

Public Relations and Advertising

Public relations and advertising often have had a love–hate relationship. They are related disciplines, but the question is: How closely related? Some colleges and universities teach public relations and advertising in the same department, sometimes the same major; others separate them. In some organizations, one department handles both disciplines; in others they are kept apart. Some agencies provide services in both areas; others specialize. This textbook isn't going to resolve the issue of the appropriate relationship between advertising and public relations, but it can look at that relationship.

Advertising is the nonpersonal paid communication through various media by an identified organization (either for profit or a nonprofit) for the purpose of informing and influencing a particular audience. Advertising can be classified into two major categories: product advertising and public relations advertising. Let's take a look at each, along with their various subcategories.

Product Advertising

The most common use of advertising is *product advertising*, which is marketing oriented. That is, the ad is intended to sell a product or service. Product advertising types include retail, general and business-to-business.

Retail Advertising. Most of the advertising for local companies and organizations is retail oriented. *Retail advertising* seeks to promote a sale, encourage use of a product or service, or otherwise sell something. Because it is local, retail advertising can be specific, including dates, locations, prices, and information on brands and various models.

General Advertising. *General advertising*, also known as *national advertising*, does not provide specific information about sales dates, store locations, and so on (though this sometimes is possible through Web sites identified in general advertising). General advertising would tell consumers about the car, its quality and its features.

Business-to-Business Advertising. Most consumers never see *business-to-business advertising*, in which companies promote themselves in professional, trade or industrial publications read by other businesspeople. For example, a public relations firm might advertise in a magazine for managers of auto dealerships, highlighting its record of generating community goodwill and support for dealerships.

Public Relations Advertising

Of more immediate interest to public relations practitioners is the category of *public relations advertising*, through which an organization promotes its nonmarketing messages related to the public image of an organization and community support. Public relations advertising includes four subcategories: institutional advertising, advocacy advertising, political advertising and public service advertising.

Institutional Advertising. When an ad promotes the merits of a new automobile, that's product advertising. When an ad promotes the reputation of the company that manufactures the car, that's *institutional advertising* (sometimes called *image advertising*). During football season, the National Football League uses institutional advertising to enhance its reputation by promoting its charities. Other organizations use this type of advertising for other public relations purposes, such as an educational union's efforts to support an employee relations program by publicly congratulating teachers on the success of their students in a statewide test. Sometimes institutional advertising is linked with crisis communications. For example, in the wake of multimillion-dollar legal judgments against them, tobacco companies began using institutional advertising

to brag about their community assistance. Shell Oil Company ran institutional ads offering a booklet on roadside safety (see Exhibit 14.1).

Advocacy Advertising. A similar public relations use of advertising tools and techniques is *advocacy advertising* (sometimes called *issue advertising*), which focuses less on an organization and more on a cause or goal important to it. Advocacy advertising is advertising paid for by organizations to communicate their position on public issues related to their mission or business. Utilities use advocacy advertising to explain their position on energy sources or pending legislation. Unions use it to address issues of importance to them. Cause-related organizations use advocacy advertising to explain and justify their positions and to challenge the public to act in what they consider a responsible manner. Nonprofit organizations use advocacy advertising for issues that cannot be addressed through public service advertising.

Before its merger into ExxonMobil, Mobil Oil for years was a recognized leader in the field of advocacy advertising for its series of print ads. The initial ads in 1970 dealt with crises—American dependence on foreign oil, environmental pressures, and the erosion of public confidence in big business. After addressing these critical issues, Mobil continued to present its opinions, explaining the practice this way: “We think a continuous presence in this space makes sense for us. And we hope, on your part, you find us in-formative occasionally, or entertaining, or at least infuriating. But never boring.” The company also sometimes donates its advertising space to nonprofit organizations such as Reading Is Fundamental, allowing it to present its messages to wide audiences.

Increasingly, companies are using some of the advertising space for article like institutional ads that present what appear to be feature articles often about celebrities. The boost for the company is the community relations value of being associated with a popular person and a worthwhile project.

Political Advertising. Closely related to advocacy advertising is *political advertising*, in which the focus is not so much on educating the public about important issues or presenting an organization’s viewpoint on them, but rather on partisan political gain. Political advertising can deal with encouraging the support (or rejection) of specific candidates or particular pieces of legislation.

Political advertising has become an important weapon in the political arsenal, and many political interest groups are using it to promote causes—everything from tobacco and global warming to telephone access charges—rather than specific candidates. However, legal questions have been raised about the role of issue advertising in the political process. The Annenberg Public Policy Center, which monitors political advertising, estimated that as much as \$509 million was spent or earmarked for issue advocacy efforts in 1999–2000 campaign season (www.appcpenn.org/issueads). The center categorizes issue ads as legislative centered, general policy centered, and candidate centered.

In addition to individual candidate ads, topics for issue ads ranged from abortion, gun control and animal rights through campaign reform, health care, education, Social Security and the environment. The Annenberg Center identified hundreds of organizations sponsoring issue ads, not only Democratic and Republican political groups but also other organizations ranging from American Medical Association to the National Smokers Alliance, and from the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania to the Coalition for Asbestos Resolution.

