A### good message bears repeating. A little over a year ago, we released an issue of The Evaluation Exchange on the topic of strategic communications (Vol. VII, No. 1). We knew we were stepping into largely uncharted territory at the time; we didn’t anticipate just how high the demand would be for help in navigating it. As a result, we are devoting another issue to this topic, focusing this time on public communication campaigns.

We define public communication campaigns as those that use a coordinated set of media, interpersonal, and/or community-based communication activities to shape behavior toward desirable social outcomes. As some of the campaigns discussed in this issue demonstrate, those behaviors might include getting more involved in our children’s education, mobilizing for investments in early care and education, using methods of family planning and HIV/AIDS prevention, or carpooling to work to reduce ground-level ozone emissions. The outcomes of those behaviors—the campaigns’ ultimate goals—may include healthier children, families, and communities or specific policy results that lead to these outcomes.

Public communication campaigns are growing more sophisticated every day. Campaign designers are diversifying their strategies and abandoning the flawed notion that information alone changes behavior. More campaigns are using public media efforts in tandem with community-based organizing and complementary “ground campaigns” to enhance the campaign’s reach and effects. And more campaigns are tackling the complex challenges of moving large groups of people to take policy-related actions (that may or may not affect them personally). The first half of this issue offers articles to inform such promising campaign practice.

The second half of this issue focuses on campaign evaluation. Earlier this year, HFRP did an environmental scan of this field (see page 19 for how to obtain a copy). We found overall that evaluation has not kept pace with campaigns’ innovations, and information is lacking on appropriate designs, methods, and outcomes.

At the same time, and as the articles in this issue demonstrate, we have some fertile ground on which to learn and grow. We have, for example, decades of behavioral change and communications research that offers much in the way of theory and methods to help us design and evaluate campaigns. We have rich examples of domestic and international campaign evaluations, many of which come from the public health arena. We have decades of experience from organizations like the Ad Council that demonstrate how to approach and use campaign research and evaluation.

As the experts in this issue reveal, this field is ripe for more exploration and development. For example, few evaluators are directly informing campaign design and strategy, feeding back what is and isn’t working, and suggesting how to apply that information. And we have yet to tackle how to measure and determine a campaign’s effects on policy.

HFRP will continue to track responses to these challenges and uncover new developments. As always, we welcome your thoughts and contributions. We also hope you will help us with our Evaluation Exchange “ground campaign” by sharing this issue with others who will find it relevant and provocative.
Using Behavioral Change Theory to Communicate Effectively: The Case of Latino Parent Involvement

Anne Pollock of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Julia Coffman and M. Elena Lopez of Harvard Family Research Project reveal how to design communications that are more effective at changing behavior by keeping in mind the factors that influence behavior.

Designing programs or communication campaigns to affect behaviors requires first being able to understand why people behave the way they do. Interventions are more effective when they are based on research that tells us what factors influence a person’s decision to perform a specific behavior, or the ways in which an existing behavior can be channeled toward more desirable outcomes.

Fortunately, decades of research have taught us much about human behavior. Behavioral change theorists now agree on eight factors known to influence behavior: (1) intention, (2) environmental constraints, (3) skills, (4) attitudes, (5) norms, (6) self-standards, (7) emotion, and (8) self-efficacy.1

These factors can be useful for planning campaigns, interventions, and their evaluations. One way to do this is to examine empirical research findings about the behavior that needs to change against the framework of the eight behavioral factors. Together they can serve as a diagnostic guide or framework for planning an intervention’s goals and components, as well as its evaluation. An example of this approach follows.

Example: Increasing Latino Parent Involvement

Latino2 children perform significantly behind their non-Latino peers on most indicators of educational success. Identifying and increasing the ways in which parents are involved in their children’s education is one promising strategy for increasing the academic achievement of Latino students.3 Latino parents, however, tend to be hesitant about initiating communication with teachers and schools, and educators often misunderstand this to mean a lack of interest in their children’s education. Many teachers and schools do not reach out to Latino parents as a result.

Apply Relevant Research Findings

The table on page 3 offers a sample of research findings about Latino parent involvement as they apply to the eight main factors that affect behavior.

Develop Messages Based on Theory and Research

Messages for a campaign to influence Latino parents’ involvement in their children’s education should be based on the issues and topics that the research findings suggest are most important. Messages can influence both parent and teacher behaviors; the research suggests both are important.

For illustrative purposes, following are sample parent-directed messages, arranged according to the eight factors known to influence behavior. They are adapted from actual campaigns designed to increase Latino involvement in education—the Hispanic continued on page 18

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2 The term Latino refers to populations that have some connection (linguistic, cultural, or otherwise) to the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America—Mexico, Central or South America (excluding Brazil), Puerto Rico, and Cuba.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioral Factors</th>
<th>Applicable Research Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Intention</strong> – a commitment to perform the behavior</td>
<td>• Latino parents rear their children within the cultural frame of <em>educación</em>, which refers to “the total task of bringing up a moral and responsible child.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Environmental Constraints</strong> – restrictions to performing the behavior</td>
<td>• Parents may have time constraints, e.g., jobs that do not offer working hour autonomy or flexibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Skills</strong> – abilities to perform the behavior</td>
<td>• Parents may lack affordable or trusted child care or transportation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Attitudes</strong> – beliefs about performing the behavior</td>
<td>• Many schools serving Latino students lack Latino teachers who can establish rapport with families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Social Norms</strong> – perceived social pressure to perform a behavior</td>
<td>• Latino parents may not be able to understand or speak English, limiting their types of involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Self-standards</strong> – whether performing the behavior is consistent with self-image</td>
<td>• Level of education can be a barrier to homework help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Emotion</strong> – emotional reaction to performing the behavior</td>
<td>• Teachers lack training to work with parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8. Self-efficacy</strong> – perception in one’s capability to perform the behavior</td>
<td>• Latino parents care about their children’s education, have high goals for them, and are interested in being involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parents may have a low level of comfort and previous negative experiences with schools.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Latino parents express a cultural belief in the authority of the school and teachers and tend to have limited knowledge of the U.S. school system.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Teachers may intimidate Latino parents.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Teachers and parents may have different conceptions of what parent involvement means.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Parents are more likely to be involved when their friends are involved.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Latina mothers may view themselves as educated people and identify themselves as teachers who give their children an <em>educación</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Latino parents can transcend their fear of schools to become involved for the benefit of their children. Family involvement is an expression of parents’ love and concern for their children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teachers and parents can gain pride and confidence by participating in family involvement projects that deeply respect their knowledge and strengths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Latino parents can be resourceful and seek family and friends to help their adolescent children with homework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Latino parents stress the positive effects they can have on the school environment and acknowledge the importance of establishing a strong relationship with the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Using Information Architecture to Improve Communication

Erin Harris from Harvard Family Research Project, with Suzanne Muchin, CEO of Civitas, illustrate the design concept “information architecture” for displaying complex information clearly and simply.

Those of us in professions where information is our primary commodity are constantly on the lookout for ways to improve our ability to communicate successfully in an increasingly information-saturated world. We want people not only to notice and read our work, but also to use it and learn from it. As we struggle to communicate more effectively in the face of an overwhelming amount of information competing for our attention, we need to challenge the standard reporting and presentation conventions and explore new alternatives. Information architecture is one possible tool to improve our communication capacity.

