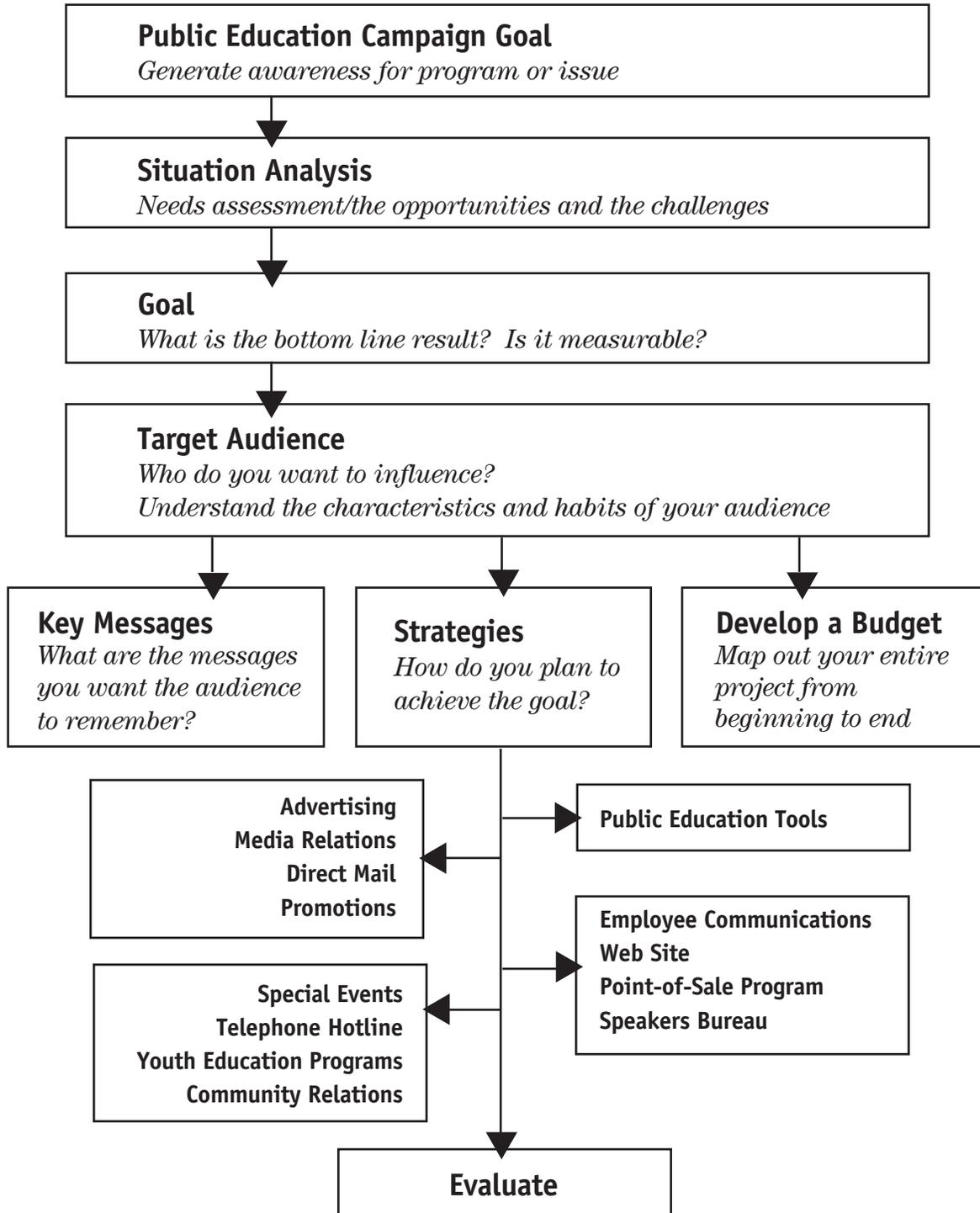


Elements of a Public Education Campaign



Goals and Objectives

The key to an effective consumer education program is to organize the components into a complete, logical and persuasive plan. The plan should detail the procedures that will help meet certain objectives and explain how their progress will be measured. A complete situational analysis should be included to guide the selection of goals and objectives. A situational analysis is similar to information presented in the needs assessment section of this workbook and reviews the opportunities for marketing action. It also takes into account the “what if” scenarios. For example, what if detection of pesticides continues to increase and residential misuse is identified as a point source?

