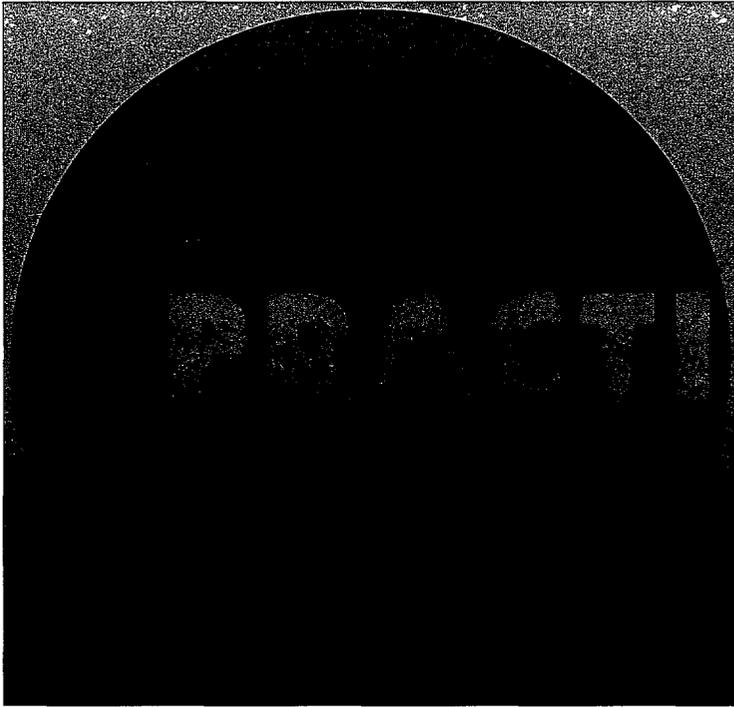


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SOMARC's Practical Guide Series



PRACTICAL PR

The Basics

THE
FUTURES
GROUP

A

Practical PR

The Basics

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111 Market Place - Suite 310
Baltimore MD 21202 USA
Tel 410/659-6300 Fax 410/659-6266
Email ccp@charm.net
<http://www.charm.net/~ccp/pcs.html>

Practical PR: The Basics

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Introduction

Where PR Fits

Public relations is a communications tool which has become critical to successful SOMARC programs. It adds an extra dynamic to help your message break through other media clutter and attract attention to your product and your message. Public relations educates, informs and changes attitudes. Through a successful SOMARC public relations program, people can adopt new behaviors, provide better care for themselves and their families and live more productive, healthy lives. Public relations is also relevant for all audiences -- particularly those that are difficult to reach. In SOMARC programs public relations is frequently used to communicate to consumers, government and religious leaders, journalists, health professionals and corporate decisionmakers.

As marketing professionals, SOMARC managers are always seeking ways to strengthen their programs. This booklet is designed to help SOMARC managers design the most effective public relations campaign for their programs. This booklet is designed to help you

- think about how public relations might fit into the context of your program,
- understand specifically what is meant by the term "public relations" and how it fits into the marketing mix,
- determine when to use PR,
- provide you tools for managing a PR program and PR agencies and
- begin to think about using PR to help you tackle marketing challenges

***PR and the
Marketing
Mix***

SOMARC's Contraceptive Social Marketing (CSM) programs are just as they are named -- marketing efforts. Marketing has four components, the Four P's -- "product", "price", "place" and "promotion". Public relations is part of promotion.

***The
Promotion
Mix***

The promotion mix includes advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relations. Integrating all the elements in the promotional mix will create the strongest promotional effort. SOMARC calls the complementary use of promotion "Integrated Marketing Communications", or "IMC".

PROMOTION MIX TECHNIQUES

While some techniques can be used for different activities in the promotion mix, here is a categorization of techniques available

- **Advertising**
 - Print, radio or TV advertising
 - Direct mail advertising
 - Movie trailers
- **Personal Selling**
 - Portfolios/sales presentations
 - Telemarketing
- **Sales Promotion**
 - Displays
 - Contests and sweepstakes
 - Premiums
 - Combination offers and price-off deals
 - Factory rebates
 - Coupons
 - Discounts to resellers
 - Special awards
 - "Push money"
 - Sampling
 - Catalogs and price sheets
 - Demonstrations
 - Special deals
- **Public Relations**
 - Publicity
 - Special events
 - Public/consumer education
 - Lobbying
 - Community relations/public affairs
 - Internal communications
 - Speaking engagements
 - Gatekeeper training
 - Policy reform
 - Partnerships/coalitions
 - Mass media entertainment
 - Community-based theater
 - Exhibits
 - Public service announcements
 - Infomercials

Public Relations

Public relations involves "planned, indirect, persuasive communications to stimulate demand and favorably influence attitudes and opinions about a product, service or idea" The focus here should be on the phrase "influence attitudes and opinions" In public relations, information is used to influence public opinion Often this is done so subtly that the target audience is not even aware that a planned process is behind much of what is seen in the news or the mobilization of advocates to a particular cause

SOMARC's advertising and public relations have certain things in common Both have the ultimate goal of creating behavior change And both require a strategic planning process to be most effective Creative development is also involved in many of public relations end products, just as it is in advertising

But public relations differs from advertising in that "persuasion" rather than paid access is used to get into the media "In advertising, you pay for it In public relations we pray for it," is a familiar sentiment among many public relations professionals And public relations uses more diverse media techniques to communicate its information These might include press releases, advertorials, sponsored events and contests, news coverage of an event or topic, symposia, brochures, public service announcements (PSAs) and the like These techniques can be used in many different ways to accomplish different types of public relations objectives Public relations is the sum of all its functional parts They are used in a productive, timely mix to support specific objectives Here's how PR is different from other promotional elements

Advertising

Advertising is used to communicate a consistent message about a product, service or idea The advertising message and its placement are controlled Worldwide, commercial advertising is paid Often in the developed world, advertising and public relations are differentiated because advertising is paid media and the use of media to communicate a public relations message is free, such as an article in a newspaper This is not always the case In the developing world as publicity is also paid media in some

countries. However, advertising is always a direct means for marketers to speak to customers -- public relations is an indirect means of communications.

Personal Selling

Traditionally, personal selling has included activities which engage a customer and the "seller" in conversation, in person or by phone. Because of the myriad of opportunities to communicate in today's global world, many consider personal selling anytime a program representative talks about or represents a product. This expanded concept of personal selling begins to merge with other elements of public relations or direct marketing, such as public speaking or telemarketing.

Sales Promotion

Sales promotion is used to promote to consumers and the trade. Consumer promotion is any strategy that offers the target audience an outside incentive to use the product. Trade promotion is any strategy that directly offers middlemen and/or their sales staffs an outside incentive to stock and/or promote to consumers.

PR Quiz

Answer "yes" or "no" to each of the following questions to see if PR is something to consider for your program.

Yes No

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | Political leaders are actively speaking against the need for family planning and religious extremists just burned our billboards. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | We've been selling the Pill for years now and sales still aren't what they should be. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | We can't really sell the injectable until women know what it is. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | My injectable sales are falling -- people think it causes breast cancer. |

- ___ ___ 5 There are too many condoms on the market -- ours is not different from any others
- ___ ___ 6 I'm afraid one day a negative news story will break about the program and I won't be ready to handle it
- ___ ___ 7 I must introduce no-scalpel vasectomy, but the men will never go for it here

Scoring If you answered yes to one of these questions, adding PR might help. Keep reading -- or call for help

When to Use Public Relations

Public relations can make or break SOMARC programs. In every country there are influential constituencies capable of directly helping or hindering our programs. Groups hostile to a SOMARC program may effectively block product distribution. They may deny the program access to mass media. Or they may seek to undermine program credibility. On the other hand, constituencies supportive of SOMARC activities may become actively involved in program expansion. They may serve as intermediaries, carrying the program's message deep into target populations. Or they may be influential in shaping positive family planning policies.

HOW PUBLIC RELATIONS CONTRIBUTES

- Extends advertising ideas
- Creates a more receptive message environment
- Enhances message credibility
- Communicates in-depth
- Manages crisis situations
- Influences complex behaviors
- Affordably accesses special audiences
- Leverages public/private sector partnerships

Extends Advertising

Sales may be good but flat, advertising can only do so much. Use a PR campaign to extend and reinforce an advertising campaign and boost sales.

Creates a Receptive Environment

Generating positive publicity and engaging the support of key publics are two ways public relations helps create a more receptive message environment for SOMARC programs

There are many ways to generate positive publicity -- from masterminding feature stories and editorials, to releasing a research study, to sponsoring symposia and training sessions. Publicity helps to make audiences receptive to new ideas during times of change.

Public relations also provides you with tools to engage the support of key publics on your behalf. Gatekeepers, opinion leaders and influentials including population/family health organizations, can be instrumental in advancing SOMARC program goals. You must identify and court relevant constituencies, uncover areas of mutual concern and explore partnerships. Such people can work "formally" on your behalf, for example, as members of SOMARC advisory councils. And they can help you informally through exerting positive political, business and media influence.

Enhances Message Credibility

The quality and diversity of public relations tools and the fact that access to such tools is usually not paid for, legitimizes your messages in ways that advertising cannot. Items that appear in the news, speeches by respected advocates (e.g., media personalities, village leaders, members of the medical and religious communities) and endorsements, bring added credibility to the SOMARC story. You can also form special interest groups to hold events that provide platforms for speakers and opportunities to sample products and distribute information (e.g., Mothers for Family Planning).

