

Communications Objectives

Setting communications objectives involves two components: deciding what to say and identifying the audience for the message.

The message may be any number of things, such as information about the organisation, an announcement of upcoming activities, or requests for funding or sponsorships.

Once it is established what needs to be said, it can be determined who should receive the message. Audiences can include:

- ◆ consumers (the general public or specific target markets);
- ◆ suppliers and distributors;
- ◆ government departments and authorities;
- ◆ the media;
- ◆ directors and board members;
- ◆ staff and volunteers;
- ◆ sponsors or donors;
- ◆ special interest groups;
- ◆ the competition.

Although there may be the same message for each group, the amount of information provided, or the specific detail, may vary depending on the target group.

Major media, especially radio and television, make provision for community service announcements which are available to non-profit organisations. In addition, some commercial organisations (advertising agencies, public relations specialists) will provide staff assistance and cover basic costs for public service oriented campaigns, although the number of people involved will vary with the size and type of organisation.



Advertising Media

Promotion can take many forms, including paid advertising, unpaid promotions (publicity and public relations), and direct marketing.

The advantages of paid advertising relate to the degree of control the organisation has. Paid advertising gives advertisers the right to select the exact media which will be used, the precise message to be delivered, and to specify the time, location, number of repetitions, and distribution of the advertisement.

Newspaper advertisements provide the organisation with full control over the material in the ad — its length, the exact wording and illustrations used, the day of the week in which it will appear, the number of times it will be run and, for an additional fee, the page and position of the ad.

In radio and television the advertiser has complete control over the script, the setting, the actors, and all elements of the production of the advertisement, as well as which radio or television stations it will be broadcast on, what days, what time, and the frequency of the broadcasts.

However, this control comes at a price. Publicity and public relations are 'free' activities but there is no guarantee whether an item or news story will even be run, much less exactly what will be said.

Paid advertising media include:

- ◆ Print media:
 - newspapers (national, major daily papers, weekend and Sunday papers, regional and community papers);
 - magazines (national and local — general and special interest);
 - trade journals and papers;
 - association publications;

- special interest publications (magazines or newspapers for specific hobbies, etc.);
- guidebooks and catalogues.
- ◆ Broadcast media:
 - radio;
 - television;
 - Internet (discussed in Chapter 9 — Direct Marketing).
- ◆ Display advertising:
 - posters (on site or at other locations);
 - billboards (inside or outside, on site or at other locations);
 - information displays (airport or tourist centre signs, etc.).

Evaluating Media

Media selection depends very much on the message and the target market. Major daily and weekend newspapers, radio, and television are mass media communication channels. They are an effective method for reaching large segments of the population.

Of particular interest is the number of listeners, readers, or viewers, and the cost of reaching them (which is usually expressed in cost per thousand — the cost of the advertising divided by the number of viewers).

Newspapers

There are three main categories of newspapers — national, metropolitan, and suburban. National newspapers include publications such as *The Australian* and *The Australian Financial Review*. Metropolitan newspapers include *The Age*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and the *Brisbane Courier Mail*. Suburban newspapers, often called community newspapers, are distributed (usually free) within suburban communities.



Newspaper advertising has several advantages:

- ◆ It is immediate.
- ◆ It is wide-reaching.
- ◆ It is non intrusive.
- ◆ It is measurable.
- ◆ It can be very cost-effective.

There are also disadvantages in using newspaper advertising:

- ◆ It dates very quickly — nothing is as old as yesterday's newspapers.
- ◆ It is a very competitive environment.
- ◆ Potential wastage — not every reader will necessarily be a potential customer.

Magazines/Trade Journals/Specialist Publications

Magazines and trade papers have the advantage of being able to reach very specific markets — stamp collectors, computer buffs, cooking and gardening enthusiasts, home renovators... the list is endless. Australians are noted for having the world's highest per capita readership of magazines.

Trade publications are also valuable in reaching specific target markets. Although some trade publications can be found in newsagents, many are posted directly to association or industry members.

Advantages of magazine advertising:

- ◆ Selective reach — it is possible to define and reach specific market segments.
- ◆ Cost-effective.
- ◆ High level of readership per copy.

