



Question 20

How Are Good Pilot Radio Spots Made and Prestested?

In Question 19 you reviewed the basic rules for producing and pretesting effective print material. Now you will see how to use guidelines for producing and pretesting radio spots. The spots use the feasible behaviors, communication objectives, messages, and creative briefs you developed in Question 17.

Skills/Knowledge

By the end of the question, you will have accomplished the following:

1. Listed the nine rules for the production of good radio spots
2. Reviewed examples of radio spot scripts
3. Discussed strengths and weaknesses of the Caribbean radio spots
4. Written a draft radio spot (Worksheet 20)
5. Drafted your pretest questionnaire for the radio spot

Exercise 1. Designing Radio Spots

Materials

Copies of Guidelines for Designing Radio Spots

Instructions

Ask team members to read the guidelines in small working groups and discuss their content.

Guidelines for Designing Radio Spots

If you have to design radio spots or judge the quality of the drafts presented to you, the following guidelines will be useful.

Present one idea. Each radio spot should have one main message, which should be repeated several times within the material. Even a short radio spot can and should repeat the main message at least twice.

2. **Use a credible source.** Feature a source of information that is suggested by the audience as appropriate (e.g., doctors, other health workers, or community opinion leader).
3. **Break the mold.** Try innovative ideas and formats; e.g. using testimonials from the audience. If you do not have much experience, start out with microdrama format or one narrator with appropriate background music and/or a few musical notes to separate text.
4. **Touch the heart as well as the mind of the listener.** Make the listener feel something after hearing the spot or programhappy, confident that they can do something but make them feel.
5. **Stretch the listener's imagination.** The voices, music, and sound effects can and should evoke pictures and create images in the listener's mind. TV limits the watcher to a small screen and print material to its own size. Radio sets no limits at all. With radio, listeners are invited to use their imaginations to see health problems in new ways and feel and imagine health behaviors from different perspectives.
6. **Write for the ear.** Radio should have the same natural, spontaneous sound as conversation. Read your spot or program to yourself aloud several times to really hear how it will sound over the air. Radio creates images through sound. Sound becomes part of the message. Think in terms of sound effects, musical notes, and words to evoke images.
7. **Write to the individual.** Imagine the face of a person within your target audience and write for that person.
8. **Ask listeners to take action.** Be explicit about what the listeners should do to resolve their problem. Too frequently radio materials simply raise awareness of problems without offering concrete solutions.
9. **Provide consistency.** Develop a similarity of sound in all of your radio materials. This can be provided by a unique voice, song, sound effect, or jingle that is incorporated into all of the radio materials produced (and other materials produced as well). This sound provides continuity to the radio materials.

Now let us analyze some of the elements involved in a radio spot.

Exercise 2. Writing a Radio Script

Materials

Copies of Example 1, Radio Script
Copies of Questionnaire on Writing a Radio Script
Copies of a Radio Script

Instructions

Have team members read aloud the example of the radio script.
Ask them to answer the questions in the questionnaire on organizing a radio script.
Hand out the information on organizing a radio script.

Example 1. Radio Script

THERE IS NOTHING AS HEALTHY AS A LAUGHING BABY

<u>OPERATOR:</u>	<u>LAUGHTER OF A BABY</u>
MOTHER:	(TENDERLY) There is nothing as healthy and beautiful as the smile of a happy baby.
<u>OPERATOR:</u>	<u>CRYING OF A BABY</u>
MOTHER:	Nor as sad and painful as his tears.
<u>OPERATOR:</u>	<u>RAPID MUSICAL FLOURISH</u>
ANNOUNCER 1:	(SOFTLY AND CONVINCINGLY) Mother, the laughter and the tears of your child depend on you. Give your child more attention when he <u>most</u> needs it.
ANNOUNCER 2:	(SOFTLY AND CONVINCINGLY) A child less than two years old is more delicate. He needs more attention.
ANNOUNCER 1:	(SOFTLY AND CONVINCINGLY) Your infant is delicate; give him special attention.
<u>OPERATOR:</u>	<u>HAPPY MUSIC. LAUGHTER OF THE MOTHER AND CHILD</u>
ANNOUNCER 2:	And <u>enjoy</u> his laughter (PAUSE) <u>together</u> .
<u>OPERATOR:</u>	<u>THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH SLOGAN</u>

Questionnaire on Writing a Radio Script

1. How many columns is the radio script divided into?
2. The left column has three functions. Can you identify them?
3. What does the right column show? Can you identify three functions of this column?

