

**Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association
Final Report
1996**

Background

The ultimate objective of the BASMAA communications campaign is to reduce the amount of polluted runoff in the Bay, creeks and Delta.

The initial strategic thinking regarding the framework of the program was to focus messages during the first year -- 1996 -- exclusively on the concept of *polluted runoff*. Everything that is deposited on the ground eventually finds its way down storm drains and winds up untreated in the Bay, creeks and Delta.

In subsequent years, campaign messages would be more *source-specific*, in that we would try to educate residents about actual toxic substances which they use in everyday life that contribute to the cumulative polluted run-off.

However, it was decided by the BASMAA group that we would create messages in the initial year which would satisfy both of these communication objectives. In effect, it was clear that in order to accelerate the behavior change among individuals, we needed to educate them about the concept of polluted runoff and their specific activities which can contribute to that runoff.

Objectives

Therefore, the following objectives were formalized and agreed upon early in the year, prior to the development of any creative materials:

- To communicate the *umbrella idea*:
 - the concept of pollution run-off.
 - that gutters and storm drains are the vehicles that carry polluted run-off.

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- that the pollution extends to more than just the Bay (i.e. creeks, Delta and ocean).
 - that individuals, not industry, are the principal cause of pollution run-off.
- To communicate specific *causes and solutions* to the pollution runoff problem:
 - Overuse of lawn fertilizers and overwatering.
 - Overuse of garden pesticides and over-watering.
 - Leaks from cars.
 - a central telephone number -- 1-888-BAYWISE -- to get information on additional ways to reduce pollution run-off.

Strategies

The strategies by which these objectives were to be accomplished included:

- Utilize advertising as the principal method of communicating both the umbrella idea and causes/solutions.
- Augment with media relations activity targeting print and broadcast media.

Tactics

The media plan contained a mix of television and radio advertising. Television accounted for 65% of the media budget, radio the remaining 35%.

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Television

Television was selected to communicate the overall pollution runoff umbrella concept. Television's principal advantage is that it builds reach of the target audience quickly and under most circumstances can reach more people than radio (at identical budget levels). The target audience was identified as adults, 35-54, who are homeowners.

A 30-second commercial, entitled "Baywise," was produced in the Spring, 1996, and aired from June 26-July 24 and from September 18-October 16. The television schedule included a combination of over-the-air stations and cable.

Radio

Radio was selected to augment the television buy, and was used to communicate both the pollution runoff concept as well as specific messages regarding proper lawn and garden care practices and the need for proper auto maintenance.

Radio ran for 3 weeks each during the same time period as the television schedule for a total of 6 weeks.

Evaluation

A Baseline survey was fielded prior to the beginning of the campaign in June, 1996. At that time, the intent was to field a post-study in June, 1997, 12 months after the start of the campaign.

The primary objective of the research is to measure any changes in attitudes, awareness and behavior with regard to pollution runoff issues and resident practices.

(Current plans call for the wave of research to be fielded in March, 1997, prior to the Spring campaign, with a follow-up wave fielded in late May, 1997.)

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The combined number of gross advertising impressions from the campaign exceeded 25,000,000.

Conclusions

Following the advertising flight in October, 1996, an internal assessment was made regarding campaign strategies, tactics and messages, as a means of planning advertising campaign activities for the Spring, 1997. Following are some of these conclusions:

Message comprehension.

The messages that describe the impact of improper lawn and garden care -- overfertilizing the lawn, overspraying the garden and overwatering both -- are simple, clear ideas that are relatively easy to understand. They are messages that leave little doubt regarding what is expected of the resident.

The broader umbrella idea -- pollution runoff -- is less clear when it comes to identifying the actions expected of the individual. From a communications perspective, this approach is more difficult for the viewer/listener to make the connection.

Consequently, the most effective advertising is advertising that focuses on what we want the target audience to do, not what we want them to know.

Tone.

The campaign featured a combination of both serious and humorous executions. The serious elements addressed pollution runoff, the humorous ones fertilizers/pesticides and auto maintenance.

The more serious executions seemed to be more "expected" for environmental issues advertising. While well-produced, they also were probably easier to tune out by the viewer/listener.

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The humorous executions, however, provided more creative license and therefore were more unexpected for advertising in this "category." This is important because creating advertising that breaks through the media clutter is essential to success, particularly where the media budget does not allow a 52-week presence.

Timing

The scheduling of the advertising is concentrated flights, to maximize the reach and frequency of the advertising in a competitive media environment, appears to be the correct way to schedule. In addition, the matching of the message with the built-in seasonality of the issue (i.e. lawn and garden care messages in the Spring) also will serve to maximize the effectiveness of the campaign.

Media Mix

While television and radio were called for in the initial scope of work, it's doubtful there are adequate funds in the budget to support a two-media plan. While television is primarily used to build reach of the message, and radio to enhance the frequency of the message delivery, it's likely that a presence in a single media will be more effective. Consequently, planning discussion for the Spring, 1997, campaign has revolved around the tradeoffs of reach over frequency.