- ◆ High retention rate — magazines are often saved and referred to more than once.
- ◆ High quality reproduction.

The main disadvantages of magazine advertising are:

- ◆ Long lead time — many magazines are published monthly or quarterly, so advertising and articles are required well in advance, and information has to be valid for a considerable time.
- ◆ Overlap — there are many competing publications in the marketplace. Choosing the best one can be difficult, but advertising in them all can be very expensive.
- ◆ A very competitive environment — it is easy for a small or unimaginative ad to be lost.

Guidebooks and Catalogues

Many organisations produce guidebooks and catalogues, such as tourist information guidebooks, annual catalogues, or calendars of events. Some, especially tourist information guides and calendars of events, have particular relevance for arts and entertainment organisations.

Some tourist publications only permit association members to advertise, and advertisements can be expensive, but co-operative opportunities exist and are worth considering.

Many commercial guidebooks approach arts or entertainment organisations selling advertising space. It can often be very difficult to determine the value of such advertising.

Questions to ask and issues to consider:

- ◆ What is the circulation of the publication?
- ◆ Is it sold or distributed free of charge? If free of charge, how many copies are distributed, when and where?



- ◆ Ask to see a copy of previous publications. What is the quality like?
- ◆ Follow-up with advertisers in previous publications. Did they get responses? Would they use it again?
- ◆ How does the price compare with other similar publications?
- ◆ Ask if the newspaper will run a feature story on your organisation, as well the advertisement.

Television

There are two types of television in the marketplace today — free-to-air television and cable or satellite pay-to-view television. For many small arts organisations television advertising (other than through community service announcements) is not a viable financial option.

However, larger organisations will consider television if they have a major special event or activity coming up which can justify costly exposure in a mass communication medium. It is not a cost-effective way to reach small, specialist niche markets.

The advantages of television:

- ◆ Can be fairly selective — television stations can provide research data on viewership which will profile viewers of specific programs.
- ◆ Immediate response — it is possible to measure the response via the use of telephone enquiries and to receive almost instant responses to advertising.
- ◆ High impact — it is a very effective way of creating a memorable and lasting image.
- ◆ Delivers prestige or credibility — research has shown that television advertising can increase a perception of credibility for an advertiser.

The disadvantages of television advertising:

- ◆ Cost and effectiveness — because television is a mass communication media it is expensive, and there is likely to be a significant amount of ‘wastage’.
- ◆ High production costs.
- ◆ Need for repetition — a general rule is that an advertisement must be run a minimum of seven times before it has any impact.

Radio

When television became popular there were many pundits who predicted the end of radio.

But radio is still popular. Morning and afternoon drive-time programs draw hundreds of thousands of listeners, and radio is still the preferred source of information for fast-breaking news and for emergencies.

There are national and local advertising opportunities, through networks, and there are many community stations as well as ethnic and special interest stations (news, sport, etc.).

The advantages of radio are:

- ◆ Low production costs — it is easy, and good creative ads are truly memorable.
- ◆ Short lead time — ads can be produced and put to air very quickly.
- ◆ It is cost-effective.



Disadvantages of radio advertising:

- ◆ Potential wastage — again, like other forms of mass communication, a lot of people not interested in your service or product will also hear your message.
- ◆ Short life — radios are often on while other things are happening — people are driving, doing housework, preparing or eating meals, etc. Your message may be lost.

Display Advertising

One of the most popular forms of advertising in the arts and entertainment industry is display advertising — using posters, handbills, billboards, on-site displays (in community centres, shopping centres, etc.). The posters may even become collectors items or souvenirs.

Display advertising is cost-effective and highly visible. You can use volunteers or staff to hand out flyers, put signs in shop windows, and set up displays at shopping centres.

Remember:

- ◆ Approval may be required — for distributing information in public places, open spaces, in shopping centres, and in government owned buildings or facilities such as airports and train stations.
- ◆ Environmental consideration is important — over enthusiastic volunteers can create problems with litter, or putting up posters in prohibited places.

Information on the Media

The most comprehensive source of information on the media in Australia is *Margaret Gee's Australian Media Guide*. Updated quarterly, and available on subscription, it covers all Australian newspapers, magazines, newsletters, radio and television stations, including multicultural organisations and overseas press representatives.