

Road Safety Advocacy Toolkit

SELECTING MEDIA ADVOCACY TACTICS



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Selecting Media Advocacy Tactics

Why is it important?

After you have set your policy objectives and strategies in your advocacy plan and identified target audiences and messengers, you are well placed to strategically select the media tactics, or activities, that will help you best position your issue to the public. A common mistake in media campaign planning is not having a media strategy. The absence of a well considered plan can lead to a set of disjointed tactics that do not work together to help win campaigns. On the other hand, having a clear strategy can map your course to consistent, effective coverage that has an impact upon your target audiences.

As you conduct your planning, it's important to consider which tactic will help you achieve your objective, and what results are realistic. A deep understanding how and when to use various tactics comes partly from experience. However, even if you are new to media campaigns, there are general guidelines that can help you make effective choices. One of the most common pitfalls in media campaign planning is the lack of a strategy, and/or disjointed tactics that do not help win campaigns. It's important to think through what's needed to achieve your objective, and identify the tactics and realistic results when mapping your strategy.

The most important question to ask yourself when evaluating each potential tactic is how it will help you accomplish your objective and reach your audience. At the same time, you'll also need to consider what you can reasonably afford in human and financial resources. For example, don't plan a major television campaign if you don't have the budget for produc-

tion. Similarly, without the staff to manage a social media account, a social media campaign is unlikely to work for your campaign.

What needs to be done?

Follow this process to ensure you've selected the tactics that best support your campaign objectives.

1. Review the campaign action plan for your overall campaign (see the GRSP Strategic Planning: How to Guide for guidance)
2. Conduct planning sessions with your advocacy team about how media advocacy can support policy objectives. Discuss potential media tactics and how they might contribute to those goals
3. Once you're clear on how you want media to support your advocacy campaign, gather the following resources:
 - The results from your media mapping and media monitoring exercise, which can help you select which channels to target
 - Target audiences list. All the tactics should be aimed towards targeting these people
 - Key dates calendar, which includes important any high-profile events or milestones in your campaign. For example, if there is a particular budget session of parliament that you would like to leverage, you might select an op-ed focusing on economic impact of road safety. Or you might use the "hook" of a UN international day to conduct a digital campaign
4. Using these resources, you can begin to select your tactics.



Media Advocacy Tactics and When to Use Them

Press conference: What It Is

A press conference can bring widespread public attention to your campaign. During a press conference, you invite prominent or media-worthy people to speak to the press about your issue. Before choosing a press conference, be sure the content will be interesting to the public, and more specifically your target audiences. Generally, the media will only attend if they believe the public will be interested and if they consider your organization to be an expert on the issue. As such, it is important to strategically select the purpose of your press conference because you don't want to waste the opportunity.

HELPFUL HINT: If you do hold a press conference, consider incorporating a visual element, and ensure you have high profile spokesperson from your organization or partner organizations available to answer questions from journalists.

Press Conference: When to Use It

Strategically timing your press conference is vital. When possible, identify a date when the media might naturally be more interested in your use. For instance, while public holidays unfortunately tend to coincide with increased road fatalities, this can be an opportune moment for a press conference, because it dramatically highlights the need for road safety efforts. Other opportune moments for a press conference include the release of major report, comment on a major development (such as Government delaying a Road Safety Law), or the announcement of the completion of a major advocacy activity (such as handing a petition to a Minister).



A press conference held by the Russian Red Cross

Media Advocacy Tactics and When to Use Them

Press release: What It Is

A press release is a written announcement circulated widely to media outlets that can bring public attention to your campaign. Like a press conference, a press release focuses on a campaign announcement or new development. However, while press conferences are typically reserved for the most high-profile stories, a press release can be a less significant announcement, though it still should be of interest to the public – and in particular your target audiences.

Press releases can also be a good way of signaling to the media that your organization is an issue expert, and may result in future queries for comment on the issue or further developments in the campaign. (If a journalist contacts you as a result of a press release, remember to update your media contact registry. The GRSP Developing a Media Registry Tool provides a template to complete this task)

A well written press release follows a common structure and includes a number of important elements that will make it most useful for journalists. The GRSP Executing Media Advocacy Tactics tool provides guidance on good practice development of press releases.

Press release: When to Use It

Strategic timing is important for press releases as for press conferences (see above). As with press conferences, press releases are most effective if they have a “hook” to a timely event.

It is also important to ensure that you release press releases strategically. Sending too many releases can risk over saturation of the media and journalists might stop taking your outreach seriously.

Paid advertisement: What Is It

Purchased ads in a newspaper or on television or radio can raise awareness of your campaign. One key advantage of a paid advertisement is that you have complete control over the content and timing. However, often paid adverts aren't viewed with the same credibility as news stories, or “earned media,” since you haven't had to “earn” the interest of journalists.

Paid advertisement: When to Use It

Paid advertisements can be a good strategic tactic during a major event to ensure broader awareness among your target audiences. For instance, if you are staging a march or demonstration, placing a paid advert in newspapers beforehand can recruit more participants and get the word out about your activity.

Media Advocacy Tactics and When to Use Them

Opinion editorial: What It Is

Opinion editorials (op-eds) are opinion pieces published in newspapers that allow your organization to communicate your stance on a particular issue. Op-eds present a great opportunity to position your issue to the public and give it a personal “voice.” You can use an op-ed to advocate a particular policy position that aligns with your campaign objectives. The GRSP Executing Media Advocacy Tactics tool provides guidance on good practice development of op-eds.

Opinion Editorial: When to Use it

To increase chance of publication, be strategic when authoring op-eds. Try to link content to a current issue that is already in the press but also affects your campaign. For instance, if passage of a bill is delayed, you could have your CEO/Director publish an op-ed questioning why and calling for renewed action.

Having strong relationships with the media prior to authoring an op-ed is also important so that you can ensure you get published. Your media monitoring activities can help you identify and develop those relationships.

Publishing an op-ed can create additional media advocacy opportunities that are not limited to the original publication, and you’ll want to consider these before publication. You can increase the impact of an op-ed by sharing it through digital channels, like your website. You might also use it as a basis for twitter chats, Facebook questions and other social media outreach.

Media roundtable: What It Is

A media roundtable is a private meeting with key journalists and editors who are particularly important to your campaign. During a roundtable, you can provide both background and newsworthy information about your campaign and encourage them to cover it. It’s also a great opportunity to educate them on your issue and “frame” it in the way that you’d like them to cover it. Reaching out to new journalists is also good opportunity to build and augment your media contacts registry.

HELPFUL HINT: Keep in mind that some costs will be incurred to play host to journalists and editors, but it need not be overly expensive. You’ll also want to adequately prepare by providing an information pack that your guests can take away and use as content for their stories.

Media roundtable: When to Use It

Because media roundtables can help you “set the stage” for your campaign and introduce your organization and issue, they are most useful during the initial phase of your campaign.

Media Advocacy Tactics and When to Use Them

Radio or TV Talk Show: What It Is

Talk shows on radio or television are a universally popular format and offer the potential to bring widespread public attention to your campaign because of their large audiences. While the invitation to serve as a guest on a talk show is often difficult to obtain (particularly in the case of television), a talk show could be an opportunity to give a high-profile stakeholder, such as an MP, the opportunity and motivation to speak publicly about your issue.

Since it's likely that you won't have much control over how the issue is framed during the show, make sure to choose a spokesperson that can think quickly and respond clearly. Because the show host may intentionally take a controversial stance to boost the show's audience, you'll want to make sure your spokesperson is well prepared and has practiced responding to challenging questions.

Radio or TV Talk Show: When to Use It

Use radio and TV talk shows during key events in your campaign, like an important session of Parliament or a globally recognized day for road safety. Because they can require major resources - human and financial - choose timing that will bring maximum attention while also ensuring that you can engage a high-profile decision maker, opinion leader or expert as the spokesperson.

