

Public Service Advertisements

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What do you want the world to know? That's the central question asked when you are creating a public service announcement (PSA), which is any message promoting programs, activities or services of federal, state or local governments or the programs, activities or services of non-profit organizations.

Often in the form of commercials and print ads, PSAs are created to persuade an audience to take a favorable action. PSAs can create awareness, show the importance of a problem or issue, convey information, or promote a behavioral change. Whether you have a cause of your own or you are an educator, PSAs create a forum for learners to actively participate in a project that allows them to become stewards of — and advocates for — social change.

PSAs came into being with the entry of the United States into World War II. Radio broadcasters and advertising agencies created a council that offered their skills and facilities to the war effort, creating messages such as, "Loose lips sink ships," "Keep 'em Rolling" and a variety of exhortations to buy War Bonds.

Today that same council, the Advertising Council, now serves as a facilitating agency and clearing house for nationwide campaigns that have become a familiar part of daily life. "Smokey the Bear" was invented by the Ad Council to personify its "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires" campaign; "A Mind Is a Terrible Thing to Waste" raised millions for the United Negro College Fund; the American Cancer Society's "Fight Cancer with a Checkup and a Check" raised public awareness as well as funds for research and patient services.

Yet the most recognized PSA consisted of only an egg, a frying pan and these 15 words: "This is your brain. This is drugs. This is your brain on drugs. Any questions?"

This only goes to show the massive impact PSAs have on our culture and our society. You can make an impact too!

GETTING STARTED

1. Choose your topic. Pick a subject that is important to you, as well as one you can visualize. Keep your focus narrow and to the point. More than one idea confuses your audience, so have one main idea per PSA.
2. Time for some research - you need to know your stuff! Try to get the most current and up to date facts on your topic. Statistics and references can add to a PSA. You want to be convincing and accurate.
3. Consider your audience. Are you targeting parents, teens, teachers or some other social group? Consider your target audience's needs, preferences, as well as the things that might turn them off. They are the ones you want to rally to action. The action suggested by the PSA can be almost anything. It can be spelled out or implied in your PSA, just make sure that message is clear.
4. Grab your audience's attention. You might use visual effects, an emotional response, humor, or surprise to catch your target audience. Be careful, however, of using scare tactics. Attention getters are needed, but they must be carefully selected. For example, when filming a PSA about controlling anger, a glass-framed picture of a family can be shattered on camera. This was dramatic, but not melodramatic. Staging a scene between two angry people to convey the same idea is more difficult to do effectively.
5. Create a script and keep your script to a few simple statements. A 30-second PSA will typically require about 5 to 7 concise assertions. Highlight the major and minor points that you want to make. Be sure the information presented in the PSA is based on up-to-date, accurate research, findings and/or data.
6. Storyboard your script.

7. Film your footage and edit your PSA.
8. Find your audience and get their reaction. How do they respond and is it in the way you expected? Your goal is to call your audience to action. Are they inspired?

Through a Public Service Announcement you can bring your community together around a subject that is important to you. Will your PSA be on education, poverty, drunk driving, or maybe even Haiti disaster relief. Keep your message clear and simple, and target your intended audience. Take advantage of your interests, and practice important critical thinking and literacy skills because you will be spreading important social, economic, and political topics.

Reference Link

<https://www.govtech.com/education/news/How-to-Create-the-Perfect-Public-Service-Announcement.html>