



Why Evaluate Your Campaign?

By Bill Goodwill

We designed the very first evaluation system for PSA campaigns in 1981, about the same time the personal computer came on the scene. Since then, we have produced literally thousands of evaluation reports for TV, radio, print and out-of-home media.

In this data driven culture, accountability for marketing expenditures has never been more important. There are a variety of reasons why you should evaluate every aspect of your PSA campaign. It:

- Demonstrates if your message is getting through to the right audiences
- Shows where you are and are not getting exposure
- Provides basis for making corrections
- Validates success of your PSA program
- Helps you keep your job

Reaching the Right Audiences

While most people think of PSAs as a general awareness medium, they can be used to reach very specific audiences such as parents, minorities, airline/transit passengers, shoppers and college students. A radio campaign we launched for March of Dimes to prevent premature births for example, was aimed at minority mothers, and it generated just under 70,000 airplays, 48MM Gross Impressions and \$2.5MM in value.



Another campaign we distributed on behalf of the Peace Corps aimed at college youth, generated a total of 782,000 leads, which in turn resulted in 58,558 applications, 21,456 invitations to join, and 18,028 Volunteers who actually joined.

Spotlighting Weaknesses

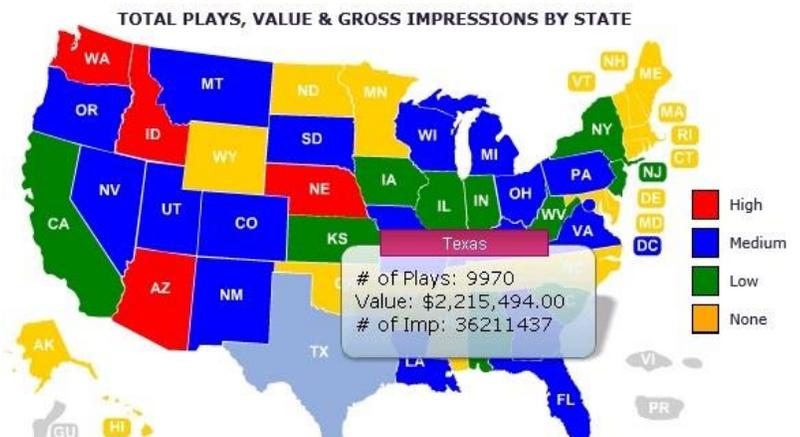
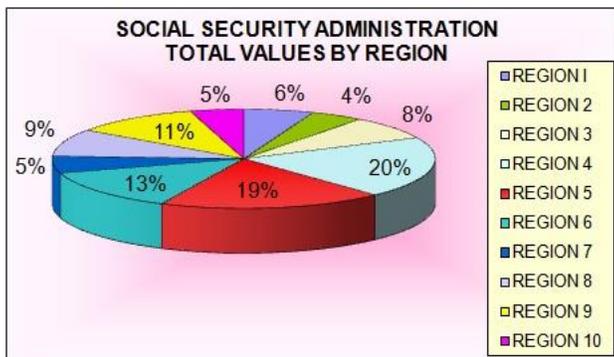
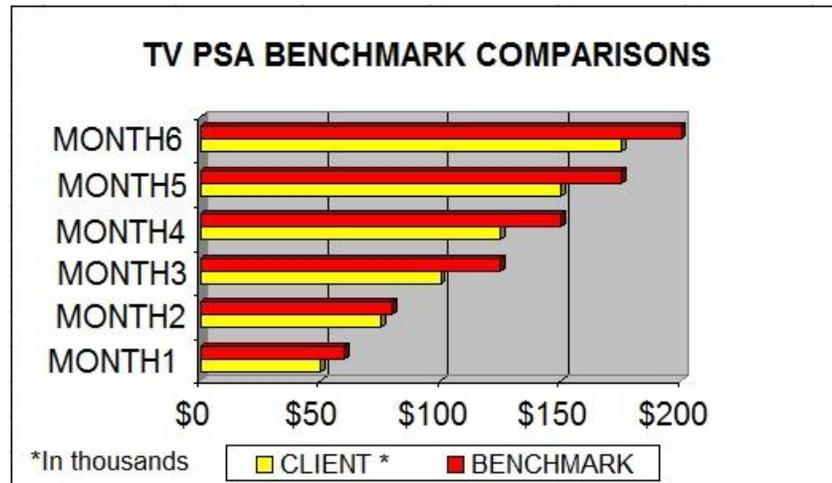
It is natural to want to focus on the positive trends depicted in evaluation reports. However, to use evaluation data properly, you should also analyze where you are not getting exposure as well, because this is how you can improve ultimate results. Following are several factors that should be analyzed to determine weaknesses in PSA exposure.

- Dollar values** – We have created a benchmark of PSA dollar values for comparing one client campaign against another.