Goals

A consumer education program must start with a clear understanding of your goals. Think of the goal or goals as the bottom-line result that you hope to achieve in the campaign. It’s not necessarily changing the ways homeowners use and dispose of pesticides; it’s quite possibly a reduction or containment of detectable pesticide residues in the public water system.

You need to consider measurability of the goals. For instance, if one of your goals is to reduce detected residues of specific pesticides in your influent, you must have baseline data that you can

later compare with results of tests conducted after your education campaign. Be realistic when setting goals. Perhaps a goal of increasing consumer awareness of their responsibility in protecting California’s water is more achievable than an immediate reduction in detectable pesticide levels.

For instance, the goals of a POTW public education campaign could be to:

- Encourage proper disposal of pesticides among residential users
- Increase awareness of responsible home pesticide use

These might seem simplistic, but campaign goals are designed to be focused on the end result. It is how you will accomplish the goals that determines a successful campaign. Typically, through strategies that are applied to a specific target audience, communication and education will achieve the goal.

We know that there are two distinct paths toward the end result:

1. Educate consumers about proper purchase, use and disposal of home-use pesticides; and
2. Educate consumers about integrated pest management as a way of using pesticides more wisely and reducing overall pesticide use.

A Look at the Communication Process

There is a critical path you must take to complete the process of communicating with an audience. Whether it's written or verbal communication, you must reach the audience with a specific message, make the audience listen, then

make them believe what you are saying, and compel them to act on the message.

In building an education outreach plan, analyze the process of communication through the following points:

Analyze your target audience

Who are they?

What do they perceive about you, your district and the issues?

What are their primary concerns?

What will make them listen?

Encourage them to listen

Start with a powerful opening or a compelling headline.

Relate quickly how the information is relevant to them.

Help them believe your messages

Establish credibility through endorsements, scientific evidence or other allied association.

Demonstrate your shared concerns.

Encourage them to act on that belief

Close the loop by offering specific “action items” you want them to consider based on your key messages — keep items clear and simple.

Target Audiences for the Public Education Campaign

Once you understand the situation and the “environment” in which you are operating, and you’ve designed specific, measurable goals, you need to define the target audience that you wish to influence in order to achieve the goals.

It is ineffective (if not impossible) to create a campaign and relevant messages/materials that will reach everyone. For this reason it is important to determine a specific target audience for the public education campaign.

Results from DPR’s survey of POTWs will shed some light on defining possible broad target audiences. When queried as to the source of the pesticide problem in their service area, POTWs responded that the following were “very significant” or “somewhat significant”:

Landscape maintenance and roadside weed control	33.3%
Agriculture	27.9%
Residential	27.0%
Parks and golf courses	21.3%
Business/commercial	18.0%
Industrial	12.7%

The Department of Pesticide Regulation and others have studied sewage inflows in urban areas to determine sources of contamination. These studies indicate that although much higher concentrations of pesticides are sometimes seen from commercial sources, the residential areas contribute much larger flows,

which translates into a greater residential contribution. Therefore, a source reduction strategy that focuses on reducing loads from residential sources would be the most effective strategy. If such a source reduction program can successfully increase the pollution prevention awareness of service area residents, inputs from commercial and other sources may also decrease.

Moreover, if you wish to target some of your educational efforts to commercial operations, there are several professional associations which communicate on a regular basis to their members. For example, the Pest Control Operators of California represents structural pest control businesses. The California Landscape Contractors Association educates its member landscape companies about relevant issues.

