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## Principles of Successful Public Communication Campaigns

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*Public communication campaigns can be broadly defined as*

(1) purposive attempts (2) to inform, persuade, or motivate behavior changes (3) in a relatively well-defined and large audience, (4) generally for noncommercial benefits to the individuals and/or society at large, (5) typically within a given time period, (6) by means or organized communication activities involving mass media, and (7) often complemented by interpersonal support. (Rice & Atkin, 1989, p. 7, adapted and expanded from Rogers & Storey, 1987, p. 821)

The following sections suggest ways in which communication campaign developers, implementors, and researchers can improve the likelihood of campaign success. These 10 principles are naturally based on considerable and diverse theoretical developments, research efforts, and practical experience. Yet many current campaigns still fall far below expectations, many theoretical aspects of campaigns are still only partially understood, and many (often unexpected or uncontrollable) factors may influence the direction, implementation, and outcomes of campaigns. Because campaigns are pragmatically goal oriented, this chapter features a prescriptive tone in presenting the basic principles.

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## UNDERSTAND HISTORICAL AND CONCEPTUAL DIMENSIONS

Paisley (1989) proposed that campaigns can be understood through a variety of related concepts:

1. *Objectives or methods*: Campaigns can be seen as strategies of social control in order to achieve certain objectives, such as one group's intention to influence another groups' beliefs or behavior (e.g., smoking, abortion, AIDS). This is often the case when social benefits are primary. But campaigns can also be viewed as a genre of communication, including the methods and media that the campaign employs, typically in education strategies.
2. *Strategies of change*: Forest fire prevention researchers at the U.S. Forest Service identified three general classes of strategies, called the Three Es: education, engineering, and enforcement. The relative emphasis of these three strategies of social control varies over time, governments, and cultures. If society has common values, education may be the most effective strategy, but the link between knowledge change and behavior change is tenuous. If government is authoritative and cannot be challenged, enforcement may be the most likely strategy, but it emphasizes costs of noncompliance rather than benefits of compliance. If technology is suitable, an engineering strategy may be applied, but social problems generally exceed the constraints of technology. Thus, each strategy has its strengths and weaknesses.
3. *Individual or collective benefits*: Campaigns differ in the explicit and implicit relative costs and benefits of the objectives to individuals and to society.
  4. *First-party and second-party entitlement*: Central to a campaign's influence on the public at large is the question of who has the right to make claims or attempt public persuasion, and is this source accepted as such by the public? What does the social contract imply about these rights to place a topic on the public agenda? Second-party groups can increase their entitlement by public sacrifice (e.g., Greenpeace's risky defense of whales, civil rights demonstrations by Whites).
  5. *Stakeholders*: Diverse interests of associations, government agencies, mass media, and social scientists differentially affect the public agenda, funding sources, campaign design, access to media, objectives, and audiences. More effective campaigns involve relevant stakeholders in the design and operation of the campaign.

In the United States, there is an extensive history of public communication campaign efforts, spanning four eras with their own set of

stakeholders: associations, government agencies, mass media, and social science (Paisley, 1989).

*Associations*: In the 1700s and 1800s, initial reform movements and campaign activities were the results of efforts by individual reformers and voluntary associations, filling gaps left by the limited authority of early American governments. Example reform movements led by prominent individuals included Cotton Mather's campaign for smallpox inoculation, Thomas Paine's defense of women's rights, Benjamin Rush's writings for temperance and women's education, and Carrie Nation's push for women's voting rights. Associations developed local chapters to support abolition, women's suffrage, and liquor prohibition. Strategies of suffragists included grass-roots organizing, legislative testimony, mass communication first through pamphlets and then through newspapers, and confrontations that brought publicity. These early efforts established principles and models for successful reform activities.

*Media*: By the end of the 19th century, the mass media took the initiative for social reform. Muckraking was not only a response to work, health, and political evils, but also a response by newspapers to growing competition in the marketplace, and was thus a means to increase circulation, not too different in purpose from yellow journalism. Muckrakers emphasized the concept of social responsibility by employers, government, and the media itself.

*Government*: The efforts of these early reformers led to greater government involvement in reform because the nature of the problems required formal, ongoing regulations, policies, and enforcement. By the turn of the century, the Interstate Commerce Act was the justification for many major laws concerning food, child labor, occupational health, and so on. The New Deal and the Great Society sustained this incursion of government as a powerful stakeholder in campaign activities.

*Social scientists*: The most recent era is the most familiar, that of applying social science to the development and evaluation of campaigns. As a reaction to the extensive propaganda of World War I, policy makers and researchers initially felt that the mass media had the power to influence large segments of society.

Early social science campaign research was generally pessimistic, leading to an academic era of "minimal effects." Unsuccessful campaigns such as the Cincinnati effort to develop support for the United Nations, along with Lazarsfeld et al.'s "two-step flow" model of interpersonal influence, led researchers to conclude that mass media campaigns had no direct effect, that audiences were largely uninterested or applied selective exposure and perception, and that most effects operated indirectly through opinion leaders.

