

7.4 Reaching Landowners via Local Media

Local media refers to placement of campaign messages or related stories in newspapers, radio channels, or TV programs associated with specific geographic communities (local, regional, or statewide). This placement can be free, or you can purchase media spots. Placement can also be customized to reach specific audiences.

WHEN TO USE LOCAL MEDIA

Local media works well to promote a one-time event, such as a local meeting—perhaps to kick-start your program or campaign. It is also ideal for creating broad awareness of an issue or your program. Consequently, it works well in conjunction with other channels designed to directly communicate with your desired audience (e.g., direct mail, phone calls, etc.). Local media can create familiarity, credibility, and a positive orientation, which increase the response rate to direct asks (e.g., by mail or in person). It also

helps by creating a social norm—even the people who don’t take action may have learned something from the media coverage, and they may encourage others to take action.

By itself, local media is not a very good mechanism to inspire behavior change, in part, because it is not suited for reaching people in a targeted way. As your target audience or target behavior gets more specific, local media will be more appropriate as a supplement to more targeted marketing.

Finally, note that broad publicity about your program is not always a good thing. In some (albeit rare) cases, raising awareness about an issue or program can solidify opposition and result in more competing or contradictory messages. If that backlash is possible, you should not use local media. Instead, stay under the radar and work in more targeted ways to influence your landowners.

<p>PROS ▲</p>	<p>CONS ▼</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local media are widely available in most areas. • They are not hard to access. Editors like developing storylines about programs that benefit their readers or the community at large. • They are a good way to create broad visibility and brand awareness. Media coverage adds to the credibility of your organization and program. • Local media coverage increases audience receptivity to more specific channels, such as door-to-door or direct mail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid media spots can be expensive. • Unless you’re purchasing media spots, you have limited control over when and where your message will appear. • There is no guarantee that members of your target audience will see the message. • Many people who are not in your target audience may also see the message. They may then contact you for unrelated information or services. • It is difficult to connect broadcast media to individual requests or behavior change. You can ask people how they heard about you, but that is often not accurate, especially if you’ve used multiple channels.

7 GETTING THE WORD OUT

HOW TO GET GOOD RESULTS

- Local media works well when you can tie your project and desired landowner actions to broad issues that concern the general public. This makes the story more attractive to media publishers and more relevant to readers and viewers.
- Rather than sending out a press release, take some time to work with your local media staff to shape and develop a story that is relevant to their readers and makes the key points that you want to convey. One well-written story that places your program in context and describes its benefits is more impactful than several announcements in local papers.
- Response rates to a media call to attend a meeting will be much higher if the meeting is about a timely or controversial issue.
- Local media is a more efficient channel when there is a lot of overlap between your target audience and the viewers and readers of that specific channel. If most of the media viewers and readers are not members of your target audience, not only is this outreach channel inefficient, but it can also lead to irrelevant calls from unqualified prospects.

METRICS TO ASSESS LOCAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

- Number of media impressions (i.e., number of readers or viewers reached)
- Proportion of media impressions that are target audience members (this information may be available from the media outlet, depending on how your audience is defined)
- Cost per individual reached
- Cost per respondent