

A Publication of the
**National Wildfire
Coordinating Group**

Sponsored by
**United States
Department of Agriculture**

**United States
Department of the Interior**

**National Association of
State Foresters**

Wildfire Prevention Marketing Guide



**PMS 451
NFES 1252**

MARCH 1996



Wildfire Prevention Marketing Guide

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PREFACE

This wildfire prevention guide has been developed by an interagency development group with guidance from the National Interagency Fire Center, Fire and Aviation Training Support Group under the authority of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group. The development group is made up of the following representatives:

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

The intent of this guide is to provide the field Fire Prevention Specialist with the necessary tools to develop a wildfire prevention marketing plan. It has been designed to generate ideas and provide information to assist in the development of a successful wildfire prevention marketing program.

Use this guide throughout the year as an organizational tool to collect, gather and file information on marketing, materials available, and your activities.

Wildfire prevention marketing is highly effective in generating public interest in wildfire prevention.

Personnel who perform this job should have a significant wildfire prevention background.

This guide is designed to be a working tool. It does not contain solutions to every situation that may be encountered in developing a wildfire prevention marketing plan. It does provide a foundation of information that will enable personnel to produce a wildfire prevention marketing plan.

1.2 WHAT IS WILDFIRE PREVENTION MARKETING?

Wildfire Prevention Marketing is simply a beneficial exchange process between the agency and its customers. The key factor in this relationship is the ability to identify customer needs. It is up to agency personnel to develop products or services that will satisfy those needs. The wildfire prevention marketing process begins with an analysis of the types of markets to focus on. It continues with the determination of how to get specific clients to respond to the need for increased wildfire prevention.

Wildfire Prevention Marketing is defined as “The process of planning and executing conception, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and agency objectives.” This is accomplished by:

1. Understanding the wildfire prevention needs and desires of present and potential customers.
2. Selecting and producing wildfire prevention products that will satisfy those customers within the limits of available resources.
3. Developing a program to educate the customer about the benefits of wildfire prevention.
4. Ensuring that the wildfire prevention message gets to the customer.

1.3 WHAT IS A WILDFIRE PREVENTION MARKETING PLAN?

A marketing plan is an organized, documented, written communication that sets forth wildfire prevention goals and action programs required to achieve those goals for a given period of time. Thus, in effect, a wildfire prevention marketing plan is a statement of how an organization intends to accomplish its marketing objectives. More specifically, a wildfire prevention marketing plan does these things:

1. Analyzes the wildfire situation—where it has been, where it is now, and where it is likely to be in the future.
2. Identifies the opportunities and problems facing wildfire prevention.
3. Sets forth specific and realistic wildfire prevention objectives.
4. Defines wildfire prevention marketing strategy (that is, long-term direction of the agency).
5. Defines wildfire prevention marketing tactics (that is, short-term action programs) to implement the strategy.
6. Specifies individuals responsible for the execution of wildfire prevention programs.
7. Creates schedules and controls for the execution of wildfire prevention programs.
8. Provides forecasts and budgets.
9. Provides for periodic review of performance under the plan and for instituting modifications if necessary.
10. Provides a contingency plan to deal with developments, the occurrences of which are uncertain, but which would have an important impact on the agency.

The purposes of planning:

It is not the purpose of planning simply to produce a wildfire prevention marketing plan. There are three important goals of planning:

- First, and foremost, a wildfire prevention marketing plan should *produce results*—it should achieve whatever objectives have been set.
- Second, a wildfire prevention marketing plan should enable the fire prevention manager to exercise some control and discipline over the wildfire prevention marketing effort.
- The third major purpose of the marketing plan: to communicate. The wildfire prevention marketing plan sets forth the goals of wildfire prevention and the programs that will be employed to achieve them. It becomes the basis for obtaining top management approval, and it is the source of all implementation. Once the plan has been prepared and properly distributed to those involved, it becomes a powerful and important communications tool.

1.4 DEVELOPING THE MARKETING PLANNING TEAM

1. **Secure management support** – Without this from the beginning, any special event is unlikely to succeed.
2. **Funding** – Secure necessary funding if required.
3. **Include key co-workers and partners from other agencies or organizations** – Your team might include representatives from Fire Management, Public Affairs, Procurement, and any other resources that are interested in participating. If you are holding the event in conjunction with other agencies or organizations, ask them to name a representative to the planning team. Keep the core planning group as small as possible—it will be much easier to make decisions and get things done.
4. **Solicit volunteers** – Select as many enthusiastic assistants as needed to help with everything from setting up to cleaning up on the day of the event.
5. **When selecting the Event Planning Team, the following should be considered:**
 - A. Pick competent people. Be sure the people selected to carry out a task have the ability and resources needed to do the job.
 - B. Provide specific objectives.
 - C. Don't interfere.
 - D. Follow-up.
 - E. Reward good performance.