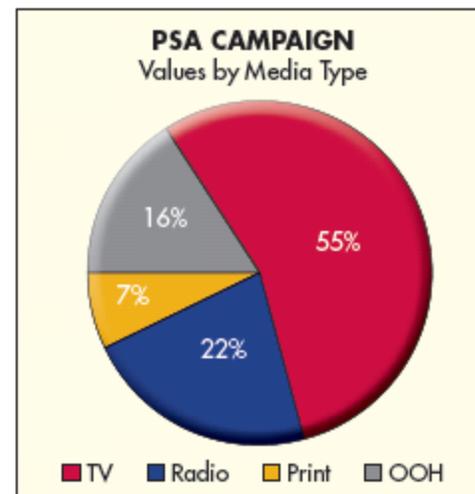
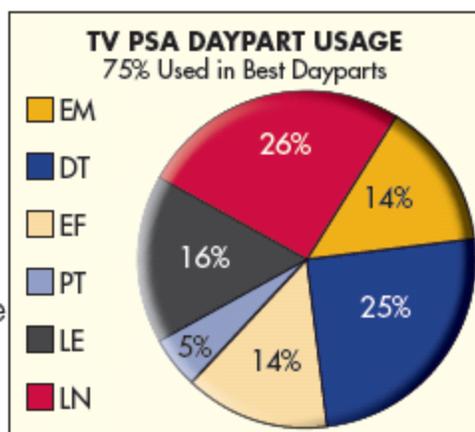
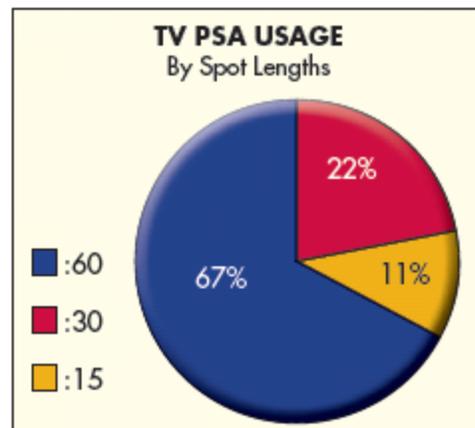
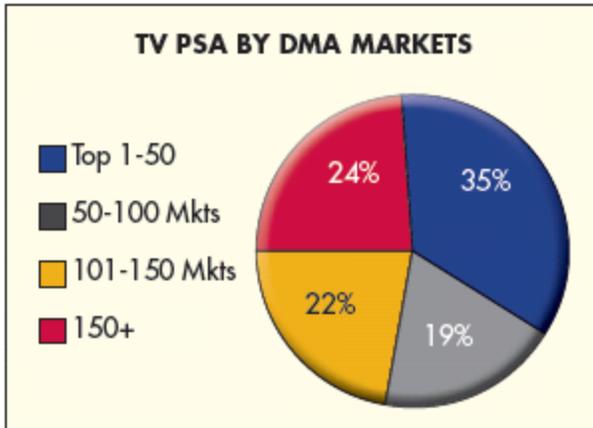
Obviously all PSAs are different, but our benchmark reflects PSA attainment for over 87 different PSA campaigns distributed to a similar number of stations, so it is a good method to determine how any particular campaign is performing on a month-to-month basis, when compared to a standard.

Monitoring your campaign as it matures is very important, because if you wait until the campaign ends, it is too late to take corrective action.

- Geographic coverage** - many organizations have field offices and by sorting the data by these offices, you can quickly see where exposure is above, at or below average. Another way is to display data on an interactive map, which shows where coverage is above or below the norm.



- Target audience analysis** – by examining the types of magazines that use your PSAs, the radio program formats for stations and the time your PSAs air on TV, you get feedback on key audience penetration and determine if it reached your campaign objectives.



Validating Your Success

A multi-media PSA campaign can cost several hundred thousand dollars to produce and distribute. It is inconceivable that any organization – particularly non-profits – would spend this amount of money and not want to know what results they have achieved with their campaign. There are several ways to validate the success of your PSA:

- **Quantitative** – overall station usage, number of markets reached, reach (Gross Impressions), frequency of use and advertising equivalency value are all quantitative parameters to demonstrate PSA success.
- **Qualitative** – factors that are included in evaluation reports include usage by daypart, use of longer spot lengths, key market penetration, and the number of messages reaching primary audiences..
- **Return on investment** – an important way to measure the success of your campaign is to divide the total value of PSA attainment by the cost of PSA production and distribution to show the relationship between cost and return.



Reinforcing Mission Support

Many organizations don't think of PSA campaigns as strategic communications tools to help achieve your critical mission. However, to the extent you can demonstrate the ability to reach key stakeholders via your PSAs, they can be an integral part of your communications outreach. Evaluation data can be used to show the extent to which PSAs support your organization's critical mission in several different ways:

- **Stimulating public response** - this can be measured in phone calls to toll-free numbers, visits to dedicated websites, or applications to volunteer.
- **Generating greater public awareness** of your issue. While this can be difficult to measure, many organizations use tracking research to determine changes in public awareness about an issue or organization.
- **Changing public behavior** toward your issue. Equally difficult to measure, there is some data to show that PSAs can achieve this objective.

A research study conducted by the Advertising Research Foundation (ARF) concluded that PSAs can induce significant changes in public health behavior. According to the report summary, ***"in one of the toughest and most challenging areas for advertising today - that of changing attitudes and behavior for health-related issues -- the use of public service advertising alone not only increased awareness, but also reinforced people's belief, fostered their intent to act and inspired potentially life-saving action."***

For more information on the kinds of evaluation data you can compile and key trends analysis, see the article: *"How You Can Use Evaluation Data to Fine-Tune Your PSA Campaign"* at: <http://www.psaresearch.com/bib4401.html>.