Incorporating Evaluation into Media Campaign Design

Sharyn J. Potter
With contributions from Brad Perry

Introduction

Research indicates that one in five women will be the victim of sexual violence in her lifetime (Tjaden & Thoennes 1998). Throughout the United States there exists an infrastructure of prevention programs and support networks for victims of sexual violence; however, funding and utilization are a constant struggle. Organizations have tried to maximize these scarce resources by using media campaigns to draw attention to the prevalence of sexual violence, the availability of services for victims and the need for community members to work together to reduce the incidences of sexual violence. Media campaigns enable organizations to deliver a message to a public audience through the use of posters, billboards, television, radio and internet advertisements. Media campaigns can be a relatively inexpensive way to reach an audience to introduce and promote general prevention messages (Wandersman & Florin, 2003; Nation et al., 2003) and can play a role in changing social norms, reinforcing positive behaviors, and supporting policy change.

For the past two decades, advocacy organizations have used media campaigns to increase the public's knowledge about sexual violence (Kitzinger & Hunt 1993; Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenbach, & Stark, 2003). Yet, only a fraction of these campaigns have been formally evaluated, and there is limited information on the development and evaluation of media campaigns focused on reducing sexual violence. Corporations spend millions of dollars every day to advertise their products and services, and their marketing campaigns are extensively evaluated before they are unveiled to the public. Yet in the not-for-profit world, media campaign evaluation can fall by the wayside when resources are limited. Evaluation is an integral component of every stage of media campaign planning, design, and implementation, providing campaign creators with the opportunity to examine how their message resonates with the target audience. This paper attempts to provide brief information on core concepts relevant to media campaign evaluation strategies and showcases several sexual violence prevention media campaigns that have completed evaluations at various stages of the implementation process.

Importance of Evaluation

Typically the goal of media campaigns in the public health arena is to increase public knowledge on a given topic and possibly to promote some specific action like wearing a bike helmet or fastening a seatbelt (Randolph & Viswanath, 2004). Most sexual violence prevention media campaigns seek to change social norms that support the culture of violence. The Texas Association Against Sexual Violence (2003) raised community awareness regarding the prevalence of sexual violence by showcasing victims' stories. In recent years media campaigns have asked community members to "step in and speak up" when they see precursors to sexual violence (e.g., Bringing in the Bystander) or to "say something" when they witness warning signs of sexual violence as in The Red Flag Campaign.

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Defining Campaign Goals

Defining media campaign goals helps ensure that target audience members walk away with a precise "take home message." Like all prevention efforts, media campaign development and implementation is an evolving process. We suggest organizations interested in creating media campaigns form working groups that include members with expertise in various areas including design, marketing, evaluation, and sexual violence prevention. Survivors, advocates, and target audience members should also be invited to be members of the working group. If members of these groups are not included in the working group, they should be offered regular opportunities to provide feedback. For the purposes of this paper we will refer to the working group as the *campaign team*.

Identifying the Message

Developing precise messaging requires input from members of the campaign team and the target audience. Evaluation that occurs throughout the campaign development process helps the campaign team craft a message that is realistic and relevant to the target audience. Researchers examining other public health initiatives find that well crafted messages raise awareness and influence behavior. For instance, the ubiquitous versions of the "friends don't let friends drive drunk" messages have made drinking and driving a violation of cultural norms and old sayings like "one for the road" are now considered politically incorrect. "A 2002 Ad Council Survey showed that 90 percent of adults were aware of advertising with the tagline 'Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk'" (Advertising Council 2004, p. 20).