4. What is in capital letters? Why do you think it is done that way? What do the capitals indicate?
5. How long do you think this spot will be when it is produced?
6. How long will a spot be if the text is one page long? What is the normal length of a radio spot in your location?
7. What do you notice has been done with the message in this spot? What has been the treatment?
8. What do you think is the communication objective of this spot? Can you pick out the communication strategy behind this spot? At what point in a communication intervention do you think the spot would be used?

Writing a Radio Script

Ask team members to compare their answers to the following text.

The radio script is divided into two columns. The left column indicates to the director or the producer who speaks, at what moment, and in what sequence. It also gives instructions to the person in charge of the production.

The right column tells the production staff the sound effect you want to be heard or the inflection, modulation, or feeling you desire from the actor. It also includes the pauses and sounds you want from the actor.

The instructions for the production staff are in capital letters. When they call for a sound effect, they also are underlined.

- The script has a communication objective which, in this case, is to touch the mother's feelings about how delicate the-under-two-year-old child is.
- The strategy behind this spot is obvious: to get mothers to pay more attention to their children under two years because this age group is most vulnerable to whatever disease the spot is addressing.

Exercise 3. Writing a Radio Spot

Materials

Copies of the Creative Brief

Copies of the Caribbean Script and four Caribbean radio spots

Worksheet 20-1, Create a Radio Spot

Instructions

Have each working group draw up a radio spot script using the Creative Brief prepared by the Caribbean team and Worksheet 20.

After they have written the scripts and presented them to the other team members, read to them the actual radio spot produced in the Caribbean intervention.

Have your team members read the other four examples of the Caribbean radio spots and comment on their appropriateness; i.e., how they meet the criteria of a good radio spot script.

Creative Brief

Media

Radio

Format

Five 30-second spots

Message

Make Measles History - tactical/informational

Audience

Parents

Communication Objective

Create doubt to combat complacency

Obstacles

- **Think children have had measles; why need a shot**
- **Do not believe measles is a problem**

Support Points

- **Measles still exist; last year there were more than 4,000 cases**
- **Measles biggest killer**
- **Many diseases look like measles; cannot be sure your child has had it**
- **Never need another measles shot**

Tone

Authoritative, dramatic, convincing

Creative Considerations

Portray voice of health specialist; mention MOH; must use "Make Measles History" at least once in every spot.

After writing a radio spot with the above information as if you were writing it for the Caribbean program, compare your script with any of the one done by the Caribbean team.

Make Measles History

Measles Elimination Month

"Myths about Measles"

RADIO (:30)

SPOT

OPERATOR:

Announcer:

OPERATOR:

Woman:

OPERATOR:

Announcer:

Woman 2:

Announcer:

OPERATOR:

CAMPAIGN THEME

(DEEP VOICE) Myths about measles.

Myth Number One:

TRANSITIONAL BREAK

(DISDAIN) Measles is nothing! It comes and it goes!

SOUND EFFECT

(DEEP VOICE): Now the truth:

(CONCERN) Measles comes...and can take your child with it.

(GRAVELY) Forever!

(INVITINGLY) If your child is between nine months and fifteen years of age, ask your health authority about Measles Elimination Month.

(TRIUMPHANTLY) And make measles...history.

CLOSING THEME

Study the following four Caribbean radio spots and apply criteria of a good radio spot script.

SPOT I

OPERATOR:

Announcer:

OPERATOR:

Woman:

OPERATOR:

Announcer:

OPERATOR:

CAMPAIGN THEME

(DEEP VOICE) Myths about measles. Myth Number Two:

TRANSITIONAL BREAK

(LIGHTLY) So if my child gets measles, so I lose a couple of days of work. That's not so bad.

SOUND EFFECT

(GRAVELY) Reality: If your child gets measles, he could lose... his eyesight. If your child is between nine months and fifteen years of age, ask your health authority about Measles Elimination Month.

(TRIUMPHANTLY) And make measles...history.

