

Extension Marketing: Budgets and Evaluation¹

Lisa Lundy, Ricky Telg, Tracy Irani, and James Varvorines²

This EDIS publication, focusing on budgets and evaluation, is the fifth of a five-part EDIS publications series on developing marketing campaigns for your local UF/IFAS Extension program. This series includes publications on campaign planning and audience analysis development, integrated marketing, and creative and media strategies. [Click here](#) to navigate the series.

Budgets

The driving force behind any marketing communications campaign is money. Probably one of the first things to consider in developing your marketing strategy is how much money you have to spend. What is your **budget**? You can spend a lot or a little, and depending on how creative you are, you can stretch your budget dollars a lot by establishing good collaborative partners and identifying prime locations to communicate your message.

Partnerships, or sponsorships, can be one of the most effective ways to send messages without incurring excessive costs. Potential partners could include local media, companies, or organizations with similar interests. Considering nutrition, you may be able to do an educational program at a local health and fitness center and utilize its built-in advertising efforts. For a program on hurricane preparedness, you may be able to partner with a home supply store that will show some of the tools or products you discuss. The store could buy advertising or provide displays in their store about your educational program.

Social media can be a low-budget option for promoting your message. Publishing content via social media platforms is free and purchasing advertising spots on social media platforms is a low-cost option for targeting audiences. Just be sure to take into account the cost in personnel time needed for developing and promoting social media content.

You can also engage in **media relations** such as community calendars in newspapers, on television, on radio, and on the web. Word of mouth to opinion leaders is another effective and inexpensive method of spreading a message. If you plan to contact a news outlet (TV or radio station or newspaper), here are some things to consider:

- **Explain your need personally**, especially if you need a good deal of exposure in a short time. However, remember that you are asking for **free** time. **Any** time that is given to you is better than no time at all.
- **Send information about your event to a newspaper or television or radio station's public relations person, public affairs director, or promotions director** (after you have made personal contact with that person, of course). Many stations have a calendar of events, which is aired once a day. The chances of your event running in a calendar of events are greater if you send your event information to a smaller station or newspaper. Large-market stations and newspapers will publicize the event if it will impact large numbers of people.

1. This document is AEC400, one of a series of the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date November 2008. Revised December 2017. Reviewed February 2021. Visit the EDIS website at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu> for the currently supported version of this publication.

2. Lisa Lundy, professor; Ricky Telg, professor; Tracy Irani, professor; and James Varvorines, graduate student; Department of Agricultural Education and Communication and Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

- **Be ready to go on the air early.** Many TV and radio stations invite guests to discuss their upcoming events. However, these interviews usually are early in the day. Be ready and willing to appear during early morning hours if you are asked.
- **Follow the media outlet's coverage.** Pay attention to the stories they published by following them on social media. They may have covered your issue or similar content close to the time you are contacting them. Help them see how your information adds to or builds upon their previous coverage. Following their coverage can also help you better understand their audience.

Evaluation

One of the most important parts of a campaign is evaluation. **Evaluation** allows someone to determine whether or not the marketing communications campaign is successful. Marketing practitioners must determine whether or not the target audience understands the message and if they can recognize and recall the message. The practitioner must also determine where the brand stands in the minds of the audience and whether or not the audience will buy the product or service.

Simple methods of evaluation include distributing surveys, comparing attendance or participation numbers, and recording the number of times people inquire about the product, program, or service. The results of these evaluation methods can help generate performance reviews, gauge success, modify marketing strategies, or develop new or different approaches.

Social media metrics provide helpful evaluation information for campaigns. For social media posts, you can evaluate by engagement, looking at metrics, including likes, comments, and shares on Facebook. On Twitter, you can look at replies, mentions, likes, and retweets. On Instagram, you can look at likes and comments.

Evaluation must also consider both tangibles and intangibles. **Tangible evaluation** involves assessing quantifiable statistics, such as the number of people who see the message or the number of inquiries you receive. Success could be measured by the number of people who attended the Extension program. **Intangible evaluation** measures unquantifiable data, such as public awareness and perceptions. An example of intangible evaluation is people's perceptions of Extension following their participation in your local Extension program.

Quick Reference Guide

Budget

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

- Stretch dollars by establishing good collaborative partners and identifying prime locations to communicate messages

PARTNERSHIPS

- Local media
- Companies
- Organizations with similar interests

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Advertising costs
- Personnel time for creating content

NEWS OUTLETS

- Explain your need personally
- Send information about your event to a newspaper or television or radio station's public relations person, public affairs director, or promotions director
- Be ready to go on the air early in the morning

Evaluation

CRITERIA

- "Getting it" (Do consumers understand?)
- Knowledge (Can consumers recognize and recall?)
- Attitude change (Where does the brand stand?)
- Behavior (Will people buy the product or service?)

METHODS

- Survey
- Attendance or participation
- Frequency of inquiry
- Social media engagement

RESULTS

- Performance review
- Gauging success
- Changing strategies
- Different approach

Applying the Concepts

1. What is your budget? What can you do to minimize the amount of money you have to devote to marketing?
2. Are there any local media, companies, or organizations that might be interested in a partnership? How could you approach them?
3. What would be the easiest way for you to evaluate your campaign? How would you define success?
4. Evaluation Form: The example evaluation form below asks such questions as how people found out about the Extension program and the frequency of the messages, among other topics. Use the form as a guide as you develop your own evaluation instrument.

Example Evaluation Form

Date: ____/____/____ Home County of Participant: _____

Title of Program: _____

How did you hear about this program? (Check all that apply)

- Television Online
- Radio Direct Mailing
- Newspaper Poster/flyer
- Magazine Word of mouth
- Newsletter/brochure/pamphlet Social media (please specify) _____
- Other (please specify) _____

How frequently did you hear about this program?

1 time 2–3 times 4 or more times

Where else could the marketing for this program have reached you? _____

Would you tell others about this or similar programs in the future?

Yes No

On the following scale, please rate your perceptions of this program.

Helpful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 *Unhelpful*

On the following scale, please rate your overall attitude toward Extension.

Negative 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 *Positive*