A recently evaluated public health campaign offers a different public health prevention approach. The Truth Campaign initiated by the American Legacy Foundation focused on corporate greed to attract the attention of cynical and idealistic teenagers and used explicit images including coffins and body bags to vividly portray the perils of smoking (Farrelly, Davis, Haviland, Messeri, & Healton, 2005; Sly, Hopkins, Trapido, & Ray, 2001). Youth smoking prevalence rates measured before and after the Truth Campaign was delivered indicate a reduction in adolescent smoking. Researchers credit the campaign's stark images of the potentially fatal outcome of failing to change one's behavior (stop smoking) for the decrease in youth smoking (Farrelly et al., 2005). Cross sectional time series data was used to examine if there was a relationship between exposure to the campaign and perceived ideas regarding smoking prevalence. Youth ages 12-17 years old not exposed to the campaign overestimated their peers' smoking prevalence rates while students who reported seeing the campaign had more realistic perceptions of the prevalence of adolescent smoking (Davis, Nonnemaker, & Farrelly 2007).

Targeting Awareness

It is unrealistic to think that one message will fit all. Therefore, during the early stages of development campaign team members should identify their target audience. The campaign team should address issues of cultural diversity that are relevant to the target audience**.** A campaign that is not sensitive to the specific racial and cultural issues of the target population will fail to engage target audience members. Target audience responses need to be evaluated during the initial stages of the campaign development to test the viability of the campaign team's vision before too much time and money is invested.

Expanding Beyond the Media Campaign

If possible it is important for media campaigns to have companion training pieces or interactive opportunities. In-person programs can alleviate some of the weaknesses inherent in media campaigns by enabling participants to process what they have learned, practice their newly learned skills, and receive feedback from trainers and peers (Nation, et al., 2003). In their review of media campaigns promoting physical health, Cavill and Bauman (2004) found that media campaigns are more successful for increasing awareness of an issue

rather than having a population-level effect on behaviors. They suggest that media campaigns be seen as part of a broader strategy, including "policy and environmental change" (Cavill & Bauman, 2004, p. 778).

Two media campaigns that address sexual violence prevention through a comprehensive multi-faceted approach include the My Strength Campaign and the Bringing in the Bystander program. These two programs incorporate media campaigns and in-person prevention programs. The My Strength program, originally developed by Washington DC's Men Can Stop Rape, is currently being administered by the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA) and includes both a media campaign and in-person training programs for young males called MyStrength Clubs. The MyStrength Clubs offer young men an opportunity to learn positive ways to express their masculinity and strength and provide a cultural context for understanding violence. University of New Hampshire researchers developed the Bringing in the Bystander program to train community members to engage in pro-social bystander behaviors through the use of an in-person program and a media campaign. The Bringing in the Bystander media campaign was based on the in-person prevention program framework and its posters portray actors modeling pro-social ways to intervene in situations where sexual violence is occurring or has the potential to occur (Potter, Stapleton, & Moynihan, 2008).

Strategies to Incorporate Evaluation into Media Campaign Design

Because most media campaigns focused on sexual violence prevention are designed and administered on tight budgets, there are limited funds for evaluation purposes and evaluation can seem costly and intimidating to the campaign creators. However, without conducting a formal evaluation it is difficult to gain representative feedback regarding the campaign and its message and to systematically identify the effective components of the campaign. Media campaign outcome evaluations also enable researchers to assess changes in the level of the public's knowledge and determine to what extent the public can engage in the promoted behavior(s). Furthermore, continuously gathering data on the campaign's impact enables the campaign team to make changes during the current or future administration of the campaign. Evaluation criteria should focus on realistic expectations. It is important to note that it is difficult for target audience members to learn specific behavior skills from a media campaign (Cavill & Bauman, 2004).

Early Evaluation Strategies

Focus Groups

During well administered focus groups, target audience members discuss their impressions of the media campaign. This provides campaign team members with an opportunity to understand how the campaign's message resonates with target audience members. In other words, is the audience taking home the message that the creators intended? When recruiting focus group participants it is important to find a group that represents the diversity in the media campaign's target audience. Often money, raffle opportunities, and free refreshments are incentives used for focus group participation. It is important to not give away the "punch line" when recruiting so that potential participants do not base their decision to participate on their positive or negative opinions of the focus group topic. In other words, tell the potential participants that their opinions are needed on a public awareness campaign, rather than a sexual violence prevention campaign.

