



OUTREACH TO AFRICAN AMERICANS

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Planning Your Objective

In preparing for your upcoming promotion or event targeting African American communities, remember to plan far enough in advance to avoid the unexpected. All promotions should be planned with a minimum lead-time of six months. If you are preparing for an event with less than the specified period, you may want to make some adjustments. At least three months for planning is highly recommended.

It is of utmost importance to be culturally sensitive to the African American community. It is critical to have African American staff working on the program in the community. Staff can also be paid interns, volunteers or students from local colleges, high school students or from local churches.

Getting Started

Once you have decided to promote your event in the African American or other communities — the following factors should be addressed:

- Who is my target audience?
- What are my goals and objectives?
- How can I reach the African Americans in my community?
- How can I reach the targeted community?
- How much money can I spend on this promotion?
- How should I evaluate this promotion or event?

Your target audience is the population, community or entity that you would like to work with to develop your promotional ideas. Remember to always try to include the intended target audience in the development of ideas, promotions and decisions. If you wait until the end of your planning period to do so, the trust and support of the community will not exist. Promotions can still happen without community members being brought in at the planning stage, but it will not be a program or promotion supported by the community, but only for you and your organization.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Before creating an event develop a list of goals and objectives. Responding to the following questions will assist you in focusing on your event:

- What is the purpose of your event?
- What are the benefits for the community?
- What results or outcomes do you expect?
- Is media coverage needed and why?
- How will the event be evaluated?

Once you have responded to each question you are ready to begin. Organizing your contacts and the contacts of others is the formula of any promotion with the community you are targeting.

In preparing for the promotion, it's recommended to develop a brief needs assessment survey. A sample has been included in the appendices. The survey is written in simple everyday language. Questions or statements used in the survey should be open ended so the survey can elaborate on passionate issues. The survey will inform you whether or not there is a need for your promotion in the targeted community. It will also tell you how concerned the community is with the issue at hand. Avoid being over zealous in communities of color. Communities are not interested in certain topics as a single or solo issue. For example, the issue must be weaved into the overall issues or impact on that community in order to gain interest or steam. Once it has been obtained, follow through with your plans if you desire to work in that community again. It's very important to not break your word or disappoint your targeted community, as it can be traumatic to all future efforts.

Review your files or database for potential agencies that may have additional contacts. The search is on for community leaders or the movers and shakers who are influential in their respective neighborhoods. Community leaders may be too busy to participate on a committee, but they will be able to supply you with a list of names and an email list of key community stakeholders.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind — especially if you need additional contacts:

- Develop a list of churches in your targeted community or area. The Internet is a great source to search for key organizations. You may also check with your local chambers of commerce agencies.
- Utilize schools, churches, restaurants, barbershops, hair salons, and other establishments to educate the community on key issues.
- Contact the voluntary agencies in your area. They may include the American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association, American Lung Association, and local health departments.
- Contact your local ministerial councils. Try to schedule a meeting to speak with several ministers. This council is a great resource to receive and request feedback on your promotion. Each denomination has a council (i.e. Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, Presbyterian).
- Contact ethnic social groups and organizations that may include fraternities, sororities, Jack and Jill groups, etc.
- Develop a pitch letter to ministers and key personnel.
- Schedule appointments whenever time is available.
- Remember, it's better to meet with community-based organizations when you don't need anything from them. It starts the development of a long-term relationship.

The following is a list of agencies that are able to provide many contacts:

- Public libraries
- Newspapers and Magazines targeting African Americans
- Radio and Television stations targeting African Americans
- African American Chambers of Commerce
- Council of Negro Women
- Local NAACP organizations
- Local Urban Leagues
- African American Fraternities & Sororities
- Neighborhood Organizations
- Volunteer Groups
- Local Elected Officials
- Community Based Organizations serving African Americans
- Housing Projects / Housing Authorities

With this strategy, you should be able to develop a mailing list or email blast list for your area. Placing your list in a database will help you to sort names and print labels if needed.



The Needs Assessment

Before creating a promotional plan, the targeted community should be surveyed. A list of open-ended questions should be used during interview sessions. Open-ended questions were chosen to give participants the opportunity to elaborate on key issues affecting them or their community. Interviews can be conducted by:

- Telephone
- One on one
- Community forums
- Focus groups
- Online tools such as Survey Monkey, Survey Gizmo, Typeform, Zoho, and Survey Planet

Sample questions are included in the appendix.

