

## PSA'S AND ADVERTISEMENTS: GETTING STARTED

1. **Choose your topic.** Pick a subject that is important to you, as well as one you can visualize. Keep your focus narrow and to the point. More than one idea confuses your audience, so have one main idea per PSA or ad.
2. **Time for some research** - you need to know your stuff! Try to get the most current and up to date facts on your topic. Statistics and references can add to a PSA or ad. You want to be convincing and accurate.
3. **Consider your audience.** Are you targeting parents, teens, teachers or some other social group? Consider your target audience's needs, preferences, as well as the things that might turn them off. They are the ones you want to rally to action. The action suggested by the PSA/Ad can be almost anything. It can be spelled out or implied -- just make sure that message is clear.
4. **Grab your audience's attention.** You might use visual effects, an emotional response, humor, or surprise to catch your target audience. Consider whether you are using a 'soft sell' (i.e., soothing, humorous or conversational voice/message) or 'hard sell' (i.e., fast-paced content delivery, excited car salesman, loud-mouthed coach, etc.) approach.

Be careful, however, of using scare tactics. Attention getters are needed, but they must be carefully selected. For example, when filming a PSA about controlling anger, a glass-framed picture of a family can be shattered on camera. This was dramatic, but not melodramatic. Staging a scene between two angry people to convey the same idea is more difficult to do effectively.

5. **Create a script** and keep your script to a few simple statements. A 30-second PSA will typically require about 5 to 7 concise assertions. Highlight the major and minor points that you want to make. Be sure the information presented in the PSA is based on up-to-date, accurate research, findings and/or data.
6. **Storyboard your script.** This involves thinking about how each scene should look and noting it in your script. You can make notes for close-up shots of a product, shots of people talking, etc. In addition, it helps to

sketch, very simply, each scene in your PSA/Ad, like frames in a comic strip. Even drawing stick figures and shapes on paper works.

7. **Film your footage and edit your PSA/Ad.** This should follow the story established in your script and storyboard.
8. **Find your audience and get their reaction.** How do they respond and is it in the way you expected? Your goal is to call your audience to action. Are they inspired?

Through a **Public Service Announcement** you can bring your community together around a subject that is important to you (i.e. education, poverty, texting and driving, Haiti disaster relief, etc.).

Similarly, your **Advertisement** can bring attention to the product or service you are presenting for public consumption (i.e., a food or drink product, merchandise, home delivery service, etc.).

For ideas and examples, check out the [Ad Council](#) . Keep your message clear and simple, and target your intended audience. Take advantage of your interests, and practice important critical thinking and literacy skills because you will be spreading important social, economic, and political topics.