

Chapter 6

Managing and Implementing Your Counter-Marketing Program

I won't kid you; pulling all the pieces together is hard work. But it works. And when you look back and realize your efforts have impacted not only individual behavior but the culture as a whole, you'll know it was worth the effort.

— Colleen Stevens, Tobacco Control Section,
California Department of Health Services

To have a successful counter-marketing program, you'll need to have the right team and set up the right processes to implement your program and keep it on track. Whether your budget is \$100,000, \$25 million, or anything in between, the steps are the same. Each step is described in detail in this chapter.

Setting Up Your Counter-Marketing Team

Finding the appropriate mix of people and expertise may be the most important thing you do. To implement your program, you'll need to establish four groups:

1. **Health department staff** to develop and monitor activities
2. **Communication agencies, communication specialists, or both**, to develop and place ads, create public relations campaigns, plan events, and conduct other activities
3. **An evaluation firm or staff** to monitor and measure the results of your efforts

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- Setting Up Your Counter-Marketing Team
- Selecting Contractors
- Developing an Annual Marketing Plan
- Reviewing Marketing Materials
- Monitoring the Counter-Marketing Budget

4. **Community stakeholders**, whose support is critical, to provide input on various elements of the program

Health Department Staff

Staffing will vary depending on your budget and timeline, but *you need at least one person dedicated to counter-marketing activities*. Even with a small budget, you must have a skilled person to work with the news media, develop and distribute materials, and plan tobacco control events with community groups.

If your program has a large budget, you should consider several counter-marketing staff positions:

- **Marketing director**—oversees the entire counter-marketing program
- **Advertising manager**—manages the work of the ad agency
- **Press secretary**—handles press relations and works with your public relations firm
- **Manager of community relations and local programs**—works with stakeholders and health organizations throughout your state
- **Evaluator**—manages evaluation of counter-marketing activities
- **Financial manager**—reviews bills and monitors financial aspects of contracts

Some of these positions, such as the finance manager and the evaluator, may be shared

within the larger tobacco control program or, in some states, within the larger chronic disease program. In your program, you may use different job titles, but the functions will be the same as the positions described here.

Each key position will need support staff if you're implementing a large program. The counter-marketing staff should have experience or credentials in health communication, advertising, marketing, journalism, or related areas. Experience with other health-related campaigns or communication programs in the state is also extremely helpful.

If you're limited in the number of staff you can hire, consider contracting with consultants. They can help you to manage separate aspects of your program. For example, you may hire an advertising expert to help you monitor the development and production of ads.

If the staff is small, typically all of the counter-marketing staff members report to the tobacco control program manager. If the staff is large like the one listed above, the advertising manager, press secretary, and others would report to the marketing director, who would report to the overall program manager.

The program manager is responsible for ensuring that the counter-marketing program and all other program elements support each other and reinforce the larger state tobacco control effort. Counter-marketing is one part of a comprehensive tobacco control program, and your communication effort must be integrated with the overall program. For example, if the state's

tobacco control program focuses on prevention of smoking among youth, the counter-marketing effort should focus on messages and interventions for youth and secondary audiences that influence youth.

You'll probably also need to coordinate with other health department staff and state government staff, such as the governor's and the health department's communication teams. Appropriate political officials and their staff should be kept abreast of your program's initiatives, as well as its opposition. Some of these political officials may need to answer for the program, so you should be proactive in keeping them up to date, especially on newsworthy issues. If they support the tobacco control program, they can be strong allies. Even if they don't support the program, you need to keep them updated on what you're doing and why (i.e., how the initiatives contribute to the program's overall goals). "Keeping people in the loop can be a constant balancing act," says one state program director. "It is important to let people know what is happening with the program and to get input on various issues or ideas. However, 'too many cooks' may turn your campaign into a vanilla, politically correct, ineffective one."