Information Architecture

Architect Richard Saul Wurman coined the term information architecture in 1975. Information architecture uses basic elements of architectural design (e.g., graphics, color, layout, fonts, and empty space) to convey information as efficiently and simply as possible. It is an attempt to make the complex clear.

Five principles are central to information architecture: 1

1. You understand something new relative to something you already understand.
2. There are just five ways to organize information, referred to as LATCH: Location (e.g., a map), Alphabet (e.g., a dictionary), Time (e.g., a timeline), Category (e.g., a department store), and Hierarchy (e.g., from largest to smallest).
3. Don’t beautify; clarify.
4. To decide which information is worth keeping, determine what you really want to know.
5. Most information is useless. Give yourself permission to dismiss it.

Information Architecture at Work

Information architecture has been used for a wide variety of topics—most recently for child development issues in Understanding Children: The Guidebook for Children 0 to 3. Civitas, a national child development communications nonprofit, partnered with Wurman to bring his information architecture approach to this book. According to Civitas CEO Suzanne Muchin, information architecture was a natural fit:

The Civitas mission is to translate essential child development content into vehicles that are accessible to parents, caregivers, and frontline professionals. So this is literally our mission—to act in a certain way as information architects of information about young children.

The book condenses the myriad of child development resources into an essential guidebook with the goal of providing a comprehensive knowledge base to assist adults in making informed decisions about the well-being of young children. Using information architecture, the book strives to communicate to a broad audience, cutting across such barriers as socioeconomic status, education, and experience; those purchasing the book range from “regular” parents and caregivers to child care professionals and community organizers.

Understanding Children uses a question and answer format, a data-driven and nonlinear layout, action-focused content, and the liberal use of color and descriptive illustrations. A two-page spread from the book is provided on page 5 to give a sense of the book’s layout. The book’s specific presentation techniques—with examples from the two-page spread—include:

Color-Coded Organization: The book is divided into issue-based sections (e.g., Childcare) with a different color assigned to each.

Big Question: Each spread includes a color-coded “big question” in the top right-hand corner that frames the topic. (E.g., What do I need to know about child care centers?) The top two thirds of each page includes theories, explanations, charts, graphs, diagrams, illustrations, and icons that address the big question.

Summary Answer: The big question is followed by an answer in summary form. (E.g., A good child care center may be hard to find. Look for low staff turnover, current licenses, and small group sizes.)

Questions: Pages are filled with questions, related to the big question, for caregivers to ask. (E.g., Will my child develop behavioral problems if I send him to a child care center?)

Answers: Questions are followed by answers with data and opinions from experts. (E.g., Not likely. The Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development, conducted by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, has followed over 1,200 families around the country since their baby’s birth.

References and Related Resources


2 Excerpts reprinted with permission from the publishers.
promising practices

While the study doesn’t provide clear-cut answers as to what leads to behavior problems in child care settings, it does find … Good parenting matters … Quality of care matters … Type of care matters.)

Marginalia: Facts and figures and other informational asides appear in the side margins. (E.g., Almost half of parents with children under six have used a child care program in the past year.)

Action Items: The bottom one third of each page contains action items that include specific tips, lists of relevant books, websites, and other resources for caregivers to use (e.g., How to make drop-off time easier).

For organizations whose goal is to educate through publications and other forms of written communication, information architecture provides a viable alternative to “traditional” written communication methods that are more linear and text-driven. The use of graphic design techniques is conducive to communicating in a way that makes information more accessible and tangible to a wide audience, meaning that the information is more likely to be understood, absorbed, and translated into action.

For information about how to obtain Understanding Children, visit www.civitas.org.

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A two-page spread from Understanding Children: The Guidebook for Children 0 to 3.
Credibility, Relevance, and Inescapable Truths: Effective Messages for Youth

Tim Mask describes three strategies for improving the effectiveness of behavior change campaigns that were used with success by the Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi.

Working with the Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi to create multimedia, youth-oriented ad campaigns that counter tobacco marketing, our agency has developed a formula for strategic communications with impressive results. Since we launched the campaigns, Mississippi has witnessed a reversal of escalating youth tobacco use. Since 1999, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey has measured a 25% decrease in smoking by high school students and a 30% decrease in middle school students.

The formula we used is not tobacco-specific. It applies well to any youth-targeted social marketing effort, especially if it is health related. Our methodology calls for all social marketing strategies to center around three aspects: credibility with the audience, relevance to the audience, and inescapable truths.

Strategy 1 – Credibility
Credibility is the individual youth’s assessment of the communication. Is it believable? Has the youth had an experience (first- or second-hand) that casts doubt on the message? For example, anti-smoking messages stating “cool kids don’t smoke” or “you can’t be a cheerleader and smoke” are obviously lacking in credibility, as there is no shortage of “cool” kids and cheerleaders who smoke. However, a message that states “if you smoke, you can’t play sports as well” might be credible. It is a given that some “star” athletes smoke, but the question might be raised as to how good the star athlete might be if he or she did not.

Strategy 2 – Relevance
Relevance relates to credibility. It is important to establish relevance in the youth’s perceived world, rather than the actual world—and these two worlds are not the same. Social marketers must look beyond what youth do and examine why youth do what they do. Understanding the psychographic condition and mindset (i.e., attitudes, preferences, values, habits, feelings, lifestyle choices, etc.) of a particular generation or youth subculture is imperative before relevance can be established.

Strategy 3 – Inescapable Truths
Inescapable truths are best described as short, impactful statements, often facts or statistics, which the audience cannot rationally dismiss out of hand. Both youth and adults are apt to use “intellectual alibis” when faced with a social marketing message that negatively portrays an aspect of their personal behavior. For example, an anti-smoking message that reads “smoking causes lung cancer” leaves the door open for an intellectual alibi. Youth targeted by this message could simply believe that smoking is something they will stop by the time they are 25, finish college, get married, etc. Inescapable truths prevent youth from making such rationalizations. A youth-targeted anti-smoking message that reads “90% of people who die from smoking started before age 18” prevents the application of an intellectual alibi.

Evaluating the Strategies
Campaign evaluations that consider these three factors look beyond the final numbers. Behavioral change is, of course, the ultimate goal. However, in measuring campaign success in stages, it is also important to evaluate any changes/perceptions in the youth mindset about message credibility and relevance. The degree to which messages are credible and relevant will be measured in attitudinal changes. Brand awareness and message recall are important, but not as important as attitudinal shifts.

We address credibility and relevance in an effort to change attitudes; we use inescapable truths to change behavior. Initially, we can evaluate our inescapable truths through message recall and awareness rates. This will later translate into a behavioral change, assuming the fact or truth presented really is “inescapable.”

To measure a campaign’s success, it is necessary to evaluate both individual psychographical impact and individual behavioral shifts. A particular campaign might address youth in a relevant and credible manner, but not fully close the door on rational intellectual alibis. Psychographic and behavioral evaluation allows for successful communication components to remain intact, while uncovering areas where refinement is necessary.

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Related Resources


Understanding Research:
Ten Tips

Stephanie Schaefer of the National Association of Child Advocates offers tips on how to evaluate research information for its credibility.

Research allows us to assess the effectiveness of policies and programs affecting the lives of children and families. Having research evidence to recommend or refute specific policy choices is especially relevant in this era of increased demand for accountability in human services and government.

