



National Conference on Weights and Measures

“Recognition through Transparency”

15245 Shady Grove Rd., Suite 130, Rockville, MD 20850

(240) 632-9454 FAX (301) 990-9771

Email: ncwm@mgmtsol.com

Strategic Planning for an NCWM National Media Campaign

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By Dee Ann Deaton, Public Information Officer,
Arizona Department of Weights & Measures

Mission

To develop a public relations-based committee that will assist the NCWM, state, county and city weights and measures agencies develop a national media campaign. The committee's mission is to increase public support, agency communication, industry compliance and funding of weights and measures programs by developing, coordinating and promoting an internal and national awareness campaign that increases public and industry support of the NCWM services and weights and measures programs.

Objectives

1. Increase overall awareness of the NCWM.
2. Increase the total number of citizens who act as the "eyes" of weights and measures agencies.
3. Increase industry compliance.
4. Increase funding support of both legislators and voters for weights and measures programs.

Method

1. Identify services and challenges that weights and measures agencies are currently facing through detailed research so that a proactive media campaign can be developed that will benefit NCWM members.
2. Develop an internal media campaign that targets members with and without public relations (PR) personnel.
3. Increase awareness of the NCWM through targeted print, radio and television media, public service announcements (PSAs), movie theater pre-show ads and events.
4. Develop and promote national investigative stories (determined by members' participation, needs and services) for all media outlets that include regulatory agencies' inspection results and the monetary impact the results have on both consumers and industry.
5. Capitalize on the need for increased funding and weights and measures presence in the marketplace through TV talk shows including: Primetime, Good Morning America, Dateline, CNN, Oprah, Larry King Live, The Today Show, 20/20 and local networks and cable stations for each member's area.
6. Promote and implement Arizona's 12-month television story schedule entitled "Weights & Measures Tip of the Month." The NCWM should encourage all regulatory members to locally promote the same consumer awareness stories at the same time, which will assist with the national recognition efforts.
7. Develop, promote and distribute two PSAs titled "Plan Before You Scan" and "Who You Gonna Call?" in both audio and visual formats. PSAs should be in English and Spanish. Budget, PSA time-lines, story boards, scripts, casting, shooting location, video production, needed props, beta and video duplication and distribution will be developed by the committee with the NCWM Board's approval. Industry members may be asked to assist or support the production of the PSAs. Retail members may be asked to run the audio versions in their stores throughout the country.

Challenges

Challenge #1: A national campaign is not recommended until: 1) member participation is increased; 2) uniformity is established for inspection procedures; and 3) the monetary impact of weights and measures programs is determined.

Solution: It is recommended that before the NCWM considers promoting itself on a national basis, an in-depth survey of weights and measures programs needs to be conducted as part of the strategic planning process. The survey should include the following topics:

1. Detailed description of each program including:
 - types of inspections;
 - procedures used;
 - inspection results including names of companies;

- licensing fees;
- agency staff and budget;
- current outreach programs; and
- Agency needs, successes and challenges.

Benefit to NCWM: Results will enable NCWM to better understand how to improve uniformity and will provide the committee with the ability to develop relevant stories and identify possible challenges.

2. The monetary impact each type of inspection has on both consumers and industry.

Benefit to NCWM: Results will enable the committee to include the “so what” (financial impact) aspect of the stories. This information is critical if the NCWM desires to increase the support of legislators, industry and the public.

- Weights and measures PR/outreach programs each state, county and city plans to pursue for the FY 2004.

Benefit to NCWM: NCWM will be able to assess member’s needs and identify member’s resources to assist in promoting a national campaign.

3. Agencies’ current financial and regulatory challenges.

Benefit to NCWM: The information will help determine types of stories and assess possible opposition NCWM and members may encounter.

4. Media outlets and working relationships.

Benefit to NCWM: NCWM can develop a media contact list for each area.

Industry Survey Topics

Profile of the organization such as:

- Directory of locations including cities and states;
- Types of weights and measures requirements and programs; and
- The view of weights and measures regulatory efforts.

Benefit to NCWM: Provides the NCWM with industry’s current view of weights and measures and the types of challenges NCWM needs to address prior to promoting a national PR campaign.

Once the survey(s) are complete and results are determined, the direction, available resources and vehicles that will be used for a national outreach program can be determined.

Challenge #2: DeeAnn Deaton has contacted weights and measures state and county agencies including: New York, California, Seattle Washington, Montana, Alaska, Texas, Washington DC, Florida and Pennsylvania. Only Kelley Chapman from Montana and Mike Cleary from California have stated they would like to be members of the committee. All other states contacted either did not have a Public Relations person currently promoting their agency or their PR person was part of a larger agency that currently does very little to promote weights and measures issues. *Note: Some agencies that currently have websites did not have sections for their weights and measure departments.*

Solutions: Internal Awareness Campaign: An internal awareness campaign that focuses on educating members with and without PR personnel about the NCWM and weights and measures issues is needed.

Agencies without PR personnel would greatly benefit from training that includes: strategic media planning, writing press releases, handling interviews, promoting stories, developing sound bites and developing interview scripts. NCWM should consider hosting PR-training workshops during conferences for those agencies without PR personnel.

With the scope of the work involved in developing, promoting and coordinating a national campaign, the NCWM may want to consider hiring a National PR firm to assist and also hire a full-time Public Information Officer to coordinate the campaigns.

Challenge #3: Determining NCWM's media budget and available support: NCWM's media budget needs to be determined in order for the committee to establish the types of outreach programs that can be developed. The committee can research different avenues of promotion such as public service announcements, print advertising, television and radio commercials, public service announcements, movie theater ads, B-roll for talk show segments, NCWM television or cable show, a movie, etc.

Solution: The committee requests that an approximation of campaign funding be determined. NCWM may want to explore corporate sponsorship opportunities that may be available as they determine the media/outreach budget. The committee looks forward to meeting the above challenges and awaits both Board guidance and approval for the proposed direction.