Pre-Testing as an Integral Part of a Public Communications Campaign:
A case study of the campaign against speeding in Ghana   *Kweku Rockson*

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Abstract
The objective of this study was to show how critical pre-testing is, in any public communications campaign by looking at the campaign against speeding undertaken by the National Road Safety Commission. It entailed the use of the qualitative approach for conducting individual in-depth interviews among 130 respondents. The media used for the pretesting were TV, radio, posters and a brochure, covering the three main concepts: Speed Limiter/Speed Sticker, Guardian Angel and Speeding Kills. As far as comprehension was concerned the Speed Limiter concept was clear mainly for the TV and poster. The Guardian Angel was however not very clear to respondents. In terms of appeal, the commercials were regarded as appropriate and respondents did not have any dislikes, neither were there any offensive aspects. They indicated that they would be motivated to change their behaviour by the commercials. The respondents also found the music and concepts appropriate and culturally suitable. A number of suggestions were made, like the need for the people in the Guardian Angel concept to wear seat belts, improve on the sound, make the posters more explanatory and show other causes of accidents. Utilising benefits from other pre-testing activities worldwide, a case is made for incorporating pre-testing in all public communication campaigns.

Introduction

Communication campaigns have always been an integral part of human endeavour since it became inevitable that public service, political communication and/or commercial messages had to be delivered to mass or designated audiences. Specifically social marketing has become a major vehicle for transmitting socially relevant information. In recent times, mass or nation-wide campaigns have been related to commercial products (goods and services) campaigns, social marketing or political campaigns. During specific seasons, before or during elections, political campaigns, through the vehicle of verbal and non verbal communication become very manifest.

Commercial marketing and social marketing principles are the major means by which causes are advanced on a routine basis. The more pressing and popular marketing technique used is the commercial marketing approach. In fact social marketing is a major derivative in this sense. The ultimate goal in this situation is to create a conducive atmosphere for the voluntary compliance, avoidance or a modification of present or past behaviour. It is the individual, family, group/association or the society which stands to gain under the circumstances.

In fact, there are striking similarities and differences between social and commercial marketing (Communication, Behaviour Change and Health. A Trainer's Guide, 2006). For similarities, first the offering is made appealing to the audience basically through customer orientation principles and second marketing research is utilized for producing effective strategies. Third, both approaches segment audiences and the tactics are customised for the peculiar demands of all segments. Fourth, the five Ps need to be incorporated apart from the traditional advertising and finally the results are measured and used for improvement, making feedback critical in the process.

There are differences which show that, first, commercial marketing sells goods and services while social marketing sells behaviour change and in some situations expected behaviour involves the purchase of products like contraceptives. Second, while the commercial version is geared towards monetary rewards the other strives at attaining individual or social rewards. Third, the competing

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products/services are vendors of similar goods and services or satisfying similar needs for the commercial marketer, while for social marketing the competitors are the target's current or preferred behaviour and perceived benefits. Finally social marketing poses greater challenges for the target than commercial marketing when it comes to eventual motivation to use a product or engage in a desirable behaviour or practice.

There are examples like addictive behaviour (smoking), resisting peer pressure (pre-marital sex) or doing something extra (pull over to use a cellular phones). Others are, engage in new habits like undertaking regular exercise, spend more money like using recycled paper. There are expected practices which will make you embarrassed, like some types of medical examinations or hear bad news like checking your HIV status and lastly reducing levels of pleasure like using a condom.

While social marketing campaigns are an important component of public campaigns, the specific matter of contention here is the significance of pretesting as an intrinsic requirement in the whole campaign process. For advertisers, whether from the social or commercial marketing sector, the principle of using marketing techniques to promote goods or services is accepted. The missing link is more in the area of formative research, especially in pretesting concepts/messages which will drive the public communication campaign.

Such pre-meditated messages have encompassed the various media especially print, radio and television. A scrutiny of such mass communication efforts have shown that sponsors of communication campaigns have concentrated more on paying for Message Design and Development and eventual Media Planning and Message Dissemination. Not much premium is paid to covering the cost for pre-testing, sometimes described as field-testing   (Developing Materials on HIV/AIDS/STIs for Low Literate Audiences, 2004,) or testing (Communication, Behaviour Change and Health. A Trainer's Guide, 2006) for communication campaigns.

Pre-testing generally involves phases within a campaign environment. Phase one entails a religious interpretation of a creative brief from a client/sponsor of a campaign for the designated medium or channel for promoting the concept in its raw form and its testing within the production company/agency handling the campaign. Phase two/three involves a review by the client, and/or the third an assessment of the concept(s) by select stakeholders as far as the identifiable publics/audiences and the issues are concerned.