Finally, your campaign should be coordinated with local program activities. Ideally the campaign should complement and reinforce programs "on the ground." Coordinate with local tobacco control programs, especially media programs. Involve them in planning, and let them know when you plan to launch various activities.

Communication Agencies

Creating a comprehensive counter-marketing program requires a variety of specialized skills. These skills include selecting, producing, and placing ads; working with the media; planning large events; and coordinating grassroots activities. To create professional-quality communications, you'll probably need to hire one or more communication firms.

For its national "truth" campaign, the American Legacy Foundation works with several media firms: two general market ad agencies, a PR agency, an events firm, and a Web design company, along with agencies that focus on specific populations, such as African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and Native Americans; the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community; and people of low socioeconomic status. However, the budget for Legacy's media campaign is higher than the budget for any single state's tobacco control program. A state typically couldn't afford and wouldn't need the number of agencies Legacy hired. The main point is that a comprehensive counter-marketing program has many elements, and each one is very time consuming and requires the expertise that agencies and individuals specializing in communications can bring. If your program's budget is moderate to large, you may be able to hire agencies or individual consultants in several of the categories listed here, but for less of their time than the American Legacy Foundation would require.

Agencies come in all shapes and sizes. Most large communication firms offer a range of advertising and PR services. These services usually include strategic planning, market research, creative development, advertising and materials production, media planning, purchasing of media time, and tracking media placement. Other firms focus on a single area. Some firms specialize in advertising only or PR only or in advertising for specific audiences (e.g., African Americans, Asian Americans, or youth). Some firms focus on communication and marketing, others specialize in policy or advocacy, and still others specialize in planning events.

There are no hard and fast rules for what type of firm to hire. Most states contract with a lead ad agency that then subcontracts with agencies specializing in PR, planning events, or communication with specific populations. California has separate contracts for advertising and PR, so the state can work directly with its PR agency when time is limited (e.g., when a quick response is needed). If your state has a very heated political climate or you anticipate

frequent attacks from the tobacco industry, consider having a separate PR contract. In a charged environment, maintaining the right dialogue on the public airwaves in a timely manner may be one of the most important things you do.

Communication firms usually perform the following functions:

- Develop creative approaches to achieve your objectives
- Recommend the type(s) of media vehicles for your messages and target audience(s)
- Identify requirements for media placement to reach your target audience(s)
- Arrange opportunities for news coverage of your messages, your program, or both
- Organize community-based activities to promote your message
- Develop relationships with community stakeholders

Running a media campaign can be intimidating for those with public health backgrounds. Don't be afraid to ask lots of questions. Agencies will always be better staffed and move faster than the health department, so be prepared to take control and slow down the process until you understand all the concepts and are comfortable with moving forward.

— Sandi Hammond, Tobacco Control Program
Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Although communication agencies bring specific expertise and create many of the campaign elements, your program staff should be closely involved and provide direction to the agencies. In general, you should work with them to develop the counter-marketing plan, then review their work to make sure it meets your objectives and stays on course. “Without ongoing direction and involvement of program staff,” says one state health department manager, “even the best agencies can stray or could end up with clever creative [advertising concepts] that has little likelihood of efficacy.”

Evaluation Companies and Consultants

An evaluation contractor will help you to measure your program's effectiveness. You can hire specialists who evaluate public health communications, a private company that specializes in marketing and advertising research and evaluation, a university-based group that is experienced in media evaluation, or a combination of such companies and consultants.

Duties involved in evaluation include:

- Identifying key measures on the basis of your communication objectives
- Determining the baseline, process, and outcome information needed to measure the impact of your activities
- Preparing an evaluation plan and budget for the counter-marketing effort
- Conducting appropriate research before, during, and after your program is launched
- Developing reports on the research that clearly present the data, findings, and conclusions

Don't wait until the last minute to include the evaluation team! Engage evaluators in the planning and implementation of the program from the beginning. They can help you to determine and define your program objectives, which you can measure and report to state officials and other stakeholders. Plus, they can help to ensure that baseline data are gathered before your program is launched, so you don't miss a valuable opportunity to gauge the effect of your program. (See Chapter 5: Evaluating the Success of Your Counter-Marketing Program for more information.)