CLOSING THEME

SPOT 2

OPERATOR:

Announcer:

OPERATOR:

Woman:

OPERATOR:

Announcer:

OPERATOR:

CAMPAIGN THEME

(GRAVELY) Myths about measles. Myth
Number Three:

SOUND EFFECT

(LIGHTLY) Measles is a household
word...No big deal.

SOUND EFFECT

(CHALLENGING) The truth? Measles is a
very complicated disease...that could take
your child to the hospital with pneumonia,
heart disease, or even brain damage.

(INVITINGLY) If your child is between nine
months and fifteen years of age, ask your
health authority about Measles Elimination
Month.

(TRIUMPHANTLY) And make
measles...history.

CLOSING THEME

SPOT 3

OPERATOR:

Announcer:

OPERATOR:

Woman:

OPERATOR:

Announcer:

OPERATOR:

CAMPAIGN THEME

(GRAVELY) Myths about measles. Myth
Number Four:

SOUND EFFECT

(DEFENSIVELY) My child has already had
measles. He couldn't get it again. Why does
he need a shot?

SOUND EFFECT

(ASSERTIVELY) The fact is: Many diseases
LOOK like measles.

(PERSUASIVELY) You can never be sure.

(ASSERTIVELY) If your child is between
nine months and fifteen years of age, ask
your health authority about Measles
Elimination Month.

(TRIUMPHANTLY) And make
measles...history.

CLOSING THEME

SPOT 4

OPERATOR:

Announcer:

OPERATOR:

Woman:

Announcer:

OPERATOR:

CAMPAIGN THEME

(GRAVELY) Myths about measles. Myth Number Five:

SOUND EFFECT

(DEFENSIVELY) My child's had her measles shot already.

(DEFENSIVELY) Why does she need another one? And won't there be any side effects?

(PERSUASIVELY) Another shot can only reinforce and boost your child's immunity.

(CATEGORICALLY) There IS no danger of side effects.

(INVITINGLY) If your child is between nine months and fifteen years of age, ask your health authority about Measles Elimination Month.

(TRIUMPHANTLY) And make measles...history.

CLOSING THEME

Exercise 4. Writing Your Own Radio Spot

Materials

Use a copy of the same Worksheet 20-1 as you did for the Caribbean example. You also need the following:

- Your communication objectives
- The messages (feasible behaviors) you selected for the radio channel
- Your creative brief for the radio productions
- Your enthusiasm and creativity to translate into radio language (sound) what you want to accomplish by using this channel of communication

Write a draft of a radio spot for your intervention. Present each spot to the other team members and together choose the best one. Check the script with a radio producer for technical improvements.

Note: Do not attempt to do anything more complex with radio if you do not have expertise. Full half-hour radio programs, interview type programs, dramas, and interactive programs need and require professional expertise. If you want to do anything

more ambitious than spots, hire someone already working in the medium. This person should have enough expertise to translate the content of your messages into the radio format so that it achieves your objectives.

Exercise 5. Pretesting Radio Spots

Materials

Copies of Pretesting Radio Spots

Instructions

Ask a team member to study this section and make a presentation to the rest of the team.

Keep a copy of this exercise at hand during the presentation to make sure the following key points are covered:

1. Preparing the pretest
 - Preparing the pretest material
 - Playing the tape
 - Identifying the tape in questionnaire
2. Doing the interview
 - Asking the question variables
3. Asking the comparison question

Pretesting Radio Spots

Preparing the Pretest Material

For purposes of pretesting, a radio spot is defined as a short announcement with a particular message. If there are several announcements for a single message, they will be referred to as versions of the same spot.

The radio spot should be recorded with all of the characteristics of a final production; i.e., complete with sound, special effects, and music. If there are no professional announcers in the office, staff members of the health communication office itself can, with proper guidance, record a spot with acceptable quality for pretesting purposes. In this way, you can avoid payments to professional actors or announcers for a spot that will probably be modified after the pretest.

If only one version is being pretested, it should be recorded two times in succession with a small pause between recordings. In this manner the respondent can hear the spot twice without having to turn off the tape recorder.

If there are two versions of the same spot, the cassette should be identified with the letters A and B to indicate two versions. Version A is recorded twice with a small pause between each taping, followed by a long pause. Then Version B is recorded two times in succession, followed by another long pause. Finally, the two versions are recorded in A-B order, followed by a long pause.