This is an expert panel because it does not endeavour to involve the main target, which is the majority of the audience. The last one involves a survey of the target, especially by using qualitative methodology to determine the broad appeal of the concept. Information gathered from interviews with two leading marketing communication agencies which handle major public campaigns in the country revealed that pre-testing in its full assessment sense is not considered a priority by clients. Reginald D. Laryea, the Managing Director of MMRS Ogilvy, one of the top three advertising agencies in Ghana affirms that clients are not ready to invest in pre-testing. Another industry Chief Executive, Kwaku Mensa-Bonsu who heads Primetime Ltd shares a similar view. In 2007 and 2008 his agency handled the largest public communication campaign in Ghana, which was incidentally a social marketing campaign, to promote the understanding of the redenomination of the Ghanaian currency, the cedi.

The major objective of this study is to show the inherent advantages in incorporating pre-testing in every communications campaign. This specific campaign against speeding has provided a pioneering opportunity within the realm of road safety for the utilization of this critical approach to campaign design, process and implementation. Blantari et al (2005) have affirmed that evaluation of

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a road safety social marketing campaign is non-existent in sub-Saharan Africa. Their study had evaluated the effectiveness of televised road safety messages in Ghana. The literature however reveals cases of pre-testing being undertaken worldwide mostly in health, in HIV/AIDS training materials (Tuttle-Widdu. et al, 1991), public health campaigns (Whittingham et al, 2008) and principles of pretesting (Zimmerman and Steckel, 1983).

Atkins (2001) believes that conventional campaigns have very limited effect for many reasons. One of the reasons is that campaigns generate counterproductive boomerang effects. Sometimes the proscribed behaviour can lead to the "forbidden fruit appeal" and such a situation can be cured only by message pre-testing.Unless communication planners test their ideas, visuals or storyline with their audience, there is no assurance that the communication material that they have so painstakingly produced will work. It is further stated that pre-testing is a cost-effective means to prevent large and expensive disasters (Escalada, 2007).

This approach measures the reaction of a group of individuals to a communication or set of communications prior to widespread diffusion. Its purpose is to determine systematically which of several alternative versions of a communication could be changed to make it more effective (Bertrand, 1978). White (2003) in reviewing eight studies in his paper which looked at strategies to promote behaviour change showed that there were lessons to be learnt like audience participation in the planning, design and production phases and the need for message design and pre-testing to anticipate potential concerns, prevent a backlash against insensitive material as well as develop appropriate responses to such concerns.

Pre-testing is crucial in a campaign during the materials development phase. (Bratic et al, 1981). Material development covers the planning, researching and producing sketches for various media, designing, pre-testing, production and eventual prosecution of the campaign. Pre-testing is direly needed before materials are produced in the final form to ensure their appeal, attractiveness and cultural acceptability.

National Road Safety Commission (NRSC)
The campaign against speeding is one of the core activities under education for the National Road Safety Commission (NRSC). The commission was set up by an Act of Parliament NRSC Act 567 of 1999. The main objective of establishing the NRSC is to plan, develop and promote road safety in Ghana and coordinate policies related to road safety and also to advise the Ministry of Transportation on all matters related to road safety.

Generally the functions are to undertake nation-wide planning and development of road safety education; coordinate, monitor and evaluate road safety activities, programmes and strategies; develop and maintain a comprehensive data base on road traffic accidents and publish reports related to road safety and finally set standards for road safety equipment and ensure compliance.

The NRSC is supported in its activities by major stakeholders like the Department of Urban Roads (DUR), Department of Feeder Roads (DFR), Ghana Highways Authority (GHA), the Building and Roads Research Institute (BRRI), some NGOs, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) and the Motor Traffic and Transport Unit (MTTU) of the Ghana Police Service (GPS).

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The commission, with the assistance of these stakeholders has played a vigorous advocacy and educational role on the need for road safety in general and the steps to minimize road crashes in particular. The commission is made up of a team of representatives and experts from select organisations for general policy direction and superintendence of the work. The management of the day to day programmes are handled by a secretariat which is headed by the Executive Director.

The Campaign Against Speeding

Road Safety has become one of the important issues of concern, the world over, because of the cost of accidents to the individual and the society. Road accidents are noted for their terrible social, economic and medical costs to the nation. It is estimated that such accidents and their inevitable fatalities, cost about two percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. These costs include post-accident care and insurance coverage for destroyed vehicles. This estimate even excludes thousands of cases never reported to the police or where the parties decide to repair their vehicles themselves.

