

Explanation of Point-of-Sale Programs

Point-of-sale (p-o-s) programs may involve a manufacturer, retailer, media partner, or all of the above. It is simply a program that puts information where consumers buy a specific product. For home pesticides, the p-o-s may include mass merchandisers, grocery chains, and hardware stores. You may target a retail chain, based on the program you are presenting and the audience you want to reach. For instance, garden centers at mass merchandise outlets may attract more female shoppers than neighborhood hardware stores.

Point-of-sale program opportunities should be designed around partnerships and budget constraints. The program may be as simple as asking retailers to hang posters in their front window during peak buying season. Or it may be as complex as initiating a poster contest with entry forms available in a branded product section at a specific retail location and promoted through a radio tie-in. Product use and disposal demonstrations can also be incorporated into a p-o-s promotion. Keep in mind that federal pesticide labeling law prohibits attaching information directly to pesticide products.

Standard p-o-s collateral includes brochures, posters and shelf displays. Costs for printing the materials and responsibility for distribution will depend on your agreement with retailers

and other partners. Typically, chain retailers can distribute materials through their internal delivery systems.

Evaluation of Method

As with all public relations programs, there are several ways to evaluate the success of an in-store promotion. Evaluation should be based on the program objectives. Success of various programs may be measured by the number of brochures distributed, the number of consumers attending a seminar or the number of comments or letters sent to retailers who display education materials on the property.

Pros: Point-of-sale programs reach consumers where they are making purchasing decisions and can be quite effective in providing educational materials. This is an audience that needs to be aware of the dangers of misuse, as well as advice on how to protect the environment.

As a public service agency with an important environmental message, you give the retailer the opportunity to be a “good citizen.”

Cons: Retailers are flooded with requests to promote programs, products and other materials; they often do not want to make decisions without corporate approval. Finding the right person at the right location may be time-consuming.

Working with Retailers

Most retailers value their reputation in the community and they usually are willing to listen to promotional proposals. Approach them through their marketing or community relations departments with a letter that explains the promotion, what you are hoping they will contribute (window space or contest assistance), and the benefit in the eyes of the consumer.

As with any marketing program, explain the nature of the problem and the need for a solution through consumer educa-

tion. Showing retailers that they can make a positive difference will help your cause. Answer the retailer question, “What’s in it for me?”

Once you have set the stage with a contact letter, follow up with a call requesting a meeting with the decision-makers. If you have product manufacturer support, it would be wise to include the support. For instance, if a manufacturer funds window posters, be sure to let the retailer know that brand support is available.

Steps to Approaching Retailers

Retailers need to be approached in different ways. The most important approaches are letters and follow-up calls. (See the sample letter that follows.) Most major chain retailers are divided into three areas: store manager; district manager; and corporate headquarters. Your contact depends on the partnership you are planning to create.

For individual store promotions, contact the store manager. If you are pursuing a partnership with multiple stores of the same franchise in a larger area, contact the district manager. In some cases, the store and/or district manager may refer you to corporate headquarters.

If you are pursuing a locally owned business, contact the store manager. After sending a letter, follow up and ask to set up a time to speak by phone or in person. Request only a few minutes of the manager’s time. Send a brief thank-you letter following this meeting.

The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District of Martinez has developed a manual, “How to Implement an IPM Partnership With Stores.” See the “Case Study” in the Appendix for photos and text that describe the program.

Sample Retail Pitch Letter

(Date)

John Smith, Manager
The Garden Center
500 Garden Way
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Smith:

Anytown Water District wants to make your customers aware that proper use and disposal of pesticides are important to home and garden safety, as well as the quality of local waterways and the ocean. We believe that your business can play an important role in protecting our community's water quality.

We recently launched a public outreach and education program called "*H₂O Home to Ocean*" to help consumers learn about safe use and disposal of pesticides, as well as environmentally-friendly tips to maintain their homes and gardens. Since The Garden Center sells many home and garden products, I urge you to consider participating in a point-of-sale program for our campaign.

Historically, government agencies have focused on the impact of agricultural pesticides on water quality. However, urban pesticide use has also come under scrutiny in recent years. While residential pesticide applications are often small in scale, their cumulative impact is significant. Pesticide runoff from lawns and gardens, as well as improper disposal, can pose major problems for wastewater treatment plants.

We need to convey this information in a number of ways, including retail displays with placards and tear cards near the pesticide products section. Enclosed is a sample tear card for your review. These materials convey an important message to consumers while enhancing your business reputation in our community.

I would be most interested in your ideas on how Anytown Water District can conduct a mutually beneficial point-of-sale program. You may call me at (phone number). Or I will call in a few days to discuss this proposal with you.

Thank you for your time and interest.

Sincerely,

John Doe
Director

Store Signage and Promotion

Message consistency

In-store signage and promotions are a great way to extend the message of a campaign. As discussed in an earlier section, it is important to provide consistent themes and logos throughout the campaign. If the retail store partner wants to produce its own materials with a store logo, insist that your theme and logo also be presented. Explain that the consumer has seen the theme and logo in other materials and will recognize the

same logo, creating a more effective communication piece.

Maintenance of materials

Reach an agreement with retailers on who will maintain materials in each store. Discuss these details in advance so that no opportunities are lost. Also remember that store signage may become worn and should be monitored for replacement.

Potential Major Retail Partners

Following is a list of major retail corporate offices in California. Telephone numbers and Web site addresses were current as of September, 1998. If you cannot find a store listed in your local

phone book, check with the company's headquarters to find the location nearest you. Do not overlook opportunities to conduct programs with locally-owned stores.

Target

P.O. Box 1392
Minneapolis, MN 55440-1392
(800) 800-8800
www.target.com

Home Depot

2727 Paces Ferry Road
Atlanta, GA 30339
(770) 433-8211
www.homedepot.com

Ace Hardware

2200 Kensington Court
Oak Brook, IL 60523
www.acehardware.com

Rite Aid

Camp Hill Shopping Center
South 32nd Street
Camp Hill, PA 17011
(717) 761-9549
www.riteaid.com

HomeBase

2120 Barranca Parkway
Irvine, CA 92714
(949) 442-5000

Orchard Supply Hardware

P.O. Box 49027
San Jose, CA 95161-9027
(408) 281-3500
www.osh.com

Longs Drugs

141 North Civic Drive
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
(510) 937-1170
www.longs.com

K-Mart

3100 W. Big Beaver Road
Troy, MI 48084-3163
www.kmart.com

Wal-Mart

702 SW 8th Street
Bentonville, AR 72716
(800) 925-6278
www.wal-mart.com