But how can you tell if a given research study is one you can trust? Below are tips to evaluate the research you encounter.

1. **Consider the source.** Evaluate the credibility of the individual(s) and the organization that produced the research. Research produced by respected researchers and institutions is more likely to be trustworthy. Also, research produced or funded by groups with a strong political or commercial agenda is less trustworthy, since these groups have a vested interest in the study’s findings supporting their viewpoint.

2. **Media is also a source to be evaluated.** Media coverage may not fully or accurately summarize the original research. Because research can be technical and complex, and because media coverage often seeks to be attention grabbing and succinct, media reporting of research sometimes oversimplifies the research, leading to misinterpretation.

3. **Has the research been published, and where?** Research published in peer-reviewed research journals is more trustworthy because it has been scrutinized by other researchers before being published. Unpublished research, or research published in publications that don’t critically evaluate it, has not gone through such scrutiny. However, even good research starts out unpublished, so just because a study is unpublished does not mean that it is poor quality.

4. **Research results are really about the topic as measured, not as we may think of it.** Look closely at how the topic in a study was measured. Since a research topic, such as aggression, could mean different things to different people, researchers always come up with a more specific definition of the topic they are studying. The results from a study are really about the precise definition, rather than the larger topic.

5. **Different types of research have different strengths.** Another indicator of the quality of a research study, and the claims that can be made based on it, is the study’s research design. Experimental design studies offer the strongest evidence about the impact of a program. Quasi-experimental studies are especially useful for studying complex systems as they exist naturally in the community. Qualitative studies often provide descriptive, story-like accounts of people’s experiences in a program or in a community.

6. **Sampling is more important than sample size.** While a study’s sample size is important, even more important is the way the sample was collected. Quantitative research is based on the assumption that the findings for a sample of people can be generalized to the larger population. If the procedures to select the study’s sample are not done well, then we cannot assume that the findings for the sample generalize to the population, and the study’s findings would not be valid.

7. **Statistical significance explained.** One of the things advocates value most about research is getting “hard data,” i.e., numbers, about the effects of a policy on children. A study reports a statistically significant difference between those who received a program and those that did not. But what does statistical significance mean, and what can we conclude from it? A statistically significant result is one that is unlikely to be due to chance. Researchers use statistics to test whether the results they found are likely to be due to the effect of the program being studied and not to other unrelated factors.

Statistical significance is different than the substantive significance, or meaningfulness, of a finding. A result may be statistically significant but unimportant. Conversely, a result may not be statistically significant, but it may be meaningful.

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Related Resources

NACA’s Translating Research Into Advocacy Project, funded through the generous support of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. Available at www.childadvocacy.org/translatingresearch.htm.


continued on page 9
Keeping It Local

Julie Parente of the statewide child advocacy organization, Voices for Illinois Children, describes a component of their “ground strategy” for effectively communicating campaign messages.

In 2001, Voices for Illinois Children implemented a statewide public awareness campaign called Start Early: Learning Begins at Birth, with the aim of increasing awareness of the crucial learning that occurs in years birth to three. The campaign used a number of “high-tech” communication features, such as paid cable and network television ads (including one that featured two “talking” babies), and radio, newspaper, and billboard advertising.

Equally important to the campaign, however, was the campaign’s low-tech “ground strategy.” This strategy used a corps of local spokespeople trained on the campaign’s core messages to increase the campaign’s reach and influence with audiences in communities throughout the state. The basic premise was that audiences would pay more attention to the campaign’s messages if they came from people they already knew and trusted.

Training Local Spokespeople

The process to establish the corps of local spokespeople began with a pre-campaign statewide survey that identified categories of spokespeople registered Illinois voters considered to be credible on early childhood issues: police chiefs, pediatricians, kindergarten teachers, and business leaders. Voices for Illinois Children then tapped those types of individuals to become local spokespeople and receive media training.

Voices’ statewide partners, such as the teachers’ union, the state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatricians, and the advocacy organization, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Illinois, helped identify 40 spokespeople. Voices arranged trainings with these spokespeople in six major Illinois media markets, including Chicago, where the TV ads were going to air. The trainings were purposely small (six to ten people) and short, lasting no more than 90 minutes. They were held in conference rooms, classrooms, and living rooms, and scheduled either at the beginning or end of the workday to maximize attendance.

Spokespeople learned about new brain research that demonstrates the importance of quality early childhood education through a short PowerPoint presentation. They watched one of the campaign’s TV ads and learned about Voices’ key messages outlined in a one-page message memo.

After some quick tips on how to deal with the media (which many spokespeople were already savvy about), the trainer asked each participant a question so they could practice their responses. For example, “You’re a police chief. Why do you care about child care?” and “What can people in our community do to help improve early childhood education?”

The spokespeople also posed for photographs that were then used in print ads in their hometown newspapers where they would be recognized. One ad read: “Why would a bank president support quality child care? Because I know that good early learning environments always pay off. And that’s a good investment in our kids and our state.” (See page 9 for another example.)

Spokespeople in Action

Spokespeople participated in the rollout of the early childhood ad campaign in several ways. Some spoke at a news conference in the state capital and were interviewed by newspaper, radio, and TV reporters. All spokespeople’s names were included in media kits that were mailed to reporters across Illinois, and several were interviewed. Their names also were included in a video news release broadcast to all TV stations.

A number of articles using local sources resulted. For example, Elmhurst Police Chief John Millner was quoted as saying, “The research is so clear that if we invest in our children now, it will clearly make a difference later on. We’re tired of seeing the looks on the victims’ families’ faces when they say, ‘Why did this happen to us? Why were we victimized?’ If we look at this in the long run, maybe we won’t have to invest as much time in building prisons, which is fine for me.”

In another article, Springfield pediatrician Dr. Raymond Castaldo said he often sees kindergarteners that teachers believe have medical problems, and noted that many of these children would have benefited from the social and learning skills taught in quality early childhood programs. “I recognize the need to go back and start earlier,” he said.

Voices’ corps of local spokespeople became a key ongoing component of the Start Early campaign. In addition to speaking with reporters, many became

Pointers for Training Local Spokespeople

- Look for uncommon supporters. People trust authority figures—law enforcement, medical personnel, teachers—and find them credible. Many may already be experienced in talking to the media.
- Tap into statewide networks and partners for help in identifying local spokespeople. They can help find the right person for your message, and it builds relationships.
- Update your spokespeople on the progress of the campaign so they feel a part of a bigger movement. Send periodic email or mail one-page updates.
- Look for opportunities to involve spokespeople in advocacy. Some may be interested in writing letters to newspapers or their elected officials. Others may want training on additional topics or offer to host a community forum.
more involved in advocacy. Some wrote letters to the editor, talked to their lawmakers about early childhood policy, or received message training on other topics.

For more information on the Start Early campaign, see Voices’ website at voices4kids.org. The campaign’s TV ads can be viewed on the site and can be made available to other nonprofits for use as public service announcements.

Voices for Illinois Children recently joined with two partners to launch a new statewide public awareness campaign, “Early Learning Illinois: Access. Options. Opportunities.” The campaign used a voter registration drive, community meetings, and a postcard campaign to inform gubernatorial candidates that all children should be healthy, eager to learn, and ready to succeed by the time they enter school.