Targeting Consumers

The most obvious audience to target for a pesticide public education campaign is consumers who are buying and using pesticide products. People use these products for a variety of tasks, from killing insects in their flower and vegetable gardens, to eliminating ants and fleas inside their homes. Many cleaning and disinfectant supplies are also classified as pesticides. As varied as these products are, and the people that use them, there are some common characteristics that allow us to develop a target audience.





 For a residential outreach campaign, the primary target is:

Homeowners who actively participate in gardening activities and home improvement — the consumers most likely to purchase and use pesticide products.

Profile of the Target Audience

Most pesticide use by homeowners is for the control of indoor and garden pests and for cleaning. Residents who use pesticides are often engaged in home improvement or gardening projects around their homes. The improper use and disposal of these products may lead to increased pesticide residues in community waterways and municipal water supplies.

According to an April 1997 article in *American Demographics*, “One in four Americans says that gardening is a real hobby or interest of theirs.” The same article notes that home ownership is one of the most likely predictors of someone’s interest in gardening. A 1994 survey for the National Gardening Association estimated that 75 percent of U.S. households had at least one resident who gardened.

Data indicates that consumers are more likely to consider environmental impact

when purchasing gardening and household products. The Green Gauge study, conducted by Roper Starch Worldwide, found that, “Environmental concerns matter more in some industries than they do in others... that people pay more attention to environmental factors when buying things that have an obvious and direct impact on the environment, such as lawn-and-garden products and household cleaners.” People want to be educated about pesticide purchases, use and disposal, through the efforts of a public education campaign.

Communications Base

Before you begin, your messages must be clearly defined and understood. Since the goal of this education outreach campaign is to encourage proper pesticide use and disposal, the strategies and tactics involved should be turned into a communication strategy guideline.

To summarize the two most important areas to cover:

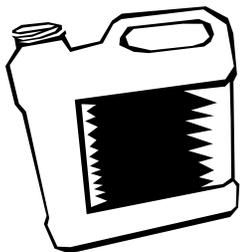
1. General pesticide purchase, use and disposal:

■ *Proper identification of the pest problem.*

Consumers tend to generalize and lump categories of pests. They need to ask nursery personnel, or consult a how-to book or magazine garden section. Consumers should be encouraged to seek the least-toxic, most pest-specific treatment.

■ *Consumers need to read labels before purchase.*

Many tend to select products based on sales promotion, pull it off the shelf, put it in their basket and move along. They won't realize until later that they bought enough concentrate to last many years. However, concerned about shelf life, consumers will probably want to dispose of it much sooner. By reading the label before purchase, consumers will understand that a little concentrate goes a long way.



■ *Using pesticides safely means responsible use.*

Encouraging consumers to use pesticides according to label instructions with safety measures in mind (for example, remember children and pets) will encourage them to treat pesticides with respect. Overuse or misuse of pesticides can cause problems.

■ *The “don’ts” of disposal.*

The risks of improper pesticide disposal are great enough to warrant a listing of don'ts for consumers.

Such a list would include “don't flush pesticides down the drain or toilet” for example, and a reminder about local and federal disposal restrictions.



2. Integrated Pest Management (IPM):

Convincing consumers to adopt IPM may be a challenge because IPM is not a rote method that produces quick results. IPM is a decision-making process which involves working with nature to create conditions that make it difficult for pests to survive, while encouraging beneficial organisms to flourish. It is a problem-solving approach to pest control that employs the least-toxic methods. IPM emphasizes preventing and reducing the source of pest problems rather than treating the symptoms. It encourages us to realize that living organisms only become pests when their populations exceed certain threshold levels. Though not strictly a non-chemical approach, an IPM program will generally result in a reduction in the use of pesticides. By working with nature rather than against it, there are usually more effective ways to manage pest problems.

