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**Public Service Announcement**

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Public Service announcements are an effective means of reaching publics with messages. However, PSAs, unlike news releases are not about “news” but about “public information.” Health issues, public meetings, high school events, public aid organizations, political debates or rallies, public library events, public speakers, etc., are the stuff of PSAs.

PSAs are formatted somewhat like news releases in that they are typed, double spaced, etc.—see example, however, PSAs are formatted with a much wider left margin, contain time or script codes, and also contain pronunciation information. All caps is the preferred style.

PSAs are also written according to rules of spoken communication that require emphasis on repetition, previews, and sign posting. See notes below.

**Radio PSA Considerations:**

- Begin with an “index phrase” that sets up the readers for what is to follow—do not begin with facts, figures, names, dates, or complicated information of any kind. Instead, begin with something memorable and punchy.
- Decide what is best, network announcer for “talent,” paid professional, or in house person.

**Variations:** Usually different versions of spots are created to be useful within different radio formats and timeframes, to add variety to your messages, and to get across different angles of messages. With non-profit organizations it is often a good idea to provide 10, 20, 30, & 60-second versions to best fit the stations format.

Prepare PSAs on studio-quality equipment, 1/4” magnetic recording tape, cut the tape to length, and place on a small plastic reel or in a cartridge (or “cart”) if resources allow.

Tell organizational members, friends, etc., about radio spots and ask them to listen for them.

**Reasons for stations rejecting PSAs:**

- Material is too dry/dull.
- The spot lacks a local angle.
- The tone of the spot does not mesh with the station’s format.
- The tapes submitted are not up to the technical standards of the station.
- The spot lacks a “public service” angle.

**Stylistic devices include:**

1. Timeliness—first-ever events, annual, etc.
2. Rarity—“unbelievable” events, “one-of-a-kind,” etc.
3. Local angle/Proximity/Relevance/Consequence
4. Human interest
5. Humorous dialogue
6. Instructive dialogue
7. Monologue
8. Celebrity Monologue
9. Announcer copy
10. Prominence—the VIP effect
11. Creative devices like jingles/raps/songs

**Visualization Strategies:**

1. Character voices: stereotypical (such as the “dumb guy”), imitated, or actual.
2. Music
3. Sound effects
4. Cue words in the copy...“what are you doing with that Rutgers sweatshirt Roger?”
5. Repetition
6. Exaggeration
7. Jingles
8. Foreshadowing/Forewarning
9. Humor