

Communications Channels

Channels of communication relate to the medium through which you convey your key messages. There are numerous channels to choose from in order to reach your target audience depending on what the members of your audience read, listen to, watch, and engage in. It is critical that your organization understand what works effectively with different audiences.

This tool contains ideas for communications channels your organization can utilize for outreach. The list is by no means exhaustive, but can provide ideas to help your organization start brainstorming.

- **Posters.** In appropriate locations, couched in simple language, and with tear-off phone numbers or other information, these can be very effective.
- **Fliers and brochures.** These can be more compelling in places where the issue is already in people's minds (doctors' offices for health issues, supermarkets for nutrition, etc).
- **Organizational and community newsletters.** These may range from church bulletins to the internal newsletters of corporations.
- **Promotional materials.** Imprinted items – caps, T-shirts, mugs – can serve as effective channels for your message.
- **Comic books or other reading material.** Reading matter that is intrinsically interesting to the target audience can be used to deliver a message through a story that readers are eager to follow, or simply through the compelling nature of the medium and its design.
- **Internet sites.** In addition to web pages, interactive sites like MySpace and Facebook, YouTube, and similar video sites have increased the possibilities for Internet communication.
- Letters to the Editor.
- **News stories, columns, and reports** (on TV, radio, newspapers, and magazines) that you suggest, are featured in, or contribute to.
- **Press releases and press conferences.** These may announce the kick-off or status of a campaign, provide information about your issue, or showcase new information that may help to change people's perceptions or behavior.
- Presentations or presence at local events and local and national conferences, fairs, and other gatherings.

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Possible communication Channels (cont.):

- ***Announcements and presentations at public and institutional or organizational gatherings.*** This can include anything from a short presentation at a local church or school to a fleet of sound trucks blanketing a city with a social marketing message.
- ***Community outreach or street work.*** Having one or more staff members spreading your message in the community can be very effective if they have the right connections and networks.
- ***Community or national events.*** Community events can serve to convey a message and highlight an issue.
- ***Public demonstrations.*** A public demonstration on your issue does not have to be confrontational: it can be positive and upbeat, and still grab the public's attention.
- ***Word of mouth.*** If you can get to a few key influential people, they can help to extend a social marketing message to a whole target population simply through their networks and their day-to-day contacts.