Exhibit 14.1—INSTITUTIONAL ADVERTISING Shell uses a standard advertising layout, with both visual and textual messages, to create a powerful message about the dangers associated with breaking down by the side of the road. Note that this is an example of the institutional type of public relations advertising. It is designed to enhance the company's reputation with its customers by providing useful and nonbiased information rather than to sell a product. Reprinted with permission of Shell Oil Company.



Would you know how
to protect yourself?

Count on Shell™ A flat on the highway. It's irritating and inconvenient. It can also be deadly. Each year nearly 3,000 people are killed in roadside accidents. Never attempt to change a tire on a narrow shoulder. Drive to an area safely away from the flow of traffic. You may ruin a wheel rim, but it's better than risking your life. Find a place where the ground is level and firm, then follow the procedures in your owner's manual for safely raising the car and changing a tire. Learn more roadside safety tips in the "Breakdown" book, free from Shell. Pick one up at your nearest Shell station or contact us at www.countonshell.com or in the US call 1-800-376-0200.



Public Service Advertising. Who says the media don't have a heart? Each year television and radio stations, magazines and newspapers give away about several billion dollars worth of free advertising time through *public service advertisements*—promotional and advocacy advertisements for both print and broadcast media in which no placement costs are charged by the medium using the advertising.

Sometimes the line blurs between editorial and advertising, and between product advertising and public relations advertising. Cigna Insurance, for example, produces an advertising series called “The Power of Caring” that runs in magazines such as Time, Fortune, People and Sports Illustrated. The ads present features about celebrities and their charitable causes—Daisy Fuentes for the March of Dimes, Jimmy Smits for the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts, Faith Hill for her Family Literacy Project, Lance Armstrong for the Life After Cancer program, Boomer Esiason for cystic fibrosis, and Sarah Michelle Geller for Habitat for Humanity. Cigna earmarked two-thirds of its budget for the advocacy ads in 1999. “The Power of Caring spots stand out in a cluttered environment because they absolutely appeal to people on an emotional level,” explained a Cigna spokesman, who said the advertising causes people to feel better about the company.

The Public Relations AD

The late David Ogilvy, one of the pacesetters of advertising, once observed that “you cannot save souls in an empty church.” In other words, to engage audiences, advertisers need to take the message to the people. We need to capture first their attention and then their imagination, and we eventually need to summon forth a commitment and action. “FYI: Cost Versus Creativity” summarizes another of Ogilvy's statements and the implication for advertisers.

Society today is increasingly complex, and just keeping pace has become a chore. New countries on the map. New chemical elements on the periodic chart. A never-ending parade of newness. *Information overload* is the term social scientists give to this growing complexity. And it is a real burden, because the average person cannot even hope to keep up with new and more readily available information. More organizations are communicating, and organizations are communicating more.

Amid this abundance of public relations messages, we hope that one message—ours— will be heard above the din of the crowd. How can we shine brighter and sing louder? Certainly, we need effective creativity, nurtured through the planning process that you have been practicing throughout this course. We also can learn from the experience of others.

CIGNA Presents a Special Advertising Feature

THE POWER OF CARING

Tiger Teaches Children To Dream Big Dreams

Long before Tiger Woods became the world's most famous athlete, he and his father Earl talked about sharing the golf prodigy's vast talent with others.

While Tiger was still a junior, he wasn't just winning tournaments. He was also conducting clinics and contemplating even bigger acts of giving as a pro. "My dad had a lot to do with my realizing I was a role model and needed to accept that responsibility," Woods says.

Even while reordering the game of golf, he didn't forget those conversations. In 1996, his \$500,000 in seed money created the Tiger Woods Foundation (with Earl serving as president) to help children pursue their dreams and live responsibly: "I love hearing the excitement in their voices when they realize they can do something new," he says. "Those opportunities can take place off the course as well. In school, on the basketball court, at piano lessons, the potential to be anything they want is already there. We're just trying to help them realize that and encourage them as best we can."

The foundation began its work on public golf courses because that's where Woods started to realize his own dreams. From the beginning, it has hosted clinics for kids all over the country. Woods chats with them, gives an exhibition and offers personal instruction to select juniors who have distinguished themselves in golf, school and the community. "If you ever see him working with kids, you'll understand how important it is to him, how fulfilling it is," says executive director Joseph S. Grant Jr. "It's almost a spiritual thing."

The clinics raise money for public junior programs in host cities, giving many children, especially minorities, the



"I love hearing the excitement in their voices when they realize they can do something new."

chance to play a game that once was too expensive and exclusive. Golf rewards patience, dedication and honorable conduct, traits Woods believes should extend to the rest of a child's life.

The foundation has also reached kids in other substantial ways: It has given \$1.5 million in grants to programs like Target House, a residence for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital patients and their families in Memphis; the Child Abuse Prevention Fund in Milwaukee; a Michigan program that develops

musical talent; and three scholarship funds.