Your target audience can be surveyed in a variety of venues, which include:

- Grocery stores
- WIC offices
- Laundromats
- Barber shops / Hair Salons
- Nail Salons
- Health clinics / Community centers
- Shopping malls
- Community festivals or events... (*cont.*)
- Faith Based organizations
- Public housing
- Local YMCA/YWCA organizations
- Girls & Boys Clubs
- College campuses
- Book stores
- Theaters
- Organizations serving African Americans can also be good partners

CHAPTER 2



Community forums can be held in an effort to reach a larger group of people. If partnering with community-based organizations, they can help by inviting 12 to 15 community members to respond and provide feedback on key issues. The forum is designed to get community members thinking about the various aspects of your issue and ways that it may impact the African American community. It's important to ask the targeted community for their advice on ways to solve the problem so that the forum does not just become a gripe session, but a place to share possible solutions.

Community members should also be provided with an incentive for participation. Providing a stipend indicates that you respect their time, energy and feedback. Many community groups are unable to provide cash for participation but it is acceptable to provide gift cards to your discussion participants. A rule of thumb is to provide a stipend of at least \$50 to participants for their time. Discussion groups are usually conducted 90 minutes to 2 hours.

In addition, it's important to provide a healthy meal when working with communities. For example, it defeats the purpose to provide fried chicken to the African American community when they are fighting high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes and every other diseases. When this happens it appears that the organizer is insensitive or stereotyping the community. It helps to work with community agencies that serve your target population if you are ever unsure of what food to provide.



Reaching the Underserved Community

There are three basic ways in which public relations is practiced in ethnic or cultural communities:

- Media Relations
- Community Relations
- Publicity
- Earned Media
- Social Media

At one time, ethnic communities could be influenced through Caucasian oriented mass media, including daily newspapers, magazines, radio, television and the overflow of some general public relations efforts. It is highly doubtful that this could happen now. Any organization, institution or communications expert that talks about an underserved group and not directly to the group can hardly be effective or influential.

More often than not, groups or organizations will prepare a promotional event or health model/program for an intended audience without ever speaking to them or entering their community. This idea rallies on the “Father Knows Best” theory that speaks down to communities who are lost and unable to help themselves. It’s also a model that health departments across the country copy over and over again which is a recipe for disaster. Do not make the same mistake or it will cost you your credibility in the community.

It is important for experts in the field of public relations or communications to understand that tailoring publicity to ethnic interest media is not segregation in reverse, but simply a good communication practice to reach your specific audience.

Any public relations expert worth his or her weight in gold knows when there is a good, legitimate story to tell, as opposed to horn tooting. However, it is important to comprehend that what may be routine or uninteresting to the dominate culture may be of significant interest to a particular ethnic group.



Although churches provide good access to all segments of the community, social service agencies provide direct contact with a segment of the underserved population. Developing a rapport with the Social Services Departments is an excellent way to reach your target audience. Information can be distributed through mailing (such as envelope stuffers) or a one on one presentation in waiting rooms. Posters, fliers or other types of information can be posted in waiting rooms with the necessary approval. Information can also be distributed through agency intranets, websites, newsletters and social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and others)

These types of interactions can also serve as great focus groups. Be prepared for feedback that is not sugarcoated as in a planned, organized and facilitated group meeting. The information you receive will be direct, honest and lacking any deception.

Another avenue you can use for more exposure is to work with pre school or head start programs. Parents of pre school aged children are usually very interested in their child's well being. They are concerned about health issues and interested in knowing how a certain issue could impact their children or family.

PROMOTIONAL PACKAGE

Developing the promotional package is a key factor in your marketing strategy. Your first contact may be made through this package and thus should have as much information and impact as possible. It will contain a cover letter, participation application and a list of potential activities.

The cover letter is the most challenging to compose. The letter should include the following information:

- Explanation of the event
- Goals and objectives of your project
- Invitation to participate
- List of agencies involved
- List of promotional items participants will receive
- Be clear to share what's in it for them
- Clear description of the issue
- Developing a Call to Action – What do you want them to do?

Earned Media or free media refers to publicity gained through promotional efforts other than advertising, as opposed to paid media, which prefers to publicity gained through advertising.



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Understanding Attitudes and Cultures

Each year, millions of dollars are to be spent in the United States to target the underserved or ethnic communities. Just for the record, the phrase minority community is a passé term used by those who refuse to relinquish the reign of power.

In America there are more than 90 million so called minority group members. Quite a minority, would you say? Of this minority group, making up 50 percent of the total non-white population or more than 26 million of the total United States population.