Stakeholders, Gatekeepers, and Local Programs

Stakeholders are people and organizations that have an interest (stake) in your program's success. For example, local groups representing the African-American community will be interested in campaigns that target African Americans. *Gatekeepers* are individuals or organizations that can help you to reach target audiences with your program messages. Sometimes overlap exists between stakeholders and gatekeepers. *Local programs* are tobacco control efforts that focus on a specific county, city, or region of your state. State programs can't and shouldn't be developed in a vacuum, so it's essential that you address and involve these three important audiences from the start. Community organizations, voluntary organizations (e.g., the American Cancer Society, the

American Lung Association, and the American Heart Association), religious institutions, parent groups, businesses, and other groups can be instrumental in supporting your program and promoting the tobacco control messages.

Community groups and local programs can work on counter-marketing activities by:

- Carrying and publicizing the program messages to constituents
- Developing programs that tie directly into your messages
- Cosponsoring community programs
- Speaking on behalf of the program
- Supporting local legislation and policies that contribute to reducing tobacco use
- Advocating for and protecting the program and its goals

Counter-marketing programs are often highly visible and can be controversial. They can stir up negative publicity or comments from constituents in the state. Involving key stakeholders in your program's development will help you to identify controversial issues up front and gain the stakeholders' support. For example, you should solicit input from individuals representing targeted communities before, during, and after the program is launched (see Chapter 4: Reaching Specific Populations for more information).

One of the best ways to involve stakeholders is to set up an informal steering or advisory committee for your effort and include key members from stakeholder groups, as well as members

of your target audience. This approach institutionalizes the involvement of stakeholders and gives you something concrete to point to as an example of your inclusiveness. Have this group review plans, concepts, and draft materials.

Listen carefully to their input. You won't always be able to incorporate everyone's suggestions, but you should understand their perspectives and what is most important to them. In many states, the media campaign fuels controversy. Having stakeholders and members of the target audience on board from the beginning gives you a source of spokespeople to defend the campaign.

Keep community leaders and local programs involved in your program. Everyone likes to be involved in a successful program effort. Many programs have a newsletter, Web site, or e-mail distribution list that keeps stakeholders and gatekeepers informed of the program's progress and successes. If you're reporting results that demonstrate progress, such as survey results that show your campaign has helped reduce smoking, involve the appropriate stakeholders in the announcement of these results. If your program receives negative press, keep stakeholders and gatekeepers informed, so they won't be surprised or caught off guard; seek their help and support when needed. For example, if a state's quitline service comes under attack, the state may ask a partner who has experience with smoking cessation issues, such as the local branch of the American Cancer Society or the American Lung Association, to comment on the necessity and efficacy of the quitline.

Look for specific opportunities for stakeholders to get involved in your program. For example, you may help a local radio station develop a day of radio programming about quitting smoking. When a local company goes smoke-free, you can help the company get media attention for its effort. When there's an important tobacco control message, such as the release of a Surgeon General's report, create press materials independently or augment press materials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), so the stakeholders can use them to help you publicize the information. Invite stakeholders to participate in community events, award ceremonies, and other campaign-related events. Stakeholders can advance policy issues and legislation related to tobacco control, a role not normally available for state staff. Supportive media gatekeepers can work with you or your agencies to develop special programming, newspaper inserts, or community events with media tie-ins.

Your communication agencies may think that working with stakeholders is a burden, because many of them are used to working with commercial clients who have few stakeholders. Although agencies often focus on expediency, it's important for you to explain the value of working with stakeholders and to specifically outline to your agency how stakeholders will be involved.

Steps for Selecting an Agency

To hire an agency, you need to:

- Outline the specific work you want the contractor to do. Don't be too prescriptive in the request for proposals (RFP), but do be clear about the overall goal(s) and the campaign's specific objectives. Allow the agencies to respond creatively.
- Issue an RFP for the work.
- Organize a group of knowledgeable reviewers from within and outside your organization.
- Eliminate proposals that don't meet the technical requirements specified in the RFP (e.g., deadline and format).
- Work with your review group to evaluate the proposals.
- Compare cost proposals.
- Invite and observe presentations from finalists.
- Check finalists' references.
- Select the firm that appears to be the most capable and to offer the most value for its fees.
- Inform other agencies that they didn't win the contract.
- Sign a contract.
- Begin briefing meetings with the agency.

Selecting Contractors

Once you determine the configuration of the counter-marketing team, you'll start the formal process of hiring contractors. This section provides you with guidelines for this process. (See Chapter 7: Advertising and Chapter 8: Public Relations for more information about working with contractors.)



Beginning to work with a contractor is like beginning any relationship. Relationships require trust, respect, and an understanding of each participant's strengths and weaknesses. In this relationship, you bring to the table your technical expertise on content, your political acuity, and your understanding of the sometimes complex government approval process. The communication firms offer creative approaches to the message, expertise in how to develop effective communication pieces, and knowledge of the media needed to reach your audience(s). The evaluation contractor provides the technical know-how to assess how successful your messages and initiatives have been in reaching the target audiences and what the effects of those interventions have been.

The focus here is on communication and evaluation firms, but the advice can apply to hiring any private company.

Before the Bidding Process

Don't rush into issuing an RFP. Take some time to:

- **Learn what your budget can buy in your state.** Media and production costs
- **Explore approaches used in other states.** Examine RFPs for media contractors in

vary in each state. Find out what it should cost to reach your audience(s) in your state. One approach is to talk to the manager of another state-funded media campaign in your state (e.g., the lottery or tourism). Your state may have a commercial campaign you can examine, too. You should also look at other states' tobacco counter-marketing efforts to see what they received for the money they spent. Find out what they spent per capita and in total, so you can make an accurate comparison with what you plan to spend.

- **Look at what has been done by other programs in your state.** Learn how other state programs selected an agency; again, the lottery and tourism programs may be a good place to start. State media campaigns can be valuable sources of government information, advice, and insights into your state's approval process.

other states and the contracts awarded. The State Information Forum, a Web site operated by CDC's Office on Smoking and Health, is a source of information, resources, and other materials for state tobacco control programs. Many state RFPs are available online on the State Information Forum, at <http://.ntcp.forum.cdc.gov>. This Web site is password protected, so you'll need to contact CDC/OSH's Health Communications Branch to gain access if you're not a current user.

- **Learn the ins and outs of your state's contracting rules.** Find someone in your state financial or contracting office to guide you through the state's contracting procedures and to help you develop language for an RFP. A good way to start is by reviewing media RFPs from other organizations in your state. (See Appendix 6.1: Key Elements of a Request for Proposals for a Media Campaign for a description of common items included in many state tobacco control program RFPs.) Make sure that you understand the RFP and that your contracting office has reviewed the process for your RFP. You should be comfortable with the wording of the RFP and the deliverables it describes. Decide whether to ask for "speculative creative" (sample materials that a firm provides before a contract is awarded) as part of the proposal. If you make this request, you must include language in the RFP indicating that the state retains ownership of any creative materials

presented during the bidding process. This language will protect you from legal action by a firm that isn't awarded the contract and may have presented creative similar to that of the winning firm.

- **Decide on the configuration of firms for your program.** Do you want one all-purpose agency that can give you a range of communication services or a set of specialized firms that work together as a team? Do you have the staff to oversee contracts with more than one firm, such as separate advertising and PR companies?
- **Avoid firms that work with tobacco companies.** Just as Coca-Cola doesn't hire firms that work for Pepsi, you shouldn't hire firms that work for the competition. This recommendation has become more complicated with the recent trend toward acquisitions and mergers. Many agencies that don't work with the tobacco industry have been bought by conglomerates that may own other firms with tobacco accounts. At a minimum, the agency you hire should have no direct connections with the tobacco industry or its affiliates (e.g., Kraft, which is owned by Altria, formerly called Philip Morris). You'll have to consider the advantages and disadvantages of hiring a firm that does no tobacco work but has sister agencies that do. *Adweek*, an advertising industry publication, publishes a directory of ad firms that lists their clients and affiliation with advertising conglomerates and holding

companies. You should require that all bidding agencies disclose any connection, direct or indirect, with the tobacco industry or its partner companies, so you can consider that information in selecting an agency. If an agency you may want to use has such a connection, ask the bidder to submit a plan for providing a fire wall between your program and any potential conflicts of interest.

- **Recruit a diverse review committee.** The members of your review committee should have a wide range of expertise and backgrounds, including experience with health issues and the communication techniques you plan to use in your program (e.g., advertising, public relations, and media advocacy). Check your state's restrictions about using out-of-state reviewers.

During the Bidding Process

Most contracting rules limit your ability to communicate directly with firms bidding on your proposal. Nonetheless, the review process gives you opportunities to learn about the firms. As you review proposals and listen to bids from each firm, keep these questions in mind:

- How strategic and thoughtful are the decisions the firm makes and the work it produces?
- How creative is the firm?
- Does the firm describe how it would approach the subject of tobacco, and, if so, do you like what you hear?
- Does the firm have experience working with community groups?
- Does the firm have experience with your target audience(s)?
- Does the firm have experience with tobacco control, social marketing, or other health-related work? If not, you don't necessarily have to rule it out; it would be much easier for you to teach the firm's staff about tobacco control than to teach them about developing and placing ads!
- Do the firm's references and samples give you insights into the quality of the work and skills of the staff assigned to your account?
- Does the firm have a track record of developing campaigns that have generated measurable results? Ask for examples.
- Has the firm bought media in every market in your state? Does it have experience in evaluating and buying a wide variety of media?
- Is the team proposed by the firm a mix of senior, midlevel, and junior staff?
- What is the experience of the primary staff to be assigned to your account?
- Are support staff in specific functional areas (e.g., market research or media buying) assigned to work on your project for a sufficient percentage of their time?

- Do you think you can work comfortably with the staff proposed for the project?
- Does the firm have the number of staff and appropriate facilities to do the work?
- Do staff of the firm have experience in negotiating for bonus airings or add-ons as part of a media buy?

(For more information on the RFP process, see Appendix 6.1: Key Elements of a Request for Proposals for a Media Campaign and Appendix 6.2: Questions and Answers on RFPs.)

Once You've Selected a Firm

Develop a team relationship with the firm that is awarded the contract. Work closely with the staff as individuals, and get to know them. Avoid thinking of them as the “suppliers” who

simply deliver the goods to you; instead, think of them as an extension of your staff or as your equal partners. The better the relationship, the easier it will be to work through issues on which you may not agree.

Teach the agency what it needs to know about effective tobacco counter-marketing messages. There's a wealth of television, radio, outdoor, and print materials on tobacco control.

Sharing those materials with them may help to inspire creative ideas or identify materials from other states that can be reapplied or adapted for use in your state. Although most agencies prefer to create original ads tailored specifically for the state, many states have combined new ads with available ads proven effective in other states. Ask the firm's staff to become familiar with the advertising materials

Tips for Selecting an Agency to Reach Specific Populations

If you decide to hire a firm to reach specific populations, choose one that offers:

- Experience in working on communication campaigns
- Examples of past communication work that an independent evaluation has shown to be successful
- References from clients for whom the firm has done similar work
- Adequate staff and facilities to do the work
- Experience in developing effective, culturally appropriate material
- Strong ties to the community

Don't pick a firm simply because its staff includes members of a specific population; choose a firm because of the merits of its work. At the same time, recognize the role that members of a specific population can play in a firm's ability to be culturally competent and culturally appropriate. (See Chapter 4: Reaching Specific Populations for more information.)

