Achieve Maximum Impact with Your Message

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Connecting resources and knowledge to strengthen the health of people in rural communities.

Center for Rural Health

- Established in 1980, at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences in Grand Forks, ND
- Focuses on:
  - Education, Training, & Resource Awareness
  - Community Development & Technical Assistance
  - Native American Health
  - Rural Health Workforce
  - Rural Health Research
  - Rural Health Policy
  - Program Evaluation
- Web site: http://medicine.nodak.edu/crh
Objectives of this session:

1. Recognize and evaluate vehicles for communication
2. Learn how to develop a dissemination plan for various products
3. Learn to work with the media

Why is Dissemination Important?

- Effective communication is your avenue to inform the public about your organization, product or event
- Properly managed messages give the public the most accurate and complete information about you
- By managing your messages effectively, you can inform, promote and create positive public opinion about your organization
What is a Dissemination Plan?

- Formal process for sharing information and knowledge
  - Communicates messages or project results to widest possible audience
  - Targets special audiences that will benefit from the message
  - Uses a variety of techniques

Components of a Dissemination Plan:

1. **Information** – What is going to be disseminated?
2. **Audience** – Who needs this?
3. **Partners** – Who can assist in reaching your audience?
4. **Communication** – How you convey the message?
5. **Evaluation** – What worked?
6. **The Plan** – Where do you start?

(Adapted from AHRQ Dissemination Planning Tool
http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/advances/planningtool.pdf)
**Work Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Items</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Who is Responsible?</th>
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**Resources Needed:**

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**How Do You Get Started?**

- **Internal audit**
  - What products do you have in place?
  - What is your message?
  - Who are you trying to reach?
Be Consistent: Branding, aka The Look

• Could someone tell *at a glance* a product is from your organization?

• Basic Components
  – Logos/Graphics/Pictures
  – Color Scheme
  – Fonts

A brand

• Who you are in colors, words, name, tagline
• Represents the essence of your organization
• Reminds internal audiences what the organization is all about
• Helps external audiences recognize you
• Above all, *branding is about consistency*
Before

Introduction

Despite advances in prevention efforts, injury remains the leading cause of death among young people. In 2000 alone, injury death rates for ages 4 to 24 years were higher than those for influenza and pneumonia combined. In 2000, 22% of all deaths among 15- to 24-year-olds were due to injuries, and 55% of all injury deaths were due to motor vehicle crashes.

Data

Twelve-year-old boys are at the highest risk for injury-related deaths. Among the 12-year-old boys, the highest risk was associated with injuries from falls, drowning, and firearms. The risk for fatalities from injury-related deaths was highest among 15- to 19-year-old males.

Causes of Injury Among Rural Native American Elders

Introduction

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After

RURAL HEALTH FACTS

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After

Flex Program Workshop
Hints for New Flex Coordination
Rural Health Resource Center
March 27-28, 2007

Other examples
Be Consistent: Message

Stay On Message - Create a Standard Messaging Package
- Tagline
- Mission Statement
- Core Messages
- Web Site and Contact Information

Be Clear & Precise

- Be sure to give your audience enough information to understand or act
- Don’t overload with unnecessary details
Timing – It Really is Everything

• Plan ahead - release components at the same time
  – Example: Launching new report – release report, associated briefs, web version, e-mailed version, press release, etc. on same day

• Send your information at the beginning of the day

Products: Tips and Tools

• Brochures
• Documents
  – Fact Sheets
  – Policy Briefs
  – Reports, Manuals, Directories, etc.
• Newsletters/listservs
• Web sites
What Type of Product To Use?

• Depends on what you need to communicate
• Audience’s needs and preferences
• Effectiveness of each product/medium vs. costs to produce and disseminate

Brochures

• Layout - clean and simple
• Photos or graphics
• Limit Text
Brochures, Flyers, Postcards

When would you use each?