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I’m Champaign Police Chief William Becker and I care about early childhood education.

Why would a police chief support quality child care? Because I know firsthand that good early learning environments can reduce crime and violence. And that’s good for our kids and our state.

Start Early: Learning Begins at Birth

Find out more at www.voices4kids.org or by calling 1-877-4-KIDS-IL (454-3745)
Funded by the McCormick Tribune Foundation

An ad from Voices for Illinois Children’s 2001 public awareness campaign featuring a local spokesperson.

Ten Tips
continued from page 7

8. Research findings are about groups. Research results are usually based on comparisons between groups of people. This makes research findings particularly relevant for policy decisions since policies affect groups of people, but less relevant for individual case decisions.

9. All research is not created equal. When comparing the results from different studies with conflicting findings, higher-quality studies should be given more weight. Better studies can refute poorer studies; there is not a one-to-one comparison.

10. Any one study is not the whole story. Although we usually come across research one study at a time, research is most valuable when many specific studies are taken together to tell the whole story of what we know on a given topic. Any single study, no matter how good, needs to be viewed in the context of other research on the topic.


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A conversation with
Ethel Klein

Ethel Klein is a long-time campaign strategist and pollster. Currently, she is president of EDK Associates, a strategic research firm based in New York City. Dr. Klein has designed campaigns for nonprofit organizations and foundations on issues of women’s rights, low-income housing, environmental protection, gay and lesbian rights, work and family policies, health education, and tax reform. Prior to starting her own firm, she was a professor at Harvard University (1979–1984) and Columbia University (1984–1990). She is the author of several books, including Gender Politics (1984) and Ending Domestic Violence: Changing Public Perceptions/Halting the Epidemic (1997).

What are the main ingredients of successful public communication campaigns that are designed to change behavior?

The first and most common ingredient would be increasing knowledge and awareness. If people don’t recognize the issue or problem, then that is where you start. If people are aware of the issue, but it’s not important to them, then you work on increasing its saliency.

But you can’t get stuck there. Too many people think that if you deliver the bad news, people are going to be rational and change their behavior. That will change some people’s behavior, but it is never enough. There is an accumulation of knowledge now that says you have to go beyond awareness in order to make real change.

You have to change behavior by giving people something to do to change it. The trick is figuring out where the locus of responsibility for the behavior change should be. Is it purely on the individual performing the behavior or is it also on creating public will and social responsibility to help make that change happen? You have to look at the issue’s epidemiology and ask, “What are the root causes and what sustains the behavior?”

What you’ll find is that to get results you have to focus on the social context surrounding the behavior and increase social responsibility for helping to change it. For example, with AIDS, just saying persuasively “AIDS will kill you” did not change behavior. Scare tactics just moved people into denial. We learned, from a great deal of public education research and evaluation, to create a broad sense of social responsibility for ending the epidemic and to engage, for example, the gay community in creating a social context where people wouldn’t be afraid or ashamed or worry about retribution if they insisted someone use a condom.

Another example is the gun control movement. Support for gun control increased when the question changed from “Why did the kid pull the trigger?” to “How did the kid get the gun?” What helped was reframing from the individual action of stopping the kid from pulling the trigger to keeping the gun away from him in the first place. Once that reframing took place, a lot of social solutions followed, like licensing, registration, and trigger locks.

Once you’ve worked on social context and made individuals around a problem responsible, the question becomes “How do we codify it and make it law?” The emphasis on social context and responsibility will often provide the rationale needed to get laws passed. It’s like the example of secondhand smoke. Laws were passed once we got people to say, “I want you to stop smoking because it is going to kill me.” Getting large numbers of people to say this provided the rationale for laws that now ban smoking in public areas.

The Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is a good example of a campaign that worked on all of these elements over time. Its evolution shows the need for a strategic progression to how campaigns unfold and what elements (e.g., awareness, saliency, social responsibility) they work on and when. One of the MADD campaign’s early hallmarks was to work on public awareness and saliency by letting people know how many kids were killed in drunk driving accidents. This was followed by ads focused on individual responsibility that said, “Don’t drink and drive.” When that approach hit its limit in terms of results, the campaign moved on to the designated driver concept. It put the issue in a social context and said, “Because this behavior has social consequences, we have a right to put some constraints on it.”
So the campaign focused on getting people to say that somebody needs to be the designated driver and that people need to make sure their friends don’t drink and drive. The first question after a drunk driving incident now is, “Why wasn’t there a designated driver?” or “Why didn’t someone take away the keys?” This acceptance of social responsibility provided the rationale needed to get stricter laws passed.

**Q** What do you think are the main challenges for the evaluation of public communication campaigns?

**A** One is seeing another side to the external approach in which evaluators say, “We take measurements, we’re completely objective, and we come in at the end and give you information.” That’s a very good approach if you’re not looking to help create change. Evaluators become seduced by the campaign because it’s challenging and they’re learning new things. But by the time they offer information the campaign is done and people don’t want to hear it. The only way evaluations will really help campaigns is if they can help them as they’re happening.

Campaigns are evolving and living things; they need to respond to what does and does not work. Evaluation is one of the few places campaigns can get that information. The challenge is to find a way in which you make evaluations dynamic and a part of the campaign process, while remaining objective. Let people know what’s working and what’s not working and how it can be fixed.

Evaluation should also help campaigns innovate. Many campaigns are stuck in a model, trying to replicate, for example, the MADD and anti-smoking campaigns. The problem is that those campaigns happened at a time when people weren’t saturated with public service announcements. The more people replicate them, the less effective they are. We need to find new models and evaluation should help us find them.

For example, I worked on a domestic violence campaign that wanted to organize the business and faith-based communities. The campaign’s approach initially was to try to get invited to talk at business meetings or in front of congregations. They assumed that if they were successful in getting invited to speak, they’d done organizing. I suggested they needed to do more and work with the clergy, for example, and help them go through their youth programs and change the curriculum, give them books, and so forth. This approach takes an enormous amount of upfront work, but once it’s in place it replicates itself.

The campaign staff resisted this idea. So I asked them, “How will you know your approach is successful? Let’s pick a measure and see how well it is working.” One indicator was how many of their toolkits people picked up or called in for. They found these numbers were small. They learned that getting people to intervene, become active, leave a palm card, put up a poster, put on a bumper sticker, etcetera takes a persistent sales job. The message needs to be repeated constantly and the action needs to be supported. So they modified their approach. This is the level of involvement a constructive evaluation needs to have.

If you can build a process that’s truly a learning environment and where people can say, “That’s not working; let’s figure out what else we can do,” then that’s a contribution. That’s how a campaign passes on its lessons.

**Q** What do you think the field needs to do in order to move forward on the evaluation of public communications campaigns?

**A** I’d like to see evaluation and campaign planning done at the same time, where the evaluators are part of the campaign design and implementation team. One of the big challenges of a learning evaluation is getting all of the players to be team members. To do this we need evaluators who are good at evaluation and good at campaigns, and that’s a small group. Campaign staff have to believe evaluators are giving them sound and strategic advice.

I’d also like to see campaigns get beyond awareness. I’d like to see the campaign team, with the evaluators, pick an issue where awareness is not the problem and struggle together with how to approach it. Again, for most of the issues we care about, knowledge and awareness are not the problem. We need to struggle with increasing and measuring public will and action.