Communicates In-Depth

Many public relations techniques also allow you to build understanding. SOMARC messages can be complicated, advertising can only say so much. To communicate in-depth try

- Advertorials, advice columns or radio talk shows that can provide detailed contraceptive information and answer questions
- Conferences and training programs that build skills and answer questions
- Video tapes, audiocassette programming and brochures to explain or demonstrate
- Direct response techniques, where point-of-purchase materials or print ads contain numbers to write or call for additional information For example, telephone "hot lines" for AIDS information have been established successfully in this regard

Manages Crises

Although the objective of public relations is to prevent crises, when they do occur, they can be managed through tactics like head-to-head negotiating, building coalitions with other groups at odds with a hostile group or finding alternative ways to shift the program strategy and still meet objectives Public relations' contingency plans for crisis management have become standard operating procedures for many corporations (See *Practical PR Crisis Communications*)

Influences Complex Behaviors

Public relations helps create social sanctions for contraception and provides vehicles for detailed information on methods and brands It thus encourages the fundamental behavior change that practicing contraception, or using particular methods, requires

Reaches Special Audiences

Often, there are several important secondary audiences that your program wants to reach with your message However, such groups can be small or difficult to reach so mass media expenses cannot be justified The diversity and specialization of public relations tools (e g, newsletter), can be helpful and more affordable in accomplishing SOMARC objectives

Quick Turnaround

Public relations can also be used as a quick means to address specific issues. For example, a "letter to the editor" of a newspaper or a press release can be drafted very quickly to address specific problems or opportunities.

Partnerships

There may be many local private sector companies who would find it beneficial, from a public image perspective, to be associated with SOMARC projects. That's because SOMARC projects involve marketing within a "greater public good mandate." This can be very attractive to the right private sector partner. Joint public relations special events can be conceived, developed and publicized. Such partnerships can help defray cost to the SOMARC project.

Strengths and Limitations

Some of public relations' biggest strengths for SOMARC programs are high credibility and legitimacy, opportunities for increased visibility, ability to be highly persuasive in an indirect way and potential for dramatization. As with anything, public relations has its weaknesses, too. These include no guaranteed placement or coverage, a lack of copy control over publicity generated and relatively poor frequency (a "story" is only "hot" once). It can also be difficult to measure public relations results. But if you understand the important role that public relations can play while recognizing its limitations, you will be in the best position to use it.

Your Role

As the SOMARC Manager, you have a multi-faceted role to play in public relations. You may be the spokesperson for the project among opinion leaders and other constituencies, the contact person with the press and the leader of the public relations planning process.

As a spokesperson for the SOMARC project, you must engage constituencies to generate and maintain program support. This requires an astuteness in identifying key players, an ability to be honest and forthright in providing information and an ability to "sell" diplomatically. You must quickly establish credibility and consistently maintain productive working relationships with relevant parties.

Planning

In precious few cases does good public relations just "happen". It requires the same level of planning that developing marketing strategies and advertising require. In countries with available public relations experts and agencies, your planning and implementing role can be much as it is when working with advertising agencies. You must provide relevant information about your marketing goals and business environment and important target audiences. You must agree to objectives, approve strategies and plans for public relations programs and approve creative work. A partnership must be developed and nurtured between you and your agency or consultant.

If you have no agency or consultant, you must become the expert. You will need to play a more active role in creating, developing and implementing plans. This requires sound strategic thinking and an in-depth understanding of how public relations works. You will need to designate a media relations specialist dedicated to facilitating public relations implementation and providing public relations ideas. You will also need an advertising agency or freelance creative people to do specific creative projects.

In spite of the work and potential difficulties involved, it is vitally important for all SOMARC programs to have formal public relations plans in effect. This does not mean that there won't be years when you might only have a couple of public relations strategies you'll want to implement, because most of your budget needs to be spent on the other things. You may also want a low profile strategy at times -- sometimes keeping things out of the news is as important as getting things in.

Media Relations

Part of this constituency building involves promoting good media relations. Success in dealing with the media depends on your ability to offer them something in exchange for the publicity they provide. They are in the information business. You are a source.

You must also be ready to respond to any request for information from the press. You may want to designate an experienced SOMARC staff person or a public relations agency to be the media relations specialist and handle all media calls, if not handle them yourself. In this regard it is important to

- Determine whether the media request is within your area of expertise,
- Determine exactly what information is needed and when,
- Fill all requests promptly, accurately and completely,
- Avoid off-the-cuff remarks or snap judgments and
- Provide only information you wish broadcast or printed

Selecting a Public Relations Agency

When possible, it is wise to hire a local public relations firm. They are the experts at what they do, they probably have good contacts with the local media and you should expect them to be able to create newsworthy materials and know what “sells” to a journalist.

Where to Begin

Following are things you can do to start finding a PR firm

- Determine your budget -- how much can you spend?
- Investigate other companies and use word-of-mouth to narrow down the list of prospects. You may also want to ask your advertising agency for a recommendation. Ask people recommending the agencies what they liked. Did the agencies accomplish the goals of their client? Was the client satisfied? Was it worth the cost to hire the agency? What is the agency known for -- creativity, strategic thinking, account management?

- Look into the possibility of hiring an individual freelance public relations professional or even a small two-to-three person staffed firm. Their expenses and overhead costs are usually lower than those of a “full-service” agency. These types of firms may also serve you better for short-term, one-time events.
- Keep in mind that agencies can be retained on a project basis, rather than a monthly fee. It all depends on how you structure the relationship.
- Determine the criteria that are important (i.e., health, experience, publicity, etc.) and create a scoring sheet defining your criteria. An example of a scoring sheet used in India follows.

CRITERIA FOR JUDGING PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRMS

Agency _____

1) EXPERIENCE (15 POINTS)

PR industry knowledge and experience implementing a multi-faced public relations program which supported issues and/or a product and included several elements, such as

- placing stories in the media/placing spokespeople on radio and TV shows
- getting issues covered in television programming
- training journalists/spokespeople
- communicating during a crisis situation
- interpersonal education (slide shows, videos, seminars, speaking engagements)
- working with research, monitoring media, evaluating programs

2) UNDERSTANDING OF PROGRAM SCOPE AND CREATIVE, TIMELY APPROACHES (15 POINTS)

Grasp of our problem/challenge, scope of the work, creative, practical ideas for reaching objectives outlined in the brief -- suggestions for adding resources to team and getting the work done on time, attention to deadlines

3) STRATEGIC PLANNING ABILITY (15 POINTS)

Experience developing written, strategic communications plans, demonstrated by an example

4) MEDIA PLACEMENT AND TRAINING (20 POINTS)

Media placement capability -- placing stories in the media/placing spokespeople on radio/TV shows, crisis communications, training journalists, media training of spokespeople

5) COLLATERAL (15 POINTS)

Experience creating collateral materials, writing brochures, understanding of materials necessary for low-literacy audiences, health professionals, non-traditional providers

6) EXPERIENCE WITH OUR TARGET AUDIENCES (20 POINTS)

Experience working with our target audiences -- low-income women, health providers

Written Proposal

Once you have narrowed down the field to three to five agencies

- Ask each agency, by letter, for an agency resume and a short proposal for your business. Explain that you are looking for an agency, give them all the same background information about the program and why you need an agency
- What you will receive from them is a broad proposal. From this, you should be able to cut your list down to about two or three agencies
- Invite them to make a formal presentation to you of their capabilities and show some of their work for other clients
- Be sure you ask who your account team members would be and invite them to participate

The Agency Presentation

Give each agency a brief scenario for a public relations project or special event. Make sure you give each agency the project specifications. You may wish to include a modest budget for reimbursing them for their expenses

Set aside a day to hear all of the presentations. Give each agency enough time to present and be sure to leave time for questions

Making the Selection

After hearing all the presentations, you should have a good idea as to the agency you want to hire. Review your scoring criteria for each agency. Also, ask yourself

- Did the agency do what you asked them to do?
- Did they create and present a strategic plan that complemented your goals and fulfilled your needs?
- What was the scope of their media and government contacts?

- Were they well-researched and thorough throughout? Did they do their homework?
- Did they stay within the budget guidelines you gave them?
- Could you and your staff work with this agency? Were there any obvious personality conflicts?
- Are the people who made the presentation the same ones who will be working on your account?
- Is the agency so large that your account becomes insignificant to them? Or so small that they cannot perform the agreed upon tasks? Look for a balance
- Do they appear truly interested in doing a good job for you?

NOTE Be sure to advise those that you reject that you have selected another agency

Agency Billings

There are basically four ways an agency gets paid

- 1 Monthly retainer -- a monthly fee which covers consulting only
- 2 A flat fee -- usually when an agency is hired for a special project for a pre-determined amount
- 3 A fee plus - this includes a set monthly retainer which covers personnel, overhead and agency expenses plus out of pocket expenses such as travel, photography, phone, mailing, etc
- 4 Hourly fee - this means the client is paying for all hours incurred on a project, with no set ceiling

Agency Contracts

If you hire an agency or individual to handle your public relations activity, it is wise to put them on a six-month trial period prior to signing any long-term contracts. However, it's probably best to avoid any long-term contracts altogether. Limit contracts to one year if possible.

Public Relations Planning

As with any endeavor, an effective, well-thought-out public relations campaign at any level begins with a sound plan and is put into operation effectively by involving as many other people as appropriate. After contract negotiations, the PR plan is the first thing you should do with your agency.

Developing a sound public relations plan is no different from putting together an effective marketing plan for your contraceptive social marketing program. In fact, many of the elements are the same.

