

THE KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION
PUBLIC SERVICE ADVERTISING FORUM
THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC SERVICE ADVERTISING
FEBRUARY 21, 2002
WASHINGTON, DC

MR. MATT JAMES: If you are paying close attention to the program, you'll note that I am not Drew Altman, President of the Kaiser Family Foundation. Drew was--had to stay in California on some pressing matters and so he asked me to pinch-hit for him. I'm Matt James, Senior Vice-president of the Kaiser Family Foundation.

And for those of you who've had the opportunity to see Drew speak and have had I guess I would call it an opportunity to see me speak, you'll know that having me in his place is kind of like going to see the producers and being told Nathan Lane is ill and is being replaced by Ned Beatty. But I'll do my best to try and get us off on the right foot here today.

First, I'd like to really thank everyone for taking the time to come here. The response to this conference has been absolutely overwhelming. For those of you who would like to later be able to view parts of the conference, look at some of the materials that were released, etc. The conference is being carried live right now on Kaisernetwork.org which is our free Webcasting service. And within 24 hours, we'll have the entire transcript and all of the material from the conference available online.

Public service announcements are the most visible elements of public education campaigns. They're often the most exhilarating part of public education efforts, too. But they're often some of the most frustrating and disappointing parts of public education efforts.

In talking with a great many of you in the lead up to this conference, I was struck how similar the experiences of many people were when it came to public service announcements. Many of you reported starting off with very high hopes, struggling to get creative, but then met what research told you would be an effective message. And then being disappointed with the results of the campaign often because of lack of exposure or the inability to effectively reach your target audience.

To be sure, an awful lot of you also told us real success stories about your campaigns. We have, I think Jay Winston is going to be here today who has done some remarkable job as we all know in public service advertising. And we at Kaiser have had a lot of really good successes with some of our media partners, most notably I would say with MTV in being able to reach effectively our target audiences with messages around sexual health.

Organizations become involved in public service campaigns for many different reasons. Sometimes it's just to raise the profile of the organization. Sometimes it's to raise awareness of an issue. Sometimes it's an attempt to change behavior or motivate people to improve some aspect of their lives.

At Kaiser, we mount public education campaigns on issues ranging from better parent/child communications to AIDS awareness to children's health insurance. And we use PSA's because we've seen how powerful they can be.

Now if I told that we had just completed a new nationwide survey of 2,000 teens and that 95 percent of teens watch television, 92 percent of them listen to radio, or that the most popular television show among teens was *The Bold and the Beautiful*, you probably wouldn't be surprised unless I told you that this survey was done in South Africa for South Africa's HIV Prevention Program, *Love Life*, which we run and which features the largest media campaign we've ever been involved in.

Whether it's commercial--a commercial or public service effort virtually anywhere in the world, we all know that there's no way to connect with people in today's society and especially young people without media. We also know that it's a rapidly changing media landscape with rapidly changing viewing, listening, reading, and clicking habits.

What does this mean for public interest organizations after what our principle mechanism has been for connecting with the public through the media, the public service advertisement. That's what we're going to tackle today. My own view is that there's more opportunity, not less, in this changing media world if we all adapt intelligently.

Now, one issue I know is going to get a lot of attention today and may be hotly contested is the question of whether networks are making a big enough commitment to public service time. Should there be a greater service obligation? Who should decide? Should it be the government itself or should it be industry?

At Kaiser, we try to shed light on issues like this through data and research. We do not take positions. And we're always encouraging balanced discussion as we hope we'll have at this forum. And I expect discussion of this question today and we have no desire to squelch it. But we also don't expect an awful lot will change in terms of the media's commitment to public service time given the commercial realities facing the media industry and the somewhat anti-regulation environment that we're in today.

So the question that interests us most at Kaiser is not how can we get more public service advertising, but how can we make the public service advertising we have more effective in a rapidly changing media world.

In just a few minutes, Vicky Rideout is going to be up here to present results of our new study on public service advertising. And with that in mind, we decided to take a look at this issue from a slightly different perspective, not from what networks are doing but from what people are

actually seeing. What does the world of PSA's look like, sort of looking at the perspective of the viewer.

So let me show you what the data would suggest from our study if you look at this from the bottom up. Now a couple of appropriate caveats here. What you're going to see is data that basically looks at what Nielsen data says are viewing habits. And we put together in effect fictional portrayals of what a viewer might look like and then coupled that with our study to show how much PSA's they would actually see.

So how many minutes of PSA's does a typical viewer see each week? According to Nielsen, 28 hours of television per week. Let's assume for purposes of this presentation that she is watching English language stations only with a mix of broadcast and cable, 10 percent of viewing after midnight which is what Nielsen says is average, and she watches an hour a day of morning programs like The Today Show during the week on the major broadcast networks. Weeknights, maybe three hours a night of prime time. Weekends, still watching prime time--or watching broadcast rather but also 4-1/2 hours of cable thrown in.

This typical viewer would then see 4-1/2 minutes per week of donated public service advertising. So how many topics would be covered in that in how much time. 22 seconds of messages about drug and alcohol abuse, 13 seconds of PSA's on HIV/AIDS per week, 10 seconds of education--on education per week, and 10 seconds on violence prevention..

Look at teen viewers. According to Nielsen, the average teen watches about 19-1/2 hours per week. Being the father of two teens, I think this is probably low. If we make up a typical viewing pattern for this teen, a lot of MTV thrown in, the Kaiser study indicates that he would see just over three minutes of donated PSA's. Looking at the topics, 15 seconds on drug and alcohol abuse, nine seconds on AIDS, seven seconds on education, seven seconds on violence prevention.

Now, what I left out of this fictional portrayal is that of course there are many other opportunities for kids to see public service advertising: through the Internet, radio, magazines, other ways that kids are having messages come at them also.

But, you can still see that an awful of messages are not--there's not an awful lot of time that's getting through to these kids. And for those of us who have been around public education for a while, we know that it's the repetition of messages that starts to have an impact over time.

Our primary focus today is going to be on the television side of public education since it is both the best way to reach the greatest number of people and I would argue the most expensive and highest profile medium in which most of us in public education operate.

Before we move on to Vicky, I'd just like to take one second to thank a whole lot of Kaiser personnel and I'm going to leave people out so I apologize to you, who have done just a remarkable job getting this conference pulled together: Tina Hoff, Jen Webber, Teresa Boston, Amanda Mitchell and most notably, Vicky Rideout who has done just a fantastic job in pulling the conference today--together today.

So, I hope today is a productive one. I'm going to turn it over to Vicky now to walk you through the data from our study.

END

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