Best Practices in Communications Auditing

Scott D. Upham
President & Chief Executive Officer
Valient Solutions Market Research

American Association of Port Authorities
Public Relations Seminar
June 24, 2009
“Shooting from the hip”

Without focus…

Without knowing your audience…

Without testing your message before campaign launch…

Without measuring the impact of your communications campaign…
What is the optimal method of optimizing your communications and accurately measuring the impact of your campaign?

- Identify your audience.
- Measure pre-campaign awareness, consideration and willingness to participate levels with your audience.
- Test your messages with your audience.
- Fine tune your communications.
- Execute your campaign.
- Measure post-campaign awareness, consideration and willingness to participate levels with your audience.
- Compare the pre-campaign and post-campaign results to determine campaign impact and return-on-investment (ROI).
Who is your audience?

- Public at large
- Geographic-based community audiences
- Port, shipping & logistics businesses
- Chambers of Commerce
- State & local governments
- Federal government
- All of the above
What type of metrics are used in measuring the effectiveness of consumer focused communications?

• Pre & post campaign metrics

✓ Level of awareness
✓ Level of consideration
✓ Level of participation
✓ Behavioral change measurement
How can you measure your communications effective and your campaign’s success?

• Primary market research

• Media monitoring services
  ✓ Spokespeople, product & service mentions
  ✓ Television, newspaper, magazine mentions

• Social media monitoring
What are the most effective methods of measuring the effectiveness of these metrics?

• **Mail Surveys**
  - Response rates vary, 5-20% on average.
  - More expensive due to postal rate and printing cost increases.
  - Higher response rates from older generation respondents ages 55+, poor for reaching younger respondents.

• **Telephone Polls**
  - Declining in popularity due to the transition to cell phones, Do-Not-Call list and Caller ID.
What are the most effective methods of measuring the effectiveness of these metrics?

- **Online Surveys**

  ✓ Online panels can provide geographically targeted sampling.

  ✓ U.S Internet penetration is ~85%, largely representative of the general U.S. population.

  ✓ Some access limitations in rural, low income and undeveloped areas.

  ✓ Good for reaching respondents ages 18-65, public, business and government audiences.
What are the most effective methods of measuring the effectiveness of these metrics?

- **Focus Groups**
  - Good for qualitative subject matter.
  - In-depth discussions can reveal insights that quantitative research methods miss.
  - New online focus group technology can reduce the cost and increase the flexibility of this methodology.
“Don’t drink your own Kool-Aid”

- Independent, third party measurement of campaign metrics and outcomes is essential.

- PR and advertising agencies often utilize research firms for message ideation, concept testing, copy testing and advertisement effectiveness measurement.

- Use a market research expert to achieve statistically valid results.