Situation Analysis

The background of your plan is called a situation analysis. It is a thoughtful, logical presentation of the facts describing the environment in which you are operating and in which you want to achieve your objective. This should include a factual assessment of

- 1 Your program
- 2 External environmental pressures - i.e., what research has shown about the need and desire for contraceptives, perception of contraceptives, local attitudes and opinions, level of support from the local government and any potential opposition to contraceptive social marketing
- 3 Competitive information - what contraceptives are currently on the market and percentage of market share, acceptance of use
- 4 Internal environmental concerns if relevant

Overall Marketing and PR Objectives

- 5 Any other factor that may affect what you want to achieve
- 6 Media use and how information is obtained

Restate your marketing objectives. Then write clear, concise statements about what the PR program wants to achieve. Depending on the nature of your program or project, this can be as broad as increasing awareness of contraceptive options and as specific as combating attacks from hostile religious leaders on condoms.

These objectives will unify all elements of the public relations plan. They must be consistent with marketing goals. They should specify an action required and the behavior change involved. They should be realistic, clear and measurable. It is not uncommon for public relations objectives to be multiple, directed at different target audiences.

Here are some hypothetical SOMARC examples:

- To create favorable attitudes towards CSM contraceptives among (government target audience), so they will support SOMARC programs
- To inform and educate (medical target audience) about SOMARC products so they will recommend them to their patients
- To build credibility for SOMARC products among (consumer target audience) so they will be more receptive to our messages

Target Audience Description

Write a description of those markets/audiences you hope to influence.

There are many potential public relations target audiences for SOMARC programs. They can range from opinion leaders, to gatekeepers, to influentials, to middlemen/the trade, to end-consumers. Your task is to segment,

understand and prioritize these audiences so specific efforts can be directed to them Research and judgment come into play here

POSSIBLE TARGET AUDIENCES

- **Medical/Trade**

- Doctors
- Nurses
- Midwives
- Pharmacists
- Retailers

- **Community**

- Community Leaders
- Right to Lifers
- Civic Associations
- Women's Associations
- Market Women's Associations

- **Government**

- Ministers of Health
- Civil Servants
- Population Officers
- Ministers of Interior
- Ministers of Information

- **Media**

- Censorship Boards
- Editors

- **Religious**

- Catholic Church
- Evangelical Churches
- Anglican Church
- Islam

You will need to ask yourself which audiences are most important at the "macro" level (e.g., physicians vs midwives, community groups vs the church) You are generally aiming for segments of substantial size, that are interested in our benefits, open to our message and reachable You should then develop a "micro" understanding of these groups Since groups are composed of individuals, it is helpful to talk about the targets on that level

Develop a paragraph that describes an individual from the target audience(s) in terms of demographics, behaviors, beliefs and lifestyles Distinguish your primary target from secondary targets Everyone is not of equal importance

Here is an example of a hypothetical public relations target audience for a new, low dose, oral contraceptive in sustaining a SOMARC program

"The mid-wives association in Las Montanas region is comprised of women in their 30's Most of these women are mothers with 2 to 3 young children at home They have up to grade seven level of education and have been trained in contraceptive technology and midwifery They pride themselves in being well-informed and up-to-date They promote other condoms and oral contraceptives to their patients, in addition to their traditional midwifery duties They want to provide helpful, accurate advice and have expressed some concern about the side effects many of their oral contraceptive patients experience These midwives share the same media habits that other women of their age do -- primarily community radio listening and reading fotonovelas "

This level of detail helps guide you later in formulating strategies Some of the public relations techniques that might be effective against this group include a mid-wives conference to introduce and train them on the new pill, developing a brochure they can circulate to their patients, including a "call-in" telephone number for the association on radio and fotonovella advertising for oral contraceptive information

This type of target audience definition is important for large groups. But you will always have key individuals (e.g., Ministers of Health) who must receive individual public relations attention. It is vital not to overlook these people's interests as public relations strategies are considered.

Geography

If your public relations efforts are to be directed nationally, that should be indicated. If target audiences are geographically segmented (rural vs urban, one section of the country versus another) you should note that, with some indication of where the majority of your effort will go.

Communications Strategy

Specify exactly what you wish to communicate to each target audience.

Example

- Communicate that religious leaders support use of the injectable.
- Communicate the injectable is a convenient method of contraception.

Key Message Points

Key message points are the main ideas you want to convey when addressing an audience or participating in an interview or presentation. They are clear, concise statements that sum up the key facts you want your listeners to take away with them. Keep your primary key messages to three, if at all possible. More than that is difficult to communicate effectively. You should meld the key message points into the context of your discussions with the public or media as much as possible or appropriate. Many programs and print formats will also offer opportunities to provide more detailed discussion of the points you want to make.

Implementation Strategies

Generally describe how you propose to achieve your objectives.

Example

Use broadcast media to disseminate the key messages about the injectable.

Tactics

Each tactic is a definite action step, which correlates to one of your strategies. Each strategy can have as many tactics as you think necessary to fulfill the strategy.

Example of Tactics Relating to Above Strategy Examples

Write and shoot one video news release featuring an engaged woman thinking about contraception and a second video news release about a married couple looking for help with child spacing. Work with local TV producers to air the pieces on TV news or during special programming.

How Public Relations Fits with Other Efforts

This is a helpful statement to include to ensure that your efforts remain integrated. Simply think through what public relations is bringing to your marketing plans. Is it broadening the reach of your message to new audiences? Is it extending your advertising campaign theme into different media? It may be helpful to refer to the capabilities of public relations to stimulate your thinking in these areas.

Budget

Estimate costs of your plan. NOTE: Although public relations activities tend to be labor intensive and usually take a lot of time to accomplish, they do not have to be costly in terms of out-of-pocket expenses.

Action Steps

Based on the budget available to you, develop an action plan by market or audience with a timetable and clearly defined responsibilities.

Evaluation

Determine in advance how you will measure the effectiveness of the program. Keep in mind, however, that results may be slow to develop. In some cases, they may not be measurable, especially if sophisticated media monitoring mechanisms are not in place. Remember, too, that a large volume of press clips may not mean the program was effective; look at the *quality* of the media placements in terms of audience and reach.

Managing Your Program and Agency

Now that you have chosen a public relations agency, it's time to get down to work. Your agency's success will depend largely on how much information you provide them with, how well you manage them and provide direction.

Educate Your Agency

Educate your agency about your program. Get to know the account supervisor. This is the person who will manage your account and be responsible for the agency's work. It is important every member of the agency team understand your goals. Be sure to include all account team members in planning meetings. The better informed and knowledgeable your team is, the better the end product will be. Your agency should be viewed as an extension of your marketing efforts. The more they understand your program, products and services, the more responsive they will be in identifying opportunities and challenges.

Set Realistic Expectations

Before you begin implementation, talk specifically about what you and the agency expect in terms of editorial and broadcast placements, (number of placements, subject of placements, specific copy points in placements) results on event turn-out, etc.

Use the Plan

Both you and the agency should refer constantly to your public relations plan in your regular meetings and revise it as necessary, based on your program's progress.

Hold Regular Status Meetings

Expect the agency to meet with you on a regular basis (every two weeks at least, perhaps more frequently when you are working closely on a project, or less frequently during down times). The agency account person should come prepared with a status report of what was accomplished since the last meeting, any video or print clips that may have appeared recently and an agenda of what you are going to cover and what will be accomplished.

Keep a Status Report

It is useful for the agency to regularly submit a status report of each project, show is doing what, expected next steps and deadlines for accomplishing tasks

Determine Deadlines

Let your account supervisor know what is expected and when and then determine the approval process. Don't make a habit of unreasonable, last minute demands. Every agency expects a last-minute project or change in direction from their client, but try not to let it happen too often. Solid planning and anticipation of all the potential results should help you avoid these situations. You need to keep your PR team motivated and behind the success of your program.

Stay on Budget

Make sure as the months unfold that the agency is staying within budget. You should be apprised of the budget situation on a monthly basis.

Listen to Your Agency

Don't make the mistake of thinking you always know better. In many cases, because they are also an integral part of the local community, they probably have a good feel for how some of the program nuances will play with the media, especially when dealing with a sometimes sensitive subject like contraceptives.

Speak Up If You Are Dissatisfied

Like any good business relationship, it is important to provide your agency with ongoing feedback about their performance. If you are unhappy with certain aspects of their performance, use your regular meetings to bring it up for discussion. Don't let issues and problems build up and then blindsides them all at once with a long list.

Publicity -- How To Create News About Your Program

Publicity involves placing news or information to a mass or targeted audience about a product, service or program in the form of a news story, feature story, by-lined article or other kind of non-paid media coverage. Generating publicity in publications read by your target audiences is one of the most effective ways to generate credible

Get to Know Reporters

information about your contraceptive social marketing program

Because the cost of publicity is primarily the cost of developing background materials for the media and the cost of time spent placing a story, publicity is considerably less expensive than advertising

Reporters are always in need of good sources of information and story ideas. Because of your position as program manager, you may be able to be such a source. As in other business deals, developing good relationships with the media will benefit both of you. Although a one-shot news item is better than nothing, the importance of working to build a continuous personal and professional relationship with the media promises to be much more valuable in receiving ongoing coverage

What Reporters Need

You should know that

- Reporters are motivated by having a story that “scoops” or beats other news media
- Reporters work on very short deadlines. If you call and the reporter says a deadline is pressing, offer to call back at a more convenient time. If a reporter calls you, return his/her call promptly
- Reporters need information that is accurate, timely and complete

Only key representatives should speak to the media. Be sure that the official spokesperson or spokespeople you designate for your program are the only people who speak to the media about the program. Because the media wants to talk with authoritative sources, be sure that the spokespeople are familiar with the program goals, key messages and that they are articulate, well-groomed and comfortable speaking with a reporter. SOMARC offers media training for SOMARC’s spokespeople. (See *Practical PR Interviews*)

WHAT IS NEWSWORTHY?