Tips for Selecting an Evaluation Contractor

Choose an evaluation contractor that demonstrates:

- Experience in evaluating tobacco control programs, health communication campaigns, or both
- Ability to work with a wide variety of stakeholders, including representatives of populations affected most by tobacco use
- Innovative approaches to evaluation, coupled with consideration of budget limitations and other program realities
- Skills that complement those of the in-house evaluation team and that increase the evaluation capacity of that team
- Regular sharing of raw data, preliminary results, and full findings with the program staff
- Cultural competency in conducting evaluations among various racial and ethnic groups
- Expertise you need and can afford

Hire your evaluation staff early in the process and involve them from the start. Don't wait until the campaign is about to be launched. The evaluation of your efforts must be seen as independent and objective, so it's important to hire a separate evaluation firm, instead of having your ad agency subcontract with one.

in CDC's Media Campaign Resource Center (MCRC), available online at <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/mcrc>. The MCRC Web site offers an online database of materials the communication firm can review. In addition, involving the agency's staff in strategic planning meetings, focus groups, community meetings, and other activities will help them to develop an in-depth understanding of the important issues. You should establish a clear process for review and approval. Mistakes can be costly to fix. Pay careful attention to the visuals and words in all communication pieces, the results of market research, and the internal and external comments about the ads.

Restrain yourself from becoming the creative director. You pay the firm to fill that role. Avoid giving prescriptive instructions about what to change. For example, don't make detailed suggestions about a proposed ad, by saying to the firm: "If you could just make this woman who stopped smoking look happier, and maybe you could have her whole family standing around her looking happy, too, and..." A better approach is to offer the agency feedback about what you'd like to change *conceptually*, and let their staff explore the specific creative alternatives. When you comment about the work the firm submits, focus on goals. For example, tell the agency: "The goal would be to make this

ad focus more on the positives of quitting smoking, instead of the negatives of previous failed attempts.”

Developing an Annual Marketing Plan

Once you’ve assembled your program staff, hired contractors, and gone through the planning process (see Chapter 2: Planning Your Counter-Marketing Program for more information on planning process), you’ll need to develop a marketing plan. This plan will be the blueprint for implementing your counter-marketing tasks and activities. It should list the specific tasks, staff, time frame, and budget needs for each objective developed during the planning phase. The plan should encompass all the components you’re using (e.g., advertising, PR, media advocacy, grassroots initiatives, and media literacy activities), and its timeline should allow sufficient time for technical review and approval. This marketing plan can be used to monitor program activities, and you may need to update it as you conduct the process evaluation throughout the year. (See Appendix 2.1: Counter-Marketing Planning Worksheet for guidance in developing a marketing plan.)

You may be tempted to skip the development of a marketing plan, but doing so will cause you to be reactive instead of proactive in working with your communication agencies, your target audience(s), and your management. This plan is an important tool for keeping everyone focused on how your goals will be accomplished. By developing a marketing plan, you’ll ensure that your agency doesn’t

lead the campaign in a direction different from the one you intended. Providing a yearly marketing plan will also help the agency to know what to expect well in advance, so the staff can manage your account effectively.

Reviewing Marketing Materials

One of the key functions of the program staff will be to review the marketing materials created by the communication firm(s). You’ll be responsible for reviewing these materials in three key areas: strategy, accuracy of technical content, and cultural appropriateness.

Keeping Materials on Strategy

Ad agencies pride themselves on their creativity because creative ads get noticed, are entertaining, and can influence behavior. But just because an ad is entertaining doesn’t mean it’s on strategy. For each key marketing piece, you and your agency should develop a creative brief. Use this creative brief to review each ad or communication piece to ensure that it’s on target.