The public relations efforts of many non-profit organizations attempting to reach ethnic groups have often failed to communicate effectively how their services or promotional campaign will benefit the targeted community. For too many years the mainstream population acted as if the minority population scarcely existed in America, simply because it was not pictured in communication practices, textbooks, or the media.

Organizations and communication experts must learn to interpret what is happening in race relations, and inversely, to communicate to America's underserved communities what the business industry is doing that should be of particular interest to them.

The attitudes of African Americans, as well as other identifiable ethnic/cultural groups, have to be better understood. For example, it should be known that in African American communities the number one concern is employment, not education, voting rights, abortion, or social integration. This does not mean however that everyone should concentrate on only one priority.

One of the biggest mistakes that are made by almost every business is labeling African American populations as one group. As an African American it's obvious that African Americans are very diverse and different from each other depending on the various regions of the country where they reside. They speak differently and relate to each other very differently. Like the Hispanic community, they all speak Spanish but are from different parts of the world with different customs and cultural values. Too often advertisers make assumptions that African Americans are all the same when in fact they are as diverse as their Hispanic and Asian brothers and sisters. African Americans are no different from other ethnic groups. This can be a valuable lesson for marketing practitioners when developing tailored public relations efforts.

Planning the Media Campaign

In the African community, there are formal and informal avenues of communication. It is imperative that you identify how to access both formats to reach that targeted community. Informal ways to reach the intended population would be through businesses, social organizations or community organizations providing a service. Some examples are listed below.

- Hair Salons/Nail Salons
- Barber Shops
- Community Centers
- Health fairs
- Corner stores
- Churches and religious organizations
- Social clubs
- Youth Serving Organizations
- Unions
- Neighborhood Associations
- Social Service Agencies
- NAACP/Urban Leagues/Chambers of Commerce
- Sororities and Fraternities

Fraternities include: Omega Psi Phi, Alpha Phi Alpha, Kappa Alpha Psi, and Psi Beta Sigma.

Sororities include: Alpha Kappa Alpha, Delta Sigma Theta, Zeta Phi Beta and Sigma Gamma Rho.

Other organizations include: Elks, Eastern Star, Masons, Blacks in Government, National Association of Black Veterans, Women, Infant and Children groups, 100 Black Men & Women, and National Council of Negro Women.

In targeting media outlets, develop a variety of pitch letters and press releases selling your program. Follow up each mailing with a phone call. If possible, attempt to schedule an appointment with health editors, public affairs directors, promotion managers and other reporters with an interest in your issue.



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Approaching the Media: Planning Ahead

Allow 4 to 6 weeks to get your message to the media. This includes preparation, distribution and broadcast time.

Are you eligible for free public service or earned media air times?

You are eligible if your organization is a non-profit, social or civic organization and your message is directly related to the activities of your group.

What do you hope to accomplish with your message?

Think carefully about your needs and purposes. Write them down and then decide upon the most effective method of reaching the public.

What services do stations offer?

- **Public Service Announcements** — These are brief messages (10, 20, and 30 second spots) describing the activities of your organization
- **Community Calendar** — Announcements listing details of special events of community interest
- **Public Affairs Programs** — Interview or discussion programs which provide in-depth consideration of complex issues
- **News Programs** — Events of wide interest, which affect many people often, qualify as news items.

Mailing out Your Announcement

Remember, when mailing materials to the media, it is not necessary to blanket the broadcast market. Review your materials and select the media that targets your audience by age, occupation, interest, etc. Excess mailing of materials can result in over spending and lack of media attention.

When mailing public service announcements or community calendars, they should be received at least four weeks in advance. Announcements should be sent on a Monday or a Tuesday to guarantee getting them there at least by mid-week. Why? Quite often directors are swamped with mail from the weekend and again on Monday.

Emailing your information

In today's market, it's necessary to check with electronic or print media to see how they like to receive stories and press releases. Messages can be emailed to key outlets. Make sure that you have the correct names and email addresses. For many editors it's easier to receive an emailed press release or public service announcement with a cover letter and a bit of information about your organization and the project you are promoting. Other editors may prefer to receive paper or hard copies through the mail only. Remember to keep you list up to date.

Helpful Tips

Send information in the correct press release format.

- News releases and project publicity accompanied by photographs have a better than average chance of being used.
- Keep names of editors of ethnic press up-to-date. The ethnic media need more personalized attention.
- Media representatives should be invited to all events...regardless of their participation.
- Consider subscriptions to African American oriented media to become acquainted with the format, editorial philosophy and publicity material used and with staff.
- Do not patronize the ethnic press. Be honest and direct.
- Remember why ethnic-oriented media exist and help fill the need for tailored information and publicity.



CHAPTER 7



Countdown!

10...9...8...7...the race is on to get everything done in the time for your event. Quite often, the countdown is a time when you may feel anxious and nervous. Taking an inventory of what needs to be accomplished in the next couple of weeks will alleviate the stress and make your event a success. At this point, all aspects of the promotion have been set up and are awaiting implementation:

- Developing an event timeline
- Press release announcing event
- Press release announcing organizations involved
- Media Alert(s)
- Press conference (optional)
- Write and send thank you notes after the event



Once everything has been handled, take a deep breath and relax before the fireworks really begin. The following is a sample timeline:

- Week 24** Meet with your staff and key public relations consultants to work out the details of your event.
- Week 20-23** Invite and involve key community stakeholders and members in the planning of your event. Develop the purpose of your event, realistic outcomes, objectives and an evaluation tool.
- Week 19-20** Develop a timeline to serve as a road map.
- Week 16-18** Order promotional and educational material for distribution. Confirm community partners for event.
- Week 14-16** Start preparing outreach efforts and select social media outlets to be used.
- Week 15** Develop or update media and organizational database for mailing or Email blasts.
- Week 12-14** Start preparing all media announcements, planning a press event (optional).
- Week 13** Start researching information if placing advertising with electronic, print or outdoor media.
- Week 8-12** Pitch stories and provides confirmation notes to participants. Make final edits to press releases, public service announcements, press packets, and other materials.
- Week 7** Distribute press material to media. Write and release editorials, and Opinion/ Editorial articles as needed. Schedule press conference and find location (optional).
- Week 4** Follow up with the press, schedule interviews, stories and news segments. Assemble incentive packages (optional).
- Week 3-4** Recruit and train volunteers and spokespeople as needed.
- Week 2** Confirm volunteers and speakers. Tie all loose ends and review the entire marketing plan. Make arrangements and distribute promotional items to community groups as needed.
- Week 1** Take a deep breath! Fine-tune your volunteer troops and strategies to get media attention. Prepare thank you notes to the media and all organizations that helped to make your event a success.

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The Event

It's show time! "What did I forget? Did the press release go out on time? Did I remember to call the wire services? Will there be media coverage? Will anyone go to church today or will they stay home watching football, will a celebrity die on the day of my event and the media will not cover my event?" These are some of the thoughts that may drive you simply bananas a day or two before the promotion.

Usually by this point, you are so exhausted from dealing with logistical details that you would like to just sleep in and pretend that the event is over. Not really an option, remember to get an early start.

On the night or day before the event, resend media alerts to key broadcast outlets that you would like to promote your event. All community partners will be excited about the publicity received. Many will be interviewed and quoted in local newspapers and on talk show formats. It will provide the opportunity for them to boast with their colleagues about a very important event and the effects on the African American community.

Be prepared for interviews on your event. After all, you are the most qualified person to address the nuts and bolts of organizing your event. Much of the work requires being a community organizer or advocate. Be aware that many interviews and phone calls will occur after the event. When your day is over, congratulate yourself on a job well done and take the day off to pamper yourself.

Know where you are going! Prior to sending your "ambassadors of communication" out to promote your event, organize a list of participants with contact name, address, phone number, email address, and directions. Scheduling a brief meeting or retreat with the ambassadors will ensure that they will deliver the same message to all. It's imperative to remember the focus of your event and expected outcomes for success.

You are now ready for the event. You will be surprised how a well-planned event will operate like clock work, running without any major problems.

Be prepared for last minute participants who want to get involved or those who may have to drop out at the last minute. If you decide to do the event a second time, you will find that many others will want to get involved in your project after hearing about your success.

The Evaluation

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The purpose of an evaluation process is to determine whether the specific goals and objectives of a program were accomplished and to what degree. In essence, evaluators want to discover whether a program has worked effectively and, if not, how it can be improved. Remember, we always learn from our mistakes in order to make improvements.

When information gathered from an evaluation is used to improve programs or promotional events, it can make a significant contribution to the well being of program participants and the community-at-large. Anyone setting out to evaluate an event or any other health education program, therefore, should focus the questions on the decisions that are likely to be made about the program while the event is being implemented and when it is concluded.

