

HANDOUT: Steps In Planning And Launching Your Own Media Campaign

Step 1: Establish A Campaign Purpose, Objectives, And Target Audience

Break into groups and consider:

- What will be the overall purpose of your campaign, what you will try to accomplish?
- Specify your campaign objectives.
- Who will be your target audience?
- How will you measure the success of your campaign?

After brainstorming, share each team's ideas with the class.

Step 2: Conduct Background Research

Ad agencies gather their own baseline data before investing all their effort in a full -fledged campaign. It's important to know much more about your target audience, what they're thinking and what obstacles you face. (Encourage students to include in their investigation the opinions of people who are not their friends.)

- How do other teachers in the school feel about this problem? Are they anxious to see action taken? Will they support a media campaign effort?
- How does the school administration feel? Will you have their support as you launch your campaign?
- What resources are available in your school to support LGBTQ youth? Is there, for instance, a Gay, Straight Alliance?
- Are members of the target audience (other students) aware of the problem? What do they think would help make a difference?
- What kinds of obstacles and barriers will you face in getting your message out to that audience.
- Develop a short set of questions to ask students.
- Gather the answers and discuss and analyze the results together in class.

Step 3: Draft A Campaign Message

Ask students to describe in a few short sentences what they want their target audience to do.

Then ask them if they can then take these few short sentences and turn them into just a few words for a very brief message. For instance, are there five words or less that together can "say it all!"

Think of the *It Gets Better* project as an example: (<http://www.youtube.com/user/itgetsbetterproject#p/f/0/7IcVyvg2QIo>)

Step 4: Test And Refine The Campaign Message

Before going any further have the students try out their ideas on a small sample resembling their target audience. For example, each student could be assigned to try it out on a few people who don't attend their school but are in the same age group as the target audience.

Have students report back on the results of their trial effort and make decisions as to whether any efforts to refine the message are needed before launching their campaign.

Step 5: Select Media Channels And Timing

Once students have decided on the message, discuss how the message will be delivered.

- For instance, will the students use posters, videos, buttons, etc. to reach their audience?
- Will there be presentations in individual classrooms and/or an all-school assembly?
- What role might the school's GSA, other school resource people, and/or local community members help play in the campaign?

When will the campaign take place? Make a campaign timeline specifying what needs to happen in order for the campaign to be launched successfully.

Step 6: Produce Media Products

Students may be assigned to a production team or they may work together as a class to brainstorm and produce product (s). If multiple individuals are developing product ideas, the class may vote on which product(s) they feel have the greatest chance of achieving the desired result with their target audience.

The class may also want to consider whether to enlist the help of outside resources (e.g. a parent or adult friend who might be a filmmaker, a printer) as part of their effort to produce the product they have designed.

Step 7: Decide How To Evaluate

Before launching your campaign, decide how you're going to go about evaluating whether or not you made a difference.

Are you going to survey members of the audience with a short set of questions both before and after you start the campaign?

Are there behaviors that you might want to observe during certain times such as passing between classes, lunch hour, before or after class?

Students will also want to keep track of how wide the outreach was for their campaign (e.g. posters, buttons distributed; people reached via word-of-mouth to talk about the campaign message).

Step 8: Distribute Media Products

It's time to launch the campaign and get your message out there! Events, posters, buttons, everything you've planned...this is the time!

Step 9: Evaluate

Now the big question? What difference did we make and how do we know?

Step 10: Celebrate!

Don't forget to celebrate the completion of a very important campaign in your school.

Whether you were able to follow all of the steps or only a few, be sure to celebrate what you've learned from the process!