Components of an IPM program:

■ *Initial information gathering.*

Identify the pest problem. This is the first and most important step — figuring out exactly what you're up against. Some pests (or signs of them) are unmistakable. Other signs that make you think "pest" can be misleading. For example, what may look like a plant disease may be, in fact, a sign of poor soil or lack of water. Use free sources in your area to help identify your pest problem and learn the most effective methods to control it. These sources include library reference books (such as field guides or gardening books), pest specialists in your county's office of the University of California Cooperative Extension Service, and local plant nurseries. These sources are usually listed in the telephone book.

■ *Monitoring.*

Observe sites at regular intervals for potential pest problems.

■ *Establishing injury levels.*

Determine when the pest problem will warrant corrective action. Decide how much pest control is necessary and appropriate.

■ *Recordkeeping.*

Maintain an accurate recordkeeping system to document observations, decisions made, actions taken, and results.

■ *Selection of reduced-risk alternatives.*

Use the following objectives when selecting pest management approaches and specific methods: least disruptive of natural controls, least hazardous to human health, least toxic to non-target organisms, least damaging to the environment, most likely to produce a permanent reduction in the supportive environment for the target pest(s), and most cost-effective considering both short- and long-term objectives.

■ *Evaluation.*

Evaluate the effectiveness of the IPM program and make adjustments as needed.

For more information on integrated pest management, see the Resource Guide.

Pesticide Use and the Target Audience

Once you are familiar with the profile of the target audience, you can look at its use of pesticide products. It is important to understand the characteristics and habits of consumers as you formulate your public education campaign.

The largest concern, because of its popularity and the room for user error, is pesticide use by home gardeners. Garden products are sold in both ready-to-use containers and in concentrate. The measuring and mixing of concentrated garden products means that homeowners are responsible for carefully reading directions and accurately preparing the mixtures. This is the first potential problem, since higher concentrations of pesticides may find their way into the water system.



Another major concern involves application of pesticides. Homeowners need to be aware of factors, such as spraying on or near concrete, which can lead to runoff. The user may not be educated on the proper use of the products, and potential risks that may come as a result of specific conditions.



Another potential problem arises when it is time to dispose of garden pesticide products. Users may dispose of the excess product down the drain, or pour it on a paved surface. Homeowners may not understand that these practices can severely harm water quality and aquatic life.

Indoor pest management is another area of concern. Most household pesticide products that are designed for in-home use are sold in ready-to-use containers. The bottle or can will probably be stored in a cabinet and used periodically to control pests. While it is likely that homeowners may use more of the product than is called for, the residual effects usually remain on the surface that is sprayed (e.g., the kitchen floor or laundry room counter). The potential problem for these products is mainly in their disposal.

It is important to note that while there are literally hundreds of messages going out to consumers regarding safety and the environment, there is still room for a strategic campaign aimed at the safe and responsible use of pesticides. As pointed out in an August 1997 *American Demographics* feature article:

“Americans are also aware there’s much to be done. Almost three-fourths think they should be doing more for the environment, according to Roper [Starch Worldwide]. Yet just 6 percent of consumers consider a product’s environmental impact as a primary factor in their decision to buy it. This potential guilt gap indicates fertile ground for upping the ante on America’s environmental conscience. If our concern is close enough to the surface, it might not be difficult to stir it into action.”

With this information in mind, it is now possible to continue the creation of your public education campaign.

Strategies

The strategies in your communication plan are based on your goals and the methods used to reach your target audience. For example, take the broad audience of homeowners ages 25 to 54 and consider ways to rationally build a host of opportunities to reach them. For instance:

Homeowners (25 – 54) who actively garden

We can build an opportunity profile by making some general assumptions:

- They may be more likely to have financial resources given the fact that they are homeowners and they have enough land to garden.
- Because they are gardeners, they probably read the gardening section of their local newspaper and they might be interested in the weekend garden program on the local radio station.
- They purchase pesticides at garden centers and independent nurseries. They might even enroll in a class there regarding a specific area of interest.