Does your story idea

- Have immediate importance to the community or a technical audience?
- Have general human interest appeal?
- Tie-in with other current local, state or national events?
- Look ahead and anticipate or provide insight for future happenings?
- Provide unusual, important information for people who want to understand and know what is going on in the area of contraceptive technology and how it relates to their world?
- Does it hold up under scrutiny? What is the risk that a reporter covering the story would find and report some negative information about your program or opposition to your program?

Story Angles

The trick to generating media coverage for your program is finding angles that serve as appropriate vehicles for your messages

You can present two different types of stories to the media news or feature stories. News is time-sensitive information which announces an achievement or event. Feature stories are not time-sensitive and they focus on stories of human interest.

Reporters and news broadcasters are always interested in fresh story ideas that will capture the attention of a distracted public. Does your story offer this kind of news? If not, try approaching the story from a different "angle." For example, it may not be as interesting to the public that Depo-Provera has been used around the world for almost 30

years as it would be to understand the results of the clinical trials in their country

You can assist reporters by suggesting feature ideas. Always remain courteous and don't push ideas. Be as helpful as possible. If you are contacting the reporter, be ready with a list of people who could be contacted for an interview. Do whatever you can to help the reporter find what he/she needs.

Remember when "pitching", or trying to sell stories to local reporters that, unless it is a story of major national or local importance, reporters do not like seeing their stories covered the same way by their competition. Always present the story angle in a slightly different way, offer different interview sources and be honest about the fact that you are also working with their competition. In this way, if two stories do run in the same medium, each reporter will have come at the story from a slightly different perspective.

Media Tools

Several basic tools are needed to support contact with the media. Once they are prepared you will be ready to contact them.

Lists

Keeping current media lists is critical to your public relations efforts. Your lists may need to be updated regularly, since the media tend to be a transient group. If you are starting from scratch, the phone book or the library might be valuable resources to find listings of your local media.

If you are inheriting an existing list, it is always a good idea to call every entry just to make sure names and addresses are still current.

Newspaper List

Start your media list by filling in the blanks in the lists below
Be sure to leave space to make notes

**Name of
newspaper:**

Daily or Weekly?

Morning or Evening?

Address

Telephone

Editor

General Assignment

Manager

Reporters

City Desk

Health

Feature

Government

**Name of
newspaper:**

Daily or Weekly?

Morning or Evening?

Address

Telephone

Editor

General Assignment

Manager

Reporters

City Desk

Health

Feature

Government

Radio List

Name of television station:

Address _____

Telephone _____
Station Manager _____
News Director _____
Public Affairs _____
Director _____
Assignment Editor _____
Reporters _____

Name of radio station:

Format _____
Address _____

Telephone _____
Station Manager _____
News Director _____
Public Affairs _____
Director _____
Assignment Editor _____
Reporters _____

Name of radio station:

Format _____
Address _____

Telephone _____
Station Manager _____
News Director _____
Public Affairs _____
Director _____
Assignment Editor _____
Reporters _____

***Newsletter/
Magazine List***

**Name of
radio station:**

Format _____
Address _____
Telephone _____
Station Manager _____
News Director _____
Public Affairs _____
Director _____
Assignment Editor _____
Reporters _____

**Name of newsletter
or magazine:**

Address _____
Telephone _____
Editor _____
Reporters _____

**Name of newsletter
or magazine:**

Address _____
Telephone _____
Editor _____
Reporters _____

**Name of newsletter
or magazine:**

Address _____
Telephone _____
Editor _____
Reporters _____

**Name of newsletter
or magazine:**

Address _____
Telephone _____
Editor _____
Reporters _____

Media Contact List

Since regular contact with the media is important, it is helpful to remain in touch with the key media in your market. This can be accomplished through an initial face-to-face meeting and then regular phone contact to let them know you are available if they need information about the program or contraceptive methods. Developing these relationships will make it easier to place your releases or announcements. Not only will you become a "known" community figure to them, but they will respect you as someone who can be trusted to provide accurate and timely information.

Create a "Media Contact List" of key reporters and make it a point to call the people on the list regularly just to touch base and see what they are working on. This is a delicate area, so be sensitive. Some reporters may feel that you are bothering them (in which case you should call less frequently) and others may welcome the contact. Certainly longer-lead publications do not need to be contacted every month. They typically work ahead one or two issues, so the editors will know what stories they are assigning a few months out.

Under- standing Media Deadlines

Reporters with daily deadlines, such as those that work at TV stations and city newspapers are more hungry for story ideas and therefore often more open to being "pitched." They may be more eager to talk with you on a regular basis, especially if you have story ideas to offer.

When sending press releases to local print media, remember that publications operate under specific deadlines. These vary with different types of publications, but generally the rule of thumb is

- **Daily Newspapers** (morning editions) late afternoon or the day before
- **Daily Newspapers** (evening editions) late morning or noon of the same day
- **Suburban Newspapers** (dailies) follow the same schedule as city dailies

Writing a Solid News Release

- **Suburban Weeklies** 10 days to two weeks prior to publication
- **Local Trade Newsletters and Magazines** Usually one week prior to publication, but this will vary depending on the publication's frequency
- **Magazines** Usually two-to three months prior to the month of publication

To make certain of the media's actual deadlines, be sure to call each publication and ask what their specific deadlines are. Keep this information with you in your media list as a handy reference when distributing press releases.

Anytime you have a newsworthy item, or would like to respond to an event or situation, you may decide to write a short, "print-ready" piece for the press or broadcast media called a news release.

NEWS RELEASE

A good news release can win major coverage for your story. It is most likely to obtain media coverage if it

- Reports an event or situation that significantly affects or involves many people,
- Draws attention to the situation through dramatic well-documented new estimates or predictions. The Population Information Program, for example, calculated that 5.8 million deaths would be avoided each year if women in developing countries followed the safest pattern of childbearing. Through the wire services, this dramatic estimate was covered around the world,

- Deals with a controversial issue Secure and well-established family planning organizations sometimes raise controversial issues purposely to take controversial stands -- even if they may draw criticism -- to obtain news coverage and focus public attention on important issues,
- Involves or quotes a well-known person, such as a major political figure, a popular entertainer, or a sports star, or,
- Reports an amusing or unusual event or occurrence

A news release has the best chances of obtaining coverage if it is written as a ready-to-print story Reporters are always under pressure to produce more stories, so they use releases that need little further investigating or rewriting A news story always begins with the most important, most interesting information Details and additional, less important information follow New releases should follow the same style

News releases should always be direct and to the point They should provide the "who, what, when, where and why" of the story in the first sentence The standard press release is clear, easy to read and understand and carries the name and phone number of a contact person who will field media calls

News organizations receive hundreds of press releases each day, so it is important not only to have a newsworthy story, but to follow a format that ensures your release is read

EFFECTIVE PRESS RELEASES DEPEND ON:

- Including the "five W's" who, what, where, when and why
- Sticking with an easy-to-read style
- Capturing attention and interest with the headline
- Sending them to the right people

News Release Style

News releases follow a specific style

- Double-space your press release on the program letterhead or news release paper and leave 1 1/2 inch margins on both sides
- Type "News Release" at the top of the page if it is not printed on your paper
- If the release runs over one page, type "-more-" centered at the bottom of the page and continue onto the other side
- Always send clean, readable copy to the media and be sure to include your program messages

Elements of a News Release

Release Date: Located at the top right of the page, the statement "For Immediate Release" is used to indicate that the information can be released immediately. If the information is embargoed, or held until a particular date, the information until a particular date and need to get it to the media in advance, be sure that the release date and time you want is noted here. (You should never release anything to the media before the agreed upon date unless you have a special understanding with that media person.)

Contact and Phone Number: The contact person who can be reached for more information should appear at the top left hand of the page. In most all cases this will be you

In the case of press releases concerning another agency or organization, you will want to include that contact person as well. It is always wise to include a home number for the media in case Weekend Assignment Editors need to reach you for a story.

Headline: The headline presents a summary of the release in order to attract the editor's attention. When appropriate, try to create a catchy, teaser type headline that piques interest as well as informs. You may also choose to write a short headline, called a "slug," which precedes the body copy of the release. The slug allows editors to know the subject of the news at a glance.

Dateline: This is the first line of the press release containing the city of origin, state and date. Even press releases which have no specific time relevance ALWAYS need to include a date so that there is some indication of a time frame. This enables the editor to know how time-sensitive (or old) the information is if they have filed it away for future use.

Lead Sentence: A good lead sentence is important because a busy editor may have only a few seconds to focus attention on your release. Be sure the first sentence gives a clear idea of what the news item is and why it is important. Don't write a clever introduction and fail to get the point across or you may lose a good opportunity. Your lead sentence should be tightly written -- 18 to 25 words long.

Quote: Most press releases should include a quote from one of your designated program spokespeople. Generally, the quote should appear within the first three paragraphs of the press release. Quotes can contain a general statement of support, a remark to bolster a point or provide statistical information. Press release quotes are sometimes picked up verbatim, other times they offer a spokesperson for the media to contact and get their own quotes. All written quotes should be short and to the point. Avoid the use of flowery language and try to offer useful information.

Length: A press release should rarely run over two pages in length. Don't try to cram a long story onto one or two sheets of paper. This makes the release look very crowded and could cause the editor to completely disregard it.

Program Tag: Most releases end with a stock paragraph that describes the program or organization. Be sure to give attribution to USAID if they desire it.