However, with more specified research on the persuasion process and characteristics of message, source, and medium by Hovland and colleagues, along with some successful campaigns in the 1960s and 70s, researchers began to conclude that campaigns could achieve moderate success if well designed and targeted.

Currently, there is a large and growing body of research on campaign principles that supports this conclusion. However, both empirical, and critical analyses have also challenged some of the long-held beliefs and assumptions about causal relations, the efficacy of the mass media, the role of interpersonal channels, and traditional ways of identifying audience needs.

This chapter summarizes some of these principles for successful campaigns, as well as some of the criticisms and challenges to campaign research, design, and implementation.

### APPLY AND EXTEND RELEVANT THEORY

While campaigns are typically viewed as merely applied communication research, the most effective campaigns carefully review and apply relevant theories; further, campaign results can be used to extend and improve theories about media effects and social change. (Rice & Atkin, 1989, p. 9)

Campaign designers, especially those with considerable expertise in the creative and production areas, naturally rely on their personal experience and insights, but they often discount academic theory as too abstract or inapplicable. Although there is some truth to this perception, we should remember Lewin's dictum that there is nothing so practical as good theory. For only when we understand underlying general principles of communication, persuasion and social change, and the relationships among the components of a campaign, can we properly design and evaluate campaign efforts. This is especially true precisely for the reasons social science is often criticized by practitioners: Reality is too complex for an individual's perceptions, especially when based solely on experience gained in a few campaigns, to identify what really causes what and what is and is not effective.

There is a wide range of communication and persuasion theories used to guide campaign efforts. One framework for understanding these processes is McGuire's communication/persuasion model (McGuire, 1989). This model is based on the "hierarchy-of-effects" theory, that any particular step in an individual's processing of a message relies on the outputs from a prior step. The 12 output steps range from (1) exposure to the communication through (12) postbehavioral consolidation. Fur-

### 12. CAMPAIGN PRINCIPLES

ther, communication inputs include source, message, channel, receiver, and destination variables. So the response steps interact with themselves and with the communication variables to mediate the persuasive response (see Fig. 12.1).

Variants to the straightforward communication/persuasion matrix include:

1. *Elaboration likelihood model* (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986): Messages have greater or longer term effect or are more strongly rejected if the individual is motivated to cognitively process (called elaboration) the message. This is the "central" route to persuasion. Messages may also have modest short-term attitudinal or behavioral effects without knowledge change if the individual is not motivated to cognitively process the message. This is the "peripheral" route.

2. *Self-persuasion*: Rather than relying solely on new, external messages, persuasion attempts may also turn to activating information already accepted, but perhaps without great salience. Thus, resistance

INPUT: Independent Variables (Communication)	SOURCE	MESSAGE	CHANNEL	RECEIVER	DESTINATION
OUTPUT: Dependent Variables (Response Steps Mediating Persuasion)	number demographics attractiveness credibility	type appeal inclusion/omission organization repetitiveness	directness context modality	demographics ability personality life style	immediacy/delay prevention/cessation direction/minimization
1. Exposure to the communication					
2. Attending to it					
3. Liking, becoming interested in it					
4. Comprehending it (learning what)					
5. Skill acquisition (learning how)					
6. Yielding to it (attitude change)					
7. Memory storage of content and/or agreement					
8. Information search and retrieval					
9. Deciding on basis of retrieval					
10. Behaving in accord with decision					
11. Reinforcement of desired acts					
12. Post-behavioral consolidating					

FIG. 12.1. Communication/persuasion matrix (from McGuire, 1989).

initial beliefs), learning modes of *reasoning* to use against others' persuading them to take health risks as well as identifying those others' reasoning strategies, *mild fear appeals* focused on valued concerns (such as personal appearance and acceptance by peers) instead of extreme or chronologically distant outcomes, and encouragement of deeply held but possibly unrealistic *illusions* that can be anchors for positive behaviors.

### UNDERSTAND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS AND INTERACTIONS OF CAMPAIGN COMPONENTS

Characteristics of the message source or medium—such as viability as a social role model, or credibility—influence a campaign's effectiveness; however, this influence may be in the opposite direction than intended or may conflict with other message components (Rice & Atkin, 1989, p. 10)

Using the communication/persuasion matrix (Fig. 12.1), McGuire (1989) identified some fallacies to avoid.

1. *Attenuated-effects*: Given that each of the 12 steps is likely to be only partially effective, the net multiplicative effect is likely to be quite low. So campaign goals should be modest.

2. *Distant-measure*: Few campaigns are explicit as to the final destination: Is it immediate exposure, liking the message, short-term knowledge change, moderate-term attitude change, or long-term behavioral change? Measuring effects at an early stage has no necessary validity for longer term effects. For example, although the majority of smokers has tried to stop smoking for a short period of time, only a small percentage has been able to maintain cessation. Thus, avoiding relapse is a considerably longer term, but more valid measure of the effect of antismoking campaigns (McAlister et al., 1989).