Last fall, the foundation also launched Start Something, its first national initiative, in partnership with Target stores. The program offers elementary and middle schoolers incentives to become more caring and focused, so they can someday be role models themselves. Nearly two million kids are expected to enroll in Start Something in its first year. Not a bad beginning—and Woods wants the foundation to continue growing, eventually reaching around the globe. "We're already brainstorming," Grant says. "Who our partners should be, how you would go about it. This is not just hyperbole."

Woods has many extraordinary accomplishments in his brief 25 years, but he considers the foundation to be one of his most significant. "Children everywhere need the encouragement to dream big dreams," he says. "I'd like to think we could help them do just that."—Alec Morrison

For information or to make a contribution, write the Tiger Woods Foundation, 4281 Katella Ave., Suite 111, Los Alamitos, CA 90720, call (714) 816-1806 or visit www.twfoundation.com.

To read other Power of Caring stories, visit www.cnsl.com/caring.

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Exhibit 14.2—PRINT AD Cigna Group Insurance runs this two-page special advertising feature in national print media. The left page is editorial-style layout to present what appears to be an article about a celebrity, while the right page is a poster-style institutional ad. Reprinted with permission of Cigna Group Insurance.

Products and services are provided by various operating subsidiaries of CIGNA Corporation, including CIGNA Group Life Insurance Company, Bloomfield, CT 06002 and not by CIGNA Corporation. CIGNA® is a registered service mark and is used to refer to these subsidiaries. CIGNA® is a registered service mark and is used to refer to these subsidiaries. CIGNA® is a registered service mark and is used to refer to these subsidiaries.

Help.

It's never too early to start planning for retirement. But how do you know if the financial decisions you make are the right ones? At CIGNA, we know how difficult this can be. That's why we created the Academy by CIGNA,¹ workshops to help educate employees about retirement options so the choices they make will be ones they can live with. At CIGNA we believe everyone shouldn't just have retirement dreams, but the tools to make them real.


CIGNA
A Business of Caring.
www.cigna.com

Developing the Message

The public relations writer sometimes uses tools drawn from the field of advertising. When we enter this field, we should learn the successful recipes that have been developed by our advertising colleagues. In particular, we should learn that effective advertisers pay careful attention to two parts of the advertising package—the visual message and the verbal message.

Visual Message. The *visual message*—artwork—presents the concept underlying the advertisement. Some advertisements use studio photographs or computer-enhanced imagery. Others use snapshots or news-type photos. Sketches, diagrams, blueprints, maps, graphs and charts also figure in the visual message. The following four guidelines may be helpful as you begin to develop the visual message for various kinds of public relations advertising:

Use simple images. The illustration is the first thing a reader looks at in an advertisement. If it seems interesting, the reader then will move on to the headline and eventually, perhaps, to the body copy. Advertising art is likely to be more effective when it is uncomplicated. A photograph of one person will attract more readers than a crowd scene. Too much background detail can distract the reader away from the main element.

Make instant connections. The combination of artwork and headline provides the immediate impression for the reader. Most artwork—such as photos, sketches and diagrams—carries a message that can be instantly absorbed and understood. This works for groups of people with various backgrounds, interests and demographic traits. Therefore, select artwork that offers instant connections linking the message with the audience. Sometimes this leads to the use of stereotyped images that, although perhaps not always fully accurate, are usually effective. For example, grandmothers come in all shapes, sizes and ages—35-year-old dancers, 55-year-old business executives, 75-year-old globe-trotting retirees. But for instant connections, you might go for the stereotype: dowdy, gray-haired, wearing an apron and baking cookies. Just be careful that, in using easy stereotypes, you don't demean the people you are portraying or depict them unfairly.

Show the product. Effective advertising finds a way to display the focus of the advertising message: the service, idea or product being promoted. Products are easy to display; people can see them. Intangibles that public relations advertisers deal with—organizations, services, ideas, attitudes and values—are more of a challenge. When we can't show a photo or footage of something, we often display it by showing its results. Sometimes it can be “seen” through its absence, or perhaps in comparison with a competitive or alternative image. Often, we rely on symbols to give form to our message.

Promote benefits, not ingredients. The grandmother doesn't buy the chocolate fudge sundae because of its riboflavin content. No, she buys it to help her grandson forget his humiliation on the soccer field or to celebrate his success.

An experienced advertiser isn't going to pitch the sundae with a list of nutritional traits, but perhaps rather as pick-me-up food, the soother of a wounded ego, a snack to be shared in good times or bad. The same advice holds for public relations advertising: Promote the benefit, not the ingredients. At University A, professors have written 276 books and published 1,435 research papers. University B has professors who will help you get a good education and a satisfying job. Which message provides the better reason to enroll?

Verbal Message. The *verbal message* is the body copy and headlines. These complement and carry on where the visual message leaves off. The public relations writer is on home turf in preparing copy for advertising. This is your area of expertise, and virtually all of the work you have done in this course will

come into play as you take on the role of copywriter. Consider the following additional guidelines for writing advertising copy as well.

