

Writing a PSA

A PSA (Public Service Announcement)

Radio and TV stations are required to offer time on their stations to running PSAs (Public Service Announcements). They are advertisements that raise awareness on social issues. They can be run on behalf of community events, charity events, non-profit organizations, etc.

Step 1 - The Overall Message

- The most important part of your PSA is your message
- Make your message as clear as possible using simple descriptive words:
“Help us deliver quality clean air for generations to come”



Step 2 - The Opening Hook

- Decide how you will grab the attention of your audience
- A. Emulation
- Suggests characteristics in people that you might want to imitate:
“The best leaders never let failure deter them from achieving their goals”
- B. Bandwagon
- Suggests that “everyone is doing it” so you should do it too. This is an appeal suggesting that you should go along with the crowd:
“Don’t be the last one to receive the benefits of Cycle Health’s natural remedy for better living”
- C. Injustice
- Attempts to shed light on bad or poor conditions and tries to arouse people to act in response:
“Every year the polar bear loses more and more of its natural habitat, and we are running out of time to act”



D. Status

- Suggests that if you act or look a certain way, you will gain importance or status.
“If you want to really stand out in a crowd then be sure to visit Dr. Watson for your free teeth whitening”

E. Altruism

- Suggests a regard for the interests of others. The altruistic appeal suggests that you will be rewarded if you do good for others:
“There is no better feeling than helping the needy children supported by Children Help International”

F. Pleasure

- Suggests that if you do a certain thing or go to a certain place, you will have fun or experience joy:
“The best way to have fun this summer is to get a membership at The Wild Wacky Water Park”

G. Stats

- Provide statistics that are related to your issue:
“Four out of five doctors recommend mint toothpaste over cinnamon in order to help fight bad breath”

H. Questions

- Ask a question that may be relevant to them:
“Do you or someone you know suffer from headaches?”

I. Mission Statement

- Make a brief point about the goals of your organization:
“The Friendly Help Clinic prides itself on quick, efficient and reliable public service”

J. Emotion

- Explain the benefits of getting involved for both the audience and those in need by using emotional language:
- “Your contribution to the disaster relief will help those affected by the hurricane”

Step 3 - The Informational Elements

- Choose which informational elements you will include to advertise your message:

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A. Descriptions

E. Humor

B. Statistics

F. Examples



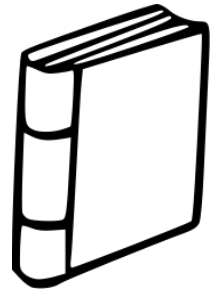
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C. Repetition

G. Definitions

D. Quotations

H. Stories



Step 4 - The Key Information



- Provide the specific details about what the listeners need to know
- It helps if you think about the details in terms of when/where and why

A. When/Where

“This Saturday in Byers Square in front of City Hall”

B. Why

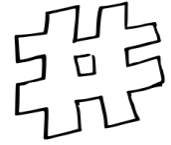
“You should come on down and support the cause to fight deforestation”

Step 5 - The Call to Action



- Let the audience know how they can get involved, donate money or support the cause in other ways like volunteering
- Provide clear direction on what your audience is to do after they hear your announcement

Step 6 - The Contact Information



- Provide a telephone number, website, email address, etc.
- Usually you put this at the end of the announcement

Step 7 - The Timing



- Keep in mind that the amount of time you have to give your announcement is limited
- The amount of time that you have can range from 10 seconds to 60 seconds
- Plan your script so that it fits into your time allotment

Length of PSA	10 seconds	15 seconds	30 seconds	60 seconds
Number of Words	20 - 25	30 - 35	60 - 75	120 - 140

Possible Themes For PSA

Social Education

- Anti-Smoking
- Exercising
- Nutrition
- New Parent Help

Approaches to Learning

- Teacher Recruiting
- Stay in School
- Homework
- Learn to Read

Human Ingenuity

- Communication
- Cell Phones
- Exports
- Internet

Environment

- Water Conservation
- Energy Conservation
- Alternative Energy

Community and Service

- Volunteering
- Homelessness
- Fundraisers

PSA Examples

PSA Example # 1

Time: 10 seconds

Organization: Water Conservation Authority

Title: "Water Wednesdays"

The Water Conservation Authority wishes to announce that starting this June, Water Wednesdays will begin. For more information please call 555-5555. Thank-you.

PSA Example # 2

Time: 30 seconds

Organization: Readers Choice

Title: "Reading"

Research shows that success in school and life starts with literacy. When children become good readers early in their education, they are more likely to become better learners throughout their school years and beyond. In a nationwide effort to communicate to parents the importance of reading to their school-aged children, Readers Choice is teaming up with the National Librarians to promote the nationwide campaign, "Young Readers." Help us make September "Reading Awareness Month" by visiting www.youngreaders.com.

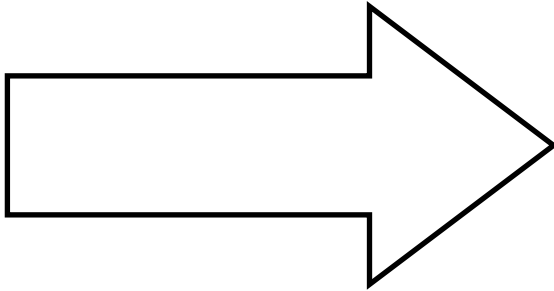
PSA Rubric

Expectations	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Content of PSA	PSA is clichéd; message is not clearly conveyed	PSA is acceptable but a simple attempt to convey a message	PSA is informative and uses a fresh approach to convey the message	PSA is motivational and effectively conveys the message
Audience Response	Approach is too rough or patronizing to be persuasive	Audience is left with sympathy for the message	Audience is attentive and persuaded	Audience is transfixed and committed to the message
PSA Point of View	P.O.V. is not specific and is mostly vague	P.O.V. is evident but not compelling	P.O.V. is sincere and committed	P.O.V. is compelling or passionate
Written Rationale Behind PSA	Includes a vague explanation that is not clearly understood	Includes essential but simple information	Includes essential information and clearly displays knowledge	Includes information and is in-depth and detailed; thorough knowledge

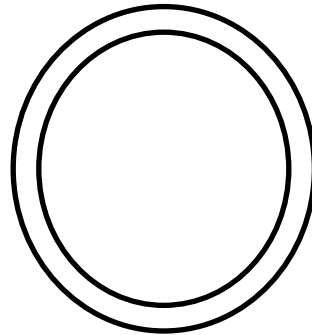
PSA Graphic Organizer

Watching or Listening

Theme



Target Audience



Message

Persuasive Techniques Used

Print imagery used

Visual imagery used

Sounds used

How did you feel when viewing this PSA? What were your emotions?

What action do you feel you need to take after viewing this PSA?



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