Ensuring Accurate Technical Content

Communication materials have to be on strategy, but they also have to be accurate. Any factual errors will undermine the credibility of your efforts and make your program vulnerable to criticism. Here are some ways to keep your communication work consistently accurate:

- Provide your agency with the most current tobacco-related data, and keep agency staff informed by promptly forwarding new data to them.

What Is a Creative Brief?

For almost any work with a communication agency, you'll need a creative brief (communication brief). This document spells out:

- The specific assignment—the product the agency is being asked to develop
- The goal of the communication piece(s)
- The main message(s)
- Demographic, psychographic, and other information about the audience
- Key insights about the audience that should be considered during development of the communication piece(s)
- The audience's perceived barriers to the desired behavior change
- Benefits the audience might receive from the behavior change
- Actions you want the target audience to take

The creative brief is typically drafted by the agency account team, but the health department staff can initiate it or provide input to it. It gives the agency creative team the basic message for each creative product and clarifies what the agency is being asked to do. Once the product is completed, everyone involved can refer to the creative brief to make sure the product meets the criteria in the brief. (See Appendix 6.3: Elements of a Creative Brief and Appendices 6.4, 6.5, and 6.6 for sample creative briefs.)

- Require the firm to provide documentation for all statements, facts, and figures that appear in the materials and ads it presents, even if you provided the original data. Always use the original source to substantiate data. Quotes from newspaper reports about study results may not accurately reflect the true findings.
- Maintain an easily accessible file of the ad scripts and corresponding substantiation. Program managers are often asked to back up the information in ads, sometimes months or even years after the ads were placed or aired.
- Identify technical experts within your department who can sign off on the technical content in ads and other communication materials.
- Develop a review and approval process that includes all of the key decision makers but doesn't delay ad production longer than necessary.

Producing Culturally Appropriate Materials

Communication materials must be culturally appropriate for your target audience(s). A critical step is to share the draft materials with members of the target audience early in the development process and before work on the materials is completed. You should also assess how the materials will be received by the larger community. For example, some ads designed for rebellious youth may be considered irreverent and disrespectful by adults. The state may still decide to use the ads but may choose to tightly control media placement to limit the number of adults exposed to them.

If stakeholders and members of your target community are on an advisory or steering committee for your program, you may be able to use their input to assess the cultural appropriateness of your materials. To help assess their impact on the larger community, especially if you think your messages may offend certain groups, you may need to be proactive in meeting with the community to explain the materials and your approach. This move will help to defuse potential criticism of your campaign and build relationships with stakeholders. For example, with its “Making Blacks History” campaign, the American Legacy Foundation met with the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), the National Urban League, the National Black Nurses Association, and other groups to explain the strategy of the campaign and get their reaction. By sharing these ads before they hit the airwaves, Legacy was

reassured that the ads wouldn’t be controversial because of the “Making Blacks History” phrase. (See Chapter 4: Reaching Specific Populations for more information on designing culturally appropriate materials.)

Monitoring the Counter-Marketing Budget

Managing the fiscal component of a program can be intimidating. Most people hired to manage public health communication campaigns aren’t financial managers and don’t have much experience with media buying, production costs, talent fees, and the range of expenses related to communication programs. These tips can help you to develop a realistic budget:

- According to CDC’s *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs*, published in 1999, state tobacco control programs should allocate \$1 to \$3 per capita per year to counter-marketing programs. Although this amount is the minimum goal for most states, few states have been able to maintain this level of funding.
- Look at budgets for other statewide efforts, such as lottery campaigns, travel and tourism, or promotion of agricultural products (e.g., citrus fruit in Florida). These programs can give you ballpark estimates on costs for media campaigns.
- Find out what other states have spent on tobacco counter-marketing programs and determine whether any of the states have per capita and total

budgets similar to yours. Learn how those funds were allocated, and ask the program managers what they would do differently if they could spend the funds again.