Another challenge is that evaluation focuses too much on campaign outputs, or the things about campaigns that are easily measured, like the number of ads we develop and how many times they run on television. We need to focus more on outcomes like issue saliency and social responsibility that both contribute to learning and really capture what the campaign is trying to achieve. The caution here is to develop realistic and useful interim outcomes. Campaigns have to build momentum and support, and both campaign staff and evaluators need to remember that that takes time.
When thinking about methods to assess communication campaigns, the usual suspects come to mind—focus groups, interviews, surveys, and polling. Indeed, these methods are critical, and most campaign evaluations use them. Yet as campaigns become increasingly sophisticated both technologically and strategically, evaluators may want to explore methods of tracking and assessment used by media and communication researchers that are lesser known among program evaluators.

Media Tracking
Many services are available to offer reports of a campaign’s coverage or an ad’s placement in print and on television, radio, and the Internet. They can also return data on a campaign’s exposure, using commercial advertising measures, such as the number of media impressions or gross rating points. A campaign that buys media time can purchase a certain number of Gross Rating Points (GRPs). A campaign that attempts to earn media time can calculate how many GRPs were donated. If 1% of the target audience sees an ad once, the ad earns 1 GRP. A weekly score of 100 GRPs means that an average person in the target audience saw the ad one time that week. A weekly score of 500 GRPs means that an average person in the target audience saw the ad five times that week. GRPs are estimated based on the projected audience for a particular medium. These projections are based, for example in television, on Nielsen ratings.

Print media tracking may offer data on the volume of coverage generated (e.g., column inches), messages sent versus messages placed, or content analysis of how often coverage reflects the campaign’s messages.

Broadcast tracking can follow special encoding on a public service announcement (PSA) or video news release sent out through satellite uplink and return information about its down-loading and airing. Services like Nielsen’s Sigma Service track what stations air the ad, the airdate and time, the broadcast market, rank compared to other downloads in that market, and the estimated audience size.

Web or Internet tracking services can provide data hits and navigation patterns for an entire website or individual pages, and can offer reports on where banner ads run.

Ad Assessments
Ad assessments can provide measures of ad recognition (aided) and recall (unaided). A Starch Readership Study conducted by the company Roper ASW, for example, provides measures based on what ads readers of a specific publication have seen and read. The study is based on a minimum of 100 interviews conducted one to three weeks after a publication is released and at locations throughout the publication’s distribution area. It delivers three scores: percentage of readers who remember seeing the ad, percentage who recalled the name of the advertiser or campaign, and percentage who read half or more of the ad. It also provides benchmarks of the ad’s scores by comparing it to all other ads in the same publication, and to other ads in its same category.

Framing Analysis
Framing analysis examines how issues are presented or discussed (framed) in the media. It looks for key themes, expressed as arguments, metaphors, and descriptions to reveal which parts of the issue are emphasized and which are missing. Campaigns that attempt to influence an issue’s media coverage may conduct pre and post framing analyses (after a sufficient amount of time has passed).

Social Network Analysis
Network analysis can be used to examine patterns of interpersonal communication as a campaign outcome and as an independent variable influencing behavior. For example, a campaign might attempt to affect who individuals turn to in order to get advice on a topic such as contraception or nutrition—aiming to decrease reliance on one’s friends and increase reliance on people who are more knowledgeable about the topic. Network analysis can determine whether the campaign affected patterns of who people turn to for advice. While its value as an evaluation tool can be great, network analysis has been used infrequently in practice because the techniques are not well understood.

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5 For an introduction to the methodology, see Dr. Thomas Valente’s 1999 publication, *Network analysis in public health*. Email the author for a copy at tvalente@usc.edu.
Keeping Smokey Looking Good at Sixty

Over the last 60 years the Advertising Council has worked on hundreds of public service campaigns on a broad range of social issues, including such well-known campaigns as Smokey Bear and McGruff the Crime Dog. George Perlov, Senior Vice President for Planning, Research, and Foundation Relations, offers a look at the role of research and evaluation inside the Ad Council.

The Ad Council has an in-house research center that is committed to extensive “front-end” and “back-end” campaign research and evaluation.

Front-End Research and Evaluation
Our campaign development model is to partner with sponsoring nonprofit or governmental organizations and their causes, and to match our partners with advertising agencies that develop public service campaigns pro bono. In conjunction with our partners, we conduct qualitative and quantitative research to guide strategic and creative campaign development.

The campaign development process includes the sequence of 10 steps in the box on this page. This extensive front-end research and evaluation ensures that Ad Council public service announcements (PSAs) are of the quality and caliber needed to achieve their intended results.

The 10 Research and Evaluation Steps in the Campaign Development Process

1. **Literature review** – The review determines what is known about the type of campaign being developed or the issue area being addressed.
2. **Expert symposium** – Experts discuss the issue and answer questions for the creative team.
3. **Target audience research** – Qualitative research taps the campaign target audience’s awareness, attitudes, etc. on the issue.
4. **Strategic brief** – The brief, based on information gained in previous steps, guides the creative team developing the advertisement.
5. **Campaign Review Committee (CRC)** – The CRC, made up of senior creative directors at top advertising agencies, reviews the brief and makes recommendations.
6. **Rough ad design** – The creative team develops rough storyboard and radio or print ads.
7. **Target audience feedback** – Rough ads are exposed and tested with a target audience sample.
8. **CRC Review** – The CRC reviews the developed materials and audience feedback and makes recommendations.
9. **Final product development** – Changes are made or new ideas developed based on feedback, and final products developed.
10. **CRC review** – The CRC has final approval over the ads.

Back-End Research and Evaluation
The Ad Council also evaluates the results of its work by tracking campaign performance measures and outcomes.

**Performance measures** These measures assess our success in disseminating the campaigns and getting the media interested in the campaigns’ issues. Specific measures include the amount of donated media the campaign garners (television, radio, print, billboard, Internet) and the amount of press or publicity the campaign receives.

For television and radio tracking, ads are specially encoded so they can be tracked as they run (by Nielsen’s Sigma Service for television and Arbitron for radio). For print tracking, we subscribe to Burrelle’s clipping service. For the Internet, we receive reports from our ad-serving networks as well as individual sites that track where our banner ads run. The PRTrak service assesses and gives a dollar value to the amount of publicity received.

**Short-term campaign outcomes** We conduct pre and post target audience surveys to collect data on outcomes that include awareness of the issue, importance of the issue (saliency), awareness of the campaign, and relevant attitude and behavior questions addressed by the campaign. The posttest typically occurs six months after the campaign launches, or at a point where we determine significant media exposure has been achieved.

About a year ago, the Ad Council also launched a proprietary tracking study for 25 of its general audience adult-targeted campaigns. Every week 93 people are interviewed on their awareness of the issue, the importance of the issue, and where they are getting their information about the issue. We regularly look at these results in line with dissemination and ad response data (e.g., 800 number and website activity). In some cases, we conduct follow-up surveys with individuals who called the 800 numbers or visited the websites.

**Long-term campaign outcomes** Finally, we look at some of the longer-term outcomes a campaign is designed to achieve. In cases where our PSAs have been long running and have had major media exposure, the contributions of our campaigns to long-term results are apparent. For example, since the Smokey Bear campaign began, destruction of forests from wildfires has reduced from 22 million acres a year to less than 4 million acres.