For the next interview, version B will first be recorded two times in succession, followed by a long pause. Then version A will be recorded two times, followed by a pause. And finally, both versions will be recorded in B-A order. At this point the recording stops.

If you are pretesting two different radio spots, record spot 1 first twice with a small pause in between, followed by a long pause. Then record spot 2 twice with a small pause between each. After a long pause record spot 2 twice, long pause, spot 1 twice.

Playing the Tape

If one radio spot is being pretested:

Play the audio tape which should have the spot repeated two times with a small interruption between each repetition.

If two versions of the same spot are being pretested:

The first interviewee will hear:

Version A (twice), short pause, Version B (twice) then A, B.

The second interviewee will hear:

Version B (twice), short pause, Version A (twice) then B, A.

After the second interview, the tape is rewound so that interviewee three will hear the same version as the first interviewee, and so on.

The order of the spot is alternated to ensure that no version is heard first by all the respondents.

If two different spots are pretested, play recording for first interviewee so he or she hears twice, spot 1 first then spot 2. The second respondent will hear the two different spots in reverse order, spot 2, then spot 1.

Identifying the Tape in Questionnaire

In the pretest questionnaire, a title is given to each radio spot version, so that there will be no confusion about which responses pertain to which version. This is necessary because versions will be alternated in successive interviews.

The Interview

Following your presentation and general questions, tell the person being interviewed that you are going to ask him or her to listen to a radio spot and to pay close attention.

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Play the first recording. After it has finished playing, let the tape continue to run and ask him or her to listen to it one more time. Then, turn off the audio cassette tape player and proceed to ask the pretest questions.

Comprehension

1. Tell me, in your own words, what did the announcement (message) that you just heard say. (Be insistent.) What was the message transmitted by the announcement?
2. Are there any words in the announcement (message) whose meanings you do not understand?
If the response is yes, identify the word and ask: What do you think that word (mention the word) might mean? Which word do you think should be used instead?

Acceptance

3. Is there anything said in the announcement (message) that you think is not true?
If the answer is yes: What do you think is not true? What about it do you think it is not true?
4. Did the announcement (message) say anything that might upset or offend people from around here?
If the answer is yes: What might upset them? What is offensive?

Attractiveness

5. What did you like most about the announcement (message) or what do you think others would like most?
6. Is there anything in the announcement (music, speech, persons talking, sounds) that you did not like or that you think others might not like? If the answer is yes: What did you not like? How would you say it so that you would like it?

Inducement to Action

7. What do you think this announcement (message) is asking you to do?
8. Are you willing to follow the advice being given? What would cause you to be willing to follow the advice or what would discourage you?

Involvement

9. To whom do you think the announcement (message) is directed? What about it makes you think that?
10. (In the case of a dramatization), do the people who speak in the announcement (message) talk the way people from here talk? Is the form of speech used in the announcement like the form of speech used here?

11. Is there anything in the announcement said in a different way here? If the answer is yes: What thing? How is that said around here?

If you are pretesting one spot, return to the beginning and play the recording again and allow the person being interviewed to listen to the version one more time.

Then ask,

General Opinion Question

12. In your opinion, what could be done to improve this announcement?

Two versions being pretested: Inform the person being interviewed that you want him or her to listen to another spot. Turn the tape player on again and have him or her listen to the second version twice. Turn off the tape player and ask the pretest questions. After the questions for the second version have been asked, tell the person that you now want him or her to listen to the two announcements together and to compare them. Play the two versions and then ask the following questions.

Comparison Questions

13. Which of the two announcements do you like best? Identify in the survey instrument the announcement the respondent selects, by its title, to avoid confusion when the two versions are played in reverse order.) Why do you like that announcement best?
14. If you had to prepare an announcement containing the best parts of each version, what parts would you choose from each?

Say good-bye to the person interviewed as indicated in the Mechanics for Individual Interviews. At the conclusion of the second interview, rewind the tape back to the beginning for the subsequent interview.

Exercise 6. Pretesting Radio Programs

Materials

Copies of Pretesting Radio Programs

Instructions

Ask team members to study the material in small groups.

Have teams point out the differences of radio-program pretesting versus radio-spot pretesting.

Pretesting Radio Programs

Even though it is suggested that you not attempt to create radio programs unless you

have the needed expertise, but instead contract them out with professionals, this does not mean you cannot pretest a radio program that has been produced. The following information will describe how to conduct such a pretest.