In Ghana, speeding has been identified as a principal reason for accidents. A poor knowledge of and /or sheer disregard for speeding protocols in designated areas sometimes lead to accidents in the urban, feeder roads and the highways. It has been scientifically established that just a little upward adjustment in speed can have debilitating effects with the braking length increasing with square of the speed. Driving a vehicle at a high speed decreases the ability of the person behind the wheel to act appropriately when there is a mishap.

In Ghana, research data on speed showed that over 90% of all vehicles went beyond the lowest legal speed limit by 50%. It is expected that there is now the need to evolve a speed management strategy with emphasis on medium to long term awareness campaigns which will lead to such road mishaps being prevented and/or reduced.

Speeding is a major cause of accidents worldwide (Krug et al, 2000). In developing countries, road accidents are now second only to HIV/AIDS as a major cause of death among persons between ages 15 to 44 years (Krug et al, 2000). Accidents on the roads are the major cause for most deaths through injury of between 67% to 88% of all deaths through injury in Ghana (Akorsa, 2000). Speeding is the leading factor in the incidence and severity of injuries to pedestrians with about half of vehicles observed in a study in Kumasi going beyond the stipulated speed level (Denno et al, 1998). Speeding is one of the thrill seeking behaviours which release the brain-reward chemical dopamine, leaving such sensation seekers with a "rush" (Stephenson and Witte, 2001).

The campaign against speeding which was undertaken by the National Road Safety Commission (NRSC) had the underlisted objectives;
- create awareness of the socio-economic consequences of speeding;
- promote speed management as an accident prevention and reduction strategy;
- promote the use of speed limiters in commercial vehicles;
- articulate the relationship between vehicle speeds and accidents.

Conceptual Framework for Campaign

The specific conceptual framework for this social marketing activity were Behaviour Change Theories and Models and these antecedents have provided the roots for Behaviour Change Communication (BCC). Such theories are viable foundations for developing comprehensive communication strategies and programmes. One of the most prominent is the Diffusion of Innovations model. This model has offered monumental insights into the phenomenon of attitude and

behavioral change. The model articulated the concept and process of wide promotion of change among the designated target audience as a whole and/or the well-structured segmentation of these targets.

The change in behaviour phase for a pre-determined audience often involves the person, society or identified institutions or groups. It is not a simple conventional linear process, but can entail a series of steps, sometimes forwards, other times backwards and even avoiding some of the designated steps. There are times when targets which have adopted the expected behaviour may relapse into the previous ways of doing things. There is therefore the call for knowing where the majority will be in any such situation.

A very clear identification of targets and the appropriate media for reaching them is therefore imperative especially since various media have their own peculiarities in terms of strengths and weaknesses. A broad campaign goal therefore has to be situated within the theoretical framework of the Behaviour Change and BCC goals.

The guiding principles are:
- BCC should be integrated with the programme goals from the commencement
- BCC assessments must be undertaken to increase understanding of the needs of the target and also the barriers to and support for Behaviour Change that their members face.
- The target should participate in all phases of the BCC development and in much of the implementation.
- Stakeholders need to be involved from the design stage
- Use various linked communication channels
- Pre-testing is important for producing materials
- Planning for monitoring and evaluation should be part of the programme
- BCC strategies should be positive and action oriented

The campaign also entailed an Audience research component which looked at causes of accidents and the ranking of such causes. Specifically data was elicited on the appreciation of the role of speeding in causing accidents and the conditions/occasions when people speed. The views of the respondents were sought on how this menace can be reduced or prevented.

Message Design and Development
The production of the message for the campaign against speeding for the various media was expected to be a short phrase/sentence/impression/picture/image which summarises this crusade in a simple and understandable way. It is the "take-away" piece which is imbibed and is expected to be shared with others within the target groups.

Based on the review of the research findings, messages were packed to meet the expected needs and perceptions of the targets.

The process entailed some steps:
Step 1:   Produce a profile of the audience from the research
Step 2:   Identify the desired behaviour change
Step 3:   Identify the information you want the target to understand
Step 4:   Develop key benefit statements to suit the demands of the campaign and still takes the interests, hopes and aspiration of the targets in mind.
          Any targets benefit will have to outweigh any disadvantage or "cost" the target may feel
Step 5:   Develop messages from these key benefit statements.