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The Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programs (JHU/CCP) was established in 1988 to focus attention on the important role of research-based strategic communications in health promotion and behavior change. The Center provides communication expertise worldwide on a range of issues, including family planning/reproductive health, HIV/AIDS/STD prevention, child survival, women’s health, public health advocacy, health care reform, and environmental protection.

JHU/CCP has representatives in more than 25 countries, and through its over 700 country-based projects and programs, has helped transform the theory and practice of public health communication.

The Center follows a theory-driven, research-based approach to its communication, which gives research and evaluation a critical role. Built into different project stages, research and evaluation contribute to the understanding of the processes through which communication affects behavior for purposes of continuous program improvement.

Evaluation designs and methods of analysis used by JHU/CCP include:

- **Pre and post data collection** (often using surveys) with audience members exposed to the campaign and control or comparison groups of those not exposed
- **Panel surveys** in which the same members of the campaign’s audience are interviewed before, during, and after the campaign
- **Interrupted time-series analysis** of indicators (e.g., health service statistics) before and after the campaign
- **Analysis of intervening effects** using statistical techniques such as multiple regression to rule out factors that may be confounding evaluation results, and path analysis to determine the effects of intervening variables and the causal pathways of communication
- **Interaction analysis** to examine the synergistic effects of mass media, interpersonal communication, and participation in community-level activities
- **Cost-effectiveness analysis**, which divides the total cost of the communication intervention by specific indicators of change attributed to the campaign
- **Communication (social) network analysis** to assess the effects of social influence on the adoption and maintenance of new behaviors
- **Image (character or method) mapping** to scale audience perceptions

JHU/CCP has many evaluation studies underway worldwide; five examples follow. Others include evaluations of community-based and mass media communication programs for safe motherhood in Guatemala and Indonesia, water and sanitation in Nicaragua, men’s involvement in reproductive health in Jordan, and HIV and AIDS in India.

**Arab Women Speak Out (seven Arab countries)**

Arab Women Speak Out (AWSO) is an empowerment training program to help Arab women overcome social, economic, educational, and political obstacles. It is centered on the belief that media images can offer role models that inspire action. It uses media materials, produced by Arab women researchers and filmmakers, that include video profiles of women who have made positive changes in their lives, a tool for monitoring the image of women in the media, and a case study publication of 30 women from Jordan, Yemen, Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Palestine.

Workshops give women the analytic tools to think critically about their obstacles and opportunities, and to propose their own courses of action. AWSO also helps Arab women develop the self-esteem necessary to discuss their opinions and concerns with their husbands, families, and communities. More than 80,000 women in seven Arab countries have participated.

In 2001, JHU/CCP evaluated AWSO using a posttest only design with a nonequivalent control group. Data showed that participants were more likely than nonparticipants to engage in entrepreneurship, advise other women in negotiation techniques, and participate in activities that further community welfare. Future evaluation plans include assessing AWSO’s community impact using social network analysis to determine the extent to which participants (1) talk to and take action with other participants, (2) are sought out by community members for advice, and (3) are perceived as community leaders. (Contact: Carol Underwood, email: cunderwood@jhuccp.org)

**National Family Planning Communication Campaign (Philippines)**

The Philippine Department of Health conducted a nationwide campaign in 2000 to increase family planning practice. The campaign broadcast four television spots with messages based on research that revealed women wanted a contraceptive method that was suitable for them or hiyang (a Tagalog word meaning a natural fit to one’s own body), and that a husband’s support for family planning was necessary.

The campaign’s 2001 evaluation used a one-group, retrospective panel survey design. Results from the national sample of 1,516 married women from 16–49 years of age revealed the campaign increased spousal communication and acceptance of family planning as a social norm, and encouraged couples to choose a method that was suitable (hiyang) for them. The campaign was suitable for them or hiyang (a Tagalog word meaning a natural fit to one’s own body), and that a husband’s support for family planning was necessary.
appropriate maternal and neonatal health practices and services. The Nepal Maternal and Neonatal Health Program's Safe Motherhood communication strategy aims to improve pregnancy outcomes by encouraging the use of productive age in Nepal. The Nepal Maternal and Neonatal Maternal death is the largest cause of mortality for women of re-

Final data analysis will control for variables that may have confounded results and will determine the time-order of effects (using structural equation modeling). It will also estimate how much of the observed increase can be attributed to the campaign (using propensity score analysis). The goal is to determine the cost-effectiveness of the campaign. Preliminary findings show that the cost of each new family planning adopter is between $2–$4. (Contact: Larry Kincaid, email: lkincaid@jhuccp.org)

The Life Choices Program (Ghana)

Low levels of contraceptive use in Ghana are fueled by women's fears of contraceptive side effects and perceptions that others around them are opposed to family planning. Using facilitated discussions within existing women's groups and complementary short radio broadcasts, the Life Choices communication program attempts to combat these barriers by increasing social support for family planning and addressing contraception misconceptions and concerns.

The evaluation is using a panel survey design, administering two surveys (n=509) at two different time points to participants in nine women's groups. Three of these groups participated in Life Choices prior to the first survey; three groups participated between the two surveys; and three groups will participate after the second survey (control group).

In addition to assessing knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and media exposure, surveys ask participants to name their social network and their perceptions regarding the attitudes and behaviors of these women. The network of relations among women in each group will be mapped to understand the direct and indirect flow of information about family planning and identify how the Life Choices program activities contribute to this information diffusion. (Contact: Marc Boulay, email: mboulay@jhuccp.org)

Safe Motherhood Communication Strategy (Nepal)

Maternal death is the largest cause of mortality for women of reproductive age in Nepal. The Nepal Maternal and Neonatal Health Program's Safe Motherhood communication strategy aims to improve pregnancy outcomes by encouraging the use of appropriate maternal and neonatal health practices and services.

Messages are based on a creative Nepali language-based pneumonic memory aid that encourages audiences (especially husbands and mothers-in-law) to care for pregnant women, share love and affection, and prepare for childbirth. The multimedia strategy embeds messages in radio spots and dramas, a television drama, mobile video van shows, community-based street theater performances, and print materials.

The evaluation is using pre and post door-to-door surveys with currently pregnant women, their adult family members, community-based and government health workers, and select community influencers. A snowball sampling technique (asking those you survey to refer you to other respondents) is being used to reach a sample of 1,200 women and men. (Contact: Suruchi Sood, email: ssood@jhuccp.org)

HEART Campaign (Zambia)

The Helping Each Other Act Responsibly Together (HEART) Campaign, designed specifically for and by Zambian youth ages 13 to 19, uses television to inform young people about HIV/AIDS, discusses ways to avoid infection, and promotes abstinence and condom use.

The evaluation, which used pre and post surveys and a control group of nonviewers, found that viewers (those respondents who saw at least one televised message) were 1.5 times more likely to report primary or secondary abstinence (return to abstinence) than nonviewers. Viewers were also 1.7 times more likely to report using a condom during their last sexual encounter (holding background characteristics constant). (Contact: Carol Underwood, email: cunderwood@jhuccp.org)

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Related Resources

Recent JHU/CCP contributions on theory and methodology include:


What do evaluators of public communication campaigns need to do to advance their work and this field?

