

# Writing Radio PSAs

**Radio PSAs can be a very effective way to publicize and market your healthy marriage program.**

On-air radio spots can be an effective way to get the word out regarding upcoming healthy marriage events. This Tip Sheet will help you create your own public service announcement for radio and get the results you desire. Keep in mind that radio stations rarely run any spots longer than :30 second spots as you consider writing your program's PSAs. You may want to create :15 second spots to use as fillers on the air as well.

Be specific about the market segment you are targeting with this PSA campaign. Audience demographics can be identified by age range, gender, race and ethnicity, marital status, interests, career choices and music preferences. Knowing as much as possible about your target audience will help you choose which radio station(s) can deliver this audience to you.

## 1. Define your audience

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gender, race and ethnicity, marital status, interests, career choices and music preferences. Knowing as much as possible about your target audience will help you choose which radio station(s) can deliver this audience to you.

### Determine which radio station will deliver your target audience

Make sure the demographics of a radio station's listeners match your target audience. The account representative for the station will have this information, so it is important that you ask them to provide it to you.

## 2. Write the Script

### Prepare a four-column grid to script your spot

Once you get your audience's attention you should



announce the specifics of your event, such as program date, location, time and the major benefits participants will receive. The script below provides an excellent example of what kind of information is needed for results. Remember to say the phone number at least twice at the end of your spot and leave them with a call to action i.e. "Call now!"

Determine the number of voices needed in the spot and create the narrative for each.

- Column 1 is for the various voices
- Column 2 is for the narrative
- Column 3 is for sound effects and music cues
- Column 4 is for the Running Time (RT).

### Showcase for Latino Couples (:30 seconds-Radio) (example only)

Voice-Over Parts	Text	Sound Effects & Music Cues	RT
		Baby crying	:00-:03
VO1: WIFE	Manuel, can you get the baby?	Baby still crying	:04-:06
VO2: HUSBAND	I can't! I told the guys I was going out tonight!	Baby continues to cry	:07-:09
VO1: WIFE	What? Again? This is the second time this week!	Baby crying less obvious	:10-:12
VO2: HUSBAND	You didn't come to my soccer game last night!	Baby crying minimal	:13-:15
VO1: WIFE	I'm sorry, but it's hard to take the baby everywhere!		:16-17
VO3: NARRATOR	Sound familiar? Come reconnect with your partner Saturday, July 29th from noon to 4:30 at the Tivoli on the Auraria Campus. The Showcase for Latino Couples will teach you how to listen and be heard, understand your partner better, and strengthen your commitment to each other. The event is FREE and child care and parking is also FREE. Call 303-830-0400 to register. That's 303-830-0400. Call now!	Music starts; continues in background to the end	:18-:30

*Audience target: 2<sup>nd</sup> generation+ Latino couples, ages 18-30, with children (primary language-English); stay-at-home mom/ working dad; urban pop/rap and reggaeton*

## Create an overall situation and tone in your script that will speak to your target audience

The target audience must relate to the overall situation and tone of the PSA. Word usage, exchanges, names used, situations, communication elements and music are integral to the effectiveness and execution of a finished PSA.

### 3. Producing a PSA

Radio stations generally will produce a PSA for *no additional cost* if you buy an on-air campaign with them. The only hard cost may be the charge for the voice over talent. The talent fee will vary by market but will generally run around \$200 per read or per voice/per spot. You may want to use staff for voice-overs if their voice, tone and style are right for your target audience. *Two male staff members were used in the sample spot above, which helped save talent costs.*

## Use voice-over talent that connects with your target audience

Most stations have a variety of voice-over talent at their disposal. Listen to the voices and decide which voice(s) have the quality and style to speak to your audience. For example, if you want to reach a younger population, make sure the voice sounds young rather than mature. Do not be afraid to admit that a particular voice

does not work! You will know when you hear the right voice.

## Strategic placement of sound effects and music makes a difference

Well-selected background music and sound effects can reinforce your message. A sound effect with the right timing will grab the listeners' attention, and culturally appropriate music can help a listener relate to and maintain an interest in the message.

### 4. Airing a PSA

## Any PSA schedule should include some one-for-one spots

Some radio stations may be willing to match airtime availabilities one-for-one. So, when you purchase air time, always ask if the station will give you an equal amount pro bono (for free). In a medium-size market (metro areas with 4 million people), you can expect to pay an average of \$100-\$200 for a 30 second spot during drive time. The rates may decrease during non-drive times (drive times are defined as peak listening periods such as 7 a.m. – 9 a.m., Monday-Friday; or 4 p.m.- 7 p.m., Monday-Friday). This practice may not apply to all stations.

If your radio PSA is effective, anecdotal evidence suggests that radio listeners will take action upon hearing the spot. Have your staff ready to answer phones during the specific time your PSA airs. Make sure they have all event details available to answer questions and are ready to register new participants. Listener/responders are generally calling from a cell phone, so obtain a name and call back information first because the call may drop before you are finished.

## Obtain a schedule in advance and prepare staff to handle phone calls

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Make sure your staff is prepared to explain exactly what the event/workshop/program is because many people only hear part of the PSA and may need more information.

## Celebrity Endorsements

In an effort to establish greater credibility for your event or services, some stations may offer or suggest using a well known DJ or on-air personality to do the voice-over. The cost will vary dramatically depending on the celebrity and the market. Expect to pay a higher upfront talent fee in addition to maintaining a minimum number of spots. A talent fee of \$600-\$1200/week may be charged separately and apart from the purchase of airtime. Also, it is essential that if you use a local celebrity as the spokesperson for your event, ensure they have a great reputation and personal testimony regarding the benefits of a healthy marriage.

## Conclusion

Radio is a cost effective way to promote your services. Once you determine which station has

listeners that match your target audience, work closely with the station's account representative to finalize your script and create an overall tone that will connect with your target audience. The station will produce the spot for you and arrange for voice-over talent. If you prefer, utilize a staff member who has a great voice. Obtain a spot schedule based on a one-for-one buy and schedule knowledgeable staff to handle calls that result from scheduled airtimes. To learn more, refer to the "Getting Free/Low Cost Media Coverage for Your Program" Tip Sheet.

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