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Message Development Guidelines

There were four objectives, namely
- Produce emotional/fear arousal messages to discourage the anti-social practice of speeding
- Produce appealing messages to discourage the anti-social practice of speeding
- Raise the awareness and knowledge of target groups about the dangers involved in the anti-social practice of speeding
- To motivate drivers to reduce/abstain from the anti-social practice of speeding.

Two obstacles were:
- Attitudes, behaviour and practices of drivers who engage in the anti-social act of speeding at the least opportunity
- Reluctance of passengers and friends/relatives to advise drivers against the dangers of the anti-social practice of speeding

There were four issues under Key Promise:
- Avoid being in an accident in a speeding vehicle because this could lead to serious injuries/death
- Avoid speeding because this could lead to injuries/death
- Speeding leads to high fuel consumption
- Major transporters who use speed limiters and stickers are more likely to get passengers to patronize their services

There were seven Support Statements namely:
- Speeding reduces the chances of survival of a victim hit by the vehicle
- Our roads were designed for 80KM/H and only the Accra-Tema motorway has been designed for 120KM/H
- Accidents through speeding cause hardships to all victims involved
- Accidents can lead to death or hospitalisation of victims which cause hardship for all the families concerned
- Accidents lead to the destruction of vehicles and sometimes other property
- Speeding might be exciting and/or thrilling but can lead to accidents
- Speeding involves going beyond the posted speed limit which can range form 30KM/H in areas where there are children, schools, hospitals or road construction to 50 KM/H on normal roads and 80 KM/H for the highways

From the creative considerations perspective, the languages and messages for the media chosen were English and Twi while TV, radio and print were the major media. There were three options for TV involving first a single purpose message through a 30 second commercial aimed at commercial drivers and passengers to promote the use of Speed Limiters and Speed Stickers. The second was a single purpose message for TV through a 30 second commercial aimed at passengers in commercial/private vehicles to advise/persuade/control drivers who are speeding through the Guardian Angel Concept. The third option was a single purpose message for TV through 30 second commercial at all road users to reduce/prevent speeding through the promotion of the relationship between: Speeding and stopping distance, Speeding and chances of survival. It also indicated that the roads were designed for a 80KM/H speed limit and that only the Accra-Tema Motorway has been designed for 120 KM/H.

Radio had three separate messages with the foremost being a single purpose message through a 30 second commercial aimed at commercial drivers and passengers to promote the use of Speed Limiters and Speed Stickers. The second message was also a single purpose message through a 30 second commercial aimed at passengers in commercial/private vehicles to advise/persuade/control drivers who are speeding through the Guardian Angel Concept. The final one for radio was a single purpose message through a 30 second commercial targeted at all road users to reduce/prevent speeding through the promotion of the relationship between: Speeding and stopping distance, Speeding and chances of survival. Also the roads were designed for a 80KM/H speed limit and that only the Accra-Tema Motorway has been designed for 120 KM/H

In the case of the print medium, the first specific channel was newspapers entailing strip Adverts in colour and in the Centre Spread targeted towards three audiences. The first was commercial drivers and passengers to promote the use of Speed Limiters and Stickers, while the second was for passengers in commercial/private vehicles to advise/persuade/control drivers who speed through the Guardian Angel concept. Finally all road users to reduce/prevent speeding through the promotion of the relationship between: Speeding and stopping distance, Speeding and chances of survival. And that our roads were designed for a 80KM/H speed limit and that only the Accra-Tema Motorway has been designed for 120 KM/H. Three fold Colour option under print was a Questions and Answers (Q&A) on issues about speeding aimed at all literate road users.

Television Concepts

Speed Limiter
1.   Story board shows, a lorry park with a person inspecting the back of a bus and bumps into a female friend and he indicates the sticker for a limiter and explains its relevance.
They later board the bus and have a smooth ride. For audio, an acapella of the jingle is heard, the dialogue, a voice over and then the final jingle.

2.   The video component shows a driver speaking on the phone and notices that the passengers who tried to board his vehicle have opted for other ones. Driver now arranges for his bus to be fitted with a sticker. Apart from the dialogue involving the driver and friend on the phone, and later driver and his mate, there is a voice over and the jingle.

3.   The video component reveals a couple advising their son to look for a roadworthy vehicle and one with a sticker. The son does just that and spots a vehicle with a sticker and boards with relief and arrives at his destination. The audio component captures the discussion with the parents, the voice over and the jingle.

Guardian Angel
1.   An impatient and drunk driver tries to overtake carelessly another vehicle, prompting a woman to caution the driver, much to the anger of some passengers. The lady disembarks and later an accident scene is shown and to her dismay and shock, she realized it was the vehicle she had tried to travel in. The audio incorporates the advice to the driver, the disapproval of some of the passengers, the voice over about the need for passengers to be Guardian Angels and the jingle.

2.   Four friends leave a funeral in a new vehicle showing that the driver enjoys speeding. The friend in the front seat takes over the vehicle when the original driver is nearly involved in an accident. The Audi has been designed for 120 KM/H.

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3.   Two friends drive home from a party and the driver is prevailed upon to stop abruptly at a crossroads to avoid running into a coming vehicle. Later at the traffic light the friend now notices that the driver was sleeping and intervenes to avoid another accident. The voice over advises passengers to be alert and advise drivers, while jingle is heard in the background.

Overspeeding Kills

1.   A father is driving and the son is seated next to him and excited because the daddy overtakes almost every vehicle in sight. The father pulls over and makes a call and the son tells the father that all the vehicles which were dangerously overtaken have driven past them. The voice over advises drivers to keep their cool with the jingle ending the audio component.

2.   The commercial commences with a montage of accident vehicles and victims of accidents in hospitals. The voice over provides information on accident statistics and the cost of road accidents. Drivers are asked to "kill that speed" with the jingle in the background.
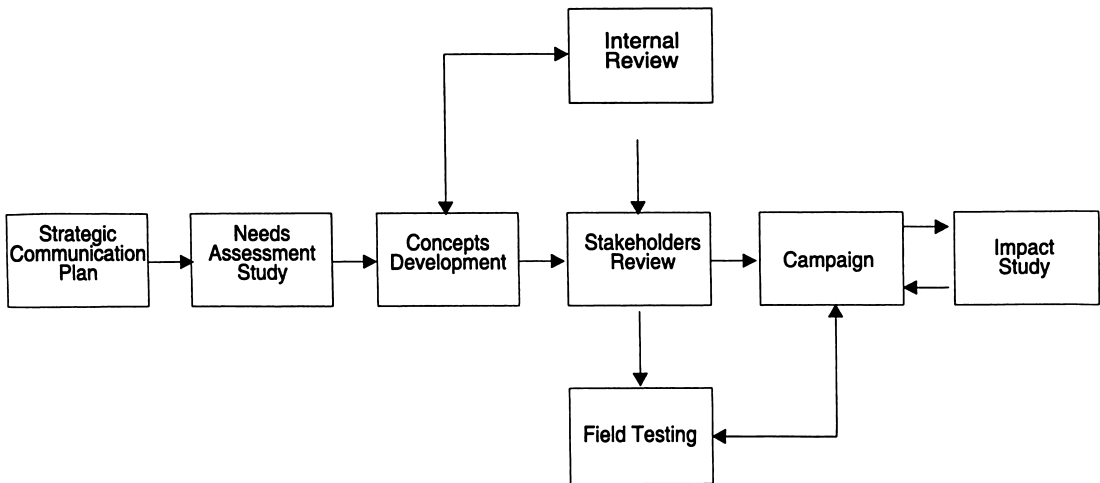
This campaign process entailed an initial situational analysis, a baseline study which elicited data on respondents' views about the causes of speeding, pre-testing and creation and placement of messages. Valente (2001) believes that communication campaign evaluation provides the opportunity to improve programmes and conduct theoretically interesting research. Placing evaluation within a conceptual framework, he lists three compacts, namely, formative, process and the summative. Specifically, the formative compact is used to test message strategy, effectiveness of channels, audience beliefs, motivations and perceptions etc.

This anti-speeding campaign also followed the path that Palmer (1981) suggests when it comes to formative research. He divides this type of evaluation into two phases, the pre-production and the production testing. Flora (2001) on the other hand identifies four categories of formative research, namely: audience segmentation and individual needs analysis, organisational needs analysis, channel analysis, and message pre-testing.

In providing guideposts for making communication programmes more strategic, Piotrow and Kincaid (2001) show that there is a lack of concern for pre-testing of messages and media with intended audiences, among other "notable weaknesses". Also they call for a communication technology, such as SCOPE software which leads the way through a step by step process to developing a strategic communication programme.

This public communication campaign was an essentially linear process depicted in the model below, starting with a plan which incorporates a needs assessment research component. It leads to the development of the concepts and the identification of channels for the dissemination of the message. These concepts go through three pre-testing phases with the final concepts evolving into campaign messages through TV, radio, posters and brochures. Finally an impact study will be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the messages.

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Pre-testing process in the campaign against speeding.

Pre-testing Process

First Two Phases
The languages used for the messages for the campaign were English and Akan (Blantari, et al, 2005) while for the media, TV was the major channel for the campaign and two phases of pretesting (Mock et al, 1999), radio and print for posters and brochures (third phase of pre-testing).

After the production of the Q&A brochure and concepts for TV, they had to go through the three stages (internal, review by stakeholders and field testing). First, the concepts were only for two channels because the TV concepts were to be repackaged for radio, posters, billboards and newspaper strips. These were the first two phases of the pre-testing process:

a)   Internal review and critique by the communications team
b)   Review by stakeholders consisting of NRSC, other communications agencies, the Ghana Police Service(GPS), the Motor Transport and Traffic Unit (MTTU), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), other road safety consultants, and public transport organisations.

After the second phase of the pre-testing, certain conclusions were drawn. The Speed Limiter concepts were regarded as inappropriate from a creative and technical perspective. The first Guardian Angel concept was set aside because it was seen as a drink driving concept. The consensus was that the final concepts for each approach had to encapsulate the creative intention with no technical deficiencies whatsoever.

Field Testing
This was the major task under the three testing phases. Pre-testing aims at measuring one or more of the following components of effectiveness which are: attraction, comprehension, acceptability, involvement and persuasion (Escalada, 2007). Another set of variables to be measured are: attractive, easily understandable, credible, persuasive, culturally appropriate, memorable, and important to the audience (Bertrand, 1978).

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This pre-testing effort was however guided by the measurement of the following variables:
- Level of comprehension of the concepts
- likes and dislikes about the concepts
- ability to identify with concepts
- whether concepts motivate change of behaviour
- whether respondents can recall concepts
- whether materials/media are intelligible, culturally suitable, credible, acceptable and appealing
- improve on effectiveness and efficiency of materials and enhance the creativeness in terms of their goals
- reduce errors and increase ownership through the participation of target audience

The approach for this pre-testing field activity was the qualitative method (Ulin et al, 2002, Velasco et al, 1999) through Individual Indepth Interviews (III) (USDA, FSIS, FSES, FTEC Boomburbs Communications Concept Testing, 2003) among experts, commercial drivers, private drivers, and pedestrians. The pre-testing activity was undertaken in three main areas of the national capital namely: Odorkor/Awoshie/Mallam, Ridge/Ringway Estates/Osu, Teshie Nungua/ East Airport / Baatsona.

This method was used so that it could provide more in-depth information on the materials pre-tested, which were:

- three concepts for radio
- three concepts for TV
- three concepts for posters
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) brochure
- Road Safety Song

This approach was used because it elicited rich, contextual data through questions like why, how and under what circumstances things occur. The whole activity entailed an interaction and interpretation. This involved the science and art of asking, observing, listening, reflecting and probing, always with the grand purpose of engaging people in a meaningful dialogue (Velasco et al, 1999)

The sampling distribution involved the four main targets: commercial drivers (25), private car drivers (40), pedestrians (50) and experts (15), all adding up to 130

Non-probability sampling, particularly the convenience sampling technique was employed in identifying the potential respondents (Blantari et al, 2005). The respondents were picked from transport terminals, (for taxis, mini-buses and full buses), offices (experts) and homes (pedestrians and private car drivers).

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Findings

Comprehension

As far as comprehension was concerned, almost all the respondents got the general message of the T.V. commercial and poster on the Speed Limiter. For radio, however, it appeared the message that respondents got was over-speeding and avoiding accidents. Only a few of them got the message that there was a need to have a limiter installed to control the speed.

In terms of the main idea of the message, the consensus regarding all the three media (TV, radio and poster) was that the campaign was about reducing speed and how to avoid accidents. This is also an indication that all of them did not get the idea of the Speed Limiter clearly enough.

The majority did not have any problem understanding the options for all the media. Only a few of them found some elements confusing, especially regarding the 80kph. They were confused as to whether the drivers were to limit their speed or the Speed Limiter was to limit it. Also, they found it hard to believe that the speed limit is 80kph.

With regards to the Guardian Angel concept, the responses given by most of the respondents showed that the message was not clear to them. This was revealed in their responses to the question on what they thought the message was trying to tell them and what the main idea of the message was. Most of them related the message to over-speeding and overtaking. It was only a few of them who got the message as being a Guardian Angel to advise drivers. As to whether there was anything they found confusing or difficult to understand however, most of them gave negative answers. Again most of them stated that the messages were easy to understand. This could mean that even though they were unable to clearly understand the concept of the advert, the messages about over-speeding and accidents were very easy for them to understand.

