Early Risk Communication Campaign Planning

Session 8 Slide Deck

Session Objectives

8.1   Define market research and explain its importance in the context of planning a risk communication campaign

8.2   Explain how and why communicators research existing communication efforts, and describe the gap analysis process

8.3   Explain how communicators assess the feasibility of their project

8.4   Define project goals and objectives and explain how and why they must be established

8.5   Discuss the importance of project management to the communication campaign

Communication Accuracy

- Communicators cannot afford to 'wing-it'
- Messages must be right the first time
- Communicators must operate with a degree of tested confidence
- The intended goal and the appropriateness of the methods and means for getting there must be valid
- Market research provides this insight

Market Research

- *An organized or structured research effort performed to gain information about markets, customers, or communication recipients*

- Also referred to as *communication research*

- Helps to develop a better understanding of audience knowledge, feelings, and thoughts

- Communicators determine how each issue will likely appeal to target audience members

- Ultimately becomes the basis of key campaign strategy decisions

Market Research Benefits

Market research can tell the planning team:

- What things concern target audience members
- What people are doing to address their risk
- How prepared people believe themselves to be
- What people think will be provided in an emergency
- How people receive information about risk
- Which communicators do or don't appeal
- How certain messages or taglines resonate

Information Requirements

In order to develop a message, communicators must understand their audience's:

- Knowledge
- Attitudes
- Feelings
- Misperceptions
- Assumptions

Market Research Options

- Questionnaires

- Focus groups

- In-depth interviews

- Theater-style testing

Focus Groups

- A qualitative, discussion based in-person meeting

- Representative sample from the target audience

- Invitees discuss selected topics with a moderator

- Participants may be provided with information about the topic, asked to listen to statements, asked about their experiences, or other topics

- They are permitted to speak freely/spontaneously

- Effective in identifying previously unknown issues or concerns and for exploring reactions to actions, benefits, or concepts

In-Depth Interviews

- Qualitative research efforts
- Involve a trained interviewer who works one-on-one with target audience members
- Individual guided through a discussion of a selected topic
- Participant speaks freely / spontaneously
- Often used to identify previously unknown issues or concerns or to explore reactions
- Participants may feel more comfortable
- More time consuming and more expensive method

Theater-Style Testing

- A large number of audience members invited to a conveniently located meeting room, often set up specifically for broadcasting or viewing of sample radio, TV, or print messages, or other materials

- Participants not typically told the meeting's purpose

- Participants exposed to an irrelevant TV program

- Viewing interrupted by commercials, one of which is the emergency preparedness message

- After the TV program, participants receive a questionnaire and answer questions about the program and the advertisements

Existing Program Research

- Rarely has no similar communication effort been conducted

- Unlikely the same messages / methods used

- In some way or other people have received / are receiving related risk information

- Communicators cannot work in a vacuum

- Existing messages may be accurate or inaccurate, relevant or irrelevant

Research Snapshot

- What has already been done to address the issue

- What is currently being done to address the issue

- What were the outcomes of previous and current actions (in terms of vulnerability reduction and behavior change)

Why Conduct Research?

- To avoid reinventing the wheel
- To build upon the successes of other programs / benefit from them
- To find collaborative opportunities
- To understand and learn from failures
- To understand any misconceptions, mistrust, or other incorrect or negative feelings

Gap Analysis

- Looks at:
  - What do people need to know
  - What is/has been done to inform people
- The difference between these is the 'gap'
- Can help communicators focus their attention where communication is most needed

Project Feasibility

- Does the organization planning the campaign have the necessary expertise and resources to conduct the campaign? If not, can these be acquired?

- Does the organization planning the campaign have the necessary authority or mandate to bring about the changes or measures being proposed?

- How much time does the organization have to dedicate to campaign planning and implementation? What, if anything, can be accomplished in that time?

Campaign Goal

- The general emergency preparedness outcome that the communication team hopes to create

- Does not indicate how, to what level of success, or in what timeframe

- Examples
  - *To increase the number of senior citizens in Springfield County who are prepared to evacuate or shelter in place in the event of a major disaster*
  - *To reduce the number of residents in Madison that are highly vulnerable to wildfires*

'Good Goal' Characteristics

- Declarative Statement

- Jargon Free

- Short

- Concise

- Easily Understood

- Positive Terms

- Framework for objectives

Communication Objectives

- Specific, measurable action points to be achieved in a drive to meet the goal

- More specific than goals

- Offer quantifiable target outcomes

- Example
    - *To increase the number of senior citizens with personal or family emergency plans to forty percent within two years*

- Goals must be realistic if they are to be achievable

Questions to Ask

- What behavior change can the intended audience realistically make?

- How willing will the group be to make the change?

- How much time will be required to make these changes?

- Will the achievement of this objective help to reach the emergency preparedness campaign goal?

- To what extent will we be able to measure our progress?

NIH Reasonable/Realistic Objectives

- Be Reasonable
  - Communication efforts alone cannot achieve all objectives
  - Raising awareness might not affect behavior change

- Be Realistic
  - Objectives must cover areas most in need
  - Activities must address what is most needed
  - Resources must be available
  - Know barriers and supportive factors

CDC 'SMART Objectives'

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time-Phased

Project Management

- Project manager directs all players and resources according to tasks required

- Project managed from planning through implementation and evaluation

- Task list (start date, resources, milestones, end date)

- Gantt Chart – visualization of project elements