Ending the Release: The end of the last page should be noted with a "# # #" or "30" centered in the document. This indicates it is the last page of the release and the story is over.

Example

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE October 2, 1995

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT Bai Bagasao, 813-0478, 812-8425

"CONDOMS FIGHT AIDS" CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

(Manila) Kabalikat Foundation launched its "Condoms Fight AIDS" information campaign today to encourage people to use condoms to fight AIDS and challenged the private sector to become involved in condom promotion. The effort is supported by Sensation Condoms.

In a press conference at the Cafe Rizal, Bai Bagasao, Executive Director for the Condoms Fight AIDS Campaign, played radio ads produced by Kabalikat and Philusa Drug which are slated to be aired later this month. Their message "Maniguro Make it safe."

Dr. Juan Flavio, Minister of Health, described the prevalence of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in the Philippines. "We are no longer untouched by HIV," he said. "It has swept Africa, Europe, the United States and is now devastating our neighbors in Thailand. The World Health Organization estimates 14,000 Filipinos are now infected and 50 people have already died. This disease is cruel. It affects men, women and children. While we are where Thailand was 5 years ago, unprotected sex could devastate our small islands much quicker than AIDS is devastating Thailand. AIDS is spreading in the Philippines by sex between men and women. Men who don't use condoms in extramarital sex risk taking AIDS home to their wives."

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Use of the latex condom is the only way to slow the spread of AIDS when having sexual intercourse with an infected person. Laboratory studies prove that sperm and disease-contracting AIDS (Population Reports, 9/90). Sensation is a latex condom made in the USA. It was selected for the Condoms Fight AIDS Campaign because it is the thinnest condom made in the United States, giving it maximum sensation while meeting the World Health Organization's standards for tensile strength and AIDS protection. Philusa Drug sells it throughout the Philippines. "Our partnership with Sensation Condom is just the beginning of the Campaign's efforts. We challenge all private sector groups to help us spread the word that condoms can help the Philippines fight AIDS," Bagasao said.

Kabalikat is a 13-year-old non-governmental agency which specializes in programs to benefit the health of the Filipino family.

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Sending Photographs to the Media

The media can make use of the standard press release you will be sending, but you should also take advantage of "visual" opportunities to increase awareness of the SOMARC program whenever you can. A picture is really worth at least a thousand words, especially if it is a good quality photo or a well-marked diagram.

Black and white photos or drawings are very useful to newspapers, color and black-and-white photos work well for magazines and slides or videotape (check the preferred format with your local stations) work best for TV.

If you are sending a photo to the media that you have had taken, or taken yourself, there are a few tips to keep in mind that will give it a better chance of being used.

Photos That Will Interest the Media

The media are interested in photos that

- are unusual
- feature important people
- tell a story
- show something new

The Right Shot

Getting the right shot involves

- taking more than one shot
- making sure that the people involved are doing something
- ensuring that there is some kind of program logo in the shot This may be as simple as a poster, banners or T-shirts

PICTURES COULD PORTRAY...

- Physicians or pharmacists being trained
- An advisory board meeting
- Shots of the ads or logos hanging in a pharmacy
- Product shots of the contraceptives, clearly showing your program's logo
- An event sponsored by SOMARC
- Shots of the ad agency filming the ads
- A program spokesperson delivering a keynote speech
- A consumer buying product in the pharmacy

Photo Format

The media prefers

- 5"x7" black-and-white prints, screened if possible
- photos with borders
- line art
- graphs containing facts
- captions for photos, art and graphs double-spaced, identifying who the people are in the photo and what they are doing. Be sure to include your name and contact number and a headline in the caption. Tape your photo to the caption sheet, which should be typed on your letterhead or "news release" paper

Hiring a Photographer

If you are hiring a photographer for an event

- Be sure the person is an expert in black-and-white prints, has a photo-journalism background and has a strong portfolio of journalistic photos to show you
- Contact the photo editor at the paper directly for a list of names. Many times the photographers at the local papers will free-lance to make extra money

Media Alerts

In some instances, you may want to use what is known as a "media advisory" or "media alert." Media alerts inform the press of an event or item quickly so that you will get coverage as soon as possible. The media alert is a short, one-page, easy-to-read bulletin which includes the basics of your announcement: who, what, when, where and how. You will find a sample media alert on the next page.

Media alerts typically pique interest about a subject and offer individuals as sources for quotes about contraceptives or program information. They are also useful to invite the press to an event or press conference, to announce a newsworthy award or citation and are a good, quick source of information to the media during emergency situations.

If you are offering a spokesperson in your media alert, it may be helpful to prepare Q&As about the topic before you send out the alerts. This way you have something to provide your spokesperson once you set up the interview.

Media alerts are typically sent to wire services, assignment editors at TV stations, news-gathering radio stations and the local newspapers. They can be mailed or faxed.

Remember -- timing is everything. Being newsworthy means being ahead of the story so that the press can inform and alert their audience and have time to write an event down in their calendars. Don't wait until the last minute to send out an alert about a press conference. If possible, for best chance of obtaining a good attendance, give the media at least two weeks notice for an event and be sure to follow up with them again a day before.

EXAMPLE: MEDIA ADVISORY

November 1, 1994

Contact in Kazakhstan Don Ruschman, SOMARC Advisor, 63-54-93

WHAT: On November 8 a press conference will be held to launch a new social marketing initiative in Kazakhstan to promote the use of and better access to safe, high-quality contraceptive methods. The program is a partnership between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of Kazakhstan. It is being implemented by The Futures Group's Social Marketing for Change (SOMARC) project in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health and local agencies.

Four kinds of new low-dose pills, condoms and an injectable hormone will provide an alternative to abortion, currently the most common method of fertility regulation in the country. USAID has projected an investment of approximately \$12 million over a two-year period for the development and implementation of this social marketing program. The primary goal of this program is to assist the public health system by stimulating the commercial sector to provide affordable, modern contraceptive measures.

The new program consists of an advertising campaign, consumer information and other promotional materials and it also involves a major training effort among

-- more --

pharmacists and physicians Beginning November 11, colorful slice-of-life ads will appear in print, radio and on TV Brochures, posters and other informational materials will be available in pharmacies to let consumers know about new contraceptive choices available to them

The press conference will cover the specifics of this new program as well as offer an opportunity to preview the campaign materials

WHEN: November 8, 1994 at 3 00 p m

WHERE: The Press Club Room on the third floor of the House of Scientists

WHO: The following individuals will also be available for interviews immediately following the press conference regarding this new program

Mr Craig Burch, Mission Director, USAID Kazakhstan

Dr T A Izmukambetov, Chairman, Kazakhstan Reproductive Health Advisory Board and Member, Cabinet of Ministers

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Questions and Answers

Developing questions and answers is a helpful exercise for shaping the key messages you want to get across to the media. As a rule of thumb, you should develop a corresponding Q&A for each press release. The exercise is helpful in anticipating potential questions the media may ask when contacting you or other spokespeople about a release.

Backgrounders

Often when you are pitching a story to the media they will ask you to send them a backgrounder. This is a succinct overview of your program, its goals and objectives and should include any statistical information you feel is relevant. It allows the reporter to absorb the main points of your program in a few minutes.

Bios

Biographies, or bios, of key program representatives, health officials and designated spokespeople are necessary for a number of reasons. When program representatives engage in public speaking activities or other community events, biographical information may be requested. In addition, the media often asks for biographical data to include in their stories.

Keep the format for all of your bios consistent. The order of information should flow chronologically from current responsibilities down to education and finally, family information if it is deemed relevant.

Spokespeople

Choosing credible spokespeople is critical to success of your public relations efforts. Your spokespeople are your program's face to the public. They need to be not only credible through their experiences, but also through their actions and appearance.

Select program spokespeople who are well-spoken, have experience speaking in front of groups and present themselves well. Appearance is important, especially for TV interviews. How many times have you watched someone who was supposed to be the authority on a subject, yet you were distracted by his or her disheveled appearance or annoying voice?

Your spokespeople need to be familiar with the program, the key messages and what the objectives are. They should also be prepared to answer tough questions should they arise. See *Practical PR Interviews* and *Practical PR Public Speaking* for more detail on skills for spokespeople.

Media Placement

Choosing the right medium for a story requires an understanding of the difference between TV, radio and the print media. Knowing the differences, as well as your objectives in seeking coverage, will increase the likelihood of a successful story.

ELEMENTS OF THE MEDIA

Newspapers

- Good reach, particularly among educated, politically interested individuals
- Photo opportunities
- In-depth opportunities
- One day turn-around

Television

- Good reach of a broad spectrum of the general public
- A visual format that is exciting, easy to watch and memorable
- Usually same day turn-around

Radio

- Good reach, particularly of special audience segments based on age, tastes and interests
- Audio requires good copy
- Format allows reach to commuters during drive time
- Programming features local organizations and businesses

Magazines/Newsletters

- Good reach, particularly of special groups, trade, military, civic organizations
- Format allows detail and offers photo coverage

Do Some Homework

Your media contacts will vary depending on the type and size of medium you are approaching and your story angle

- Call the stations to find out who the appropriate reporter is who covers reproductive health/contraceptive issues
- Watch and read the various media outlets to understand their style and the reporter's style before you pitch a story
- Watch for the tone of the reporting, the angles of interest to each reporter and the quality of coverage of a story
- Read local newspapers' editorials to get a sense about their position on contraceptive social marketing
- Listen to radio stations to become familiar with the announcers' personalities and the stations regular programming features, such as call-in shows. This will also help familiarize you with their audiences

General Tips on Television Placement

Television is perhaps the most influential medium of mass communication today. Dealing with TV media requires planning, foresight, good timing and attention to detail

- The news assignment editor is basically the counterpart to a city editor at a daily newspaper. It is his/her responsibility to assign a reporter and/or camera crew to cover a story. Assignment editors tend to be more telephone-oriented than print reporters. Rather than sending a lengthy release, a short media alert works best with the basic story information included

Follow-up with the assignment editor by phone and be sure to have your "pitch" down. Use notes to organize your thoughts if it makes it easier and be prepared to "sell" your story if there is hesitation. Be sure to include a brief description of what you have to offer VISUALLY. This can sometimes be a deciding factor, especially on a

slow news day. Keep in mind that assignment editors are usually very pressed for time.