3. *Neglected-mediator*: It may appear that an attractive source increases step 3 (liking, becoming interested), but the attractiveness may simultaneously distract the comprehension process (Step 4). Or, production standards may predominate in making the source credible and familiar (such as Smokey the Bear) but submerge the message content (as Smokey really doesn't tell us how to prevent forest fires).

4. *Compensatory principle*: Different variables may affect behavior outcome in opposite directions because of their mediating effect. For example, if the audience is aware of the persuasive intent of the source,

to persuasion may be increased by providing prior exposure to threatening messages. Or, internal values may be changed by causing the individual to confront those values, to inspect associated issues, or to evoke new arguments (McGuire, 1960).

3. *Alternate causal chains*: Rather than the simple sequence that knowledge changes attitudes that in turn change behavior, it may well be that changed behavior alters one's attitudes, which then causes one to seek out supportive knowledge (Bem, 1970). Both cognitive dissonance and self-perception theories support this altered causal path.

Whereas McGuire's chapter summarizes 16 classes of theories used to explain persuasion, several of the theories most commonly invoked to guide successful campaigns include the following:

*Social learning* (Bandura, 1977b): Individuals are likely to exhibit behavior similar to that of role models who are credible, who explicitly model intended behaviors, and who receive appropriate negative or positive reinforcements.

*Reasoned action* (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980): A combination of one's personal attitudes, perceived norms of influential others, and motivation to comply provides a parsimonious model of predictors of intended behavior. This model is derived from *expectancy-value* theory, which postulates that one's beliefs about how likely a given behavior leads to certain consequences, multiplied by one's evaluation of those consequences, are likely to predict attitudes and behavior.

*Instrumental learning* (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953): The classic model of persuasion combines characteristics of the source (such as attractiveness and credibility), incentives of the message appeal (such as fear, social acceptance, correct knowledge), and repetition and placement of the message to predict changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavior.

*Self-efficacy* (Bandura, 1977a): The extent to which one feels one has control over one's actions, or can in fact accomplish a task, affects the extent to which one engages in changing one's own attitudes and behaviors. Thus an intermediary goal of a campaign would be to improve the self-efficacy of the at-risk group, such as those attempting to stop smoking (McAlister, Ramirez, Galavotti, & Gallion, 1989) or adolescents attempting to learn and practice behaviors that reduce their risk of AIDS. Crucial to increasing self-efficacy is providing explicit strategies through role models (for children, peers are especially influential) and social comparisons to admired others (Reardon, 1989).

Reardon suggested a variety of other perspectives that can be used in campaigns intended to alter unhealthy behaviors by adolescents: *counterattitudinal advocacy* (observing oneself behaving contrary to one's

perceived trustworthiness may decrease, but clarification of the message may increase.

5. *Golden mean*: Because of some of the other principles and interactions among stages, the eventual outcome may be highest at middle levels of several inputs.

#### PLAN THE CAMPAIGN: MATCH OBJECTIVES TO INDIVIDUAL COST-BENEFITS

Campaign objectives must, in some way, appeal to the values and cost-benefits of individuals rather than abstract collective benefits. . . . Long-term prevention objectives seem more difficult to achieve than more immediate campaign benefits; so campaigns aimed at prevention need to link future benefits to present benefits or currently held values. (Rice & Atkin, 1989, p. 10)

Part of the process of identifying campaign objectives is to explicitly plan the campaign (Alcalay & Taplin, 1989), stating the following:

*Goals*: What do you want the audience to do? Identify where along the hierarchy of effects the campaign objectives lie. It is generally more effective to emphasize current rewards and positive behavior changes rather than distant outcomes and negative consequences (Backer, Rogers & Sopory, 1992). Decide whether the objectives are short term or long term.

*Media objectives*: What percentage of what subaudience in what area do you want to have access to how many messages? Use broadcast ratings for the specific region and audience, and tracking surveys to determine delivery, exposure, and recall.

*Media timing*: What media channels and what media content are used at what times in the campaign process? In a Honduras health communication campaign, during the rainy season, rehydration treatment messages were provided, whereas before the rainy season, underlying concepts about health, cleanliness, and causes of diarrhea and dehydration were more important.

*Media choice*: Which specific media will be used, for what specific characteristics? Consider the competition these media and the messages will be facing. For example, in a Gambian campaign, few villagers could read, so a variety of nontext media were used. Colorful posters were distributed that graphically showed how an infant rehydration mix should be used; these posters were valued visual additions to modest living quarters, but also provided continuing reinforcement of the message (Rice & Foote, 1989).

McGuire suggested that three criteria should be applied before

campaign efforts are expended on specific objectives: Is the problem serious?; is the solution effective?; and is mass persuasion an appropriate way to achieve the objectives? If these criteria cannot be met, perhaps the objectives should be changed.

