

Media Messages

- Media are forms of communication.
- Media refers to a vehicle or means of message delivery system to carry a message to a targeted audience.
- Television, Radio, Print, Outdoor, Internet and Movies are all types of media.
- Since they contain stories of one kind or another, whether fiction or non-fiction, these media also contain messages.
- These messages are called media messages. Some of them refer to media messages as advertisements.

Types of Media

Media can be classified into four types:

- Print Media (Newspapers, Magazines)
- Broadcast Media (TV, Radio)
- Outdoor or Out of Home (OOH) Media
- Internet
- Each media type will have a different type of message which will create an impact on the minds of the audience.
- A media message or an advertisement which is successful on a TV may not be successful on a radio or internet.
- Each media requires a different style of creating media messages.
- Since media messages are created or constructed, it all depends on who is creating the message, for whom the message is being created and what is the purpose of creating the message.

Steps to develop messages

Identify the goal of creating the media message. It's not enough to have a general idea — the goal should be specific and actionable

- Identify the needs for the media message - whether on-going or a one-off situation.
- Have clear objectives for making the media message.
- Objectives are even more specific than your goals.

Objectives need to be SMART:

- S: Specific
- M: Measurable

- A: Achievable
- R: Realistic
- T: Time-bound

Though you may have only one or two concrete goals, you need to be precise about how you will achieve them through the use of media.

- A good strategy for making a media message may be multi-pronged and multi-faceted.
- You also need to be clear about how the media message you make will help to achieve the objectives.

Identify the target audiences, or stakeholders

- There are generally several communities involved with an issue, and all of them can be considered stakeholders.

Types of stakeholders

- **Allies** – people and organizations who already support what you do.
- **Adversaries** – people who oppose the change you want to see.
- **Neutral** – people whose position or attitude is unclear or who have not become actively involved in this issue.

‘Target audience’ means the people who can actually make the change that you want to see.

- It’s important to define your target audience because, very often, a media campaign that has been designed for everyone ends up being for no one in particular.
- Successful films, television programs, newspapers or posters are never made for “everyone.” On the other hand, a well-made media campaign that targets a specific audience can very easily end up being liked by many different groups of people.
- Using the list of stakeholders you’ve created, identify a target audience (or audiences) for your media campaign

Audience profiling - After you have identified your target audience, create a profile for each that includes details such as:

- Demographics– race, gender, ethnicity, age, education, religion.
- Geography – local, national, international, remote, urban, rural.
- Attitudes – how do they perceive the issue, how proactive they are? What would it take to get them to take action?

- Media habits – what media do they have access to, use and like?
- Culture – what is their cultural background, what languages do they speak or read?

Prepare messages that are wide in scope and describe the point of view of the organization, product, service, or program.

- Your message is what will pull people toward your campaign.
- Through your research, find out what needs to be communicated and how.
- There can be several messages that you send to different stakeholders, but they should all lead to the same goal.

Remember that an effective message should:

- Be simple and explain the cause clearly, without ambiguities.
- Emphasize the critical importance of the cause.
- Tell people something new, something they had not thought about.
- Be engaging, interesting, perhaps even shocking.
- Articulate the need to take action, and provide a solution.
- Focus on benefits that distinguish the offerings from others, highlighting the value and innovative features that directly cater to the target audience.
- Substantiate the points with supporting details that distinguish the case and add credibility.
- Quote facts and statistics, validation from experts, stories and visuals

In brief, the media message should be:

- **Concise:** Maximum 3 key messages per page; each statement only 1-3 sentences long or under 30 seconds when spoken.
- **Strategic:** Define, differentiate and align with benefits/value proposition.
- **Relevant:** Balance what you need to communicate with what your audience needs to know.
- **Compelling:** Meaningful information designed to stimulate action.
- **Simple:** Easy-to-understand language; minimal jargon and acronyms.
- **Memorable:** Easy to recall and repeat; avoid run-on sentences.
- **Relatable:** Active rather than passive voice; no advertising slogans.
- **Tailored:** Adaptable to different target audiences, with flexible language and depth of information.

Review the messages - Check the messages to ensure they are good quality.

- Do they align with the organizational mission, business plans, goals and objectives, and brand strategy?

- Are they unique to the firm or can they be applied to competitors as well?
- When read out loud, do they sound convincing and credible?
- Can you simplify and tighten the wording?
- Do they motivate stakeholders to act – giving a ‘call to action’?

- **Create a call to action**

All of the media messages you create or construct should state clearly what action you want people to take.

Although your media can generate awareness about your campaign or project, it is not this awareness in itself that will create change.

You have to be very strategic about your call to action, because it is this action that will bring about the change you desire.

A call to action should:

- Be actionable! It should not be something people find extremely difficult to do.
- Compel people to do something.
- Provide options for different levels of engagement.
- Select the most appropriate media channel so that the media message created by you can effectively communicate with the targeted audience.
- Hence, it is essential to:
 - Keep up with latest media trends
 - Keep up with new technological developments
 - Determine long and short term effects of different media
 - Analyze strengths and weaknesses of different media

Factors determining Media Selection

- Nature of product
- Market requirements
- Advertising objectives
- Distribution strategy
- Nature of message and appeal
- Advertising budget
- Competitors choice

- Media availability
- Reach of the media
- Size and nature of business

- **Create a timeline**
 - The effectiveness of a media campaign largely depends on timing. Your media should be released when the need for it is greatest.
 - There are issues that are not so time-bound, but even with those it is necessary to make the media campaign topical and relevant to current events.

- **Evaluate outcomes and measure your impact**
 - It takes a lot of effort to ensure that people remember your message and take action on it.
 - This is why it's important for you to measure the impacts of your media campaign or project.
 - You need to know what works and what does not and to assess whether you have achieved your objectives.

- **Documenting impact**
 - It helps tremendously if you can demonstrate and document the achievements of your media campaign as it is happening, because this can make the target audience more responsive, and inspire others to join in and take action.
 - You will also be creating a document that others can learn from.

Expressing dissent

- **Dissent** is an opinion, philosophy or sentiment of non-agreement or opposition to a prevailing idea or policy enforced by a government, political party or other entity or individual in a capacity of contextual authority.
- If someone wants to express dissent about anything, then there are several ways of doing it.
- Dissent can be expressed by:
 - Writing letters to the editors of print media
 - Writing articles, or
 - Presenting street plays highlighting the issues.