1.5 THE WILDFIRE PREVENTION MARKETING PLAN

The following outline displays a sample marketing plan format. It can be adapted for local use as needed.

1. Mission statement.
2. Program title.
3. Introduction.
4. Situation analysis.
5. Wildfire prevention marketing objectives.
6. The target market.
7. The marketing mix.
8. The promotional mix.
9. Implementation plan tactics.

The following pages provide example definitions for each of the above.

1.51 THE WILDFIRE PREVENTION MISSION STATEMENT

The mission statement is a non-complicated statement identifying what the agency position is in the marketplace and what the expectations of the wildfire prevention marketing plan will be.

Example mission statement:

Develop a wildfire prevention program that is highly visible, politically acceptable, and provides nationwide leadership in wildfire prevention.

Example program title:

Smokey Bear and Major League Baseball.

1.52 THE INTRODUCTION (EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)

This section, in general, describes the marketing plan, the product or service planned, the target markets, the level of program to be achieved, and the competition. Marketing and promotional mixes combined with associated strategies and tactics must be described.

Example introduction:

Major league baseball is family entertainment; Smokey Bear is family. Baseball is a summertime game; Smokey's message is a summertime message. There is a natural bond.

The nine- to fourteen-year old male is generally interested in baseball. The nine- to fourteen-year-old male is generally inquisitive about fire. It is with these assumptions that this marketing plan is developed.

This plan will provide for a wildfire prevention program that will emphasize the need for fire safety and will be communicated by baseball celebrities from each major league baseball team in both the American and National leagues.

This will be the first coordinated effort for a public service campaign by major league teams in every ball park in America in the same year.

1.53 THE WILDFIRE PREVENTION SITUATION ANALYSIS

The situation analysis provides for review of the existing situation and evaluation of results of the previous planning effort.

Review the previous planning effort:

Wildfire prevention marketing has to be a cycle in which the results of one planning exercise becomes input to the next. So, as you begin to think about preparing a new plan, the first step is to review the previous efforts and results and determine the following:

1. Was the plan appropriate and adequate?
2. Was the plan flexible?
3. Was the plan able to be implemented?

How well was the plan implemented?:

Review all materials that were developed as part of the plan. Execution must follow planning. This examination should focus on the quality and effectiveness of the planned activities and their consistency with the overall wildfire prevention marketing plan.

Example situation analysis:

The present national wildfire prevention program does not adequately address the problem of youthful fire setters, especially in the nine- to fourteen-year-old male population. Review of the past efforts indicate an emphasis on younger children and adults. This marketing effort targets this age group but will also be effective in all age brackets.

1.54 DEVELOPING WILDFIRE PREVENTION MARKETING OBJECTIVES

Define what the realistic expectations will be upon completion and implementation of the wildfire prevention marketing plan.

Objectives provide the purpose of the wildfire prevention marketing plan. They define what you want to happen as the result of preparing and implementing the plan. You must specify when, how much, and what you will do to achieve the goal. The following are principles for developing objectives:

1. Objectives should be stated quantitatively. This requirement makes it possible at the end of the program to measure how well they were achieved.
2. Objectives must be realistic and attainable.
3. Objectives should be consistent.
4. Objectives should be achieved within a specified time frame.
5. Objectives must define actual results.

Example wildfire prevention marketing objectives:

1. Formulate a consistent wildfire prevention program that can be implemented in numerous cities across the country.
2. Focus the marketing and promotional mix on the target market.
3. Develop a cadre of personnel to implement the program nationwide.
4. Develop a centralized materials development center.

5. Create high quality educational materials and provide for timely distribution.
6. Develop a media mix to enhance the knowledge and awareness of the principles of wildfire prevention.
7. Provide a quality wildfire prevention experience to both the urban and suburban environments.

1.55 THE WILDFIRE PREVENTION TARGET MARKET

Decide *who* it is you want to reach when staging a special event. Many special events are geared for the entire community and focus on reaching the general public, but you should consider, as a minimum, the following:

Target audiences:

- The Media
- Homeowners
- Vacationers
- Local Government
- Fire Prevention Organizations
- Community Organizations and Associations
- Local Businesses
- Contractors and Builders

Audience characteristics:

- Age
- Gender
- Income
- Education
- Occupation
- Marital Status
- Family Size
- Attitude
- Ethnic Background

General target audience evaluation:

- Ages 5 to 7 years old – Address primary activities, i.e., meet characters and receive a Fire Prevention Coloring Sheet, etc.
- Ages 8 to 9 years old – Create appropriate elementary activities, i.e., children meet costumed characters and receive a comic book or related item. A coloring contest could be incorporated into the program, etc.
- Ages 10 to 11 years old – Use activities similar to the 8-9 year-old age group, but be prepared to upgrade the materials to the upper age level, i.e., add stickers, patches, pencils, bookmarks, etc., to handout materials. This age group can deal more specifically with fire causes and the effects of fire on the environment. The “straight forward” approach will begin to have an effect on behavior. The living symbol of the characters may have limited success.
- Ages 12 to 18 years old – Handout materials must be more sophisticated, i.e., posters of sports figures or rock stars.
- Young Adults - Ages 19 to 29 years old – If this is your audience for the fire prevention message, costumed characters may have limited success. Useful promotional items, i.e., trading cards, travel mugs, team logo baseballs, golf balls, etc., are ideal premiums for handouts at the event.
- Adults - Ages 30 and up – This adult group is one sometimes overlooked. They can be targeted for specific fire prevention education concerning their own property; i.e., Wildfire Strikes Home, specific urban interface problems, and debris burning. Often times, the general promotional items like trading cards or baseballs aren't appropriate, but brochures, bumper stickers, pencils, homeowner's handbooks, or travel mugs imprinted with slogans can be very effective in educating the public about local fire prevention concerns.

Example of the target market:

Juvenile fire setters in the United States are generally males, ages 9 to 14. These individuals are curious about fire and will experiment. Statistics show that this fascination can result in damaging and sometimes fatal fire activity.

This activity occurs in all environments, from the inter-city to mountain communities.

The target market for this plan will be young males, ages 9 to 14, and utilize the value of sports figures as role models.

1.56 THE WILDFIRE PREVENTION MARKETING MIX

The fundamentals of the marketing mix are:

- **Product** – Determine what materials will be developed to support the wildfire prevention program.
- **Placement** – Decide where the product will be and how the customer will get it.
- **Promotion** – Know what communication techniques will be used to inform the public.
- **Positioning** – Determine if the product is unique/creative. Ensure it is good quality. Decide if it is meeting the needs of the community.
- **Service** – Know who the customers are, what their needs are, and exceed their expectations.
- **People** – Develop a cadre of highly trained and skilled support personnel.

Example of the marketing mix:

Product – The major product for this plan will be sports trading cards. The target market is enthusiastic about this type of material. Sports trading cards are extremely popular as collectibles, which creates a a fire safety message with a long life span.

The product will be a set of collector cards featuring a player from all major league teams and Smokey. These cards will also feature fire safety tips to increase fire safety awareness.

Product placement – These collector trading cards will be available to people attending a Smokey Bear Day at a baseball park near them.

Example of positioning:

This material is high quality, a one of a kind effort, and will provide fire safety information for years to come.

Example of service:

This public service, high visibility program provides for a wide range of customers to become aware of the need for fire safety precautions and will be especially effective with the target market.

This program will also provide for interagency cooperation and develop long term relationships with fire service partners.

1.57 THE WILDFIRE PREVENTION PROMOTIONAL MIX

Promotion is informing and persuading the target market of the value of wildfire prevention. The basic components are advertising, which is paid media placements, and public relations, which include all publicity efforts.

Advertising:

Advertising is a means of communicating how wildfire prevention is important to the desired client or customer. The primary task of advertising is to provide information, reinforcement, or assurance. It delivers useful information and maintains interest.

Advertising objectives:

Objectives usually fall into three main categories:

1. **Information** – Describes what the features and benefits are to wildfire prevention.
2. **Persuasion** – Convinces the client that wildfire prevention is important.
3. **Reminder** – Reinforces client awareness of the need for wildfire prevention.

Message development:

To develop an effective advertising campaign it is important to know what to say and why it needs to be said. Messages to target audiences can be developed in many ways. The best may be an approach that is dictated by the client group. Intuition and inspiration are valuable tools for the creation of a message.

Message impact:

The impact of the wildfire prevention message depends on the following criteria:

1. **Desirability** – The message must appeal to people's self-interest and needs.
2. **Exclusivity** – The message must be distinct to attract people's attention.
3. **Believability** – The message must be credible.

Media mix:

Media selection is no easy task. To start with, there are numerous types and combinations of media to choose from. Below is a general outline of some of the more common advertising media.

1. Printed media

A. National

1. Magazines
2. Newspapers
3. Direct mail

B. Local

1. Newspapers
2. Magazines
3. Direct mail
4. Handbills or flyers
5. Yellow pages

2. **Electronic media**

A. National (network)

1. Radio
2. Television
3. The Internet, World Wide Web site

B. Local

1. Radio (AM-FM)
2. Television

3. **Other**

A. Outdoor (example: billboards)

B. Transit

C. Specialty (giveaways)

D. Point-of-purchase (in-store displays)

E. Telemarketing (telephone selling)

Public relations:

Public relations is a useful marketing tool and a relatively low cost method of enhancing wildfire prevention programs.

Publicity is the art of getting the media to carry a news story about wildfire prevention without paying for it. The objective of a publicity campaign is to contact members of the media and convince enough of them to run the wildfire prevention story.

Media kit:

To contact the media you need a media kit, which usually contains:

1. A news release
2. A fact sheet
3. Sample product
4. Who's who
5. Public service announcements

However the publicity program is developed, make sure the topic is news. Answer these questions:

1. Is the story unusual?
2. Is it topical and newsworthy?
3. Will it interest a large number of people?
4. Is it of importance to the local community?

Relative merits of major advertising media:

	<i><u>Advantages</u></i>	<i><u>Disadvantages</u></i>
Newspapers	Flexible and timely. Intense coverage of local markets. Broad acceptance and use. High believability of printed word.	Short life. Read hastily. Small “pass-along” audience.
Television	Combination of sight, sound, and motion. Appeals to senses. Mass audience coverage.	Non-selectivity of audience. Fleeting impressions. Short life. Expensive.
Radio	Mass use (over 25 million radios sold annually). Audience selectivity via station format. Low cost (per unit of time). Geographic flexibility.	Audio presentation only. Less attention than T.V. Short life.
Magazines	High geographic and demographic selectivity. Quality of reproduction.	Long closing periods (6 to 8 weeks prior to publication). No guarantee of position (unless premium is paid).
Outdoor	Flexible. Relative absence of competing advertisements. Repeat exposure. Relatively inexpensive.	Creative limitations. Many distractions for viewer. Public attack (ecological implications). No selectivity of audience.

Direct mail	Audience selectivity. Flexible. No competition from other advertisements. Personalized.	Relatively high cost. Consumers often pay little attention and throw it away.
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Examples of the promotional mix:

These Smokey Bear Days with major league baseball teams will promote the wildfire prevention message by:

- Providing internal/external wildfire prevention motivations and awareness.
- Development and distribution of event media kits to communities nationwide.
- Pre-event publicity at preceding games on site.
- VIP participation and Smokey participation with celebrities.
- Scoreboard advertising.
- Public service announcement distribution.
 - Television
 - Radio
 - Print
- “Firefighters We Love You” video presentations.
- Personal appearances on site by Smokey.
- Smokey Bear opening pitch ceremony.

- Public address announcements.
- Smokey Bear autograph sessions.
- VIP interviews.
- Distribution of wildfire prevention educational materials on site and throughout the community.

1.6 PRESENTING THE WILDFIRE PREVENTION MARKETING PLAN

When presenting your plan, be clear and concise. You will have more success in selling the proposal if it is organized and prepared. The following presentation basics should be considered:

1. Always make sure the purpose of the presentation is understood by everyone in attendance.
2. Begin the presentation with a statement of purpose and what the expected results will be.
3. Develop an agenda.
4. Don't try to accomplish too much at any one meeting or presentation. Have no more than one or two major objectives.
5. Prepare carefully. Prepare both the material that will be used and the presentation techniques.
6. Outline in detail everything to be covered.
7. Use visual aids, flip charts, overhead transparencies, etc.
8. If a model or example is prepared, it should closely resemble the final product.
9. Rehearse the presentation.
10. Take charge and stay in control.
11. Be flexible.
12. Reach closure by the end of the presentation. Obtain some action or response to make it possible to proceed to the next stage of planning.

13. Summarize the presentation as it draws to a close.

14. Set the stage for the next step.

1.7 IMPLEMENTING THE WILDFIRE PREVENTION MARKETING PLAN

The first major step in the implementation of a marketing plan is the development of action plans, or *tactics*.

The nature of tactics:

Tactics, as just indicated, are action plans associated with a particular marketing strategy. They are distinguished from tasks, which are simply the routine activities people perform as part of their overall job responsibilities. The activity becomes tactical only when it is driven by the marketing plan.

Marketing tactics are identified by five specific elements:

1. ***What is to be done*** – This must be a specific action, for example. It is not a general statement. Specificity applies to every tactical element in the plan, whether advertising, product development, or implementation.
2. ***By whom it will be performed*** – The tactical plan must specify, by name, the individual (or at least the department) responsible for performing the action. This is an exceedingly important aspect of tactical planning. Lack of communications is the principal cause of organizational inaction and misaction. The people who will implement a plan must know what they are supposed to do. Getting this information into their hands is part of the planning process, and identifying them in the tactical plan assures that this part of the process has been thought through and that the necessary communications will take place.

3. ***When the action will be started and when it will be finished*** – Since strategic windows open and close swiftly, tactics that are not implemented in a timely way cannot be expected to work well. Note that there are two aspects of scheduling. It is not enough to set completion dates; an activity that is not started on time is not likely to be finished on time. It is far more effective to control starting dates than finishing dates. If an activity is late getting started, there is little prospect of meeting its completion deadline.
4. ***The specific results that are expected*** – Every tactic must have a purpose—an outcome that is to occur as a result of the action that is taken. Remember that the hierarchy of objectives is still in place.
5. ***How much it will cost*** – There will be an explicit, or an implicit, cost associated with every action called for in the tactical plan. Explicit costs are direct, out-of-pocket expenses directly traceable to the activity. If the action is not taken, the cost cannot be incurred. Implicit costs are indirect or overhead costs that cannot be traced to the specific activity. Marketing budgets generally are restricted to explicit costs.

When these five elements have been properly identified for every key marketing activity involved in the execution of the marketing plan, the planner can be reasonably certain that the strategy is achievable and can be confidently sent to the field.

How to prepare the tactics:

To begin, select a marketing mix component. Then break the component into a detailed list of all the actions necessary to complete the task. These actions must address all the “issues” previously identified.

Arrange the actions sequentially because there is usually a logic to the timing. Some activities must be completed before others can start. You are not trying to schedule at this point, but paying some attention to the chronology as the activities are listed will be helpful subsequently.

Now that the elements of the tactical planning have been identified, let us examine each of those aspects more closely.

- **Identify the specific individual responsible for each action** – This step in the planning process gives you the chance to consider how best to use the staff that is available.
- **Estimate the time necessary to complete each action** – This where street experience is important. Try to be realistic, but remember that most tasks usually take longer than they should. Build some margin of safety into your estimates.
- **Schedule the actions** – Work backwards from the final completion date, prepare a schedule of starting and completion dates, but recognize the need to coordinate interdependent activities.
- **Prepare cost estimates for each activity** – We have touched on this before. Since you will be dealing with explicit costs, you should be able to get acceptable estimates or bids.

- **Identify the specific, measurable result expected from each action** – Remember how you arrived at the decision to undertake this task in the first place. You believed it would accomplish something. This is its expected result. All that remains is to state that objective in an acceptable way. It must be quantitative, realistic, and consistent. These expected results will be extremely important in monitoring the program.
- **Group all activities for individuals into consolidated lists for each** – Think back over what you have produced up to this point. You have a list of actions, each of which has been assigned to an individual. You also know when each action must start, and the date on which it must be completed. You know what is expected to occur as the result of each action. Now you must get ready to transmit the tactical plans to those who will carry them out.
- **Issue instructions to each individual or department** – Issue instructions together with schedules, budgets, and expected results. You are well prepared to do this. You have just prepared a list of all of the tactical activities that have been identified for each person whose assistance and support is required.

Example of implementation plan-tactics:

1. Develop the proposal.
2. Present the plan several times to different levels of organization.
3. Get approval to proceed.
4. Develop the budget.
5. Generate liaison with major league baseball.
6. Develop education material design.

7. Conduct planning meeting with agency and major league baseball.
8. Arrange for project coordinator from major league baseball.
9. Establish product development team.
10. Contact each major league team representative.
11. Develop a product development schedule with each team.
12. Design and implement a support team for project execution at 26 cities across the U.S. and Canada.
13. Conduct training of event personnel, five sites nationwide.
14. Obtain necessary support materials for product development.
15. Conduct necessary photographic sessions for product development, 12 sites nationwide.
16. Complete final product design, get approvals.
17. Prepare contract specifications for product production.
18. Conduct management briefings, nationwide.
19. Arrange for product distribution, 26 cities nationwide.
20. Award product contract.
21. Inspect product for quality.
22. Develop media kit.
23. Distribute media kits and information kits.
24. Develop scoreboard messages, videos, announcer scripts, etc.

25. Provide for Smokey visits at each site.
26. Coordinate each event with stadium, team, and agency personnel.
27. Develop internal communication network.
28. Monitor each event on site or by assigned coordinator.
29. Prepare plan evaluation.
30. Complete national report and distribute.

Proposed Budget: \$210,000.⁰⁰

1.8 DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS

Identify your objectives:

The first step in developing a focused and successful cooperative program is to identify your objectives. Your objectives can include the messages you wish to communicate, the audiences you wish to reach, and the end results you hope to achieve. Having identified clear and specific objectives, it will be much easier to determine whom to approach and what activities to implement. You will also find that measurable objectives can help you evaluate the success of your cooperative program at the end of the year.

Identify target companies in your region:

After you have identified your objectives, develop a list of 10 - 20 companies in your region that you wish to contact. These companies may include local supermarkets, real estate offices, accounting firms, utility companies, banks—virtually anyone, because wildfires can have an impact on the employees or customers of all companies. Some of the companies you contact may be a division or branch of a larger national company. This should not be a barrier to you because most branches have monies set aside for local public service.

Do use some caution when choosing partner companies. Any company that promotes your message will, in the eyes of the homeowners, be a reflection of your agency. In other words, make sure that the company has the right image for your agency. And remember, it's important to make sure there is a “fit” between the message you want to communicate and the company you choose. For instance, if your objective is to reach vacationers with fire safe tips, you may want to contact camping supply stores for their support.

If you have difficulty identifying a list of companies, your local chamber of commerce may have insight into the most active and

concerned corporate citizens.

Identify specific program ideas for each company:

Once you have selected a list of companies, develop an accompanying list of program ideas for each. Try to be as specific as possible to help the company visualize what you want. It may also help to make a drawing of the proposed artwork or design to help bring the idea to life; a company will never commit funds to a cause without knowing exactly how the monies will be used.

Keep in mind that most companies work with a six-month to one-year leadtime. If you are seeking financial assistance, it is imperative that you contact companies early (September - November for the following fire season) before monies are committed elsewhere.

It is important to develop ideas that are appropriate to a given company. For example:

- A supermarket may be willing to tell its grocery bag manufacturer to print a supply of bags with fire safe messages.
- A real estate office might be interested in distributing a fire safe homeowner tipsheet to all new home buyers.
- Utility companies may be able to create fire safe inserts for billing statements.
- Fast food restaurants could develop fire safe placemats.
- Camping stores could distribute fire safe camping information to all customers.

Other general program ideas include:

- Sponsoring wildfire prevention messages on billboards.
- Producing radio/television commercials.
- Wildfire prevention messages on any type of package or

product (such as milk cartons, etc.).

- Underwriting the cost of wildfire prevention brochures to be delivered to every doorstep in the community.
- Printing of wildfire prevention posters.
- Local shopping mall exhibit.
- Distributing wildfire prevention brochures at gas stations, park entrances, etc..
- Newspaper advertisements.
- In-store wildfire prevention displays (commonly called “point-of-purchase” displays) that can include: shelf containers for brochures; banners that can be hung from ceilings to call attention to the availability of wildfire prevention materials in the store, bank, etc.; large cardboard displays that can accommodate a company's product and brochures.
- Elementary school programs.
- Placing wildfire prevention articles in company newsletters/newspapers.

Identify approximate costs for each program:

This step may require a little homework. Before proposing a specific idea to a company, try to get an accurate estimate of the cost for such an endeavor. Some programs can be quite expensive (such as in-store displays), while others can cost almost nothing (such as placing a wildfire prevention article in the employee newsletter). Always

check to see if printing or other production discounts are available to you.

As an example of how to budget, suppose you want to propose the idea of developing and placing a series of four 15-second radio advertisements to a company. First you would need to contact a local advertising agency to find out how many radio spots would need to be run to adequately cover the selected market. Let's say it is necessary to purchase 12 radio spots per week (Monday - Sunday, 6 a.m. - 7 p.m.) on five different radio stations. Next you would need to identify the cost to purchase the airtime. Creative and production costs to produce four different 15-second radio spots would also need to be determined. The total cost to the company could then be determined.

When working with outside vendors (designers or advertisers) try to get price estimates. Make sure the vendors provide you with the total price of completing a project. Oftentimes, items such as tax, shipping, and overrun costs (for printed materials) are not included in budget estimates. These "hidden" costs can amount to hundreds or thousands of dollars and result in a project running over budget.

It is always a good practice to "pad" budget estimates to take into account any such hidden costs or price increases (for example, increases in paper costs). If a company agrees to pay \$5,000, and the program ends up at \$5,500, you may have to make up the difference. On the other hand, if you come in under budget, you can always return the money, to the delight of your sponsor!

Determine the appropriate contact at each company:

This is an easy step that can save weeks of time, while a letter is passed on from one person to another. Simply call the company, briefly explain your idea, and ask to whose attention the letter should be sent. Although one's first inclination is to send the letter to the president of the company, in all likelihood, the president will pass

the letter on to the director of marketing, public affairs, or another department. If the letter is sent to the wrong person, there is always the chance that it will be thrown out or lost.

If you have a personal contact at the company who is a supporter of wildfire prevention, it may be more effective to send the letter to him or her. Oftentimes, your personal contact can “go to bat” for you. A person from within a company who can accurately represent your interests will definitely help your cause.

Send a proposal letter to the contact person:

The proposal letter is your first opportunity to present your cause, your idea, and your agency. It is very important to make a strong first impression.

Letters beginning with an emotional appeal and impacting information about the fire danger in an area attract the most attention. For example, the following sentences have been effective lead-ins for agency co-op pitches:

“We need your help to save lives and property this fire season. Let me explain.”

“We are emerging from one of the worst fire seasons in its history. During the past five months, more than 12,000 wildfires burned out of control, consuming over 900,000 acres and destroying more than 114 homes. Worst of all—the danger's not over.”

“There's nothing more heartbreaking than to watch a fire victim rummaging through the remnants of a charred home, searching for his past. If you, or anyone close to you, has suffered through a fire, you know that flames don't just burn homes, they destroy memories.”

After you have piqued the reader's interest by describing the devastation and danger in your specific region, it is important to point out that something can be done about the loss of lives, homes and property. Support your claims with statistics, or by writing

something like, “*the majority of the homes lost could have been saved. . .*” Next, demonstrate that public relations can make an impact by informing the community about your crucial wildfire prevention messages.

There are many examples of homes or communities that have followed agency guidelines, and, as a result, have been saved from fire while their surroundings burned. If you have a local good example, use it.

The next part of the letter must explain what needs to be done, and how that company can help. Detail your specific idea for the company, and give a breakdown of the costs involved. Be sure to indicate the publicity avenues available to them, and let the company know that you will work to get them as much visibility as possible for their efforts. Tell them how many consumers you expect to reach by such a program, and how beneficial it will be for the company to be seen as a dedicated and caring corporate citizen.

If you think the company would be interested in picking up the costs of re-printing existing wildfire prevention information, let them know that your agency can provide camera-ready artwork. Tell them that you will be willing to work with them to develop any co-op program that will meet their needs.

If appropriate, tell the company that the program is being offered exclusively to them. Many times, a company will be looking for a cause that it can “call its own.”

Remember to keep the letter short and to the point—one page, if possible, and no more than 1½ pages.

Finally, be sure to include with the pitch letter any useful

background information you may have about wildfire prevention campaigns and fire statistics for your area. This type of information can help “sell” the agency to the potential co-op sponsor.

Follow-up by phone:

In your proposal letter, indicate that you will be calling your contact back by a certain date, and be sure to do it. Allow one week between sending the letter and making the follow-up call. Identifying your follow-up date in this way will alleviate any doubts the recipient may have about who will call whom and when.

At times you may find that the contact person has not thoroughly read through your letter, and will have questions about the suggested program. Be sure to have all of this information in front of you when you call.

Flexibility is the key when talking to a company. Some of your proposals will result in an interest in the campaign, but not necessarily in the suggested program. Be willing to work with the company to tailor a program especially for them. Make sure the company understands that *any* assistance they can offer will help to make your area fire safe!

Remember that you rarely get something for nothing in a co-op effort. The sponsor may want you to redesign your artwork, have its logo prominently displayed, etc. Again, be flexible—the most important thing is that the message gets out.

Don't assume that just because a company is unable to help out this year, it will not be able to help out the next. Business environments, budgets, and personnel are always changing. It may be just a matter of time before a company has the budget, or inclination, to help you.

Schedule a meeting/presentation (if necessary):

In some instances, you will be asked to make a presentation to the

company before a decision can be made. This presentation will be your chance to show the company who you are, what your agency's role is, how severe the wildfire problem is, what can be done about this problem, and how the company can help.

It's always helpful to use visual aids during the presentation that show the devastation of homes in a wildfire or demonstrate how homes can be saved by being fire safe. These can be very persuasive. It is true that a picture says a thousand words!

Work with the company throughout the program:

Make yourself easily accessible to your cooperative sponsor and provide any assistance they may need. If the company needs camera-ready artwork to print a poster, or a news release to print an internal newsletter, provide it to them promptly. The more precise you are in executing your responsibilities, the more likely it will be that the sponsor will do the same.

Be sure to review any typeset copy or artwork before it goes to print. Changes may be made to your originals that result in faulty, incomplete, or misleading information being communicated. While you might not have control over the artwork that is selected, you do have control over the message that is conveyed. Make sure that it says what you need to say.

Send a thank you letter:

The final step is to send a thank you letter. Any time a company (or individual) donates its time, money, or resources, be sure to express your appreciation. None of these companies are obligated to support an agency, but without their assistance, it would be impossible to communicate our wildfire prevention messages to all of the residents and vacationers in your area.

You may also want to consider recognizing your cooperative

sponsors with a special award that expresses your appreciation for their involvement. Engraved plaques or framed certificates are thoughtful gifts that will tell the sponsor how significant and appreciated their support is to you.

Depending on the depth of a sponsor's commitment (money, time, services, etc.), you may even choose to host a news conference, or at least distribute a local news release, to unveil the cooperative program to the media. Public recognition such as this can go a long way toward encouraging repeat participation in your cooperative efforts. The more aware your sponsors are of your gratitude and need for them, the more likely they will be to renew their pledge to help you in the future.

A1.9 SAMPLE WILDFIRE PREVENTION MARKETING PLAN

Mission statement:

Develop a wildfire prevention program that is highly visible, politically acceptable, and provides nationwide leadership in wildfire prevention.

Program title:

Smokey Bear and Major League Baseball.

Introduction:

Major league baseball is family entertainment; Smokey Bear is family. Baseball is a summertime game; Smokey's message is a summertime message. There is a natural bond.

The nine- to fourteen-year old male is generally interested in baseball. The nine- to fourteen-year-old male is generally inquisitive about fire. It is with these assumptions that this marketing plan is developed.

This plan will provide for a wildfire prevention program that will emphasize the need for fire safety and will be communicated by baseball celebrities from each major league baseball team in both the American and National leagues.

This will be the first coordinated effort for a public service campaign by major league teams in every ball park in America in the same year.

Situation analysis:

The present national wildfire prevention program does not adequately address the problem of youthful fire setters, especially in the nine- to fourteen-year-old male population. Review of the past efforts indicate an emphasis on younger children and adults. This marketing effort targets this age group but will also be effective in all age brackets.

Wildfire prevention marketing objectives:

1. Formulate a consistent wildfire prevention program that can be implemented in numerous cities across the country.
2. Focus the marketing and promotional mix on the target market.
3. Develop a cadre of personnel to implement the program nationwide.
4. Develop a centralized materials development center.
5. Create high quality educational materials and provide for timely distribution.
6. Develop a media mix to enhance the knowledge and awareness of the principles of wildfire prevention.
7. Provide a quality wildfire prevention experience to both the urban and suburban environments.

The target market:

Juvenile fire setters in the United States are generally males, ages 9 to 14. These individuals are curious about fire and will experiment. Statistics show that this fascination can result in damaging and sometimes fatal fire activity.

This activity occurs in all environments, from the inter-city to mountain communities.

The target market for this plan will be young males, ages 9 to 14, and utilize the value of sports figures as role models.

Marketing mix:

Product – The major product for this plan will be sports trading cards. The target market is enthusiastic about this type of material. Sports trading cards are extremely popular as collectibles, which creates a a fire safety message with a long life span.

The product will be a set of collector cards featuring a player from all major league teams and Smokey. These cards will also feature fire safety tips to increase fire safety awareness.

Product placement – These collector trading cards will be available to people attending a Smokey Bear Day at a baseball park near them.

Positioning:

This material is high quality, a one of a kind effort, and will provide fire safety information for years to come.

Service:

This public service, high visibility program provides for a wide range of customers to become aware of the need for fire safety precautions and will be especially effective with the target market.

This program will also provide for interagency cooperation and develop long term relationships with fire service partners.

Promotional mix:

These Smokey Bear Days with major league baseball teams will promote the wildfire prevention message by:

- Providing internal/external wildfire prevention motivations and awareness.
- Development and distribution of event media kits to communities nationwide.
- Pre-event publicity at preceding games on site.
- VIP participation and Smokey participation with celebrities.
- Scoreboard advertising.
- Public service announcement distribution.
 - Television
 - Radio
 - Print
- “Firefighters We Love You” video presentations.
- Personal appearances on site by Smokey.
- Smokey Bear opening pitch ceremony.
- Public address announcements.
- Smokey Bear autograph sessions.
- VIP interviews.
- Distribution of wildfire prevention educational materials on site and throughout the community.

Implementation plan-tactics:

1. Develop the proposal.
2. Present the plan several times to different levels of organization.
3. Get approval to proceed.
4. Develop the budget.
5. Generate liaison with major league baseball.
6. Develop education material design.
7. Conduct planning meeting with agency and major league baseball.
8. Arrange for project coordinator from major league baseball.
9. Establish product development team.
10. Contact each major league team representative.
11. Develop a product development schedule with each team.
12. Design and implement a support team for project execution at 26 cities across the U.S. and Canada.
13. Conduct training of event personnel, five sites nationwide.
14. Obtain necessary support materials for product development.
15. Conduct necessary photographic sessions for product development, 12 sites nationwide.
16. Complete final product design, get approvals.
17. Prepare contract specifications for product production.

18. Conduct management briefings, nationwide.
19. Arrange for product distribution, 26 cities nationwide.
20. Award product contract.
21. Inspect product for quality.
22. Develop media kit.
23. Distribute media kits and information kits.
24. Develop scoreboard messages, videos, announcer scripts, etc.
25. Provide for Smokey visits at each site.
26. Coordinate each event with stadium, team, and agency personnel.
27. Develop internal communication network.
28. Monitor each event on site or by assigned coordinator.
29. Prepare plan evaluation.
30. Complete national report and distribute.

Proposed Budget: \$210,000.⁰⁰