Documents – General Tips

- Be consistent - format and name
- Clearly identify key information
- Include a short summary
- Obtaining companion documents
- Web availability
Document Titles

• Should be short, but descriptive of content (include keywords)
• Written in plain language
• Catch prospective reader’s attention
• Avoid being cute

Document Titles

• Issue: Few clues about actual content
  – **Title**: New Opportunity for Rural America
  – **Better**: New Funding Opportunities for Rural Economic Development

  – **Title**: Out of Reach
  – **Better**: Out of Reach: Rental Housing Affordability for Low-Income Americans
Document Titles

• Issue: Acronyms and Abbreviations
  – Title: *Bridging Silos, Part II: DI, SSI, Medicare, and Medicaid Issues and Initiatives*

  – Better: *Bridging Silos, Part II: Disability Insurance (DI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicare, and Medicaid Issues and Initiatives*

Document Titles

• Issue: No “So What?”
  – Title: *Rural People Have to Travel Farther for Care*

  – Better: *Longer Distances to Care Result in Poorer Health Outcomes for Rural People*
Document Titles

• Issue: Too technical

Fact Sheets
A policy brief presents policy relevant research in a short, concise fashion.

Reports

- Include a summary at beginning or as companion document
- Make reports scannable
Newsletters

Special Delivery ONLINE

Electronic: Listservs/e-Newsletters
Electronic: Listservs/e-Newsletters

Avoid Appearance of Spamming.....

Electronic - Website

Designing for a Rural Audience

- In 2006, only 35% of rural Americans had a broadband connection at home OR work
- 62% had any access
Electronic - Website

Website Basics
- Professional look
- Information architecture
- Memorable domain name
- Write for the web
- Keep your website current

Usability
- Can users easily accomplish important tasks on your site?
- Usability testing
- Component of evaluation
Electronic - Website

Accessibility

• Can people with disabilities effectively use & interact with your website?
• Site needs to work well with assistive technology (e.g., screen readers)
• Accessibility audits can identify problems

Electronic - Website

Links and Search Engine Optimization

• Make sure important keywords are included
• Actively seek having your links placed on other related sites
• Include most important keywords in hyperlink:
  – **Do**: Get more information on rural hospitals.
  – **Don’t**: For more about rural hospitals, click here.
Use Your Network

• Some of the best tools are free (or nearly)!

Working with the Media

My reputation is a media creation.

– John Lydon (formerly Johnny Rotten)  
  (b. 1957), British rock musician
What is newsworthy?

- Ask yourself these questions:
  - Is your story new or fresh?
  - Is it timely?
  - Is there an unusual twist to it?
  - Will it tap people’s emotions?
  - Is it useful?
  - Does it have an interesting angle?

Types of media

- Daily newspapers
  - Do more, shorter stories
- Weekly newspapers
  - Do fewer, longer stories
- Radio
  - Limited news coverage
- Television
  - Need visuals, short time frames
Gaining and Maintaining Contacts

- Become familiar with the beat reporter and keep him or her informed
- Get them what they need in a timely matter
- Become a POC not only for info on your organization, but also related topics

The News Release

- The news release is the easiest way to communicate with the media
- One-page outlining the who, what, when, where, why and how
- Written in journalistic style
- Now, with the help of email, you don’t even need paper copies
Tools to pass like the real thing

- Associated Press Style Guide
  - Use it and they will never know you aren’t a PR person
- Limit and identify all acronyms
- Never, never use jargon
- Write as if you are explaining it to your mother

Inverted Pyramid

- Start with the most important information
- Follow with the basic who, what, when, where, why, and how
- Provide background
- End with less important information
The phone rings.

They want to do a story!

Now what?

Be Available

• Reporters are always on deadlines
• Stories lose newsworthiness with time
• Make every effort to talk with a reporter as soon as possible (if even by phone from across the country)
• Either way, return reporter’s calls promptly
Take Time To Prepare

• Plan up to three main messages
• Think of ways to explain in analogies
• Don’t stress out. Most interviews are very easy and over very quickly
• Remember: You are the expert, that is why they want to talk to you

During the interview

• Get your main points across right away
• Speak in short “sound bites”
• Apply information to every day life
• Speak slowly and clearly
• Use “Hey, Mom” factor
• Allow emotion to show
• Be honest
• Don’t guess at information you are not familiar with
• You are representing your organization
• Keep it short and simple (KISS)
PLEASE never say these:

- ANY acronym
- ANY jargon
- “No comment”
- “I’m not going to speculate”
- If you don’t know, just say you don’t know

At the end of the interview

- Be sure to thank the reporter
- Give him or her your number in case of further questions
- Ask when to expect the interview to appear in the paper/radio/TV
- If, when the story comes out, you are pleased with the results, send the reporter an email or a handwritten note thanking him/her
A few things to keep in mind

• There is no such thing as “off the record”
• Expect the occasional error or misquote

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