Brief is best. Most advertising is based on concise copy, and professional copywriters pride themselves on their ability to pack a lot of meaning into a few words. Generally, this is the approach to aim for. It offers the greatest potential for the largest number of readers. But don't sacrifice understanding just to be terse. Research shows that people will read lengthy copy under two conditions:

if they are particularly interested in a topic and (2) if they want more information about that topic.

One thought per ad. Good ads focus on just one idea. Even advertisements of large dimensions don't have the luxury of wandering from one theme to another. For the copywriter the rules are simple: Know your point, make it and don't stray.

Make it memorable. All writers strive to have their words stick in the reader's mind, like a haunting melody that doesn't quite go away. Because advertising copy must be brief, we need to also make it memorable. A good copywriter will work through many drafts, seeking the precise word and creating just the right phrases and sentences. Often, the memorable phrases are those that, in their simplicity, are brimming with potential and meaning. "Coke Is It!" isn't the most profound corporate statement ever made, but it is meaningful and memorable. So is "Just Do It!" Think of some of the memorable messages of public relations advertising. "Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk" is wisdom packaged for a bumper sticker. The two parts of an ad where you should strive for memorable phrasing are the headline and the tag line (the slogan or parting message).

Use strong narration. Storytelling is an ancient and very effective form of communication. Good advertising copywriting features well-told stories. Anecdotes, metaphors and parables can be more forceful than mere definitions. Dialogue that is natural and realistic can bring a narrative to life.

Use description. Details and particulars also are the stuff of good advertising writing. In preparing to compose an advertisement, copywriters should know the characteristics of people and places being referred to. Study the technicalities and trivia about the subject of your writing. Picture imaginary scenes in exquisite detail. You will not use every detail, but well-chosen bits of information will flavor your writing and appeal to the audience's senses.

Be specific. Any organization can make claims and assertions, especially when its writers use general terms. But provable reality and unquestioned facts are needed to "sell" the message to the reader. Consider two universities that offer professional-training programs in public relations. University A claims to have "an excellent placement record." University B reports that "80 percent of our graduates get jobs in the public relations field." Which is more convincing? Generalities are easy to hide behind. Facts are more demanding of the writer, requiring careful research and precise use. But facts convince readers far more effectively than vague claims.

In addition, research indicates that artwork attracts attention, whereas headlines provide readers with needed information. Some advertising practitioners say the headline is the single most important determinant of an ad's effectiveness. Headlines are read at least 5 to 10 times more often than body copy. The headline itself can be presented in various ways. From a strategic point of view, consider the following types and examples of headlines:

News: "Introducing a new way to learn Spanish." This type of headline is remembered more than any other.

Emotion: "Little Maria and her brothers go to bed hungry almost every night."

How-to: "Three easy ways to get a great-paying job."

Pun: "A waist is a terrible thing to mind."

Question: “Ever wonder why Hudson-Wallaby employees always seem so happy?”

Beware of asking dumb questions that open themselves to sarcastic answers: “Would you like to get straight A’s the easy way?” (Who wouldn’t?) Avoid other types of problem headlines—the too-long head, mere labels, heads awash with hype, cute or tricky headlines that fail to reveal the topic, and headlines that don’t indicate any benefit.

Visual and Verbal Together. Think artwork. Think words. Then think of these together. Most ads are a combination of both visual and verbal elements, which work together to determine the effectiveness of the advertising message. Three common styles of advertising layouts that vary in their balance between visual and verbal mes-sages are standard, poster-style, and editorial-style layouts.

Standard advertising layouts feature both visual and textual messages—a prominent photo or other piece of artwork, along with a substantial written message. These are the advertising messages we see most often in magazines. The Shell ad in Exhibit 14.1 shows an example of a standard layout.

Some ads are *poster-style advertising*, heavy on art with very little textual information. You see poster-style layouts in most billboards and often in magazine ads.

Some ads include mainly a headline and a lot of body copy. You find this kind of *editorial-style advertising* layout in advocacy advertising in newspapers and magazines, by which an organization wants to present a detailed point of view. This style also shows up occasionally in publications in which the advertising mimics the look of an article. The ad in Exhibit 14.2 uses both the editorial-style ad to present a public relations ad and an institutional ad designed in more of a poster-style layout.

Types of Advertising Media

Consider the three different categories of media for your public relations advertising— print, poster and broadcast. Each category offers its own set of strengths and limitations.

Print Media. Print media advertising combines visual and textual messages, but there are some important differences. Newspaper advertising, for example, generally is implemented in black-and-white, whereas magazines regularly feature color advertising.

Newspaper ads are sized in various dimensions, whereas magazines most often have full-page ads. Newspapers also place several ads on the same page, so artwork, headlines and text need to work together to attract reader attention away from competing advertisements.

Magazines increasingly are featuring special advertising features, such as the Cigna Group Insurance ad shown in Exhibit 14.2. This is a typical pattern for such advertising features—an ad presented in editorial layout that is strong on the textual message, and a complimentary one presented in poster-style layout with emphasis on art and a simple headline.

Poster Media. Poster media such as transit, outdoor and placard advertising focus on visual messages. Transit advertising is located on buses and subways, either inside or on the outside of the vehicles. Outdoor advertising is carried on billboards that offer the reader only a couple of seconds to grasp the message. Placard advertising may complement the outdoor and transit media, sometimes appearing in bus terminals and airports, sometimes in store windows or hanging in hallways and lunchrooms. All forms of poster media emphasize the visual message—a strong illustration, a meaningful headline.

The strategy underlying most poster communication is *reminder advertising*. It reinforces already known images and ideas. It works best with a well-known and identifiable logo, symbol or product that

provides instant recognition. Writers for poster media need to remember that their audiences will have very little time to see and understand the messages. For example, billboards along a highway provide the viewer with less than six seconds of viewing time. Messages on transit media may literally be moving in the opposite direction.

Broadcast Media. Broadcast and cable television advertising features images that are active and dynamic. Newspapers, magazines and billboards are static media, with images that don't move and visuals that don't make a sound. But broadcast and cable offer possibilities for movement and sound that allow the writer to be creatively effective in presenting the organization's message. Likewise, the Internet and other new media increasingly can include movement and sound. Following are some guidelines for writing advertising copy for broadcast media:

Write conversationally. Make dialogue natural. Use contractions and colloquial language.

Use short sentences, with active voice and simple words.

Be careful with pronunciation. Avoid unintended alliteration and unanticipated rhymes.

Make a place in your script for music and sound effects.

Writing Public Relations Ads

Writing PSAs is generally a wide-open field, with few stylistic restrictions. It observes some of the guidelines associated with broadcast writing, especially the need for natural-sounding dialogue and simple words. It needs a footing in conversational English that allows the use of contractions, sentence fragments, and colloquialisms and other regional or nonstandard speech. It generally relies on active voice and strong

verbs. Repetition, restatement and reinforcement are common techniques. Following are a few of the particular approaches that can be used for public relations ads being prepared for radio and television:

Testimonials. *Testimonials* are straightforward, sales-type appeals by someone who has used the product or service, either an expert or an average person. Public relations writers should be careful about ethical matters related to testimonials. The PRSA Member Code of Ethics and other codes require honesty in word and spirit. The federal government, through the Federal Communications Commission, also has standards that can affect testimonials and other types of advertising (for example, restrictions on an actor dressing like a doctor).

Celebrity Endorsements. *Celebrity endorsements* are closely related to testimonials, except that the testimony comes from a well-known person. Organizations selecting celebrity spokespeople should follow two guidelines: First, choose people who are admired by the public rather than those who simply are favorites of the organization and/or the ad writers.

Second, select spokespeople whose professional and personal lives will reflect favorably on the organization and its cause. Many organizations, commercial as well as nonprofit, have been embarrassed by off-camera antics and offenses of celebrity spokespeople, and nonprofit organizations cannot afford to waste production money or risk their reputations by putting their fate into the hands of the wrong spokesperson. Also remember that celebrities may be good at attracting attention for the organization but not particularly effective in creating interest in the issue or generating support for the cause.

Product Demonstrations. *Product demonstrations* are used more often in consumer advertising, but they have a place in the world of public relations advertising. For example, a service agency can take the here-we-are-and-here's-what-we-do approach, providing viewers an overview of its programs and briefly presenting the personal and community benefits it offers. Some demonstration-oriented advertising messages use parallel structure, such as a before-and-after approach.

Drama. The technique of *drama* often is useful in public service advertising. Despite the brevity, accomplished writers can present a powerful message in 30 seconds. The secret for writing dramatic scripts for such short time frames is to confine the action—few characters, a single location, a simple plot that is easily set up and just as easily resolved. As with other advertising situations, these mini-dramas often rely on stereotyping and the use of clothing, setting and other nonverbal cues to convey important information to the audience. The drama format itself has a variety of categories:

Problem-solution ads set up an obstacle with which the audience can easily identify and then resolve it, often by a hero figure.

The *fantasy format* may rely on make-believe characters or real (perhaps historical) persons in unreal situations.

Animation sometimes finds its way into public relations advertising, especially some of the high-tech spots aimed at audiences of children, teens and young adults.

Humor is another type of advertising format that can be useful, though often public relations topics do not lend themselves to levity and comedy.

Reflective Pieces. *Reflective pieces*, also known as *mood pieces*, sometimes are effectively used for public service advertising. These involve an almost meditative use of music, poetry, scenery and other nonverbal sensory elements that are designed to put the viewer or listener in a favorable frame of mind. This approach echoes the words of Martin Luther King, who observed that “Occasionally in life there are moments which cannot be explained by words. Their meaning can only be articulated by the inaudible language of the heart.”

Symbols. Visual *symbols* can be very effective for public service advertising. Nonprofit organizations may have low budgets to produce broadcast spots, but high-impact visual symbols often are enough to carry the message. Think of the symbols in the advertising spot developed by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America—a frying pan, an egg, and a short message about your brain on drugs. That frying egg was a powerful symbol, a visual analogy. Or think of the simple visual metaphors used in the forest fire-prevention campaigns—some dry grass, a flame and a bear cub.

Sound. *Sound* can enhance a radio or television advertisement. Sound effects can be especially useful. Background music easily sets an emotional tone. Studies also have shown that dialogue or narration by on-screen characters is more effective than off-screen voiceovers. Make sure you obtain permission to use recorded music. U.S. Copyright law protects public performances of music, even by nonprofit organizations and even for uses such as nonbroadcast and educational video and telephone music-on-hold. For information and licensing permission, contact the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (www.ascap.com).

Writers do not have the final say on how a scene will be executed. That usually is in the domain of the art director or the video director. However, the writer often includes visual cues in the script as a way of signaling to the director the intended impact of the visual element. For that reason, it is important for writers to understand some of the terms, such as those dealing with broadcast scripts.

FYI

Video Terms for Broadcast Scripts and Storyboards

Fixed Camera Shots

(ES) Establishing Shot: Opening shot of a program, spot or scene; often an LS; also called a cover shot

(ECU) Extreme Close Up, (TCU) Tight Close Up: Tight shot of character's face or other scene details

(CU) Close Up: Shot of character to the armpits; used for showing dialogue or registering emotion

(CS) Close Shot: Longer than a CU, this is a shot of the character to the mid-chest level; used most often for "talking heads"; also called a bust shot or a head-and-shoulders shot

(MS) Medium Shot: Shot of character to mid-thigh; provides for some background detail and limited movement of character within the shot

(FS) Full Shot: Shot of character head-to-feet

(LS) Long Shot, (WS) Wide Shot: Any shot longer than FS

Camera Movement

Panning: Horizontal scanning of a scene, or following a moving subject with a stationary camera

Tilt: Vertical scanning of a scene

Traveling: Horizontal or vertical movement of the camera relative to a subject

Zoom: Movement of a scene between the range of ECU and WS; accomplished optically without change in camera position

Transition Between Shots

Cut, Hard Edit: Most common edit between shots, with one shot beginning at frame following the end of a previous shot

Dissolve: Replacement of one scene with another by superimposing a fade-in of the latter over a fade-out of the former; indicates passage of time or change of scene

Fade-In: Transition into a scene from a blank screen (black or color)

Fade-Out: Transition out of a scene into a blank screen (black or color)

Wipe: Change of scenes vertically, horizontally, diagonally or (with advancing technology) using any number of geometrical and other special shapes and effects

Cutaway: Cut, dissolve or wipe to a transitional shot, then on to the next scene (such as a dissolve from a scene to a clock, showing passage of time, then on to the next scene)

Audio Effects

Environmental Sound: Natural sound appropriate to the scene, such as birds and animals in a wilderness scene or traffic sounds in a street scene

(SFX) Sound Effect: Enhanced special sounds beyond environmental ones, such as a telephone tone, the sizzle of frying food, or footsteps

(SOF)

Sound-on-Film,

(SOT)

Sound-on-Tape:

Natural sound that is linked with the action seen in the film/tape, such as dialogue between characters

(VO) Voice Over: Narration read over a shot

Production Procedures

(CG) Character Generator: Computer that produces lines, letters, and other graphics for on-screen use; graphics may be moved in and out of position as cuts, fades, dissolves, crawls across the screen, and roll-ups or roll-downs into the screen

Chroma-Key: Process of inserting background from video footage, slide or still photo behind a character who is shot against a solid-colored in-studio wall

Public Service Advertising

Until 1989, television stations were required by federal law to provide public service programming under the mandate to operate in the public interest. That changed with the Reagan administration's deregulation, when the Federal Communications Commission eased its requirements for stations to provide public-interest programming. Most stations now provide significantly less free broadcast time to nonprofit organizations than they once did. However, television stations still are required to operate in the public interest, and many stations cite their broadcast of public service ads to demonstrate service to the local community when they seek license renewal from the Federal Communications Commission.

PSAs serve another practical benefit to television stations. They generally are timeless spots that can be dropped in on short notice, such as when a scheduled advertiser withdraws a commercial at the last minute. If no other paying advertisers are available, stations often turn to public service ads as last-minute fill-ins.

Because print media are not regulated by the government, they never developed a strong tradition of publishing public service advertising. However, the Advertising Council and other groups regularly provide newspapers and magazines with various sizes of public service ads. Some of these are published, especially in magazines and smaller nondaily newspapers.

Public Interest Topics

The point to remember about PSAs is that they are gifts, and you can't demand a gift. Public service advertisements receive free air time by television and radio stations and free space in publications that judge the topics to be interesting and fair comments on timely topics in the public interest. This is a call that can be made only by the media. The public relations practitioner may think the topic deals with public interest and can make a case for it. But the decision on whether to provide air time or space for a particular advertising message will be made by the station.

Television programmers who make the decisions about PSAs offer three criteria for a spot to be accepted: local angle, appropriate topic and creative presentation.

Local Angle. Many national organizations provide regional versions of their ads instead of generic national spots. Such spots have a greater chance of being accepted by local broadcasters, who naturally resent being asked for free air time that doesn't appear to serve the interest and needs of their particular audiences. Localizing an advertising spot can be as simple as ending the spot with a three-second local tag, either provided by the national organization or added by the local station. Or it may be as sophisticated as a specially edited version of the spot with local information and images woven into the central message.

Many stations prefer to co-sponsor a public service message with a nonprofit organization rather than simply give the organization free air time. They may add a tag such as "This is a reminder from Channel 7 and the local Girl Scout Council." The result is a closer identification of the station with the public service message, and an ally for the organization that may have spin-off benefits such as promotions, public affairs programming or news coverage.

Appropriate Topic. Each station and publication develops its own guidelines for what topics are appropriate materials for public service advertising, and proposed PSAs must heed these guidelines. Acceptable topics are those dealing with nonpolitical, noncommercial, nonsectarian and socially acceptable themes. Most television and radio stations, for example, would allow for general get-out-the-vote spots, but they would not provide free air time for partisan political advertising. Similarly, a nonpartisan group such as the League of Women Voters may receive free air time, but the local Democratic party probably would be not, even with the same get-out-the-vote message, because of its vested interest in the outcome of the voting.

Some stations allow nonprofit organizations to ask for support in PSAs but not for financial contributions. However, the station or publication may allow the nonprofit group to purchase commercial time at a discounted rate for its fund-raising activities. Stations often provide free air time for the charitable, educational and community service activities of religious organizations, but not for denominational religious messages. In addition, national projects like the Advertising Council's Religion in American Life campaign and local inter-religious groups have been successful in obtaining PSA status for nondenominational messages on religious, moral or spiritual themes.

Some of the most interesting topics of the day are the controversial ones. Issues that stir the hearts and minds of people are those that are contentious, multifaceted and disputed. Police accountability, euthanasia, medical use of marijuana, human rights, pro-life/pro-choice, welfare reform—these are the stuff of great and wonderful controversies. As such, they often are off-limits for PSAs.

Why? Think about it. Why would a broadcaster give time to an organization presenting a message that many of its audience members would complain about? It often is difficult enough for a station to defend its own news coverage and network presentations, without also having to defend free air time for groups with which many viewers or listeners might disagree. So it makes sense that a broadcaster would refuse PSAs on controversial topics. This also causes frustration for public relations practitioners working with organizations that deal with controversial issues, because in some ways it makes their successful advocacy of a point of view dependent on the charity of a broadcaster. That's one of the problems with charity: We can't demand it; we can only request it, and then be thankful when it is given.

Creative Presentation. Interesting and lively writing is essential for public service advertising. There are so many good causes, so many important messages, that a radio or television station cannot hope to provide a voice for each one. Often, a determinant is writing quality. Most television stations, for example, would refuse to accept spots that feature slides or still photographs with off-screen narration. Such an approach is a terrible waste of the potential of television.

Consider this scenario. Organization A and Organization B both have something important to say to the public. Organization A provides a bland, uninteresting script that merely repeats a time-worn message. Organization B deals with the same topic, but does so with a vigor and finesse that creates an interesting new approach. Most likely, Organization B will get the PSA time before Organization A does.

Eligibility Requirements

A quick call to the media will give you information on what topics are considered for public service time and the details associated with requests for public service advertising. Contact the program director or public service manager at a television or radio station, or the advertising director of a magazine or newspaper. Acceptable topics generally include health and safety issues—seat belts, safe driving, child abuse, disease detection, alcohol and other drug abuse, handicap awareness and medical research. Other topics that often find their way into PSA spots include education, the environment and family life—as long as the presentation isn't partisan or controversial.

Only non-profit organizations can qualify for PSA time. Sometimes, however, corporations work in partnership with nonprofits, producing their public service spots that are distributed nationally and locally. This is part of the community relations program of some corporations. For example, Ashland Oil developed a multi-million-dollar corporate advertising campaign to support education following a critical report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. Ashland focused ads on how teachers affect individual students and society in general. It sponsored student visits to colleges and universities, and it developed an audiovisual program to encourage students to think about their future. Ashland also sponsored a stay-in-school project by the Advertising Council. Admitting that part of its motivation was to improve its image and support its sales, the company said it sponsored the ads also because "it is the right thing to do, and we are in a position to do it." Broadcast stations have varying requirements for how organizations may submit materials for public service use. Radio stations, for example, often will accept scripts that can be read by reporters and on-air personalities. Some radio stations accept brief postcard announcements for upcoming events. Others encourage organizations to record brief announcements over the telephone. Most radio stations can use audiotaped announcements prepared by the organization or by professional production companies.