**Gary T. Henry** is a professor in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies and the Department of Political Science at Georgia State University. He serves as co-editor-in-chief of the *Journal, New Directions for Evaluation, and recently co-authored Evaluation: An Integrated Framework for Understanding, Guiding, and Improving Policies and Programs* (2000, Jossey-Bass).

We are just beginning to learn how to grapple with the evaluation of public communication campaigns. Evaluators have been largely focused on evaluating direct services, and campaigns’ use of information-related instruments to change attitudes and behaviors are relatively foreign to the evaluation community. Evaluating public information campaigns is replete with challenges that will require new developments.

First, we should be looking at the literature in the fields of public opinion, marketing, psychology, and public health. Evaluators have an empirical base that we can tap and researchers for these domains have already uncovered a lot about social marketing and behavior change campaigns. We ought to use that research base to learn about conceptualizing and measuring campaign outcomes and how these outcomes interrelate.

Second, almost every campaign seems to be based on the assumption that if we can just get people educated about an issue that they will care more about it. We need to challenge that belief. Existing research indicates that our interests and emotions lead our thinking and we are prone to learn more about things we are interested in. Thus far, people have relied too much on awareness get tossed around, and they are viewed as having a causal relationship with attitude change. We need to unpack the interim outcomes that lead to the ultimate outcomes, such as policy change or behavioral change.

Third, we need to get better at evaluating the grassroots level work that often accompanies communication campaigns. An often-used notion with campaigns is combining “air” and “ground” strategies. The air strategy is the public media campaign and the ground strategy is grassroots organizing. It is really important to do more quantitative and qualitative work to develop outcomes and pathways at the grassroots level. It is very important not just to measure the uptake of the messages by the public, but whether or not the grassroots activities are really enhanced by having the media campaign.

Fourth, our tools and methodology in this arena are vastly deficient. For example, I worked on the evaluation of the Voluntary Ozone Action Program, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources campaign to improve Atlanta’s air quality by reducing behaviors that contribute to ground-level ozone. We faced some methodological challenges and couldn’t find techniques that would reliably estimate reductions in driving on alert days.

We ended up testing, to good effect, the use of rolling sample surveys, which use daily surveys to obtain measures of target outcomes—attitudes and behaviors—from an independent sample of individuals surveyed each day. This method tracks the day-to-day shifts in public opinion and behavior and enables evaluators to create natural experiments based on when campaign events or media coverage will take place (the treatment occurs on the days when campaign events take place; comparisons are on days when no campaign events occur).

Finally, I think we need to work more on how to evaluate the public policy change that many campaigns pursue. Usually before a policy is adopted you will see, for example, press releases from key leaders and legislative hearings. We have to be open to doing content analysis of those releases and testimony at the hearings to see the extent to which they were influenced by the campaign. We need to develop our techniques for tracing impacts and test them. We shouldn’t simply ask, “Were we in the newspaper?”

We should not be daunted by the methodological challenges of evaluating campaigns. We have to push ahead; we have to try some new things. We have to put data collection strategies into the field even if they are imperfect, try them, and work on their development. We need evaluators who are going to be in this for the long haul because we need to learn from our failures and improve; we need to share our experiences and move forward together.

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**Related Resources**


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How can evaluations of public communication campaigns be of more use to social change efforts?

Dr. Sharyn Sutton, President, and Elizabeth Heid Thompson, Vice President, of the social marketing firm, Sutton Group, in Washington D.C. have worked on the research, strategic planning, and execution of numerous social change efforts and public service campaigns.

We’ve seen a lot of money go to evaluating communication efforts that are not helpful to the program implementers or their funders. Like all social change efforts, public communication campaigns are complex initiatives that operate in a noisy setting. Yet many evaluations try to apply a strict causal paradigm to detect cause and effect relationships. Although trying to understand this relationship is admirable, the very nature of public communication campaigns often makes doing so impossible.

Evaluating for-profit advertising campaigns is easier because firms running the campaign have much more control over the intervention. They develop the message and advertisements, are able to direct the campaign to reach the target audience, and can control the level of media saturation. Designing an evaluation of this controlled approach is relatively straightforward.

By contrast, public communication campaigns frequently do not have this luxury of control. They cannot afford paid media or buy enough of it to reach saturation. As a result, public campaigns rely on public service announcements that may or may not reach their target audience, attempt to get earned media, or recruit partners who may distort or weaken the message. In other words, they lose control. In addition, advertising is just one aspect of public communication campaigns. These campaigns tend to be embedded in broader social change efforts that employ a range of intervention tactics, including public relations and policy advocacy.

Given the multifaceted and dynamic nature of these campaigns, trying to apply a strict causal evaluation to them becomes a very difficult, if not impossible, task. Although a laudatory goal, we have seen many evaluations fall short because of the emphasis on determining specific causal relationships by relying on experimental or quasi-experimental designs.

These evaluations tend to set up artificial controls, lack flexibility to change with the evolving campaign, and cannot separate the effects of a specific initiative versus other activities aimed at the same goals.

The paradox is that these evaluations attempt to attribute causality in an environment that does not provide them with sufficient information to make causal claims. Perhaps more importantly, they don’t tell us why a campaign did or did not work, which limits our ability to learn and influence future efforts.

Evaluations need to better reflect the real life settings in which public communication campaigns operate. It’s time for a shift away from a causal evaluation paradigm to a social change one. Social change evaluations more closely track and assess a campaign’s activities and interim results and link them to its ultimate goals. They not only look at what happened before and after the campaign, but also assess interim tactical progress so that it can feed data back into the program to improve its chance of success.

For example, not only should an evaluation track changes in attitudes and awareness at the end of a campaign, it should also monitor whether the target audience is exposed to the message and heard it. Measuring only awareness and/or behavior change doesn’t let you know if a campaign failed because of a poor message, lack of message saturation, or some other cause, such as poor implementation. By linking the interim results to a campaign’s longer-term goals, the evaluation can help campaign directors pinpoint areas that need to be improved as well as make informed judgments about its success.

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Related Resources

Resources are available at www.suttonsocialmarketing.com.


Behavioral Change Theory
continued from page 2

Outreach Initiative and the Success in School Equals Success in Life campaign (see Related Resources). 12

Intention/Self-Standards
• Children benefit from seeing their parents at school. Your presence shows you care about them and about what happens at school.

Environmental Constraints/Skills
• It’s not necessarily the quantity of time you spend with your child, but the quality.
• Ask that report cards and other school documents be made available in both English and Spanish.
• Ask the school to provide a translator for meetings and whether English as a second language (ESL) classes are available. 13

Attitudes
• Children learn in different ways. Know how your child learns and tell your child’s teacher about it. Tell the staff about your child’s personality.
• Your child’s teacher can give you insight into your child’s learning style and his/her personality away from home.
• Share stories and photos about school in your home country. It is important for new teachers to see that differences between the schools go beyond language.

Social Norms
• There are many organizations that help bring parents and other members of the community together to work for better public education.
• If you already belong to a group of parents, invite other parents to join you.
• Churches and community centers are good locations to meet and talk with other parents about your child’s school and education.

Emotion
• Allow your children to see you read daily newspapers, books, etc. Read stories aloud and tell them about your culture and heritage.