- Be aware of a station's deadlines and learn the news times. Mid-mornings and early afternoons are usually a good time to call. Never call an assignment editor 30 minutes before a newscast or right after the news.
- In addition to the news, there may be publicity opportunities on local talk shows. These types of programs are constantly on the look-out for new topics and interviewees. Be sure to watch these shows carefully, since some talk shows tend to lean toward the controversial, to keep audiences tuned in. You will have to make the decision about whether local talk shows are the right forum for your messages.
- As you approach TV stations with your pitch, you may wish to have the following materials handy:
 - program backgrounder or press release
 - videotaped footage of your event, ads, etc

General Tips on Radio Placement

Because radio technology is comparatively simple, radio is lighter on its feet and can respond more quickly in reporting news than the press or TV. Very specialized audiences listen to each radio station and information is available on the demographics of station listeners. For these reasons, it is a very efficient way to deliver information. Listeners tune in at work, in the car, at home or even while running.

Like TV, the assignment editor is the person you deal with first on a story. Be sure that the station you are pitching produces news. Many stations take their news off of a national or local feed. Some stations only play music and then "rip and read" the news at the top of the hour direct from the wire services. Radio news stories tend to be shorter than TV spots and the interviews are sometimes conducted over the phone. Again, a media alert usually works best to catch these very deadline-oriented people's attention.

Don't overlook radio talk shows or call-in shows. You will want to talk directly to the producer of these programs about getting your guest on the air. It is advisable to select a spokesperson with a pleasant voice for a radio interview.

Also, remember that on the air radio announcers typically read notices about upcoming events or other information free of charge. These types of announcements would be handled by the Public Affairs Director. You will want to speak with him/her about publicizing this type of information.

Be prepared for the possibility of speaking directly on the air. Know how to make your points clearly and concisely.

Stations may require that information submitted for announcements be on a certain size paper or card and contain the who, what, when, where and why, plus a phone number. If you would like your information read over the air by the announcer, double-space your copy so it can be read easily.

General Tips on Print Placement

In many towns newspapers are the strongest and sometimes the only outlet for local news. Once something appears in the newspaper, it is often considered newsworthy for the other media. Newspapers can devote more time and space and provide more detailed coverage of a story than can TV or radio.

Daily newspapers operate on a very tight schedule. Most news is covered one day and then printed the next. Feature stories have longer lead times. The newsworthiness of a given piece can vary depending on the time of day a particular event happens. During a slow news day, you have a better chance of getting your pitch heard. During a period of intense breaking news it will be almost impossible to get a reporter to listen to you. Try to anticipate your news as much as possible and contact a reporter as soon as you know it will happen.

When contacting print reporters, generally, the same rules apply to print as do for TV, except that deadlines will vary.

Rather than a variety of news shows, print reporters have one deadline. It may be daily, weekly, or monthly. Be sensitive to those deadlines and don't call reporters around the time their copy is due. For morning papers this is late afternoon, for evening papers it's late morning. Weekly or by-weekly papers may have deadlines several days in advance of publication. Magazines require material much earlier -- as much as three months prior to publication.

Many print reporters will conduct their interviews over the phone. The publication's photo editor may dispatch a separate photographer to take a photo.

Newspapers provide opportunities to pitch the story in a variety of ways to different people. Depending on the angle of your story, you can try a different pitch to

- The Business Reporter
- The Health Reporter
- The Feature/Lifestyle Reporter
- Op-Ed Page Editor

When calling, make sure you have the essentials of your story idea, ready to "pitch" by phone and ready to mail. This includes

- a news release
- a program backgrounder
- other background information
- any black-and-white photographs with captions

Contacting Magazines

Magazines are similar in structure to newspapers, but most operate on much longer lead times because they specialize in feature stories rather than news stories. Magazines may need three months or more in advance of the publication date to run your story.

Magazines are especially good media for SOMARC program stories because they offer the opportunity to target specific segments of the public and can provide in-depth information about your contraceptive social marketing.

program. Many magazines also offer good opportunities for numerous photographs.

Check the masthead of the publication to identify the editor and correspondents for the magazine. A telephone call to explore your story idea is usually the best way to start. They will probably ask you to send along printed materials and a letter outlining their pitch to review with the editorial staff.

Once you have had an initial conversation, follow up with

- a letter
- a backgrounder
- a news release
- possible photos to pique interest and provide more detail

Following Up

Following up with your contacts at media outlets is one of the most important things you can do. Don't be discouraged if your story idea is turned down the first time. Use the opportunity of talking to a reporter to determine interests in relation to your program. Take some time to think about it and formulate a new approach that will meet the reporter's needs. If your story is used, follow up with a note to compliment the reporter on the piece, or offer to take the reporter to lunch and establish a base for ongoing conversations.

Dealing With Access Problems

If you have trouble generating media interest in your story, you may need to rethink your story angle and approach. In what sort of stories is the reporter interested? Can you turn your program's story into something that will meet the reporter's interests? Does he or she need a more local or more national angle for the story?

If the Media Calls You

Due to the nature of news, the media will most likely call you today for a story they needed yesterday. You may be required to act fast and determine who your best spokesperson is in a tight time frame and a certain situation. It will help to have your designated list of spokespeople and their phone numbers handy.

WHAT TO DO WHEN TALKING TO THE MEDIA

- Make sure you have your facts straight before answering any questions
- Remember, nothing is "off the record "
- Be positive and congenial, turn negatives into positives
- Keep the interview on track and stick with the subject
- Talk slowly and in clear sentences
- Avoid making sexist remarks or off-color jokes
- Have plenty of back-up information and facts and figures handy
- If you don't know the answer to a questions, say so
Then tell the reporter you will get back to him/her with the answer
- Conclude the interview on a friendly note

Anticipating Publicity Outcomes

There is always the possibility that an unflattering story may appear about your program, even though the interview for it was upbeat and complimentary. The reporter may also wish to contact others, such as religious groups that oppose contraceptive marketing, to get their perspective for the story.

Your best bet is to be sure the reporter has all of the facts on the value of the program. For example, emphasize that the program's intent is not to promote sexual promiscuity, but to provide couples with the ability to help space their children.

If you believe you have been treated unfairly by the media, you may wish to write a letter to the editor of the

publication or the station manager of a TV or radio station
Remember, all media is set up to distribute information

about opposing viewpoints Be sure your letter is factual rather than emotional Back statements up with figures
SOMARC has created questions and answers for most CSM methods to help you respond to difficult questions

If a supplement is planned related to SOMARC's issues, send the advertising director your feature news release, fact sheets and other background information which an editor can convert into news articles If no supplement is planned, suggest one Typically, these special supplements rely heavily on editorial material from outside sources You can also place SOMARC ads in this context for synergy

WHILE ON THE PHONE WITH THE MEDIA

- Be sure to confirm their deadline and projected interview date/time
- If you don't have the information at your fingertips, promise to get back to them as soon as possible
- If you are scheduling an interview at a future date, be sure to reconfirm the interview with the media the day of the appointment It is wise just to ensure they haven't been pulled onto some breaking story and have forgotten to cancel with you
- Send a quick thank-you note to the media Never thank them for doing the story -- they don't want to feel as if they were the pawn/mouthpiece of a PR person Instead, tell them you were glad to be able to help provide them with information for their story and you felt they did a good/comprehensive job covering the topic, or you enjoyed watching/reading/listening to the story Always offer your assistance in the future

Media Training

Working with the media can often be a daunting experience Whether it is the glare of the camera lights in your eyes or

the presence of a hand-held microphone, if you are not prepared for what to expect, you may be caught off guard

Effective media training can help ensure that your key message points make it on the air and in print and can prepare you for every potential interview situation. SOMARC has created a *Practical Guide Interviews* specifically on this topic. Ideally, a SOMARC PR consultant should formally train you and your spokespeople by putting you on-camera to observe and learn from your actions. If this is not possible, *Interviews* should provide you with an outline of what to expect and help you anticipate any potentially negative situations.

How to Extend Publicity

Once the excitement of a program launch has passed, or a new contraceptive has been introduced to your country, what are some of the ways you can continue to seek out public relations opportunities?

- Go back to your list of angles. What is happening in the program on a day-to-day basis that might be newsworthy?
- Look at the possibility of special events (covered in next section) to garner visibility.
- Try to meet with reporters one-on-one to determine what they are working on. Describe your program and brainstorm informally with them about what might be of interest to them.
- Is there any new research or statistics that might be newsworthy and have a local angle for the media?
- What is happening globally with contraceptive technology and marketing? Is there a local angle to make it newsworthy? Are there any new developments reporters might be covering and you could provide a local contraceptive marketing perspective?
- Are there opportunities to showcase your distributors and allow them to be quoted using your program name?

- Are you filming a new generation of ads that could be covered by a lifestyle reporter? They may want to come out to the shoot and interview those involved
- Are your physicians or pharmacists undergoing training for a new contraceptive method?

