Tips for Creating Public Service Announcements

Public service announcements (PSAs) are about disseminating information and achieving a result. This result can be anything from a change in behavior to involvement in a issue. Here are a few tips for creating a successful PSA.

Use Imagery to Deliver a Message

With PSAs, they often come in the form of print or video; and with each you want to use the visual to help create a tone that is appropriate and delivers the desired results. Make artistic decisions such as: whether or not you're going to work in black and white, what kind of images you're going to use, etc. You can refer to our **basic video production** documentation for how to use shot size, shot angle, and shot movement to visual communicate with the audience.

Think about your audience and what they will likely be familiar with to help you with your visual message. You want your image to resonate in order to leave the biggest impression. A good example is using a buckled seat belt in a PSA about safety. You want you're imagery to get the point across.

Figure 1

Including Bold Statements and Call to Actions

PSAs work to not only inform, but to spur action as well. To do this, PSAs will often feature bold simple to understand statements that get to the point. These statements can include statistics and other information that will help with pushing the final part of your PSA, the call to action.
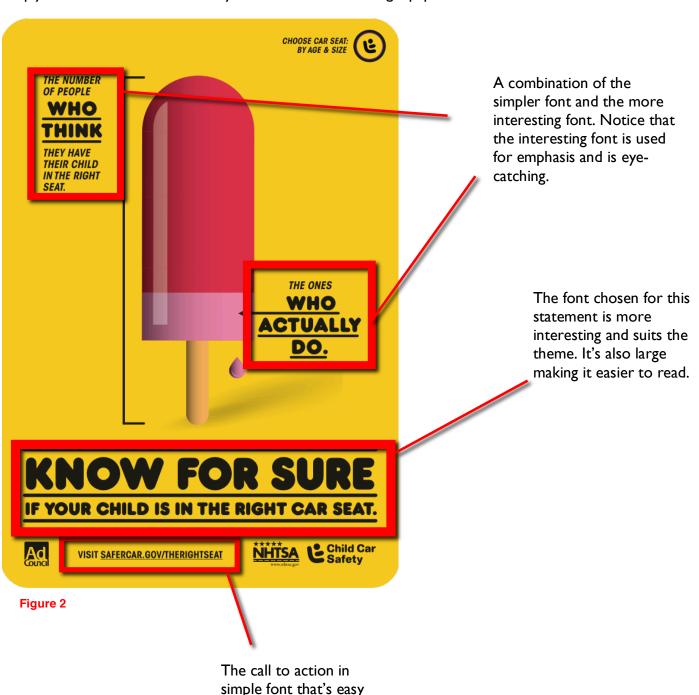
The Call to Action is the most important part of creating a PSA. It gives the audience directions to where they find more information, to volunteer, or to donate money. Often, this is a website. For a video format PSAs, the call to action acts as an end to a very short narrative and comes after your statement. With a print PSA, you will often find it near the bottom of the page.

Text Design – Print

With print ads, use text in an eye-catching way. Think about the kind of font you are using and don't just simply use the standard fonts that you would use for writing a paper.

Figure 2

A combination of the simpler font and the more interesting font. Notice that the interesting font is used for emphasis and is eye-catching.

The font chosen for this statement is more interesting and suits the theme. It's also large making it easier to read.

The call to action in simple font that's easy to read at a smaller size.

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Text Design – Video

In a Video ad, you want to make sure any font used is easy to read. Keep your statements short and make sure to give your audience enough time to read. If you can read a statement 3 times before it changes that should be enough for audiences who are new to the material.

Use a simple font over an uncluttered background. So that audiences aren't distracted.

Figure 4

Make your call to action clear and large for audiences to easily see.

Figure 3

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Figure List