Solomon (1989) described another approach to campaigns that builds upon the experience in marketing and advertising fields: *social marketing*. It applies a marketing approach to social concepts. It is based on the fundamental principle of exchange theory: Individuals will engage in transactions to the extent that the exchange is fair and useful. Campaigns that simply transmit a message fail to accommodate this principle. Or, campaigns that attempt to induce individual sacrifice for a collective benefit will, in general, and unfortunately, achieve minimal results. Analyses of the famous Chinese campaigns show clearly that even the Chinese have realized this principle: Campaigns ostensibly identified as successful examples of collective sacrifice have generally been shown later to be failures or misrepresentations. The most successful major Chinese campaign, to reduce childbearing to one or two per family, has come to depend on both incentives and sanctions at the individual level (Rice, 1989).

Campaigns applying a social marketing perspective would attempt to identify and respond to all these primary marketing challenges (Solomon, 1989):

1. *Product*: An associated physical product (such as condoms) may help to make a concept (such as family planning) more concrete. A campaign may develop a "product line" of concepts, so that different audiences can enter into the transaction at their level of expertise, motivation, or effort.
2. *Price*: Every product and campaign objective has a variety of costs to the potential audience member, such as time, money, cultural constraints, peer acceptance, conflict with personal desires, and so on. These must be identified, accommodated, and dealt with in the full campaign context. Price may signal value; for example, family planning campaigns in India were much more successful when condoms were sold for a small price instead of given away.
3. *Place*: What are the campaign's distribution channels? The audience should be able to obtain the information, product, or service easily, and the service provider should be prepared for a successful response.
4. *Promotion*: How should the social concept be promoted, and how can the audience be continually motivated to obtain it? Formative evaluation, audience analysis, and media analysis must be involved.
5. *Positioning*: Any product, whether commercial or social, must compete for mental mindscape with other products and will be associated with others, whether positively or negatively. A campaign should

identify how the concept is already positioned, and how that position can be improved. For example, is family planning perceived as a legal, moral, health, and/or personal issue? Where in the scheme of popular food products are "heart-healthy" foods positioned in the public's mind?

Other important social marketing precepts discussed by Solomon include: Segment the audience, understand all relevant markets, develop information and feedback systems, mix interpersonal and mass communication, utilize commercial resources, and understand the competition.

### APPLY FORMATIVE EVALUATION

Formative evaluation of specific campaign objectives and media messages is crucial to developing effective campaigns; it is also necessary to identify and understand the needs and media habits of the relevant audiences. (Rice & Atkin, 1989, p. 10)

As part of campaign management, information and feedback systems should be implemented. After all, campaigns are complex, longitudinal projects. They must be monitored for ongoing administration, scheduling, delivery of materials, effectiveness, diagnosis, and improvement.

An important part of this campaign planning and design is *formative evaluation*, which "provides data and perspectives to improve messages during the course of creation" (Atkin & Freimuth, 1989, p. 131).

A general goal of formative evaluation is to understand the "sociocultural situation," what McGuire called "the situational circumstances [whether economic, cultural, political, psychological, etc.] that instigate and maintain the undesirable target behavior or that sustain the desired target behavior" (p. 63). This understanding is obtained through *preproduction research*. Messages are then revised based on *production testing* (pretesting).

Atkin and Freimuth identified these stages in preproduction research:

1. *Identify the target audiences:* Who is at risk, who is accessible through communication channels, who can influence others at risk, and who is most and least persuasible?
2. *Specify the target behavior:* Insofar as most global behaviors consist of component behaviors (i.e., pregnancy can be prevented in a variety of ways, and responded to in a variety of ways) that are influenced by contextual factors (i.e., religion, socioeconomic status, support groups, information about family planning, etc.), campaign messages should

focus on specific effective component behaviors. For example, formative evaluation of weight-loss messages found that whereas women were aware of their weight problems and motivated to change, men greatly underestimated their weight problem, were not generally motivated to change, and had low self-efficacy about their ability to lose weight (Flora, Maccoby, & Farquhar, 1989). Indeed, McAlister, Ramirez, Galavotti, and Gallion (1989) argued that in addition to *informing* audiences about behaviors and their consequences and *persuading* audiences to change those unhealthy or dangerous behaviors, campaigns must also provide specific *training* of skills necessary to change behavior and maintain that changed behavior, as well as resist opposing influences from the mass media or peers.

3. *Elaborate intermediate responses:* As the hierarchy-of-effects model suggests, there is a long causal chain between exposure and integrated behavior. Formative evaluation can identify how these steps are linked and what intermediate steps are most amenable to campaign efforts. Some of the intermediate responses include knowledge and lexicon, beliefs and images, attitudes and values, salience, priorities, and skills. For example, Cialdini (1989, p. 222) argued that campaigns must distinguish between portraying *prescriptive* norms (perceptions of what behaviors are socially approved) and *popular* norms (perceptions of which behaviors are typically performed). Some campaigns may have been unintentionally providing persuasive models of undesirable but popular norms while explicitly concentrating on desirable but unpopular prescriptive norms.

4. *Ascertain channel use:* Using any kind of media without knowing which media the target audience uses, at what times, for how long or how many times, and in what combination is an ineffective use of campaign resources. Formative evaluation can identify media exposure and attitudes toward the different media. (See the sections on media and audience analysis.)

Then these stages of pretesting research can be applied (Atkin & Freimuth, 1989):

1. *Develop the concept:* Although some campaigns have a very specific understanding of the concept to be communicated, often test audiences can suggest and amplify new or more appropriate concepts. Or, more relevant message sources (e.g., should the source be a doctor or a neighbor?) can be identified. Words, phrases, or descriptions used by target audiences in their discussions about the campaign topic can also be incorporated into message content.

2. *Execute the test message:* Rough, preliminary versions of messages can be tested for the following attributes: attention, comprehensibility, relevance, or controversial aspects.

Several methods are useful, in pretesting messages, including focus group interviews, in-depth interviews, central-location intercept interviews, self-administered questionnaires, theater testing, day-after recall, media gatekeeper review, and physiological response analysis. The Health Message Testing Service, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, was a standardized system of questionnaire items and theater testing to pretest radio and television messages.

### ANALYZE AND UNDERSTAND THE AUDIENCES

The campaign message must reach a sufficiently large proportion of the desired audience, but the message must be a product of individuals' needs and must contribute to their own goals. (Rice & Atkin, 1989, p. 10)

Audience segmentation is necessary to identify internally homogeneous subaudiences, both to be able to provide a relevant message for that audience, and to efficiently use mass media channels. Segmentation may involve analyses of demographics, media ratings, lifestyle, psychographics, ZIP code, uses and gratifications, and channel accessibility.

Dervin (1989) proposed an alternative to the traditional approaches to identifying audience needs and designing appropriate messages. The *sense-making* approach rejects the notion that information is objective content that can be packaged and transmitted, and that audiences simply lack that expert information that can solve their problems.

The sense-making perspective seeks to understand how individuals attempt to make sense out of their world as they move along various situational paths. The core challenge that individuals face, in this approach, is how to "define and bridge gaps in their everyday lives" (p. 40). The objective is to provide informational resources that are context specific and available along those personal routes. Further, campaigns must allow individuals to deal with competing information claims. That is, individuals need to know the motives and reasons for events, rather than just facts about them. Then the individuals can make sense of those new resources and use them in making decisions and taking action. Thus campaigners must conceptualize their efforts as entering into a dialogue with individuals, instead of as transmitting content. "The researcher is mandated to attend to what is called the sense-making

triangle: How the respondent sees the situation, what gaps the respondent sees self as facing and/or bridging, and what ways the respondent saw self as helped by the bridge he or she built" (p. 77).

The sense-making approach is less well suited to large-scale mass media campaigns, though results from its intensive, qualitative and quantitative, ethnographic, and systematic procedures in specific contexts may be useful in broader applications.

### ANALYZE AND UNDERSTAND MEDIA CHOICES

Campaigns must make their messages available through a variety of communication channels that are accessible and appropriate for the target audience, but the message must also communicate specific information, understandings, and behaviors that are actually accessible, feasible, and culturally acceptable. (Rice & Atkin, 1989, p. 10)

We have seen that the communication/persuasion matrix, along with formative evaluation, can be used to design or identify persuasive and informational attributes of source, message, and channel. A social marketing perspective also emphasizes the need to understand the competition: Design the campaign objective to be attractive, desirable, and accessible relative to other media, other messages, and other behaviors. Any mass media message competes with hundreds of other messages. Any concept competes with dozens of related mental concepts. So, there is a need to identify the "competitive advantage" of the particular campaign objective. For example, exercising as a means of preventing heart disease can also be advertised as a social activity.

Alcalay and Taplin (1989) highlighted the importance and utility of *public relations* ("news about an issue, service, client, or product," p. 116) and *public affairs* ("lobbying and working on regulatory or legislative issues with administrators and legislators," p. 122). Because it is free and has "third party" credibility, public relations can be very useful in not only increasing public awareness of a campaign, but also in deterring opposition to an otherwise controversial issue, such as family planning. Public affairs is important not only in shaping legislation that may affect campaign objectives, but also in gaining support for resources and spokespersons. Editorials, press releases, and hard news coverage may also be powerful media outlets, when managed properly.

It is common practice to request local and sometimes national media to provide *public service announcements* (PSAs). The practice of broadcasting PSAs was in large part an outgrowth of Federal Communication Commission requirements that stations using the broadcasting frequen-

cies served the public interest and necessity. With the increase in media outlets and the movement toward deregulation of the media, opportunities to broadcast PSAs have declined. It can be argued that PSAs are typically of limited value anyway, because they cannot be scheduled for times when the specific target audience is most likely to be watching or listening, or in known amounts of exposure. Nevertheless, PSAs can be placed on local radio stations or in print media that are more likely to reach a target audience, such as teenagers or retired people, if the campaign implementors understand the audience's media usage patterns.