The benefits of evaluating your training program can include:

- Information that will help you improve the event in the future
- Feedback on the effectiveness of the event, staff and volunteers
- Assessment of how well your objectives matched the needs of your audience
- Assessment of whether or not you achieved your objectives
- Documentation that the training objectives were successfully achieved

In developing an effective evaluation, you must first identify the objectives. An objective is different from a goal. A goal can be something lofty such as “reducing exposure to second-hand smoke among youth,” as opposed to an objective which should identify “*who should accomplish how much of what and by when*”.

Here are some sample objectives:

- By the end of the workshop, 90% of the participants will be able to correctly identify...
- By the end of the workshop, 75% of the participants will be able to demonstrate effective...

When you set up your evaluation, it will be useful to have someone go through it on a “test” run to answer the questions. You can ask someone who is unfamiliar with your program to imagine that they have attended the event.



Planning Ahead

Now that you have successfully completed your event, you are ready to start planning for next year. Having organized an event of this type you will be prepared with the necessary tools to execute a better program, event or promotion next year.

Take a couple of weeks to evaluate and plan your next event.

- Make a list of the program successes and the areas that could have been stronger and more effective.
- Involve your volunteers in the review process. They will be able to provide you with first hand experience and concerns.
- As a team, develop a strategic marketing plan and timeline for the next year.
- Decide which avenue the event should travel to obtain the most impact on your intended community or audience.
- Decide on the types of social media you will use to promote your event. Social media to be used may include Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and many more. Tumblr is a good source to use for blogging. Each day, there are new apps hitting the market that can assist us in disseminating our message to a larger audience.
- Remember to include additional time for areas that seemed more difficult.
- Allow at least four to six months to plan your event.

CHAPTER

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE MEDIA ALERT:

WHO: Name of your organization

WHAT: Name of event targeting the African American or other community

WHERE: Location of event / Address

DATE: Date of Event

TIME: Time of Event

OTHER INFORMATION (optional)

On Sunday, June 20, African American churches will “Take Back Their Communities from the Tobacco Industry”. Churches throughout the entire Bay Area will tie in a variety of activities in honor of great male role models. Activities will include: presentations from youth members, incorporating tobacco control messages from the pulpit, letters from youth, and challenging members, especially fathers to trade in their cigarettes for a day of clean air with their children, family and friends.

According to a recent study, the African American community is on the hit list of the most powerful force in the United States — the Tobacco Industry. Each year, the Tobacco Industry spends billions of dollars to recruit African American and Hispanic youth, to become their new generation of addicts. Cigarette ads are portraying youth who smoke as being sexy, glamorous, slim and rebellious.

This special day will serve to acknowledge the effects of environmental smoke, tobacco advertising techniques, and other health concerns targeting the African American communities. It’s also a great opportunity to pay tribute to male role models.

(Your organization’s name) is funded by (List of funder). For more information, please contact (your name, phone number and email address).

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE OF PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

TO: Public Affairs & News Directors

FM: (Your Name)

RE: PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please find attached public service announcements promoting (Name of your event), a Bay Area wide event targeting African American churches, women and youth.

Any placement or mention would be greatly appreciated. Thanks for your continuous support.

THIS IS A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

START PLAYING IMMEDIATELY

This spot can be used through June 19, 2009.

ATTENTION AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCHES!
LET'S JOIN FORCES AND SAVE OUR YOUTH FROM THE
TOBACCO INDUSTRY. PARTICIPATE IN "SMOKELESS SUNDAY"
ON JUNE 20, 20XX. FOR DETAILS PLEASE CALL 415.255.0800

THIS IS A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

START PLAYING IMMEDIATELY

This spot can be used through June 19, 2009.

DON'T LET OUR COMMUNITIES GO UP IN SMOKE!
PARTICIPATE IN "SMOKELESS SUNDAY" ON JUNE 20, 20XX.
FOR DETAILS PLEASE CALL 415.255.0800.





APPENDIX C

SAMPLE OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Here are a few of the questions that were asked via telephone, one on one interview or in small group settings:

- Can you name some of the health hazards that are affecting the African American community today?
- Of those listed, which ones do you think that we can rid from the community?
- Who or which organization do you think would have the most power to reach the African American community?
- Do you think the churches and schools in the African American community could disseminate the message effectively to keep children from smoking and assist families in saving family members from tobacco related illnesses?
- What do you think are some of the ways that people could be educated through the churches and schools in your community?
- What would it take for you to hear the message? Believe it and start to organize against the tobacco industry?
- Did you know that the Tobacco Industry is making a profit off of the deaths of those in the Black community?
- Would you like to know the statistics and how much money could be saved and used for other programs if the community smoked less?
- Would you be willing to volunteer and/or recruit others to distribute the message to others?



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