For television, the requirements are usually higher. Most stations use only professionally prepared videotaped spots. Some stations will provide in-studio production services to organizations that have scripted simple public service advertisements. Sometimes the station will provide the organization with extra copies of the finished PSA tape for other television stations in the area. Also, most video production companies can make PSA tapes, either from an organization's script or from a script they prepare for the organization. Both of these services can be expensive. Alternatively, some nonprofit organizations assist each other with scripting and production services, and others find inexpensive help from colleges or universities, public access cable television studios and in-house corporate video facilities.

The actual presentation of a script for a television PSA also can take several forms. Exhibit 14.3 presents a United Negro College Fund ad in a traditional script format. The same PSA is presented in storyboard format in Exhibit 14.4.

Exhibit 14.3—UNCF TELEVISION SCRIPT Concepts for public service advertising can be pre-sented in storyboard format, such as in this outline format, which describes the same ad as seen on the storyboard.

“Portraits”

Format: 60-second public service advertisement

Client: United Negro College Fund


Video: Main characters are two African-American girls, depicted at various ages from 6 to 19

Audio 1: Announcer voice-over

Audio 2: Original Music: “Save a place for me. Save a space for me.”

		<i>Video</i>	<i>Audio 1</i>	<i>Audio 2</i>
:05	:05	(MS) Two African-American girls on a sliding board (age 6)	xx	Save a place for me. Save a space for me
:05	:10	(MS) Same girls on swings	xx	in your heart. In your heart.
:05	:15	(ECU) Same girls	xx	Save a place for me.
:05	:20	(ECU) Same girls (age 10)	xx	Save a space for me
:05	:25	(MS) Same girls in school cafeteria	xx	in your heart.
:05	:30	(LS) Same girls sitting and studying on apartment balcony (age 16)	xx	In your heart.
:05	:35	(MS) Same girls still on balcony, studying together	xx	xx
:05	:40	(CU) One girl sitting in college class looking pensive (age 19)	Every year, the United Negro College Fund	xx
:05	:45	(MS) Same girl in large college class, with other black students	helps thousands of students go to college.	Save a place for me.
:05	:50	(MS) Same girl sitting in college class, looking pensive (empty seat in row behind her)	But for everyone we help	xx
:05	:55	(CU) Empty college desk.	there’s one we can’t.	xx
:05	:60	“The United Negro College Fund. A mind is a terrible thing to waste. 1 800 322-UNCF (with logos of Ad Council and UNCF)	Please support the United Negro College Fund. A mind is a terrible thing to waste.	xx














Exhibit 14.4—UNCF STORYBOARD Young & Rubicam advertising developed three different versions (60, 30 and 15 seconds) of this spot for the United Negro College Fund, one of the offerings of the Advertising Council.

THE ADVERTISING COUNCIL, INC. 

UNITED NEGRO COLLEGE FUND CAMPAIGN

Public Service Announcements

"PORTRAITS" (Version A) :60 CNUF-8160 Also available as :30 (CNUF-8130), :15 (CNUF-8115)

 <p>MUSIC: SAVE A PLACE FOR ME. SAVE A SPACE FOR ME.</p>	 <p>IN YOUR HEART IN YOUR HEART.</p>	 <p>SAVE A PLACE FOR ME.</p>
 <p>SAVE A SPACE FOR ME.</p>	 <p>IN YOUR HEART.</p>	 <p>IN YOUR HEART.</p>
	 <p>ANNCR VO: Every year, the United Negro College Fund</p>	 <p>helps thousands of students go to college. MUSIC: SAVE A PLACE FOR ME...</p>
 <p>But, for everyone we help, MUSIC: SAVE A SPACE FOR ME...</p>	 <p>there's one we can't.</p>	<div style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 10px; border-radius: 10px;"> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;">The United Negro College Fund</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">A mind is a terrible thing to waste.</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em; margin: 0;">  1 800 332 UNCF  </p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em; margin: 0;">Please support the United Negro College Fund. A mind is a terrible thing to waste.</p> </div>


Volunteer Advertising Agency: Young & Rubicam Inc. A public service campaign  499

Exhibit 14.5—UNCF PRINT AD UNCF print ads for magazines and newspapers feature a variety of sizes and layouts with the same picture and similar messages, along with the familiar slogan of the United Negro College Fund, “A Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Waste.” Such print ads are a staple of the UNCF package of public service ads. This ad series is called “Money Can Separate Even the Best of Friends”

MONEY CAN SEPARATE EVEN THE BEST OF FRIENDS.

The United Negro College Fund helps thousands of deserving students go to college. But for every one we help, there's one we can't. Not without the funds. Please help.

Support The United Negro College Fund.
A Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Waste.

Call 1 800 332-UNCF.

MONEY CAN SEPARATE EVEN THE BEST OF FRIENDS.

The United Negro College Fund helps thousands of deserving students go to college. But for every one we help, there's one we can't. Not without the funds. Please help.

Support The United Negro College Fund.
A Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Waste.

Call 1 800 332-UNCF.

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