



How can I make sure my video, radio clip, poster, brochure, or website will have an IMPACT on the target audience?

The answer is simple. Pretest the communications product with the appropriate target audience during the development stage when there is time to modify the product based on how the target audience responds.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Review the timeline for development of the communications product. Select dates that will assure you that the most central parts of the product are developed. Don't worry about extraneous aspects of the product such as trailers, music or introductions on videos and radio clips, or the type of paper on brochures. You want to test the parts of the product with the main message.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Decide who the target audience is and invite them to a focus group of about 10-12 people for an hour or so. Talk tends to be more candid when the participants don't know one another. Make absolutely certain they are representative of the audience. Don't choose your colleagues down the hall no matter how much you respect them.

RECOMMENDATION 3

You know what ideas you are trying to communicate, but the more important part is knowing whether the target audience understands them; whether the language is on their level; and whether they are convinced? To find out, design 6-10 questions that get at the following aspects of impact (Bertrand, 1978).

1. Comprehension
2. Acceptability
3. Persuasiveness
4. Attractiveness

RECOMMENDATION 4

Compare the results across the focus groups. Modify the product to correct for the problems that emerged *in most of the groups*.

REFERENCE

Bertrand, Jane T., *Communication Pretesting*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, Community and Family Center.

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