Prototypes

Campaign material prototypes can be evaluated in a focus group setting. Focus group participants can discuss how the prototype (e.g., poster, broadcast public service announcement, or bumper sticker) facilitates or hinders the campaign message (Donovan, Francas, Patterson, & Zappelli, 2000). For instance, ask participants to describe messages they think were conveyed in the media campaign, if the scenes depicted on each of the posters were realistic, and if they could see themselves taking the

action advocated by the campaign. Why or why not? Previous research findings stress the importance of using language in a media campaign that resonates with the target audience (Lederman, Stewart, Goodhart, & Laitman, 2003). Focus group participants can comment on the campaign language, models' appearances, the background scenery and poster graphics and provide insight into product placement. It is important that the medium be appropriate for the target audience. For example, popular websites such as Facebook, rather than newspaper advertisements, would be a more effective venue for reaching adolescents.

Surveys

If there is money in the development budget, a contracted survey center could randomly call and invite a sample of target audience members (e.g., from the college campus, small town, city) to participate in the focus group. This technique would most likely provide more diversity among the focus group participants than using volunteers who happen to see the advertisement or hear about the focus group from a friend. The campaign team might want to consider segmenting the focus groups by age or gender in an effort to hear the feedback from the younger participants without the influence of the older members.

Piloting the Campaign

Following the initial campaign development, a pilot study can be conducted to collect feedback and insight. Piloting the campaign enables the campaign team to administer the media campaign on a small scale to determine if there are problems that could jeopardize the large scale administration. Because production costs of media campaign products can be expensive, it is often useful to have a small batch of the product printed for pilot testing. The campaign team should consider selecting a printer or production house based on their willingness to work with the campaign team at different stages of development, as this would give the campaign team opportunities to gain feedback on prototypes rather than waiting for feedback on the final product.

Ideally, it is useful to find two groups with similar demographics for the pilot test. For example, the Bringing in the Bystander media campaign pilot test included two college residence halls with similar resident demographic characteristics. Both residence halls were given pre-tests to assess their views on different aspects of sexual violence. One residence hall was randomly selected to serve as the control group, while the other served as the experimental group. Following the pre-test the experimental group was exposed to the media campaign. The control group was not exposed to the campaign. After a two-week period, both groups were given a post-test to assess if there was a difference in attitudes among students. It is important to make sure that the control and experimental groups are geographically and socially separated so that the members of the control group are not intentionally exposed to the campaign through proximity or through communication with friends and acquaintances in the experimental group. This enables the campaign team to more accurately examine the impact of the campaign on the experimental group.

Analyzing Reactions

Reactions to the media campaign are also important when piloting a campaign. For instance, following the two week Bringing in the Bystander experiment period, students were asked to join a focus group to talk about their reactions to the media campaign. Focus group administrators provided students with campaign posters minus the message and asked them to fill in the text. The focus group feedback helped the campaign team finesse the poster language so that the models engaging in prosocial behaviors used phrases and terms that are memorable and commonly used in the campus community. Focus group feedback at this stage gave the campaign team an opportunity to receive feedback that increased the realistic quality of the posters, including the language and visual images. For instance, focus group participants indicated that the party scene actors holding empty cups detracted from the realism of the poster images.

Evaluating the Completed Campaign

Pre-Tests and Post-Tests

When launching a media campaign the campaign team wants to impact the target audiences' knowledge base, beliefs, attitudes and possibly behaviors. One of the most common ways to assess the change in knowledge is the use of pre- and post-tests. This method involves giving the target audience a survey assessing knowledge of the particular topic prior to the launch of the media campaign. After the launch of the media campaign (perhaps two or four weeks in duration) a post-test would be administered to the same target audience. A comparison of the pre-test and post-test answers provides insight into changes in target audience knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. For a more in-depth understanding of the campaign impact, randomly selected members of the target audience may be interviewed. The data gleaned from the pre- and post-test comparisons and interviews document program impact and provide insight to further refine and strengthen the campaign for future implementation. In order to determine if the campaign's impact is still potent in the months following the post-test, a second post-test could be administered at a later date (e.g., four weeks, six months, and twelve months following the first post-test). Comparing the results from the pre-tests with the first and second post-tests provides insight into the effectiveness of the campaign's message over time.