Reach this defined audience with the communications methods available to “move” your message:

- Newspaper garden sections
- Radio or television feature programs
- Direct mail opportunities via the purchasing of mailing lists

- Bill inserts in mailings other than your own billing (sorted by zip)
- Retail point-of-sale program at local garden center

Mapping out your plan involves outlining your goals and messages, and the communications methods you will use to reach your audience. For instance:

- Place a series of columns with the local newspaper garden editor and writer
- Conduct regional spokesperson tour in conjunction with Earth Day activities

These become two strategies with the actual execution of each defined through the plan. You should also consider localizing story angles — making sure that if you have statewide statistics, you relate them to your “backyard” and make them more newsworthy and compelling to the local/regional audience.

These goals and strategies become critical in evaluating your programs. However, to adequately discern if you have achieved your goals, you need to conduct pre- and post-program research or somehow set a benchmark to measure success. Evaluation programs will be discussed further in this workbook.

Budget Development for a Public Education Campaign

Any public or semi-private entity understands the nature and reality of limited budgets. We can consider the budget crunch an everyday dilemma. When budgeting for a campaign, be sure to build in efficiencies such as partnership opportunities and “free publicity” venues. It is also important to carefully construct and manage the budget.

The following provides a checklist in the development of a budget for a campaign. This assumes that you need to keep track of staff time as part of the budget planning process.

Where to Start

- Take time to map out the project before it begins
- Outline all expected staff time and out-of-pocket expenses line by line
- Research and request bids for all expenses, getting several for any large items such as printing
- Discuss/review the budget with a supervisor or coworker as a reality check
- Estimate ballpark figures when possible
- Include tax on all hard costs as appropriate — this can be quite a surprise
- Include a 5 to 10 percent contingency if possible
- Formally write up budget and provide to all appropriate parties

How to Implement

- Provide all management/communications team members with detailed budget for each project
- Provide staff members with estimated time they can spend on a project, along with the estimated expenses for specific hard costs
- Have team members alert a supervisor immediately if time or out-of-pocket expenses are getting “out of control”
- Review detailed budget status each month and have major vendors provide the same
- Maintain monthly budget trackers and estimated remaining budget
- Designate a member of the management team as a budget point person
- Keep copies of all signed estimates and invoices to help track expenses
- Create an invoice binder for easy reference

Budgeting Tips

- Use previous similar programs as budget guidelines
- Always call vendors for estimates — don’t “guesstimate”
- Document discussions that might impact budget
- Include miscellaneous expenses such as administrative costs

Event and Services Checklist

The following provides some standard items to consider for out-of-pocket expenses and possible services/staffing time requirements

Typical Event Out-of-Pocket List

- Venue costs (e.g., hotel conference room rental)
- Audio visual equipment/stage/podium
- Insurance
- Food and beverage
- Flowers/centerpieces
- Photographer, videographer
- Invitations
- Guest book, media leave-behind gift (e.g., T-shirts, keychains), press kits
- Speaker honorariums
- Travel and lodging (complete detailed list)
- Shipping, freight, postage, messenger, FedEx, UPS
- Phone, fax, cell phone, copying
- On-going internal communications
- Planning and update meetings
- Site research/site check
- Speaker contact and coordination
- Write/review speaker and/or client remarks
- Coordinate AV needs, food and beverage, stage/podium, flowers, photographer
- Develop event time line and event flow
- Coordinate travel/lodging arrangements
- Coordinate press materials
- Coordinate gifts for participants/speakers (e.g., garden aprons with logo, t-shirts)
- Event run-through or rehearsal
- Coordinate broadcast and print monitoring
- Travel to and from event
- Attend event
- Management correspondence and status reports
- Follow-up: thank you letters, follow-up on vendor invoices and billing
- Coordinate monthly budget status
- Results reporting (clip reports, broadcast placements)

Typical Time-Consuming Services for Event

- Develop event concept
- Research/contact speakers
- Write invitation copy
- Coordinate design, proofing, printing
- Coordinate mailing
- Development invitation list/media list (qualify by phone)