor?
8. What solutions are being proposed? By whom?
9. Who is named or implied as having responsibility for solving the problem?
10. What stories, facts, or perspectives could help improve the case for this campaign?



Booklet and postcard produced to highlight the key environmental health problems of children.
Produced for World Health Day, April 2003.

11. CAMPAIGN EVALUATION

Public health information campaigns require investment in scarce human and financial resources. It is important to measure the value of such investment, in terms of money, time, and effort. Measures for evaluating the effectiveness of public relations campaigns have become more and more sophisticated, but some techniques are more sensible than others.

Simply measuring the number of column centimetres devoted to your campaign in print (quantitative analysis) may provide impressive figures, but they don't mean much if you do not know what type of publications were measured. What is their circulation area? What are their circulation figures? Who are their target audiences? Which ones are read by the people you want to contact?

To discover whether your investment has been wise and effective, it needs to be measured against clearly defined objectives you have set yourself at the outset (qualitative analysis).

Qualitative analysis yields more useful data. If you engage an agency to analyse your media coverage make sure you know what systems of measurement are being used. Some agencies 'weight' messages by scales of -5 to +5, delivering a weekly report to their clients – but may not discriminate between one type of publication and another. Unless you check, you may discover later that coverage in a small-circulation specialist journal has been 'weighted' the same as for a mass circulation newspaper. This could distort your perception of how effective the campaign has been. However, a specialist journal aimed at nurses, or sexually active single men, for instance, may reach more of your target group than the general newspaper.

It is vital to know what actual messages the coverage is communicating. Not all coverage is effective coverage. Measuring column centimetres will not tell you whether the coverage was negative (critical) or positive. Public relations (PR) agencies, in countries where the PR profession is highly developed, use systems to measure the strength of positive or negative messages. This often makes sense.

For example, if you want to use a campaign to communicate a number of complementary messages (that smoking is bad for health, unpleasant to non-smokers, costly, and difficult to give up), you will want to see how many of these messages came through in the resulting coverage. It may be possible to calculate how many of your target audience will have received the message by counting the number of times these messages

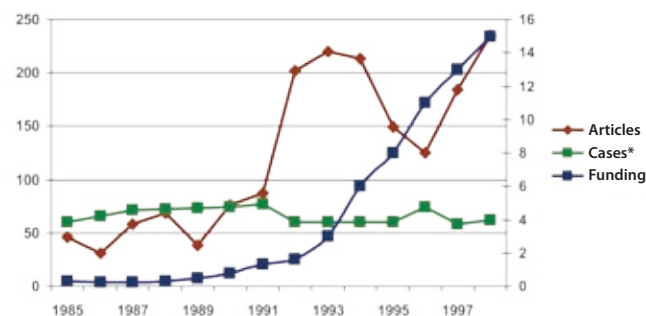
appeared in which publications against the publications' circulation figures and readership demographics.

Some agencies use formulae which estimate that, in financial terms, editorial coverage is worth, say, three times as much as a paid-for advertisement carried in the same newspaper or magazine. This is based partly on the notion that readers know the difference – and trust editorials more. This is supposed to help clients ascertain whether they have obtained value for money. You could use such analysis to decide whether the amount of money and staff time you put into a campaign was worth it – but this is always difficult with health campaigns, where the key determinant of success is whether people have acted upon the messages, which is a much more difficult question to answer in the short to medium term.

The best advice in evaluation exercises is: keep it simple, and keep it common sense.

TB cases, media coverage and the WHO Global TB Program Budget

(Sources: Kraig Klautt, Massive Effort Campaign; WHO Global Tuberculosis Report, 2000)



Graph shows how even with a stable number of TB cases, increased media coverage is strongly associated with increased funding.

AS A HEALTH CAMPAIGNER, SOME OF THE ISSUES YOU MIGHT CONSIDER ARE:

How much did you spend?

Look at the budget and itemise everything, including staff hours. Keep an eye on hidden costs, such as the extra telephone time, travel or reprinting costs needed to respond when you get enquiries – these can continue for a long time after a campaign launch.

Do not look only at external factors when you evaluate.

Bring the campaign team together for a debriefing. Talk about the efforts they put in. Did people have to work late to get the materials ready? Were there extra costs which you did not expect? Did telephone enquiries increase so quickly that you did not have enough staff – or enough telephone lines? Write up a short report based on the information you gather and use it to inform the planning stage of your next campaign.

Measure public awareness of the issues before and after a campaign.

This can be both complicated and expensive. Partnership with academic, public opinion, media or market research organisations can help. Persuade a newspaper to run a reader poll about your main message; give them some exclusive part of your campaign, and get them to run the poll again in the days after a launch. Or try and get a polling agency to add some questions to one of its regular public opinion polls – this ‘piggy-backing’ can be cost-effective if you have invested a lot in a campaign. Proxy variables such as increased requests for HIV testing, increased sales of condoms, etc, may also provide some useful data here.

Have you succeeded in shifting the focus of debate?

If you have been aiming at ‘reframing’ your issue, are policy-makers now debating on your terms, and asking relevant health and environment impact questions?

Examine what your opponents are doing.

If you are promoting sensible drinking, you may have a backlash from the brewers and alcohol retailers, or from bars. Look at the strength of their messages – what are their arguments? Are they persuasive? Prepare your response and take every (media) opportunity to challenge their assertions. Use their reactions and your responses in planning your next campaign.

Were you able to implement your ‘follow-up’ strategy?

If someone saw an article or TV show, or heard a radio programme about the campaign, and made contact with you – were you able to answer their questions and provide them with accessible information, or refer them to appropriate authorities? Did you log these enquiries and ask these people if they would like to stay on a mailing list?

Have you found out what your target groups thought about the campaign and your information packs?

Follow up with the people who called you for information a few weeks later: ask them what made them call you and what they thought of the information you sent them. What positive action have they taken as a result? Make a note of their replies and use them in

future campaigns, or to inform your planning. Get a ‘focus group’ of people to give you feedback – not only on what they thought of the look of the materials and the messages in them, but whether they found materials useful.

Did the campaign gain a higher profile for your top spokesperson?

This may well be an objective for you, so find ways to measure this. Was your top woman or man interviewed on the main national radio and television news bulletins, or did s/he appear on a ‘flagship’ current affairs programme during the campaign week or soon after? As part of your follow-up you might want to place a profile of the top person in a high circulation magazine, or get them invited to speak at an important conference – so the message keeps getting out.

EVALUATING SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGNING

- Did you get value for money?
- Is there evidence that the public is more aware of the issues than before?
- How have your opponents responded?
- What difference has the campaign made within health institutions?
- How did your target group/s respond to the information materials?
- Do key figures in the campaign have a higher public profile than before?
- Have you publicised evidence of your success?
- Has your campaign implemented its ‘follow-on’ strategy?

12. SOCIAL MARKETING

Cause-related marketing is defined as a commercial activity by which a company with an image, product or service to market builds a relationship or partnership with a cause or charity for mutual benefit. CRM has emerged as a strategic marketing tool for differentiating brands and adding value to them.

From Brand Spirit: How Cause Related Marketing Builds Brands
Hamish Pringle & Marjorie Thompson (John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2001)

Building partnerships with commercial companies to promote health messages is fraught with ethical and practical problems, but can yield amazing results — for both parties.

There are a variety of reasons why a commercial company might wish to be associated with a particular health issue — perhaps employees are affected in some way (smoking, for instance) or members of the family of a senior executive may have contracted a preventable disease (eg HIV/Aids).

In recent years a movement has grown encouraging companies to consider their social responsibilities, both in terms of trading relationships (Fair Trade) and in terms of public health (labelling of salt and sugar content, for instance).

Companies are increasingly happy to develop sponsorship partnerships — with the arts, schools, or sport, for instance. It improves their visibility and makes a statement about their engagement with the public. If they can see that visible links with health campaigns will improve their market share — or at least will not damage it — they are more easily persuaded. Indeed, most companies that get involved in this type of advocacy work expect to see an improvement in their market positioning.

Customers are sensitive to a company's image and may want to be associated with the issues a particular brand has adopted, and the brand gains kudos from being associated with popular and socially improving causes (anti-racism, for example).

Thirty seven and a half million consumers have indicated that linking a product or service to a charity or cause could positively influence their buying behaviour and perceptions of companies.

Research International, 1999

This approach takes time, requires research, and needs to be carefully monitored. A fast food chain may be willing to back a 'healthy eating' campaign to deflect criticism of its products. Small health food companies may not have the resources to promote such a campaign on their own, but if you can get them to combine as sponsors of a mass distribution 'healthy eating' booklet — which advertises them, too — it may be much easier for them to get involved. You just have to make sure their claims stand up to scrutiny!



© Photo by Corbis/Van Parys Media

Beatle John Lennon and wife Yoko Ono in bed during a press conference at the Amsterdam Hilton Hotel. Engaging celebrities can greatly enhance media interest in your issue.

You have to think in terms of vested interests: is what is good for the sponsors also good for your campaign? They may stand to gain more than you in terms of their public standing or sales, but if it helps to improve health awareness you will have achieved your aim. However, any criticism of them or their products will also reflect badly on you too, and that can be catastrophic. Cigarette companies are keen sponsors of events, but health campaigners are likely to lose credibility if they accept donations from hazard-merchants.

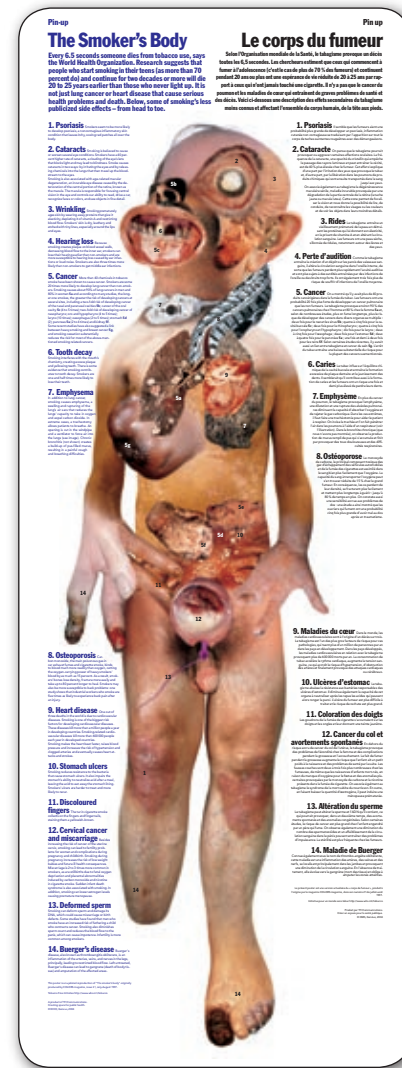
The key to successful negotiations with a commercial company is to ensure that you can demonstrate some synergy between their image, product or service and your campaign. A fashion jean company marketing to young people may be an ideal company to work with on an anti-drug-abuse campaign; but manufacturers of underwear may not want to be associated with a public awareness campaign about sexually-transmitted diseases or skin disorders.

One of the important benefits that can derive from such partnerships is that larger companies conduct market research so that they know their customers. That means you will know who is most likely to pick up your message. The company will want to know its impact upon their customers and their brand image and may be willing to include questions to which you want to know answers.

One important consideration when promoting socially aware products through social awareness campaigns is availability — and that includes price. It is no good promoting an idea if the majority of the people who need to respond cannot afford the products. Similarly, promoting breast cancer screening in countries where mammography is unavailable (for example) does not make sense either.

Campaigners who join up with commercial companies must appreciate that there can be a substantial cost involved for the company, which has to be recouped from increased sales. Even giving away leaflets costs money (for design, production and distribution) and while the company may be prepared to donate these costs initially, they cannot sustain the campaign unless their products sell.

It is a balancing act for both parties. There are issues of emphasis and commercial confidentiality at stake. Campaigners will be bitterly disappointed if they are left out of planning and evaluation and feel that their message is being misrepresented. But investors will quickly object if profits fall because a company espouses a cause in a way that has a negative effect upon sales or brand image.



© Poster by WHO

Benetton, the Italian fashion leader for adolescents, developed this poster for a special issue of their Colors magazine. The "Smokers Body" went on to be the most demanded poster from WHO Tobacco Free Initiative.

USEFUL WEBLINKS

The non-exhaustive list below of international institutions and agencies provides key information on data, statistics, policy reports and events to which you may want to link your communication activities.

United Nations

- World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int>
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP): <http://www.unep.org>
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): <http://www.unfccc.int>
- UN Commission for Sustainable Development: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd.htm>
- The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS): <http://www.unaids.org>
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): <http://www.undp.org>

Professional and Patient Organizations

- World Medical Association (WMA): <http://www.wma.net>
- International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP): <http://www.fip.org>
- International Council of Nurses (ICN): <http://www.icn.ch/>
- International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO): <http://www.patientsorganizations.org>

Journalism Organisations and Media Regulators

- Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe (AIPCE): <http://www.presscouncils.org/html/frameset.php?page=aipec>
- Association of Health Care Journalists (USA): <http://www.ahcj.umn.edu>
- Communications Initiative: <http://www.comminit.com/healthcomm>
- Informed Health Online: <http://www.informedhealthonline.org>
- International Federation of Environmental Journalists: <http://www.ifej.org>
- International Federation of Journalists (IFJ): <http://www.ijf.org>
- International Press Institute (IPI): <http://www.freemedia.at>

- The MediaWise Trust (formerly PressWise): <http://www.mediawise.org.uk>
- Medical Journalists Association (UK): <http://www.mja-uk.org>
- Organization of Newspaper Ombudsmen: <http://www.newsombudsmen.org/what.htm>
- World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC): <http://www.amarc.org>
- World Association of Newspapers (WAN): <http://www.wan-press.org/>

Press Agencies and information distributors

- ANSA News Agency: <http://www.ansa.it>
- APTN: <http://www.aptn.com>
- Associated Press News Agency: <http://www.ap.org>
- Bloomberg LP: <http://www.bloomberg.com>
- Communications Initiative: <http://www.comminit.com/healthcomm>
- DPA (German Press Agency): <http://www.dpa.com>
- Information Telegraph Agency of Russia (ITAR-TASS): <http://www.itar-tass.com>
- Jewish Chronicle News Agency: <http://www.thejc.com>
- M2 Communications: <http://www.m2.com>
- Maghreb Arabe Press: <http://www.map.co.ma>
- Press Association (PA): <http://www.pa.press.net>
- Press Trust of India: <http://www.ptinews.com>
- Reuters: <http://www.reuters.com>
- Rex Features: <http://www.rexfeatures.com>
- Russian Information Agency – Novosti (RIA-Novosti): <http://www.rian.ru>
- Universal Pictorial Press & Agency: <http://www.uppa.co.uk>
- World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC): <http://www.amarc.org>
- Xinhua News Agency of China: <http://www.xinhuanet.com>

EUROPEAN LINKS, WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH:

European Union

- Health and Consumer Protection Directorate General of the European Commission (DG SANCO): http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm
- Environment Directorate General of the European Commission (DG Environment): http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/index_en.htm
- European Parliament Committee for Environment, Public Health and Food Safety: http://www.europarl.eu.int/comparl/envi/default_en.htm
- Council of the European Union: <http://ue.eu.int>

WHO EURO/UNECE

- World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe – Environmental Health: http://www.who.dk/healthtopics/HT2ndLvlPage?HTCode=environmental_health
- World Health Organization European Environment and Health Committee: <http://www.euro.who.int/eehc>
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE): <http://www.unece.org>
- Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters: <http://www.unece.org/env/pp>

INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN NETWORKS: SPECIALIST INFORMATION

The list below includes European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) and EPHA Environment Network (EEN) member organisations who work on a variety of public health and environmental health issues at a European or global level. Their websites offer useful material on specific issues, target groups and settings. Many of them also provide good examples of advocacy materials, campaigns and press releases.

- Association of European Cancer Leagues (Belgium): <http://ecl.uicc.org>
- Association of Natural Medicine in Europe (Germany): <http://www.anme.info>
- EURO CARE (Belgium): <http://www.eurocare.org>
- EuroHealthNet (Belgium): <http://www.eurohealthnet.org>

- Europa Donna (Italy): http://www.cancerworld.org/cancerworld/home.aspx?id_sito=5&id_stato=1
- European AIDS Treatment Group (Belgium): <http://www.eatg.org>
- European Coalition of Positive People (United Kingdom): <http://www.ecpp.co.uk>
- European Consumer Safety Association (The Netherlands): <http://www.ecosa.org>
- European Disability Forum (Belgium): <http://www.edf-feph.org>
- European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (Belgium): <http://www.efanet.org>
- European Heart Network (Belgium): <http://www.ehnheart.org>
- European Network for Smoking Prevention (Belgium): <http://www.ensp.org>
- European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (Belgium): <http://www.physio-europe.org>
- European Respiratory Society (Switzerland): <http://www.ersnet.org>
- European Academy of Allergology and Clinical Immunology (Belgium): <http://www.eaaci.net>
- European Association of Hospital Managers (Belgium): <http://www.eahm.eu.org>
- European Chiropractors' Union (Belgium): <http://www.chiropractic-ecu.org>
- European Council for Classical Homeopathy (United Kingdom): <http://www.homeopathy-ecch.org>
- European Shiatsu Federation (Spain): <http://www.shiatsu-esf.org>
- Federation of European Cancer Societies (Belgium): <http://www.fecs.be>
- Health Action International – Europe (Netherlands): <http://www.haiweb.org>
- Health Care Without Harm (HCWH): www.noharm.org
- International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (Netherlands): <http://www.iavi.org>
- International Babyfood Action Network (IBFAN) (Luxembourg): <http://www.ibfan.org>
- International Diabetes Federation – European Region (Belgium): <http://www.idf.org>
- International HIV/AIDS Alliance (United Kingdom): <http://www.aidsalliance.org>
- International Network on Children's Health, Environment and Safety (Belgium): <http://www.inchesnetwork.net>
- International Planned Parenthood Federation – European Network (Belgium): <http://www.ippfen.org>

- International Society of Doctors for the Environment (Switzerland): <http://www.isde.org>
- IOGT-NTO (Sweden): <http://www.iogt.se>
- Mental Health Europe (Belgium): <http://www.mhe-sme.org>
- Pesticides Action Network Europe: <http://www.pan-europe.info>
- Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (Belgium): <http://www.pgeu.org>
- Standing Committee of European Doctors (Belgium): <http://www.cpme.be>
- Standing Committee of Nurses of the EU (Belgium): <http://www.pcnweb.org>
- Women in Europe for a Common Future (Netherlands): <http://www.wecf.org>
- World Cancer Research Fund International (Netherlands): <http://www.wcrf.org>





MEDIA CONTACT SHEETS

Media Outlet.....

Key contact name.....

e-mail.....

tel.....

fax.....

mobile phone.....

Other contacts.....

Forward planning desk.....

News Room.....

Editorial office.....

Best times to contact.....

Comments.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Target audience.....

Circulation.....

Areas of interest.....

Areas of interest.....

Areas of interest.....

Areas of interest.....

Areas of interest.....

Areas of interest.....

Areas of interest.....

Media Outlet.....

Key contact name.....

e-mail:

mobile phone

Other contacts.....

Forward planning desk

News Room

Editorial office

Best times to contact

Comments

Target audience.....

Circulation

Areas of interest.....

Media Outlet.....

Key contact name.....

e-mail.....

fax

mobile phone

Other contacts

Forward planning desk

News Room

Editorial office

Best times to contact

Comments.....

Target audience.....

Circulation

Areas of interest.....

Areas of interest.....

Areas of interest.....

Areas of interest.....

Areas of interest.....

Media Outlet.....

Key contact name:.....

e-mail.....

mobile phone

Other contacts

Forward planning desk

News Room

Editorial office

Best times to contact

Comments

Target audience.....

Circulation.....

Areas of interest.....

Media Outlet.....

Key contact name.....

e-mail.....

mobile phone

Other contacts

Forward planning desk

News Room

Editorial office

Best times to contact

Comments

Target audience.....

Circulation

Areas of interest.....

Areas of interest.....

Areas of interest.....

Areas of interest.....

Areas of interest.....

Media Outlet.....

Key contact name.....

e-mail.....

tel.....

fax.....

mobile phone.....

Other contacts.....

Forward planning desk.....

News Room.....

Editorial office.....

Best times to contact.....

Comments.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Target audience.....

Circulation.....

Areas of interest.....



Produced in partnership with



World Health Communication Associates Ltd
Little Harborne, Church Lane, Compton Bishop,
Somerset BS26 2HD, United Kingdom
Tel. & Fax: +44 (0)1934 732353
e-mail: whca@onetel.net

Public health advocates - health professionals - educators and promoters