Experimental Trial

A more sophisticated approach to assessing impact is by conducting a formal experimental trial involving a control and an experimental group. For instance, if there is a media campaign focused on reducing sexual violence in high schools, then the evaluation of the campaign could occur in high schools in two separate towns. At each high school the 11th grade males and females could both be administered pre-tests. For four weeks the experimental high school would be exposed to the media campaign, while the students in the control high school would not be exposed to the campaign. At the end of the four week period 11th graders at both schools would be administered post-tests. The effectiveness of the campaign is determined by comparing the pre- and post-test results at the two schools.

An even more rigorous design involves administration of only a pre-test to a third high school and only a post-test to a fourth high school to further control for any artificial knowledge gains attributable to the pre-testing. These procedures can produce reliable results if they are done correctly, but the methods require time, skill, and money.

Measuring Community Reaction

When campaigns focus on increasing community members' knowledge of services, or utilization of services, other evaluation techniques could be used. For instance, if the media campaign is highlighting the services available at the local crisis center, their call volume before, during, and after the campaign could be compared to see if there were changes in community members' willingness to utilize these services. Finally, it is important to quantitatively measure the public media's attention to the campaign by tracking the number of stories or features in local newspapers, television and radio programs, as these figures can provide some indication of the media campaign's community impact.

Internet Use and Evaluation

In recent years the internet has been used as a recruiting tool, a method for administering evaluation surveys and as a vehicle for providing information (Potter, Moynihan, Stapleton, & Banyard, forthcoming; Red Flag Campaign). The Choose Respect campaign, an initiative to prevent teen dating violence and sexual assault, uses a website with interactive learning tools to help convey the campaign message. Therefore, the Choose Respect campaign team measured the hits to the website and website usage patterns as one measure of the campaign's impact.

Practical Evaluation Examples from Campaigns Aimed at Reducing Sexual Violence

Because evaluation requires a great deal of time and resources, some campaigns have worked creatively to develop cost-effective evaluation methods. The following are a few examples.

The Bringing in the Bystander Poster (www.unh.edu/preventioninnovations) highlights the role of the bystander in sexual violence prevention (Potter et al., 2008). The campaign was evaluated throughout its development through the use of focus groups and a pilot test was conducted in two residence halls for first year students (Potter et al., 2008). The campaign was also evaluated when it was administered university wide, using the university Blackboard Portal. Students were given the opportunity to win an Apple iPod Nano if they agreed to take an online public awareness survey. The online survey asked students questions about their willingness to intervene in a situation where there was the potential for sexual violence to occur. After the students answered questions regarding their demographics and bystander behaviors, they were shown the campaign posters and asked whether or not they had seen the posters on campus. This enabled the researchers to compare the differences in the responses between students who reported seeing the campaign posters and those who did not. All survey participants were asked demographic questions in order to analyze the campaign's impact across the different groups on campus (Potter et al., forthcoming).

The Red Flag Campaign (www.theredflagcampaign.org), created by the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance and supported by Verizon, used focus groups and the internet as part of their evaluation strategy. First they used focus groups to determine what college students thought about dating relationships and their willingness to intervene if they witnessed something that was troubling. After the initial posters were created, the designers reconvened the focus groups to ask students if the wording in the campaign was appropriate, whether the target audience could identify with the models, and whether the poster design enhanced the message. The designers then made changes based on that feedback. During the campaign pilot, the developers used Survey Monkey, an internet based tool, to administer the pre/post surveys assessing students' perceptions of the Red Flag Campaign.