- Consider hiring a compensation consultant to help you negotiate your agencies' budgets. This consultant can help you to determine the appropriate profit margin for the agency and assist you in understanding how agencies bill for their work.
- Determine the amount(s) you can afford to spend and the best approach for allocating funds in your particular budget. If your budget is small, you may consider a greater mix of PR, media advocacy, media literacy, and grassroots communications rather than a paid media campaign. You can conduct innovative and effective media efforts without expensive ads.
- Conduct a media audit of your advertising media buys to ensure that you're getting your money's worth. If you have limited resources, you may want to conduct a partial audit, from a specific ad flight, to get a snapshot of the quality of your media buy. Because much of your budget may go to paid media, you need to ensure that the funds are spent appropriately.

Variables that affect a communication budget include the following:

- Cost of buying media in your state
- Amount and level of ad production (e.g., number of ads produced or reapplied and complexity of ads produced)
- Number and choice of media outlets
- Intensity and duration of campaign
- Use of existing versus original advertising
- Single focus versus multiple focuses (e.g., number of overall goals and number of target audiences)
- Number of events and activities (e.g., PR, grassroots and media advocacy)
- Communication in English only, other language, or both

Here are some rules of thumb for managing the budget of a counter-marketing program:

- Regardless of the size of the budget, remember that you're spending taxpayers' money. Be sure that your spending decisions are well informed and that every initiative is focused on the program's goals and objectives. Select initiatives that are most likely to contribute to your program's progress in a cost-effective way.

- Obtain estimates, so you know how much a project will cost before you start.
- Approve all costs before any work begins and money is spent.
- Review monthly expenditures carefully. Track expenses for each product, as well as the overall counter-marketing budget. A number of financial tracking systems are available to help you monitor expenses and project monthly expenditures. You may want to ask managers of other state campaigns (e.g., the lottery or tourism) about the procedures and tracking systems they use.
- If any products must be changed, tell staff and consultants that you must discuss and approve any additional costs in advance.
- Hold monthly budget meetings with contractors and staff to keep your expenses on track.
- Include evaluation costs in the overall campaign budget, unless they are included in another part of the tobacco control budget.
- Buy the rights to creative materials (e.g., photos and ads), whenever possible, so they can be reused by you or others.
- Ask questions at each step to better understand what you're buying and what your options are. Keep asking questions until you understand all aspects of media production and placement.

Points To Remember

- **Don't skip the development of the marketing plan.** Creating this blueprint will force you and your contractors to outline the specific tasks needed to reach your goals and objectives and to have all key decision makers agree. It will be a valuable tool in tracking your progress and monitoring the performance of your team and contractors. An approved marketing plan will also help you to stay on track when outside groups try to influence the direction of your program.
- **Track every penny spent.** You should be able to report to government officials and other funders what your specific activities cost and what you delivered for those costs. Closely monitoring the budget will help you to determine which activities were cost-effective and which were not. It will also provide you with benchmark costs for your program in future years.
- **Never let anything go out the door without reviewing it.** Because of the multiple reviews during the development process, you may be tempted to simply scan a product before it's finalized, but make sure you give it one last, thorough review. You need to be certain that the material is on strategy, has no technical errors, is culturally competent, and reflects the program's position. Determine your review process up front for each type of product (e.g., ads and press releases), and follow it to the letter.
- **Make stakeholders and local programs your partners.** Involving stakeholders in the development of your campaign is vital. This move will develop strong relationships with stakeholders, will build support for your program, and may help you to identify potential criticisms of your program and be prepared to address them proactively. On the other hand, don't feel that you have to incorporate every comment by every stakeholder. Consider all comments and feedback, but keep your campaign on target.
- **Keep your eye on your goal at all times.** Implementing an integrated, multifaceted program isn't easy. You may be getting input from the governor's staff, stakeholders, various contractors, and your own staff. There's a lot to consider and sort through, but no matter how exciting an ad or activity may seem or how much a key person or group pushes for something, if it doesn't support your overall goal, don't pursue it.

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