To pretest radio programs, it is necessary to know the following:

- Whether the radio program will be a one-time broadcast; i.e., whether it will be an individual broadcast and not part of a series of regularly scheduled radio programs
- Whether the program will be part of a regularly broadcast series of prerecorded programs on a number of different topics

Whether the program will be part of a short series of programs prepared on a single topic, which will later be used as a series for training and dissemination purposes once production has been completed; for example, a series of four radio programs to be used together on how to nourish a child by means of exclusive breast-feeding during the first six months.

Whether this will be a series of programs regularly broadcast live in the studio

In the first two cases, the pretesting of each individual radio program should follow the steps given for pretesting any type of educational communication material and evaluated in terms of the various pretest criteria.

For the two remaining cases, bear in mind that it is costly to pretest all of the radio programs in a series and that the task is virtually impossible if the programs are broadcast on a daily basis, even if they are prerecorded. Accordingly, what should be pretest in these latter two cases is not so much the comprehension of the message that a particular program transmits, but whether its format and structure are the most appropriate for transmitting an educational message in a comprehensible and convincing way.

The most appropriate technique for pretesting a radio program is to organize a focus group discussion. The rules and implementation of this technique are modified only slightly when pretesting radio programs. Questions on comprehension, attractiveness, acceptance, involvement, and inducement to action are similar to examples given in Question 19.

Specific considerations for pretesting radio programs with focus groups are as follows:

Some of the questions in the pretest guidelines are related to the general pretest criteria. Others refer to specific aspects of the program (for example, format, dialogue, presentation, dramatization, or informational) or to specific aspects of the characters involved and of the individual messages being transmitted. If the program deals with several different messages, the facilitator should encourage the participants to name as many messages as possible and take note of the order in which the messages or topics are mentioned.

It is very important to take note of those messages that are least remembered or those that are not remembered at all. For example, if the program deals with the steps to be taken in the case of a child with an acute respiratory infection, the questions of comprehension might be as follows:

- What did the program say are the symptoms of an acute respiratory infection? (Write down the symptoms mentioned in the order that they are given.)
- What did the program say it is necessary to do when a child shows signs of having a respiratory infection? (Write down the responses mentioned in the order that they are given.)

If the program is a dramatization in which characters are used, it will be necessary to ask about the individual characters.

- Who do you think (mention each character) is? If the character is a representation of an average individual from the target population, it will be necessary to ask:
 - Do you think that (mention the name of the character) is like people from here and does he or she talk like people from here?
If the answer is no: How is he or his speech different? How should he speak in order to become or sound like the people from here?

After all of the questions have been asked, the group should be asked to listen to the program one more time. If it is a half-hour program, choose the most critical session. The tape is played once again and a final general question is posed to the group.

- What part or section of this program would you improve so that it would be more convincing regarding the messages being proposed?

Synthesis

1. A good radio spot accomplishes the following:
 - Presents one idea
 - Uses credible sources
 - Breaks the mold
 - Touches the heart and mind of the listener
 - Stretches the listener's imagination
 - Writes for the ear
 - Writes for the individual
 - Asks the listener to take action
 - Shows consistency with all radio other spots

2. The components of a radio spot are the following:
 - Sound effects
 - Music
 - Actors
 - Voice inflections
 - Instructions to the producer on what you want him to do
3. Any radio production more complex than a radio spot, generally should be contracted from a professional source.
4. The steps of a radio spot pretest are as follows:
 - Setting the mood
 - Asking the questions about comprehension, attractiveness, acceptance, involvement and inducement to action
 - When comparing two different spots, making sure the spots are recorded in alternate order, one-two then two-one
5. The steps of pretesting a radio program are as follows:
 - Determining type of radio program
 - Mechanics of pretesting in a focus group situation; guide with questions regarding pretest variables of comprehension, acceptance, attractiveness, involvement, and inducement to action.

Application

1. Using the radio spot developed in the first part of this question, draft your pretest questionnaire following the guidelines just analyzed.
2. Pretest your radio spot or program in the field.

Worksheet 20-1

Create a Radio Spot

Main Message:

Date:

Format: [Dramatization, dialogue, presentation, informational]

Length: [Remember to account for your music time]

Description/Voices: