

Why PSAs Should Be Part of Your Engagement Strategy in 2019

Your organization wants to launch a media campaign...should PSAs be a part of it?

Absolutely. There are many steps in the process of creating a successful campaign. One of them is being open to new ideas.

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are a good place to begin. PSAs are messages distributed through donated media inventory, offered without charge, and intended to raise awareness for a social issue or cause. This approach often triggers concern among organizations: If I am not paying for the advertising space then my message will never be aired.

This is a common misconception even within the media industry. The fact is that if your nonprofit or government organization produces a quality video, audio or print PSA on an important, non-political social issue and engages an experienced distributor, then your PSA could accrue thousands of placements that exceeds a million dollars in ad value.

Here's how it works.

Stations seek to fill vacant advertising spots when they fail to secure paid contracts. Unlike an advertisement, PSAs can be "evergreen" (i.e., they have no expiration date); therefore, stations often choose to air messages on a long-term basis. It is not uncommon for PSAs to run for several years.

Stations select a few distributors that disseminate quality PSAs to develop an inventory for each quarter. This results in PSAs populating prime advertising space for free.

The takeaway: PSAs result in nonprofit organizations and government agencies being able to take advantage of prime vacant air space indefinitely based on station requirements.

Here is a 7-Step Guide that will help nonprofit and government organizations take advantage of this low-cost media campaign opportunity:

7-Step Guide to Launching a PSA Campaign

Step 1: Determine your campaign budget. Do you want to launch a fully integrated campaign with video, audio and online content or focus on just one or two types of messaging formats?

Step 2: Define the desired goals and objectives for your project, i.e., brand awareness, public education, fundraising, program registration, interaction with the target market, etc.

Step 3: Define your target audience for the message. Your target audience, budget, and goals and objectives for your campaign will determine which marketing channels will be the most cost-effective choices for your marketing mix.

Step 4: What is your “call to action”? Will you direct your audience to a website, video, phone number, etc.? This component is vitally important so that you can effectively measure campaign outcomes and determine which channels, if you are integrating more than one, are providing the greatest return on investment (ROI).

Step 5: Produce your media in-house or hire an experienced professional team. Keep in mind that the quality of your content will be a major factor that determines whether your PSA is placed. Pricing may vary significantly for video and audio production depending on the format desired. For example, will you require the use of actors, professional voice talent, stock content (video, music, images), celebrities, multiple cameras, a large production crew, equipment (e.g., jib, lighting, dolly, track, and gyro-stabilized camera), editors, edit suite, color correction, and closed captioning.

Step 6: Have your producer secure “unlimited rights in perpetuity” for all licensed content, including stock footage, music, talent performances and other creative works for hire. Unless you request this in writing in advance of production, you may only have the right to use your PSA for the standard 1-year term provided by many content providers and talent unions.

Step 7: Locate a PSA distributor and promoter who are able to tag your multimedia (video, audio or digital online content) so that it can be tracked and measured for success via broadcast, cable and online channels. It is important to plot out your campaign strategy across all of the media you intend to utilize as part of your initial planning to ensure the desired “call to action” generates data that can be accurately captured and evaluated.

Good luck with your campaign and feel free to write me if you have additional questions at aninteman@psnmedia.com.

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