

Working with the Media

Introduction

Effective public information and education should include working with the media in a variety of ways to enhance the delivery of messages. The media can play an integral part in helping an ABC establish itself as a key point of contact for alcohol-related messages and issues. A significant presence can greatly enhance an ABC's credibility and public awareness of their alcohol education and prevention efforts. This media involvement includes planned activities, as well as reaction to alcohol issues as part of a daily news process. Planned media activities that ABCs have found effective include:

- Media packets for news and local groups regarding specific alcohol-related issues.
- Video, radio and print public service announcements.
- Media and news events announcing programs.
- Media events highlighting alcohol-related issues.
- Media campaigns during and after enforcement initiatives to increase public awareness and public results.

These media activities offer the opportunity to disseminate alcohol-related information and establish partnerships with other organizations that bring credibility and impact to the information being presented. As the media becomes more comfortable and aware of the ABC's resources and expertise, they will be more likely to contact ABCs for their reaction to stories or issues that are included in the news process.

In both the planned and unplanned media areas, the ABC should be consistent in its message and seek to "stay on target". It is also important that ABCs retain the expertise of their public relations and press offices. Media advocacy and activity of ABCs can compliment and enhance activities and projects designed to prevent alcohol-related problems.

The "Community How To Guides" which were referenced in Chapter 6 includes a guide on media relations which describes basic principles that can help organizations develop an effective media strategy. The tools that are necessary for this strategy, including news advisory, news release, letters to the editor and op ed articles are described and samples provided in the appendix. The booklet also describes the techniques for a successful interview and suggestions on how organizations can conduct effective news conferences. Additionally, there are examples of how other underage drinking prevention organizations have effectively used the media to communicate their message. Finally, because underage drinking can often end in tragedy, this booklet suggests coalitions and organizations develop a plan to deal with these incidents when they occur in their communities. A tragedy provides an excellent opportunity for organizations fighting underage drinking to inform the public about how tragedies can be prevented.

RESOURCES:

(Contact Information, [see Appendix A](#))

National Association of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives (NAGHSR)

Develop a Public Service Campaign

TARGET POPULATION:

General public.

GOALS:

Raise public awareness about the misuse of alcohol.

DESCRIPTION:

An ABC can utilize various media, including television, radio and print to raise awareness about specific alcohol issues, such as underage drinking and drunk driving. Traditionally a spring campaign focuses on underage drinking and a winter campaign on impaired driving and youth. Other campaigns have focused on responsible consumption for adults and the consequences of giving alcohol to minors. The campaigns should have an appropriate message and, if possible, include professional media or public relations professionals in their development. It is also possible to utilize campaigns or media materials/messages developed by others that can be tailored to your state. Lastly, it is helpful if state and local partners get involved and assist with local activities related to the campaign, including press events and visits to media outlets.

ACTION STEPS:

- Step 1 – Identify issue to be addressed.
- Step 2 – Determine demographic of target population.
- Step 3 – Identify which media would be most cost effective for reaching target audience:
 - Print
 - Radio
 - TV
 - Op ed
 - Letter to the editor
 - Outdoor advertising.
- Step 4 – Develop message:
 - Use advertising agency or create internally

- Write and/or design sample messages.
- Step 5 – Test materials and product ideas with internal staff and focus groups.
- Step 6 – Develop materials and products.
- Step 7 – Advertise that your materials are available for distribution:
 - Purchase air time or advertising space
 - Deliver Public Service Announcements to stations that might provide free air time
 - Send a letters or op ed to the editor of local newspapers in your state.
- Step 8 – Launch campaign and materials during a press event:
 - Invite agency head, other participating agencies and local officials
 - Send press release to media announcing the campaign
 - Have materials at each event
 - Display print ads; play broadcast ads.
- Step 9 – Distribute materials and products.

Distribute Media Kits

TARGET POPULATION:

Prevention professionals, police departments, community organizations and coalitions.

GOALS:

Provide factual information, project ideas and communication tools to interested organizations and persons who assist in raising awareness and communicating information regarding specific alcohol-related issues, such as underage drinking. (*See CD-ROM – Appendix S*)

DESCRIPTION:

Kits are developed to help local or state organizations raise awareness of an issue. These resources provide information regarding specific alcohol-related issues such as: underage drinking, impaired driving, fetal alcohol syndrome/effect, etc. This information is disseminated to local organizations and is specific to one alcohol-related topic.

The media kits can be especially effective when tied to other campaigns or materials targeted at the same specific issue. These media kits may be available from federal sources such as NHTSA.

ACTION STEPS:

- Step 1 – Identify media project.
- Step 2 – Develop media kit:

- Sample press releases
- Sample letter to the editor
- Sample op ed piece
- Camera-ready ads
- Radio/TV ads
- Media tips
- Calendar of events
- Campaign “How To’s”
- Editorials
- Handouts
- Public Service Announcement.
- Step 3 – Test market.
- Step 4 – Revise kit.
- Step 5 – Print media kit.
- Step 6 – Distribute:
 - Send directly to regular contacts, such as local drug and alcohol agencies, highway safety groups, local police, etc.
 - Advertise availability in newsletters, on web site, at events, etc.
 - Make copies available on web site.
- Step 7 – Obtain feedback on packets’ usefulness and revise for future kits.