Look at the whole universe of your marketing efforts and try to wear your reporters hat. Especially on slow news days, you may be sitting on a story and not even know it

News Conferences

News conferences are used to assist the media in covering a story of major importance that is too complex to be handled adequately in a news release. News conferences have been held by SOMARC projects throughout the world. They are integrated into kick-off programs, used to publicize new advertising campaigns and are periodically called for any number of important sustaining events.

Before scheduling a news conference, contact a few friendly media representatives to solicit their advice of the topics, timing, venue and other details. Planning should take into account the differing interests and needs of print and electronic media. If the local press association is willing to co-sponsor it, the news conference will take on added importance and visibility.

Issues to Consider

Important issues to consider in scheduling a news conference are

- **Speakers** -- identify one to four articulate, poised experts or leaders who know the topic well and can respond to questions accurately
- **Place** -- select a site convenient for media representatives. If indoors, make sure that it can accommodate lighting and sound equipment, that microphones are available (if needed) and there is enough room for reporters

- **Timing** -- schedule the conference several hours ahead of most reporters' deadlines. Typically, morning hours are best, since deadlines are in late afternoon for the TV and radio news and morning newspapers. Try to pick a slow day, mid-week is usually best.

Media Alert

Once the news conference is set, prepare a "media alert" which clearly states the topic to be covered, date, time, place and speakers. If possible, two weeks in advance of the conference, this alert should be sent or hand-carried to all local media outlets -- city editors of newspapers and wire services, news editors of radio and television stations, as well as staff of specialty publications or programs covering health, science, social welfare or related areas. If your city has a daily listing of media events, be sure your conference is listed.

Reminder Calls

The day before the conference, call key media outlets and contacts you know personally to remind them of the event. If they cannot attend, offer to hand-deliver background materials, a news release summarizing the results, or other items they may need to cover the story. Don't overlook the possibility of making audio or video recordings of the conference or interviews with the main speaker(s) and providing copies to radio and TV reporters.

Background

Prior to the conference, prepare or collect all necessary background materials, including a list of participants, a news release, brochures and press clippings. Compile and circulate media press kits to the participants. Designate a coordinator, whose job is to greet reporters, supply information and advise on the position of cameras and microphones and an assistant coordinator, who should be available to order coffee, make a phone call or locate a repairman. Brief the speakers and make sure that they are able to answer difficult questions and that they can reflect your position on key issues.

On the day of the conference, arrive early to make sure that all arrangements are in order. Ask the press to sign in so that you can contact them in the future. Start the conference on time. Speakers should make brief presentations and offer to

Media Incentives

answer questions. The coordinator should stay in the background but be prepared to intervene if the discussion is side-tracked from the main issues or if the session goes on for too long.

You might want to consider providing incentives to the media which recognize the contribution they make towards getting SOMARC programs positive, constructive publicity. Productive working relationships with the media are enhanced by awards presentations. For example, you should recognize programs that portray positive family planning values. Similarly, you should provide incentives for writers to incorporate messages on sexual responsibility into their scripts.

Awards can be presented to individuals who have influenced programming or to particular films or program episodes which exemplify the media at its best in promoting responsible sexual behavior. The Center for Population Options (CPO) offers the following guidance in establishing media awards:

- Base your criteria for the selection of a winner on the media resources available in your country. If film, radio or TV programs are not produced nationally, for example, the award can be designed to honor the individuals who determine local program selected rather than writers or producers.
- Since the objective of such awards is to point up the need for responsible programming, make sure that the competition is publicized well in advance and that the awards presentation itself is covered by the media.
- Involve local media professionals in the nomination of contenders and/or selection of winners. Their involvement will increase the number of media people who are sensitive to the issues.
- Don't spread the awards so thin that you end up honoring every production that carries positive messages. A more competitive contest will recognize high quality work.

- The awards ceremony itself must draw attention to the issue of responsible programming. Your first several presentations might be planned to coincide with an event sponsored by the media industry itself -- for example, an annual writers' guide dinner would provide a built-in audience of the winners' peers.
- Cash prizes are only appropriate if the amount represents a real incentive to writers and producers. A trophy or certificate is usually sufficient. CPO has created a scholarship named after the winning production, to be awarded to a student pursuing a field of study related to teenage pregnancy prevention.

Special Events

Visibility in the community through sponsoring events or causes is another way to generate positive publicity. When executed properly, involvement in community events can have great public relations value.

If you choose to work with community causes, be creative and be aware of the groups' goals and projects. Tap into the pulse of your community and surrounding area. Brainstorm for ideas that will not only benefit the community, but will add positive recognition and generate positive publicity for your program. Special events also present the perfect chance for a "photo opportunity."

Planning a Special Event

The main ingredients of a special event are

- Time
- Place
- Activities
- Drama
- Excitement, or pizzazz

A special event may have smaller events such as contests, speeches or kick-off banquets associated with it. Some examples of popular types of special events include

Publicity for Special Events

- Displays and exhibitions
- Parades, pageants, contests
- Athletic events or other types of competitions
- Stunts
- Theatrical events, such as street plays

Special events require special publicity arrangements. These include

- Developing media action steps for full media coverage
- Preparing announcements for TV, radio and print
- Preparing a press kit of stories, photos, features
- You may also want to hold a media reception. Have a sign-in desk staffed with someone to assist if needed
- Hire a photographer, or take pictures yourself for post-event distribution
- Send follow-up information to the media about the results of the event, as well as thank you letters for attending

For Maximum News Coverage...

For maximum coverage by your news media

- Be alert to the general news flow in your area. For example, weekends are typically “slow” news days. Press conferences or press briefings are better conducted on Tuesdays through Thursdays
- Check to see if there is a local wire service in your city that operates a community events calendar. If they do, have your event listed on the calendar so that local newspeople you may have missed will be alerted to your event

Sponsoring an Existing Event

If creating your own event is beyond your budget or time requirements, you may wish to sponsor an existing community event. Although you may not “own” the event,

there are still very good opportunities to get your program name out and increase awareness

You can start by compiling a list of the key events which happen annually in your area. This can be easily obtained from any number of sources, whether its the Department of Tourism in the country, or the equivalent of the Chamber of Commerce. Explore a number of different sources and create a short list of those events (and the contact people/organizers) that make sense or are a good fit for your SOMARC program. Be sensitive to the fit between your program and the organization.

The next step is to draft a letter of inquiry to the event organizer and determine if there is a role for your program. When you have narrowed down the field, you should begin to determine what it will cost, manpower hours and other factors which will determine the level of involvement in each particular event. You should be able to justify why the particular event is good for SOMARC.

Launch Events

Launch events are used to announce the introduction of a SOMARC program with creativity, imagination and constructive publicity. They are mainly used to "generate excitement". In many countries, launch events fit with introductory objectives of generating widespread, public awareness quickly. When a lower profile is preferable, launch events obviously should not be done.

Think of the event as the beginning of a continuation of public relations efforts -- it is the point of origin which sets the stage for other events to come over the life of a SOMARC project. Launch events, thus, require several considerations.

Logistics

Establish the date, place(s) and time of the kick-off, making sure it immediately precedes major marketing efforts (e.g., advertising launch), but that your program is in place to move forward (e.g., distribution achieved). The kick-off may be in one location or several. For example, in Indonesia the kick-off spanned 11 cities. Make sure you have administrative help to assist you with the many details.

Guest List

Carefully consider everyone who needs to be invited. Err on the side of being more comprehensive rather than less comprehensive. Include key opinion leaders, influentials and gatekeepers. Make sure your list of media personnel doesn't overlook anyone.

Theme

Identify a theme for the launch. Tie it to your other communications tools if possible.

Host

It is helpful if you can get a prominent local leader to host the event. This adds to its prestige, legitimacy and publicity.

Speakers

Determine who will speak and how many speakers there should be. Speakers could include some of the following:

- the governor or country president
- the Minister of Health
- a celebrity or consumer advocate
- a representative from USAID
- a prominent health professional
- a member of your advisory board
- the leader of the local sponsoring organization

Strategies

Will there be a main attraction? What exciting print material or other devices will you use? Will you include an open question and answer forum? There is no end to the diversity here. For a launch event among opinion leaders in the Philippines, a Sensation condom portfolio and umbrella were giveaways. Consumer launches have included such fanfare as parades, rock concerts or mobile vans broadcasting radio messages or bearing billboards. Balloons, sticker giveaways, logoed T-shirts or caps, even condom giveaways can add fun and excitement.

Materials

Naturally you will need to obtain materials for all the strategies you identify. Beyond these you should also include:

- Press kits - containing news releases, copies of speeches, photographs, fact sheets and the like
- Refreshments - plan what will be served

- Audio/visual aids - determine what will be needed in this regard
- Invitations
- Prepared question and answer information sheets - these will assist speakers with the facts in question and answer sessions
- Advertising and other communications material

Advisory Councils

Advisory Councils are organized groups of individuals representing diverse factions, constituencies or organizations who agree to work together to help achieve SOMARC goals. The importance of a strong, helpful Council cannot be underestimated in the introduction and sustainability of SOMARC programs. Its composition will vary by SOMARC country and it may be more or less productive depending on its composition and mandate.

Composition

There is no "ideal" composition for Advisory Councils, as the "ideal" varies by the task at hand. While there may be little choice in some of the members who sit on the Council, carefully identify and recruit the members you can. Look at the various constituencies you need to affect -- the government, the church, the media, women's groups, family organizations, the medial community and recruit the most influential in the religious community is a prominent businessman with strong religious involvement. Seek individuals with a strong social sense who will be advocates for the SOMARC program.