Commercial *broadcast rating* services (such as Nielsen, Arbitron, AGB, Standard Rate and Data Services, Birch, etc.) can help identify the most effective and efficient channels. For example, media books can be used to calculate the effective CPM—the cost to reach 1,000 of your target audience through one presentation of your message via a mass medium. Similar data are available for newspapers, magazines, billboards, mailing lists, and even bus posters. By providing figures to calculate the percentage of the target audience exposed to the program or channel at specific time periods, as well as the extent to which audiences change across time periods or are consistent, campaign implementors can determine the *reach* (number of different individuals in the audience) or *frequency* (number of times any individual may be exposed). Different campaign objectives would be achieved through increased reach or increased frequency. For example, increasing awareness about a common issue by the public at large could be achieved more cost effectively through using a specific time/channel combination to maximize reach. However, achieving and maintaining learning or attitude change in a specific at-risk audience would require increased frequency, which may involve a different time/channel mix. A jazz or classical music station, for example, may have high frequency but low reach.

The Advertising Council provides in-kind creative and agency services to support approximately 36 public communication campaigns a year in the United States. Further, in-place commercial distribution channels can be used to support delivery of campaign messages and materials. For example, getting 7-11 or Sears stores involved in a campaign would provide immediate delivery channels across the United States.

Finally, recent campaigns, such as a sexual abstinence campaign in Mexico, and the Be Smart! Don't Start! anti-alcohol campaign in the United States, have begun to engage in cooperative efforts with the entertainment industry to produce attractive and popular music videos or PSAs with celebrities, rock stars, and commercial production teams. These are extensions, or derivations, of prosocial television programs

such as *Freestyle* in the United States (LaRose, 1989), and *Hum Log* in India (Singhal & Rogers, 1989). This form of campaign, sometimes called *infotainment* or *edu-entertainment*, consciously mixes theories of social modeling (providing role models for behavior and attitudes), parasocial interaction (getting the audience personally involved in the characters and content), and expectancy value (combining perceived social norms with beliefs about the source's normative expectations concerning those norms) with commercial entertainment values, media personalities, and wide-scale distribution. Celebrities often provide credible and influential sources, especially for certain at-risk populations who distrust, or are not otherwise exposed to, traditional authority figures.

### MIX MULTIPLE MEDIA AND INTERPERSONAL CHANNELS WHEN COST-EFFECTIVE

Behavioral change is more likely generated and maintained through interpersonal support, especially through preexisting social networks, but for many campaigns this approach may not be cost-effective. (Rice & Atkin, 1989, p. 10)

Examples such as organized listening groups in Tanzania's health campaigns, peer moderators for televised smoking cessation programs, and counseling groups that support disease prevention efforts all show that although mass media can be independently successful, greater and longer lasting effects typically follow from interpersonal communication support. The underlying principle here is that individuals' social contacts provide strong influences—and often strong constraints—on the individuals' attitudes and behavior. For example, a videotape teaching self-management techniques for smoking cessation, accompanied by a live peer moderator who provides social reinforcement and encourages the audience to discuss the content and imitate those techniques, can be a quite effective component of smoking cessation campaigns (McAlister et al., 1989). Further, there is evidence not only that mass media can stimulate interpersonal communication about a campaign topic, but that interpersonal communication can stimulate common use of the mass media as well (Rice & Foote, 1989).

Hornik (1989) challenged this argument, however, by critiquing assumptions underlying measurement, theory, data, and practice of much campaign research on the mass media/interpersonal mix. First, in many contexts, especially development campaigns, it is quite difficult to recruit, pay for, train, manage, and retain interpersonal support,

variety of unhealthy behaviors, incorrect medical information, and antisocial attitudes on television—in both programs and commercials.

2. *Commercial concerns:* There are many instances of both explicit and implicit advertiser control over program content. Sponsors of alcoholic beverages or drugstore remedies are not likely to encourage either program content that attempts to reduce or question such consumption, or counter advertisements.

3. *Social norms:* Stereotypes of male-female roles, race relations, age-specific behaviors, behavior by medical personnel, and treatments of physical and mental problems are all developed and reinforced through media portrayals that overwhelm attempts by other messages to reduce such stereotypes.

4. *Violent and sexual content:* It has been argued that perceived higher levels of fear, and submissive behavior toward authority, are reported by those who watch more television, especially television with violent content. Greater acceptance of aggressive sexual acts against women have been reported for viewers of films with violent sexual content. It is difficult for family planning or AIDS prevention campaigns to compete with regular program and advertising content that portrays and glamorizes irresponsible or promiscuous sexual behaviors.

5. *Maintaining the consumption ethic:* The media are businesses, and their business is to sell consumers to advertisers. So the underlying message is that consumption is good. Complex matters must be dealt with in simplistic ways that do not alienate large audiences. For instance, televised dramas about AIDS may show the effects on a normal family of the accidental contraction by a child of AIDS through blood transfusion, rather than deal with more likely causes in the United States such as unsafe sexual practices or intravenous drug use.