Like op-eds, plan ahead for how you'll repurpose a talk show to obtain the largest benefit possible. Share recordings of radio and TV talk shows through digital and social media following the airing and consider sharing the recording with journalists to interest them in follow up stories on your issue.



Sinthay Neb, Director of the Advocacy and Policy Institute in Cambodia, in an interview with a television channel on the role of API in promoting road safety and new road traffic law enforcement

Media Advocacy Tactics and When to Use Them

Social media: What It Is

Social media tactics include internet-based communications channels, like Facebook, twitter and Instagram, which engage your target audiences and inspire them to take online and offline action to support your campaign objectives. Social media differs from traditional media channels by operating on 'peer-to-peer' communications, where information is shared and exchanged among friends or followers, instead of being directly consumed from one single information source. Social media requires considerable human resource capacity but can be a powerful driver in building support and constituencies for your campaign. Implementing a campaign on Facebook or Twitter can educate public activists and mobilize them to take action to pressure a decision-maker or decision-making process for your campaign (e.g. petition signing, attending an event etc.).

Social Media: When To Use It

You can use social media campaigns at any time during your campaign. Consider increasing your online campaign activity during time periods where you want to directly engage with key stakeholders that are active online, such as policy decision-makers, or key opinion leaders who have influence on a policy maker.

SMS Campaign: What It Is

Mobile phone based communications can be an effective means in reaching large numbers of people, especially in rural and highly dispersed environments. Mobile phones consistently have the greatest reach of any communications channel and can allow you to target your messages to groups in specific areas or regions.

Implementing an SMS campaign consists of short, text-only messages that arrive directly to an individual's phone after the recipient has signed up or opted-in for updates by texting to a 'short code' or special number reserved for the campaign. One drawback of SMS campaigns is that you'll usually be limited to a short sentence or phrase. However, potential exists for interactivity, as the recipient can reply using a similarly short text message, or take another action that you specify.

SMS Campaign: When To Use It

Mobile SMS-based campaigns are often paired with other activities in order to increase engagement and interactivity. For example, SMS campaigns can be an effective complement to advocacy events such as demonstrations. Being able to quickly mobilize a large number of people through SMS may result in a much more significant amount of people engaging in your event, and therefore leading to broader earned media coverage.

Media Advocacy Resources and When to Use Them

Media advocacy resources are communications materials that support your other media tactics and advocacy activities. They can provide critical background information, highlight statistics and “put a face” on your issue for journalists. Having media advocacy resources at hand can help to generate coverage for your issue. Journalists are busy people, and the more information they have at their fingertips about your issue, the more likely they will be to cover it. Most media advocacy resources can also be shared with your target audiences during meetings and events as a “take-home” resource that provides context and further information on your issue.

Leave Behind: What It Is

Leave behinds are an important communications tool for meetings and events, and can also provide useful background for journalists. A leave should include clearly presented, non-technical language describing your issue and campaign in no more than one double-sided page. The GRSP Executing Media Advocacy Tactics tool provides guidance on good practice development of leave behinds.

Leave Behind: When to Use It

Create and produce a leave behind before a major event, meeting, or discussion with the press.

Testimonial: What It Is

A testimonial is a first-person account by someone who has been affected by your issue. This could be with those impacted by a road crash, their family, or a first responder. Testimonials are generally presented in an interview format – either written or visual – and can appear in an article, online or in a newsletter. You can provide journalists with effective testimonials for their “human interest” stories, either as a pre-packaged product you’ve created, or as the individual themselves, who can share their story directly on radio or television.

Testimonial: When to Use It

Use testimonials at any time during your campaign to put a human face on your issue. They can be particularly effective when you want or need to make a personal connection between the target audience and your issue.

Case study: What It Is

A case study is a story that showcases another intervention or campaign that has been successful at addressing a similar problem or issue. A case study is useful in building credibility for your campaign and providing proof that your approach is proven.

Case Study: When to Use It

A case study can be effective at any time during your campaign.



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