



Best Practice: Bus Televisions Showcase STD/AIDS Prevention

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CITY: SÃO PAULO

POLICY AREA: PUBLIC HEALTH

BEST PRACTICE

The Health Department of the City of São Paulo uses televisions installed in municipal buses to broadcast public service announcements related to the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS. Mandated by law, programming on bus televisions must include public service announcements. By utilizing bus TVs, the City of São Paulo has significantly enhanced its STD and AIDS prevention campaign.

ISSUE

The size of São Paulo's population is a challenge to conducting public health campaigns. São Paulo and the surrounding area is home to approximately 19 million inhabitants. One quarter of the AIDS patients in Brazil reside in São Paulo. Advertising via the mass transit system is one effective way to reach residents in a sprawling metropolis.

Another major challenge for the Health Department is the lack of funding available to conduct large-scale advertising campaigns. In order to successfully reach such a populated urban area, the Health Department had to look for creative ways to capture the public's attention and entrepreneurial means to fund advertising campaigns.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The main goal of the STD/AIDS Municipal Program is to reduce the rate of AIDS cases from the current 22 per hundred thousand inhabitants to less than 15 per hundred thousand inhabitants. Other goals include reducing mother to child transmission of HIV to less than 2%, eliminating congenital syphilis, expanding the population tested for HIV in the city, and increasing the number of patients who seek treatment at São Paulo's STD/AIDS specialized facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION

In April 2007, São Paulo enacted the "Clean City" law, prohibiting advertising on the exterior of municipal buses. In July 2007, the Municipal Transport Department (MTD) set new advertising regulations in order to raise funds. These regulations paved the way towards installing televisions in buses using a Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system.

The MTD mandated that 10% of programming shown on bus TVs should be dedicated to official city programming. Later, that number was increased to 30%. No other municipal department or civil society organization besides the São Paulo Health Department requested to use airtime on bus TVs after airtime was made available to outside entities.

As of April 2010, there are televisions installed in 900 municipal buses, or approximately one quarter of the entire bus fleet in São Paulo. An estimated 2 million people per day view these TVs.

The STD/AIDS Municipal Program develops TV programs to share information regarding safer sex practices, publicize services available to the public and to fight social barriers and stigmas which is associated with STD/AIDS prevention. The content of the video programs are focused on messages about AIDS, as well as the availability of prevention supplies, such as condoms, syringes and needles for drug users. The São Paulo Health Department designs materials to encourage safer practices in relation to gender and health as a whole.

This corresponds with the overall Brazilian approach to STD/AIDS prevention in which audio-visual messages are used to help expand the use of condoms. The use of CCTV coincided with a large expansion of the transmission channels for closed-circuit video.

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According to the MTD, each video must not have sound and must last 30 seconds, 45 seconds or, at most, one minute. Therefore, each piece can only focus on a single topic. The first video produced focused on a new service that had just been implemented in STD/AIDS specialized facilities: the rapid diagnostic test for HIV.

Videos are also produced in conjunction with planned events. For example, the Health Department created videos containing clips of Carnaval in relation to announcing last year's Gay Pride Parade in São Paulo, the largest of its kind the world. This video was made to help fight prejudice and spread tolerance. Another example is a video which was created to encourage both parents to complete pre-natal care, not only the mother of the child.

Videos generally contain animated text and images (in two dimensions) and testimonials from film stars or media personalities.

The videos produced for bus TV were also broadcasted on community channels of cable TV in São Paulo City, in some malls and on CCTV in Municipal Health Department facilities in São Paulo.



Advertisement regarding the availability syphilis exams for women



Advertisement regarding the availability of rapid tests for HIV/Aids and STDs

COST

The cost of production is very low compared to the cost of advertising on public or cable TV. The script and text are made by the Media Group of STD/AIDS Program, which is also responsible for contacting and scheduling the participation of chosen personalities. A production company runs the animation, but the recording, editing and captioning are conducted in the studio with equipment provided by the Health Department. In 2009, the Health Department spent approximately 2,300 USD. The program costs are minimal given that the production is completed by the media group of the Health Department.

The campaigns remain live on bus TVs for 30 days with two inserts per hour. For private companies, similar air time would cost 500 thousand USD.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

The program was launched 20 months ago and while it is epidemiologically impossible to measure how it has affected the behavior of São Paulo citizens, there have been two increases in demand for public services. The amount of Rapid Diagnostic Tests conducted by STD/AIDS specialized facilities increased by 60% between 2008 and 2009. There was also an increase of 45% in the number of visitors to the STD/AIDS Program website during the time that certain pieces were showing on bus

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TV.

The program is one component of a plan of action focused on fighting AIDS. The STD/AIDS Program is currently developing a survey to measure the outcome of its multiple programs to prevent STDs and AIDS.

TIMELINE

March 2007	Regulation of CCTV in buses in Sao Paulo
December 2007	Installed TVs begin to be operational
July 2008	Partnership between the Municipal Program of STD/AIDS and MTD is formalized
August 2008	First video broadcast
August to December 2008	Five videos broadcast
January to December 2009	Eight videos broadcast
January to March 2009	Two videos broadcast

LEGISLATION

The "Clean City" Law was enacted in March 2007. The MTD Ordinance number 79/2007 regulates the use of CCTV and it was modified by the MTD Ordinance number 61/2009 to expand the time devoted to institutional messages. The legislation allows private companies to promote commercial advertising on bus TV, but also ensures that the public agencies can broadcast for free.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Health Department learned quickly how to properly develop content for the size and limitations of the bus TVs. It learned to work primarily with moving images and without sound. It also learned that colors call attention and that images and letters should be large to offset the size of the actual bus TV screens.

At first, the Health Department tried to place too much material in each video. Therefore, it learned to produce more concise text and to focus on a single message.

Finally, the Health Department discovered the value of keeping apprised of other departments' initiatives. Understanding what other city agencies are doing often leads to collaborative efforts.

TRANSFERABILITY

The use of bus TVs in public health campaigns is unique but highly transferable. In a city where bus TVs can be made available, the city would need to consider its capacity to produce videos and secure air time at little or no cost. New technology allows for the production of high quality videos at a low cost. Thus, there are many subjects which can be covered in a single bus TV program.



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