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Five Key Features of an Effective Public Awareness Campaign

Careful planning is critical when tackling tough issues and creating successful public awareness campaigns. To be truly effective, these campaigns cannot be a quick and simple media splash; instead, they must be treated as far-reaching, strategic efforts with multiple layered components. These components can include everything from messaging, outreach and social and traditional media relations to influencer recruitment, government affairs and calls to action. When orchestrated correctly, these campaigns can inspire target audiences to fight for a cause and can help turn the tide on public issues challenges.

As with any communications effort, public awareness campaigns should be fully developed - with every component anchored by sound reason and clear intent. The messaging should constitute a blend of statistical and anecdotal evidence to engage the audience on both an emotional and intellectual level, and the goals and motivations of the target audience should always be incorporated into messaging points.

The five key features that OTM Partners believes are essential to effective awareness campaigns are as follows:

1) Conduct Research Prior to Message Development

Facts and figures alone will not drive change. However, sound research and hard facts coupled with compelling storytelling are the foundation for an effective campaign that will resonate with target audiences. In short, it is imperative that you understand every facet of your issue and every aspect of your audience. You need to know who your various audiences are and tailor your messages specifically to them. This is a time-consuming step in the process, but it is one that is crucial to the overall success of the campaign

At OTM Partners, we specialize in the development and management of nationally branded communications programs with a focus on corporate social responsibility campaigns.

Blending creativity with craft, we transform challenges into opportunities and objectives into outcomes.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is our business. Our award-winning team of CSR strategists has more than two decades of experience in the communications arena, and we understand that effective CSR programs are an essential element for succeeding in the business world today.

Whether you are looking to assess your current CSR efforts or to create a national program from the ground up, OTM Partners is the right team to help you achieve your goals.

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2) Emotional Connections

Your campaign messaging must motivate, inspire and energize. The most effective messaging is simple and memorable and draws people in with compelling emotional connections. Your audience will be able to debate research findings and statistics, but it will not be able to refute the personal stories and sentiment conveyed through emotionally charged messaging points. Once people have made the emotional connection to your cause, they will be more apt to commit themselves and their resources to it over the long term.

3) Drive Action

You can empower people to take action by creating and distributing valuable content that provides them with the tools they need to contribute to the campaign's success and offers them an incentive for doing so. Specific action options for various audiences should be provided, and supporters should be given a stake in the mission. If you show people that they have a valuable role to play and that their participation matters, you will build a committed network of supporters who are personally invested in making your campaign a success.

4) Connect with Influencers and Build Partnerships

Influencers are individuals who have substantial credibility within certain groups. An influencer could be a journalist, a blogger, an academic or even a celebrity, and many have a large number of followers as a result of their expertise, credibility or fame. Connecting with influencers and partners who believe in your campaign will help to propel it forward. Influencers can share your content with their networks and expand your campaign's reach to include a variety of like-minded individuals and organizations. Keep in mind, these influencers should be credible sources of information, and they should share your organization's goals and values.

5) Evaluate, Audit and Report Progress on Key Metrics

To ensure that your public awareness campaign is a success, you must define key metrics at the outset, track the ongoing progress and communicate that progress with your stakeholders. This will enable you to refine and optimize your communication strategies on an ongoing basis and will help to make certain that the campaign is a worthy investment. By maintaining a continuous loop of feedback for your supporters, you will motivate them to stay active and involved in your campaign effort.

OTM Partners has the communications expertise necessary to help you educate your target audiences about any public issues challenge your company or industry may face. We can work hand-in-hand with you to develop a corporate social responsibility strategy tailored specifically to your needs, and in turn, to help your organization highlight its socially conscious spirit and create shared value for all your stakeholders.