In Kazakhstan, for example, the overriding principal of Advisory Council recruitment was to select potential members as SOMARC advocates. This can often be pre-determined by the sorts of social issues prospective members are active in. Advisory councils have included members as diverse as a female religious leader with

social/family concerns, a consumer advocate, one who specializes in women's health, a television personality who is capable of discussing sensitive personal issues on the air and desensitizing them, a respected physician who talks to the medical community, the Minister of Information acting as a government communications liaison or businessman who supports the involvement of the private sector

Mandate

Establish a clear mandate for your Advisory Council Regularly schedule meetings with members and provide honoraria, luncheons and the like The SOMARC Manager should "formally" apprise Council members of marketing and communications decisions Council member provide input and advice, but are not involved in operating activities "Informally" Council members should be expected to exert influence on key sectors of the community that can help or hinder SOMARC programs Identify further ways to motivate this group (e.g., publicity for its achievements, dinners and awards) to maintain their interest and commitment

Speaking Engagements

Public speaking engagements are a terrific way to establish credibility for your spokespeople and the program Whether it's speaking to a classroom of teens about condom use or addressing a local business group about the role of pharmaceutical privatization, these public community forums create positive public relations for SOMARC programs around the world

Identify Groups

Much like the sponsoring a community event, some of these opportunities may be presented to you Many groups look for speakers who can appear for a luncheon or dinner and provide remarks on a current issue

You can begin by compiling a list of the groups and organizations in your area Again, start at the library or Chamber of Commerce Be sure to poll the people involved in your program regarding their membership in civic and

professional organizations and what forums they think would be appropriate for public speaking engagements

Topics

Once you have targeted groups, you need to then meet with your prospective speakers to discuss potential topics, decide who would speak about what topics and begin drafting speech outlines, if necessary. Be sure to offer speakers that have credibility and prestige

Make Calls

With your list of organizations compiled, you can begin to call each organization to determine whether or not they accept outside speakers

- Have several topics in mind when you call that might be of interest to the meeting attendees
- Talk to the meeting planner or the person who organizes the speeches about the type of speaker that is needed and the theme of the meeting. Tailor your “pitch” to the planner’s needs
- If you are refused, don’t give up. Ask what future meeting plans are and the meeting themes
- Confirm everything in writing. Once you have picked your date, speaker and topic, write a letter to the planner and confirm all the details. Provide your speaker with a copy
- Arrange for any audiovisual equipment if necessary. Your meeting planner may also be able to handle those requirements
- Confirm the speaking engagement three days before the meeting. If the speaker wishes to distribute hand-outs, notify the planner so that special arrangements can be made

- Arrive at the site prior to the beginning of the meeting
Make sure the equipment is available and working properly and that the speaker is comfortable with the room arrangement

After the presentation, thank the meeting planner for assistance and explore opportunities for future speaking engagements

Other PR Tools

Consumer Education

There are many opportunities to educate the public about SOMARC programs and available contraceptive methods. Some common consumer education tools include booklets and pamphlets that can be distributed free at pharmacies, doctors' offices, at speaking forums. Group meetings, school classes and presentations are also an effective way to educate consumers about your key messages.

Point of purchase or "POP" materials are designed to pique the consumers interest when he or she is in a store. They can be either designed to fit on the counter near the product they are promoting, or they can be a separate stand-alone display. POP materials are usually catchy and contain brief slogans tying in with advertising. Their purpose is to grab the consumer's attention in the store and motivate purchase.

Gatekeeper Training

The gatekeepers or experts in your program, such as pharmacists or physicians, are a vital link to your program's success, since they are the ones who have the contact with the consumer. Training sessions to educate them about contraceptive methods, how to deal with customers effectively and how to answer questions about contraceptive methods are an important part of the marketing and sales process. These gatekeepers can also be educated about your sales materials and sales promotion efforts and trained to be spokespeople for your program. They can be an important tool in promoting the use of contraceptives and dispelling any myths or misconceptions that exist.

Policy Reform

Publicity about issues can make a difference in how legislators and other government officials feel. It can ultimately change the face of how a country feels about contraceptives and contraceptive social marketing. Whether it's using legislative publications to reach these influentials, sending a direct mail piece to their offices, or scheduling a lunch to brief them on your program, public relations efforts can play a key role in policy reform.

Partnerships

Effective partnerships with influential organizations can greatly benefit your program. Working with women's groups or clubs, health care associations or other grass roots operations can help get the word out about your program and available contraceptive methods. For example, in Uganda, the SOMARC program established a relationship with midwives and educated them in contraceptive technology. They then began working at market days to talk to women about the Pill and sell it. Looking for combined educational and sales opportunities like these can greatly extend your program's reach, increase sales and build awareness.

Entertainment

Numerous opportunities exist in the "popular culture" to inject messages, whether it's by creating a vehicle, or altering one that exists. Entertainment can be utilized through the mass media, or through community-based activities. In the mass media, popular program messages or slogans can be communicated through music videos or pop songs. Soap operas also provide an entertainment forum to disseminate responsible messages about the benefits of contraception. At the grassroots level, community theater provides an outlet via public concerts, traveling minstrels, storytellers, street plays and coffee houses. These are excellent platforms to disseminate your program's messages to specific target audiences.

Evaluation

As mentioned at the outset of our discussion on PR, "In advertising you pay for it. In public relations we pray for it." If you've developed sound plans and built the right kind of relationships with key constituencies and the media, you have maximized your chances for a successful public relations program. While there are no guarantees that all your publicity will be implemented, many of your efforts will be rewarded.

Because of the uncertain nature of public relations, it becomes even more important to track its performance. Without evaluation you will not know whether to continue strategies in successive years.

Let's take a look at what needs to be evaluated in public relations and how to go about this process. The evaluative tools you use will vary depending on the strategies you've chosen for your program.

Formative Evaluation

Formative evaluation, including pre-testing, is designed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of materials or campaign strategies before implementation. It permits necessary revisions before the full effort goes forward. Its basic purpose is to maximize the chance for program success before the communication activity starts. Evaluation techniques that can be used in this regard are:

- **Concept testing.** This examines how a particular issue or product should be presented and helps identify the strongest supporting arguments. Focus groups or in-depth interviews with members of the target audience are conducted for input. The testing format will vary based on the medium in question. This type of testing may be helpful for brochures, newsletters and Public Service Announcements, for example.

Process Evaluation

- **Materials testing.** In a similar qualitative format it is also helpful to assess whether the materials being developed actually communicate what is intended. For example, do the visuals in a condom brochure clearly indicate how to put on and remove condoms effectively?

Process evaluation examines the procedures and tasks involved in implementing a program. This type of evaluation also can look at the administrative and organizational aspects of the program. It tracks such things as the number of materials distributed, number of people who attend a special event, number of stories on TV or in newspapers and similar activities. In addition to quantity, it helps you see whether or not public relations messages are clear and consistent with previously determined copy points.

For those of you working with a public relations agency or consultant, you can ask them for this sort of evaluation. If you have developed your own plan, your in-house media relation/public relations specialist might perform this duty. Alternatively, an administrative assistant might devote several hours a month to this project.

It is also important to put some checks and balances in place with your agency to ensure that everyone is staying on top of their responsibilities. Here are some ways you should be evaluating your agency:

- Your agency should provide monthly activity reports or regular project reports which include clear, concise billings as well as outlines of projects underway and proposed activities.
- Evaluate your agency's use of time and money. Ask for a monthly time sheet report showing you exactly how much time was spent on a project and by whom.

- Evaluate all results of completed projects Hold a meeting with your agency to discuss how things went, what could have been done better Hold your agency accountable -- remember you are paying them to get results
- Ask for a monthly report that includes
 - Copies of articles, noting when and where broadcast messages were run Did you receive the volume and media articles you'd planned on? Right after an event or press conference you should also expect the agency to present you with the results, complete with audience reach and circulation figures
 - Identification of whether messages were on strategy and if there was confusion or negative coverage

Communication strategies and key messages points agreed to early in the process provide guidelines here

 - Monitor logs of TV/radio stations for frequency and time of PSA airings and discuss results with public service directors
 - Distribute and replenish print materials, by site, to assess materials use
 - Phone or meet with participating organizations to review progress and problems
- Ask for a status report of media placement "pitches" This report will help you keep track of exactly what the agency is talking to the media about It can also let you see the progress and problems the agency is experiencing as well as what their next steps will be See the following "Media Placement Pitch Sheet" for an example

MEDIA PLACEMENT PITCH SHEET

SUBJECT _____ DMPA/Injectable
 _____ Couple's Choice program
 _____ Pills
 _____ HIV/AIDS
 _____ Church response/reason for family planning

PUBLICA- TION	PERSON MAKING PITCH/ WRITING STORY	ANGLE	NEXT STEPS/ RESULTS/ DATE TO CALL BACK
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
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Outcome Evaluation

Outcome evaluation usually consists of a comparison between target audience awareness, attitudes and behavior before and after the public relations program. It uses quantitative and qualitative measures necessary to help you draw conclusions about the program's effects. Outcome evaluation should provide more information about value than quantity of activity.

Techniques here include

- **Tactics evaluation** -- Qualitative research (focus groups, one-on-one interviews, telephone interviews) among selected targets to assess the impact of special events, media tours, speakers programs, trainings
- **Tracking studies** -- Include public relations questions (e.g., what sources are trusted, how do consumers learn about health issues, etc.) in broad-scale tracking studies or field special studies to see how awareness, attitudes and behaviors have changed as a result of these efforts

In Conclusion

This booklet is packed with information about some of the tools to help you do PR. We hope it has provided you with a better understanding of the discipline and some ideas about how it might work for you. Good luck!