In the case of the General Accident concept, most of them clearly got the message and the main idea. They all said it was about road accidents and the effects of over-speeding. As to whether they found anything confusing or hard to understand, a large number again, replied in the negative indicating that the message was easy to understand.

And, in terms of comprehension of the concepts, it can be said that though a lot of the respondents did not get the concepts clearly, some got the general idea and understood what the messages were about.

Appeal of Material

Data gathered from the field revealed that most people liked all the advertising materials, and concepts. They indicated that they liked almost everything about the commercials for the various media. The majority of them also found all the commercials very appealing.

In terms of picture and sound clarity, most of them found the adverts clear. For TV and poster, most of them found the pictures to be of a very good quality. The sound quality for TV and radio were also regarded as being of high quality. Many respondents also found the posters attractive and the people in the posters, good looking.

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Dislikes and Offensive Aspects

The bulk of the respondents did not find anything hard to believe in the various concepts. As far as they were concerned, everything about the concepts was believable. Only a few stated that they found the extent of damage to the vehicle shown in the General Accident concept hard to believe. They also did not believe in the 80kph speed limit.

In terms of dislikes, a lot of them did not express any dislike for the concepts. A few, on the other hand, indicated their dislike for the 80kph speed limit, the sitting arrangement in the bus, the noise of the passengers (Speed Limiter), and the damaged vehicles in the General Accident concept. Some also felt the scenes in the TV commercials were too formal and artificial.

As to whether they thought any Ghanaian would find the advertisement upsetting or offensive, the majority of the respondents said they do not think so. In their opinion, nobody would find the materials upsetting or offensive. Since most of the people who were interviewed liked the adverts and found everything believable and inoffensive, it can be concluded that there are no offensive aspects to the concepts and when put on air, would not create any problems in the minds of viewers.

Motivation to Change Behaviour

It was obvious from the responses gathered that people would change their behaviour when they watch or listen to the various concepts. This became evident when most of the respondents said they are likely to change their behaviour towards speeding.

Appropriateness, Cultural Suitability and Importance of Materials

According to the majority of the respondents, all the concepts are appropriate for the road safety campaign. Also they described the music used for the TV and radio materials as "lively" and "okay"; which showed that they liked the music. Again the music was seen as African and appropriate. The people used in the advertisements were also said to be African looking and acceptable to respondents. Most of the respondents also found the people used to be natural, mature, experienced, lively/interesting and believable.

In terms of importance of message, here again, the majority were of the view that the various messages and concepts used were very important for the road safety campaign. They also thought the materials were good and would help in reducing road accidents and speeding.

In sum all the advertisements, the people used and the music were found to be appropriate and culturally suitable for the campaign. The message and concepts were also very appropriate and important in the campaign against speeding.

Suggestions for improvement

Respondents made several suggestions to help improve on the advertising materials. Some of them worth mentioning are:

- Other causes of accidents should be emphasized
- The posters should be more explanatory
- Other Ghanaian languages should be used
- The sound should be louder
- The people in the Guardian Angel concept should wear seat belts

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Discussions

The issue of pretesting as an inherent component of communication campaigns whether for public service purposes or for the promotion of goods and/or services for profit has always posed serious challenges for sponsors or clients whose responsibility it is to manage and fund all aspects of such campaigns (O'Neil, 1963)

There is, first of all, the issue of the appreciation of the concept of feedback as crucial in any campaign. Also the whole process of incorporating research in a campaign is often difficult for such promoters of such campaigns to fathom. Other factors like the issue of managing the process in an effective and efficient manner needs to be considered. Meanwhile there are hurdles like time and cost (Valente, 2001) and the requisite human and material resources needed for undertaking a pre-testing activity, the scientific analysis and the interpretation of the data.

This activity therefore becomes ostensibly a pact between the creative team responsible for message design and development, and the client. It has been realized that even though the sponsor could be a corporate entity, a decision as crucial as this may be hinged on the idiosyncrasies of the individual schedule manager or a small team. Sometimes it is obvious that the creative tactics utilised is often clear to only this small cult of persons with the same cosmopolitan outlook, in some cases all sharing the same socio-economic status. The resources utilised in terms of energy, time and money in most cases could have offered some room for pre-testing the campaign concepts.