6. *Individual blame and simplification of complex issues:* Because consumption is an individual choice in a free-market economy, health and social problems are also seen as individually caused and individually solved. The social and economic causes—such as government policies or corporate irresponsibility—of many of our social ills are rarely dealt with at those levels by the mass media in general or even in campaigns in particular.

#### IDENTIFY REASONABLE CRITERIA FOR CAMPAIGN SUCCESS, AND USE SUMMATIVE EVALUATION TO ASSESS BOTH THEORY AND PROGRAM SUCCESS

Campaign objectives and criteria for success should be reasonable; not only is it difficult to pass through all the individual's information pro-

especially over a wide area with complex logistical constraints. Second, it is not necessarily true that media are "more" effective when combined with interpersonal communication; Hornik provided evidence that the two channels have independent effects. Thus mass media not only have the obviously greater reach compared to interpersonal communication, but they are generally more effective (per unit of exposure) and cost effective (per unit of cost) as well. Hornik's arguments also challenge the traditional assumption that mass media are useful only to raise awareness, whereas interpersonal communication is necessary to inform and persuade.

Another means of integrating media and interpersonal communication is to conduct and involve campaign activities at the community level. As Alcalay and Taplin (1989) suggested, "By working with local resources, health care practitioners involved in an intervention can translate general health education project goals into locally meaningful ones and project activities into culturally acceptable and affordable ones" (p. 106).

Flora, Maccoby, and Farquhar (1989) emphasized community-level approaches in the Stanford Five-City Multifactor Risk Reduction (heart disease prevention) Program. Three models of community mobilization were applied as appropriate: (a) *consensus development*, or participation by diverse community members; (b) *social action*, or mobilizing the community to create new social structures and engage in the political process; and (c) *social planning*, or using expert data to propose and plan system-wide change. Campaign messages, resources, and activities were planned through media, training instructors, workplace contests and workshops, schools, restaurants and grocery stores, health professionals, and contests or lotteries.

#### UNDERSTAND USES AND CONTRADICTIONS OF MASS MEDIA

Mass media can be used to improve awareness and knowledge, to stimulate interpersonal communication, and to recruit others to join in, but commercial media may also help to create or reinforce the initial problems. (Rice & Atkin, 1989, p. 10)

Media can present a wide variety of contradictions for public communication campaigns (Wallack, 1989).

1. *Unhealthy agendas:* Some have claimed that the single most negative health influence in the United States is the portrayal of a wide

cessing stages and to overcome constraints on resources, beliefs, and behavior, but many public communication campaigns have typically set higher standards for success than the most successful commercial campaigns. (Rice & Atkin, 1989, p. 10)

As Flay and Cook (1989) proposed, *summative evaluation* consists of identifying and measuring answers to question about six campaign aspects: (a) the *audience* (e.g., size, characteristics), (b) *implementation* of the planned campaign components (e.g., as exposure of the audience to messages and/or services), (c) *effectiveness* (e.g., influence on attitudes, behaviors, and health conditions), (d) *impacts* or effects on larger aggregations (e.g., families or government agencies), (e) *cost* (e.g., total expenditures, and cost-effectiveness), and (f) *causal* processes (e.g., isolating the reasons why effects occurred or not).

Proper summative evaluation can distinguish between *theory failure*, the extent to which underlying causal chains are rejected by the evaluation results, and *program failure*, the extent to which the implementation of the campaign was inadequate or incorrect, thus allocating blame, credit, and lessons for future campaigns accordingly.

Flay and Cook identified six challenges to summative evaluators:

1. There are inherent *trade-offs* in abilities to answer any given subset of the six questions.
2. Different evaluator *stakeholders* are interested in different subsets of the six questions.
3. It is difficult to identify and reach the small *subaudiences* that are at risk.
4. The *salience* of, and exposure to, campaign messages, is generally low.
5. *Causal chains* in the theoretical foundations of a specific campaign are long, complex, and often questionable.
6. *Sample sizes* tend to be low; indeed, good research design calls for different treatment and control conditions at the community level, generally resulting in analysis sample sizes of a half-dozen or less.

There are three general evaluation models that attempt to respond to these challenges in different ways.

The *advertising* model focuses on the early stages of the communication hierarchy of effects: exposure, recall, liking, self-reported behavioral intentions, and message characteristics. Through the use of cross-sectional surveys, the success of a campaign in these stages can be

assessed, especially at the individual level of analysis, but few causal inferences or evidence of behavioral outcomes are possible.

The *impact-monitoring* model focuses on the more distal stages and social impacts in the hierarchy of effects, through tracking of archival data such as population trends, consumption behaviors, epidemiological information, and so on. Such analyses cannot unravel causal factors leading up to these distal outcomes, so it is difficult to unambiguously detect significant effects.