Self-efficacy
• You can get information on school-provided and related services anytime.
• Your child’s teacher should contact you to tell you about positive and negative events that involve your child.
• The principal should contact all parents about larger issues at school that don’t involve your child directly, but do affect him/her.

Track Relevant Factors Through Evaluation
Theory and research can guide evaluation in the same way they guide message development. The behavioral factors the campaign focuses on, or that research reveals are the critical influences for a given behavior, are those factors that are critical to track, in addition to the actual behavior.

Most social programs or interventions are ultimately about trying to affect human behavior, whether that behavior is getting involved effectively in your children’s education, reading to your children, recycling products, or quitting smoking. Behavioral change theory can help guide the development and evaluation of these efforts by identifying the social, psychological, cultural, and physical factors that affect behavior among different populations.

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12 Messages are drawn from materials available on the campaigns’ websites: from the Hispanic Outreach Initiative – Ten ways to participate in your children’s education (www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/spanish/nidotsen.pdf) and from Success in School Equals Success in Life – Parents at Home (www.schoolsuccessinfo.org/athome/index.html) and Parents at School (www.schoolsuccessinfo.org/atschool/index.html).

13 The caution here is that at times idiomatic differences among translators can actually contribute to parental-school disconnect.

Related Resources

The National PTA’s Hispanic Outreach Initiative seeks to remove language and cultural barriers that keep Hispanic families from actively participating in their child’s education. The initiative offers a variety of language- and culture-sensitive materials, a mentoring program, and bilingual resources. National PTA also offers Spanish-language resources in the Parent Involvement section of its website: www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/spanish/index.asp.

The Success in School Equals Success in Life campaign promotes the involvement of minority parents in their children’s education. It is a collaborative effort of the People For the American Way Foundation, NAACP, the Advertising Council, and the Eastman Kodak Company. Spanish-language resources are available at: www.schoolsuccessinfo.org.
In this section HFRP offers “new and noteworthy” resources on the evaluation of both public communication campaigns and strategic communications in general.

The FrameWorks Institute has two new CD-ROM presentations on effective communication strategies for social issues. Talking Children’s Issues aims to provide communicators with a deeper understanding of the power of framing and its implications for their work. Making Communications Connections: A Review of Communications Campaigns assesses what makes a successful campaign, including such considerations as strategic planning and message development and framing. These narrated presentations use checklists, pictures, videos, and issue/campaign examples. For more information about these presentations, contact Debbie Morgan at the FrameWorks Institute by phone at 202-756-1378 or email at dmorgan@frameworksinstitute.org.


U.S. General Accounting Office. (2002). Program evaluation: Strategies for assessing how information dissemination contributes to agency goals. Washington, DC: Author. (GAO-02-923) This report analyzes five federal agencies’ strategies for assessing the effectiveness of media campaigns and other information dissemination programs designed to persuade others to behave in ways that produce desired social or environmental benefits. www.gao.gov


New Resources From HFRP

Coffman, J. (2002). Public communication campaign evaluation: An environmental scan of challenges, criticisms, practice, and opportunities. This report, commissioned by the Communications Consortium Media Center, presents the results of an environmental scan of what has been happening in the field of public communication campaign evaluation in recent years and what choices evaluators have been making in terms of their evaluation designs and methods. Drawing on pertinent research and evaluation studies, literature, and expert evaluator and practitioner opinions, it examines evaluation challenges, criticisms, and practice. Included are sections on relevant theory, outcomes, and methods useful for designing evaluations. The report ends with opportunities in communications evaluation for the road ahead. www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/pubs/pubslist.html#pcce

The FINE (Family Involvement Network of Educators) website features a new FINE Research Digest that offers condensed versions of research papers about family involvement and their implications for teacher education and professional development. The digest includes evaluation summaries of an early childhood program and an after school literacy program. www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/resources/digest/index.html

Initiatives & Campaigns

Members of the Grantmakers Income Security Taskforce (GIST) have been sponsoring an initiative that links strategic communications experts with state and local advocates, researchers, and policy analysts working to inform TANF Reauthorization. Connect for Kids, a project of the Benton Foundation, coordinates the project. www.gist-group.org

The Trust for Early Education (TEE) and the National Institute for Early Education Research were created to build support for universal voluntary access to effective early education programs as part of the Pew Charitable Trusts’ new initiative, Starting Early, Starting Strong: Investing in Early Education. TEE, a Washington, D.C.-based advocacy center, informs the federal debate on early education and supports the work of state-level organizations. The National Institute for Early Education Research, a research center at Rutgers University, collects and disseminates research and information on early education federal and state policies. nieer.org

Focus Five for Kids, a Pennsylvania coalition of leading child advocates, began a major media campaign in September 2002 to promote five kid-focused policy priorities during the state’s gubernatorial election. Television and newspaper ads throughout the state focused on the group’s five priority areas: quality public education, school readiness, health care, after school and youth development activities, and parenting programs. www.focusfive.org

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Harvard Family Research Project

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promising practices

Blogging (BLOG’ing)

Julia Coffman of Harvard Family Research Project wants to save you from the embarrassment of making the same mistake she made.

Recently over lunch, a colleague asked, “So, how do you feel about blogging?”

“Well,” I responded, “I rather liked Riverdance. That Michael Flatley is one talented dancer.”

To which he responded while snickering, “No, not clogging … blogging!”

For those of you as clueless as I was about this term, let me explain. Blogging is short for Web logging. A weblog is an online journal or diary with short and frequent entries arranged in chronological order. Every day or week, for example, a weblog author (aka blogger) writes a new entry and posts it to his or her website. A weblog typically focuses on a single subject or theme, ranging from the personal to topic-specific or professional commentary. For example, weblogs exist on such subjects as health care, inequality, the media, social sciences, and, of course, politics.

Web logging is different from emails or websites that only offer lists of new resources or website links. A weblog might offer such links, but they are typically accompanied by the author's commentary. You read the log aware of that, and based on how much you trust, respect, and tend to agree or disagree with the author, you make your own judgments about the already filtered content.

Like most technology, Web logging is susceptible to annoyances. (Consider one weblog I came across devoted to “smells that annoy me.”) But it is also a concept and technology with some potential merits. Let’s start with the obvious. If you are already an opinion leader in your field, or are striving to be one, it can be an efficient tool for getting your messages (and your name) out, providing you have the time to devote to it.

If you are an advocate or communicator, Web logging can be a way to take advantage of message framing and repetition. We know that how information is framed makes a big difference in how it is perceived. We also know that the more a message is repeated, the more likely it is to have an impact. Web logging allows you to do both—ineexpensively.

If you are an evaluator, under the right circumstances and at an appropriate level of frequency, Web logging can be a way to provide continuous feedback on what you are finding, offered in digestible bites (potentially for different audiences) that will likely elicit more consideration and reflection than your 200-page final report. Plus, it forces you to frame and interpret data, something which most of our stakeholders hire and trust us to do, but many evaluators are reluctant to undertake.

As is the case with all technology, Web logging is not for everyone or for all circumstances. At the very best, it’s a tool that can make you more effective in your communications. At the very least, next time somebody asks you about blogging, Michael Flatley won’t be the first image that pops into your head.

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A simple Web search for “blogging” will return many sites that offer information and/or tools to help you become a blogger. The author invites readers to email her links to quality weblogs on topics related to evaluation, children, or families.