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For REALTOR® Associations

## DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING PUBLIC AWARENESS AND MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

### BACKGROUND

Public awareness and media campaigns often have two closely-related goals: to inform and to persuade. In both cases, the intent is to have the audience take specific actions. If a public awareness campaign spreads the word about new mortgage financing options, the intent is to persuade some of those hearing/reading this information to pursue those new options for themselves. Similarly, a media campaign describing an upcoming housing fair is clearly intended to boost attendance at the fair. At the same time, these campaigns can be leveraged to enhance the reputation of your association and of REALTORS® in general.

The first instinct of many organizations is to announce news or describe new programs via their web sites. These descriptions must be there for reference, but the web is a “passive” communications tool; your audience must come to you (to the web site) to get the message.

In contrast, public awareness and media campaigns reach out to those you want to inform. They can do this through a range of mechanisms: flyers, posters, newspapers, radio and television, and direct mail to engage the audience in an “active” fashion. Here are some ideas to make those campaigns successful:

### SUGGESTIONS

- Download *A Media Training Guide for Housing Advocates* from The Campaign for Affordable Housing for detailed plans on organizing a successful media campaign. This 60-page PDF lays out a well-designed, step-by-step strategy:
  - Set Clear, Measurable Goals
  - Identify Your Target Audiences
  - Develop Compelling Messages
  - Plan Wisely
  - Specify What People Should Do
  - Know Your Media
  - Secure Media Coverage
  - Stay on the Media and Public RADAR

[www.tcah.org/pdf/Media\\_Training\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.tcah.org/pdf/Media_Training_Guide.pdf)

- Set quantitative goals before the campaign begins. For example, if your ads seek to drive people to your web site, find your baseline traffic figures before you begin and revisit them again as the campaign is underway.

## DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING PUBLIC AWARENESS AND MEDIA CAMPAIGNS *(continued)*

- Coordinate the campaign with adjacent associations and others who share your campaign's goals. This spreads the word over a wider geographic area, allows for the possibility of overlapping coverage thereby reinforcing the message, and has a greater chance of reaching those people who live in one area and work in another.
- Use multiple media. If your budget allows, try to overlap your target audience with messages from different media: newspapers, radio, etc. Or consider approaching a media organization as a campaign partner.
- If appropriate, tie the campaign to some recent news, event, or change in regulations/statutes. This gives your message a timeliness and an added reason for the recipient to pay closer attention to what you are communicating.
- Make sure all of the REALTORS® in your association know details of the campaign beforehand and make sure they know where to direct inquiries for more information. In this way, every REALTOR® can be an ambassador for the campaign.

### UP CLOSE

#### HOME FROM WORK AND HOME CONNECTICUT

The Eastern Connecticut Association of REALTORS® (ECAR) crafted a media campaign to promote NAR's *Home From Work*<sup>TM1</sup> initiative and the local Home Connecticut program using a Housing Opportunity Fund grant<sup>2</sup> from NAR. They developed two print ads and two radio ads (played 170 times), placed in two newspapers and four radio stations, respectively. To boost the campaign's effectiveness, ECAR made an informational presentation to the city council, worked with local chambers of commerce, and provided background information to all of their association members.

Learn more at:

[www.easternctrealtors.com/homefromworkprogram.html](http://www.easternctrealtors.com/homefromworkprogram.html)

<sup>1</sup> Please see Section 7 of the "for REALTORS®" portion of the *Toolkit* to learn more about NAR's Employer Assisted Housing Class (formerly *Home From Work*<sup>TM</sup>).

<sup>2</sup> Please see Section 9 to learn more about Housing Opportunity Fund grants.

- Prepare for success. Have a follow-up ready. It may be a handout that can be mailed, it may be a presentation that can be made to a civic or town group, but have something that expands on the message and fills in the details of your campaign. If your follow-up message is that a particular service is available, make certain that members are fully trained and ready to provide that service.
- Collect anecdotal responses as well as measurable results. These can sometimes give added insight into the effectiveness of the campaign via an individual's personal reactions to the campaign and its message.

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING PUBLIC AWARENESS AND MEDIA CAMPAIGNS *(continued)*

**LEARN MORE**

**Capital Area REALTORS® Kick-off “Buy Now” Campaign**

A press release announcing the launch of a consumer oriented marketing campaign targeting prospective homebuyers in the Springfield, Illinois area. The campaign made use of buttons to be worn by REALTORS®, stickers, and special business cards.

*Capital Area Association of REALTORS®*

[www.caaronline.com/news/nws\\_buynow.php?print=1](http://www.caaronline.com/news/nws_buynow.php?print=1)



**NAR Public Awareness Campaign**

NAR established the Public Awareness Campaign more than a decade ago to convince homebuyers, sellers, and investors about the value of working with a REALTOR®. More recently, the campaign expanded its messages to educate consumers about the benefits of homeownership and buying opportunities in a changing real estate market.

*National Association of REALTORS®*

[www.realtor.org/pac.nsf/pages/PACHome](http://www.realtor.org/pac.nsf/pages/PACHome)

**OAR Launches New Campaign**

This is a press release announcing the kickoff of a 2008 media campaign called “Good Thing You’re in Oklahoma.” The campaign sought to distinguish and characterize the Oklahoma market as distinct from the national housing market, often described in media reports.

*Oklahoma Association of REALTORS®*

[www.oklahomarealtors.com/news/view\\_article.asp?article=384](http://www.oklahomarealtors.com/news/view_article.asp?article=384)

**Using local IMPAC for Media Expenditures**

A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for local California associations on using Issues Mobilization Political Action Committee (IMPAC) funds for conducting media campaigns. Emphasizes the need for funding source disclosure in all ads.

*California Association of REALTORS®*

[www.car.org/governmentaffairs/pacs/mediafaq/?version=1](http://www.car.org/governmentaffairs/pacs/mediafaq/?version=1)