It must be noted too that any serious pre-testing of concepts will pose some intrinsic difficulties. First, there is the matter of sample size, which within the milieu of qualitative research can range from a minimum of 50 to a maximum of between 150 to 200 (Velasco et al, 1999, Escalada, 2007). While stating the limited effectiveness of the qualitative approach, Lapka et al (2008) call for cognitive response testing, a form of qualitative method which allows for the paraphrasing of items, discussions of thoughts which come to mind etc. Second, in a multimedia campaign with concepts for the designated media, there is also the need to determine the quantity of information each respondent can absorb for a single interview. While too many concepts for an individual respondent may be hard to handle it is important to realize that sometimes a concept without other media concepts leads to a poor comprehension of a particular concept on its own. Communication campaigns are expected to be intertwined in terms of ideas, theme song, logo, colours etc.

Perhaps the most difficult challenge is how to synthesise the various ideas coming from the field and draw final conclusions as to the ideas to be used. There are technical responses which are critical in a campaign like this. The use of TV as the major medium is justified by Mock et al (1999) and Blantari et al (2005). First, the idea that the persons in the Guardian Angel concepts for TV and posters were not wearing seat belts, was a monumental defect which could only be cured by road safety experts. According to Cialdini (2001), even the advertisement regarded as the "16th greatest TV commercial of all time in the United States of America contained elements which prevent optimal effectiveness, a defect which, could have been cured by formative research. Also, to what extent does the minority view on any matter become very noteworthy? While the first position is technical, the second observation calls for a careful analysis of the position of the respondents and the extent to which any such component of a concept can be seen as very damaging to the eventual roll-out of the campaign and its expected goal.

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Conclusions

The concentration on TV concepts to serve as a basis for radio and posters confirm the supremacy of TV as a medium. Also the efficacy of the song component (Monaham, 2005) also shows how this medium in association with other media can impact positively in any campaign.

Despite the acknowledgement of the clear and present challenges that a pre-testing activity can pose, some extremely beneficial ideas emerged through this exercise which assisted in no small way in shaping this campaign. Apart from the seat belt idea, issues relating to the sound quality, and the duration of the radio and commercials were improved upon. Also the NRSC logo in the brochure was removed in order to make the writing more legible.

It is our expectation that pre-testing will become an integral part of all public communication campaigns in this country.

Notes

1.   Social Marketing is the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution and evaluation of programs designed to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are a part.(Andreasen, 2006,)

2.   These are the five Ps:
   * Product : what is the audience being asked to accept?
   * Price: the cost that the audience is being asked to voluntarily contribute in exchange for accepting the product.
   * Place: the distribution channels dictating how and where the product will be made available to the target audience for trial and/or for acceptance.
   * Promotion : how the target audience will be made aware of the product and its availability, as well as how this awareness will be translated into audience members' intention to accept the product.
   * Positioning: how will the product be seen

(Communication Behaviour Change and Health A Trainer's Guide pq 130)

3.   Personal Interview with Laryea, presently the President of the Advertising Association of Ghana (AAG) and Chief Executive of one of the leading advertising agencies in Ghana with a large clientale of local and multinational corporate entities. He laments the lack of appreciation of clients and a poor commitment to research generally and pretesting particularly. He explains that pre-testing is however an in-house quality control activity which is undertaken as a means of improving on the appeal and marketability of their concepts for their campaigns.

4.   The interview with Mensa Bonsu, who is also a lecturer in Advertising at the School of Communication Studies (SCS), University of Ghana indicates that clients do not perceive pre-testing of concepts/messages as crucial in the whole process of promoting nation-wide campaigns.

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5. The campaigns reviewed included
   - Project Smiles : Touch a Child who has been Touched by AIDS"
   - Oral Contraception and Condom Use"
   - Abstinence and Condom Use"
   - Use a Condom Every time"
   - Women's Issues and Condom Use"
   - Save Jamaica AIDS Support
   - Anti-Stigma and Discrimination Campaign
   - Prevention of Mother to Child Transmissio

6. O'Neil is skeptical about the usefulness of the main method for pretesting and the measurement of the common variables. He supports Canter (1958) who says that what pre-testing measures is not necessarily related to the objective of most advertising, which is the establishment of attitudes favourably disposing the consumer towards the advertised products. Another sceptic is Dunn (1956) who opines that although sales are the ideal test of advertisements effectiveness, an advertisement may also have long range effectiveness since it pre-conditions a reader towards a brand for a purchase in future.

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