The Netherlands Child Abuse Prevention Campaign urged adult residents of the Netherlands to report incidents of child abuse and was evaluated by examining the number of hotline calls received before and after the campaign. The campaign was also evaluated through the use of an online survey where the website address was on the pamphlets that were distributed throughout the country. Unlike the United States, the Netherlands does not currently have mandatory child abuse reporting laws (Mudde, Hoefnagels, Van Wijnen, & Kremers, 2007).

Voices Not Victims (www.voicesnotvictims.org) was developed and first administered at the University of California at Davis in 2001. This campaign aimed to stimulate college students to think about consent, intimate relationships and sexual violence and relationships. During the development of the campaign, focus groups were facilitated by an outside media consultant to frame the development of the campaign message and image use. The focus groups gave the campaign development team an opportunity to understand how students think about the issues at hand during the initial stages of the campaign design (Chrismer, 2001). In addition, a web survey and focus group interviews were used to asses the impact of the poster campaign.

The MyStrength Campaign (www.MyStrength.org) was developed by Men Can Stop Rape in Washington, D.C. and the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault and is now being implemented in California. The purpose of the program is to prevent young men from perpetrating sexual violence through teaching them about respect and healthy relationships. The program is currently being piloted in California high schools and is being evaluated by comparing the results of attitude questionnaires among schools that received the media campaign alone to schools that received both the media campaign and the compan-

ion club program (Lee, Guy, Perry, Sniffen, & Alamo Mixson, 2007).

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the importance of making evaluation an integral component of all steps of media campaign planning, design, and implementation. By integrating some of the techniques described in this paper, evaluation becomes part of an ongoing quality improvement effort rather than an afterthought. The development of campaign teams facilitates the inclusion of evaluation at every stage of the media campaign development process and enables the final product to benefit from constant feedback and tinkering. The campaign creators can help increase the likelihood that the targeted audiences are receiving the message that the campaign designers intended. Furthermore, the use of pre-test and post-test evaluations can identify if changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors are significant and in the intended direction.

Author of this document:
Sharyn J. Potter, PhD MPH
Associate Professor and Undergraduate Chair
University of New Hampshire
sharyn.potter@unh.edu

Consultant:
Brad Perry, MA
Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator
Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance (VSDVAA)
bperry@vsdvalliance.org

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In Brief:

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For the past two decades, advocacy organizations have used media campaigns to increase the public's knowledge about sexual violence (Kitzinger & Hunt, 1993; Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenbach, & Stark, 2003). Media campaigns enable organizations to deliver a message to a public audience through the use of posters, billboards, television, radio and internet advertisements. Sexual violence advocacy organizations have used media campaigns to draw attention to the prevalence of sexual violence, the availability of services for victims and the need for community members to work together to reduce the incidences of sexual violence. Yet, only a fraction of these campaigns have been formally evaluated, and there is limited information on the development and evaluation of media campaigns focused on reducing sexual violence.

Corporate marketing campaigns are extensively evaluated before they are unveiled to the public, but in the not-for-profit world, media campaign evaluation can fall by the wayside when resources are limited. Evaluation is an integral component of every stage of media campaign planning, design, and implementation, providing campaign creators with the opportunity to examine how their message resonates with the target audience. This paper attempts to provide brief information on core concepts relevant to media campaign evaluation strategies and showcases several sexual violence prevention media campaigns that have completed evaluations at various stages of the implementation process.

Feedback from media campaign evaluations can help campaign creators increase the likelihood that the target audience is receiving the message that they intended. This paper describes standard media campaign evaluation strategies including focus groups, prototypes, surveys and pilot studies as well as more sophisticated evaluation strategies such as pre- and post-tests, experimental trials, and measurement of community reaction. Finally, the evaluation strategies used by four recent sexual violence prevention media campaigns are reviewed. By integrating some of the techniques described in this paper, evaluation becomes part of ongoing media campaign quality improvement rather than an afterthought.

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