The *experimental* model focuses on testing hypothesized causal chains through controlled manipulation of treatments, often requiring lengthy and complex campaigns. To insure valid analyses, units of analysis should consist of communities or regions, greatly reducing the power of the analysis and highlighting challenges to controlling for confounding explanations.

Flay and Cook suggested that the greatest insights will come from meta-evaluations of different approaches to similar problems, which will overcome the specific but often different weaknesses of the individual studies.

Rice and Foote (1989) suggested a *systems-theoretical* approach to planning campaign evaluation, with particular application to health communication campaigns in developing countries. The approach includes these stages:

1. Specifying the goals and underlying assumptions of the project.
2. Specifying the process model at the project level.
3. Specifying prior states, system phases, and system constraints.
4. Specifying immediate as well as long-term intended poststates.
5. Specifying the process model at the individual level.
6. Choosing among research approaches appropriate to the system.
7. Assessing implications for design.

Similarly comprehensive programs of systems planning and integrated campaigns have been applied to complex problems such as rat control in grain-producing countries (Adhikarya, 1989).

The basic assumption is that campaign inputs intended to alter prior states are mediated by a set of system constraints, enter into a process whereby some inputs are converted into outputs, and evolve into a new poststate, including altered system constraints. Further, this dynamic system occurs at the global project level, the community level, and the individual level of analysis. Campaign evaluation planning must match the timing and nature of inputs (such as media channels, messages, and material resources) and measurements with relevant phases of the

system. Rice and Foote distinguished between *planned, real, and engaged* inputs. A campaign may plan four radio spots per day on a particular station, whereas only three are actually broadcast, only 40% of the audience had the radio turned on during the day, and only 60% of those could recall any campaign messages. Informed campaign evaluations should measure and analyze these kinds of inputs separately.

Figure 12.2 provides an example summary of inputs, short-term individual-level responses, and longer term individual and system poststates.

### CONCLUSION

We would like to end simply by noting that a variety of theoretical and practical challenges and tensions continue to exist in the design, implementation, and evaluation of public communication campaigns.

Many important social problems involve *collective benefits* (such as littering), yet most campaigns have succeeded only when they promote *individual benefits*. How can campaigns increase the salience of collective benefits?

What is the proper mix of *education and entertainment*? Will or should new "infotainment" campaigns be embedded in the commercial media mainstream?

How can campaigns, which generally use the mass media, overcome the *simultaneous pervasive negative influence of the mass media* on the campaign issue (such as alcoholism or violence)?

Few theories or campaign designs explicitly distinguish *short-term* from *long-term* effects and objectives. What should be the relative

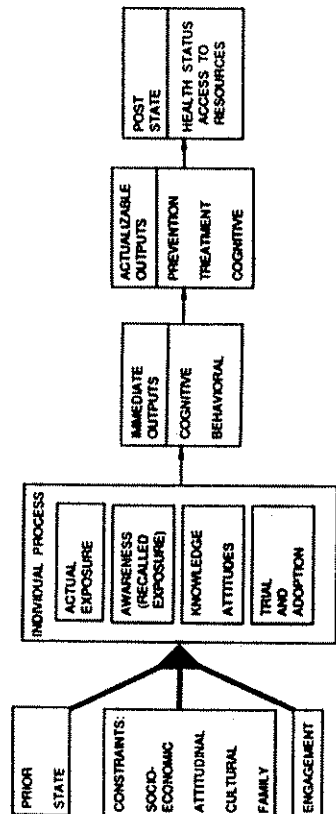


FIG. 12.2. System-theoretic model of prior states, constraints, individual-level process, outputs, and poststate in campaign evaluation (from Rice & Foote, 1989).

emphasis on each, and how can campaigns achieve longer term outcomes?

What is the proper mix of *interpersonal* and *mass media* communication for specific campaign goals?

How can campaigns successfully promote a *prevention* approach in order to avoid the generally more expensive and less effective *treatment* approach typically favored by organizations, government agencies, and the electorate?

What are the relative influences of *individual differences* versus *social structure* on the problems targeted by communication campaigns?

What are the potential roles of *new communication media*, such as electronic mail, voice response systems, interactive video, and computer games, in reaching particular at-risk populations and in influencing learning, attitudes, and behaviors (Rice and Associates, 1984)?

Future campaign research and policy debates should explicitly consider these important challenges. Finally, of course, researchers should seek out, replicate, and document campaign approaches and results. Adhikarya (1989), as did Flay and Cook (1989), Flora, Maccoby, and Farquhar (1989), and Rice and Foote (1989), argued that only with continual documentation of campaign processes and results, and comparisons of results across campaigns, can future campaigns apply the lessons learned from such systematic campaigns. Additional annotated sources for such summaries and reviews are provided in the Appendix by Rice and Atkin (1989), as well as in Backer, Rogers, and Sopory (1992), who also suggested 27 generalizations about successful health communication campaigns (pp. 30-32).

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