Step 3 # Get to Know Your Audience: Audience Analysis and Segmentation

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

The third step in creating a health communication campaign requires you to develop a better understanding of your audience—based on their preferences, needs, demographics, health behaviours, media interests and other characteristics. This information allows you to better predict behaviours and develop messages that appeal to your audience using the channels and vehicles that will reach them.

Specifically, audience analysis consists of the gathering, interpretation, and application of demographic, behavioural, and psychographic information related to audiences of interest. Audience analysis helps to:

▸ segment an audience into smaller 'chunks'
▸ develop priority segments
▸ select the objectives most appropriate for an audience
▸ select the best channels, vehicles to reach an audience
▸ develop messages that are relevant to an audience
▸ plan and evaluate more easily

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SEGMENTATION

As described above, gathering information to get a better understanding of your audience also helps you to divide it into smaller, similar groupings. Segmentation, then, is the process of breaking down a large audience into a smaller number of subgroups that are as homogeneous as possible and as different from each other group as possible.

Dividing a large population into homogeneous subsets of priority audiences helps to better describe and understand a segment, predict behaviour and formulate tailored messages and programs to meet specific needs. It also helps to set objectives that will reflect your

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overall goal. The importance of segmentation cannot be stressed enough. Without it, we try to reach "everyone" in the general population but are less effective with the group(s) we really want to reach.

TECHNIQUES FOR COLLECTING AUDIENCE ANALYSIS DATA

You will want to use a variety of information:

some existing, some new

some qualitative, some quantitative

some requiring significant resources to collect, somre requiring little or no additional resources to collect

Focus Groups

A type of qualitative research in which an experienced moderator leads about 8–10 respondents through a discussion of a selected topic, allowing them to talk freely and spontaneously.

Purpose
▸ to get in-depth information about beliefs, perceptions, language, interests, concerns
▸ testing out and gaining reactions to concepts, issues, audiovisual or print materials, or logos/other artwork.

Resources Needed
▸ discussion outline
▸ trained moderator
▸ list of respondents
▸ meeting room
▸ tape recorder
▸ VCR (for audiovisual materials, if required)

Pros
▸ group interaction/length of discussion = more in-depth responses
▸ can discuss concepts prior to materials being developed
▸ provides more opinions at once
▸ quick process
▸ can cover multiple topics

Cons
▸ too small for consensus or decision-making
▸ no individual responses (group influence)
▸ can be expensive
▸ self-selection bias — respondents who choose to attend may not be typical of the key audience

Individual Interviews

Purpose
▸ to probe for individual's responses, beliefs, discuss range of issues

Uses
▸ to develop hypotheses, messages, potentially motivating strategies
▸ to discuss sensitive issues related to complex draft materials

Respondents
▸ 10 per "type" of individual

Resources Needed
▸ discussion guide/questionnaire
▸ trainer/interviewer
▸ list of respondents
▸ telephone or quiet room
▸ tape recorder

Pros
▸ in-depth responses may be different
▸ can test:
  • sensitive or emotional materials
  • complex/longer materials
▸ understand "hard to reach" audiences
▸ works well for those with limited reading/writing skills

Cons

▸ time consuming to conduct/analyze
▸ expensive
▸ may not provide any firmer conclusion or concensus

THCU has developed three workbooks: Evaluating Health Promotion Programs, Using Surveys for Evaluating Health Promotion and Using Focus Groups for Evaluating Health Promotion. They are available from THCU, and at our website at www.thcu.ca.

Intercept Interviews

Interviews conducted with respondents who are stopped for a short time at a busy place frequented by people typical of the desired audience.

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Introduction to Evaluating Health Promotion Programs, Using Surveys for Evaluating Health Promotion and *Using Focus Groups for Evaluating Health Promotion* contain practical information relevant to this step and are available from THCU or on our website at www.thcu.ca

STEP 3: HOW TO ANALYZE YOUR AUDIENCE

Audience analysis is a critical step in planning a communication campaign. Below is a list of key things you need to know about your audience in order to segment it and create the right messages delivered through the appropriate channels.

You'll also have to decide on the right method for collecting this information. Please refer to the previous section to help make your decisions about which audience analysis techniques to use.

Use this section to guide your audience analysis, along with the blank worksheet in Audience Profile Appendix A.

MENU OF AUDIENCE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

Demographic Characteristics

▸ What is the gender breakdown of your audience and/or audience segments?

▸ What are their age ranges?

▸ What is/are some of the most typical or representative occupations? Are they from professional, white collar, blue collar, skilled or un-skilled occupations?

▸ What is the income range of your audience? What is the average, most common?

▸ What is the range of formal education among your audience? What is most common?

▸ What is their family situation—for example are they two parents with children, single parents, or single persons?

▸ Where do they live and work—in urban, rural, suburban settings?

▸ What are some of the cultural characteristics? Is the audience culturally diverse?

Behavioural Characteristics

▸ What is their actual current behaviour? Provide a detailed picture of the behaviours in question (e.g., smoking, dietary fat intake, exercise, etc.).

▸ What benefits do they derive from their current behaviour?

▸ What is their readiness for change? What would the audience members give up to make the change? What would they gain?

▸ What social or medical consequences are your audience members experiencing already?

▸ What might they be vulnerable to, based on family history and patterns in the community?

Psychographic Characteristics

▸ What are the fundamental values and beliefs among your audience? What is most important to them?

▸ What are some of their key personal characteristics?

▸ Where do they get their health-related information? Which media, interpersonal channels, and events are they exposed to?

▸ What organizations and social networks do they belong to?

▸ How do they spend their time and dollars? What are they interested in? Describe their lifestyle.

In case of broader audiences, such as network opinion leaders, organizations, and communities, the questions can be adopted, modified, or dropped.

Step3: Audience Profile Worksheet

Demographics

Behavioural

Psychographic

Tips for Audience Analysis

❑ Be sure to use existing sources of information (for example, see THCU's "Guide to Audience Analysis," and THCU's links to related Websites.

❑ Create new knowledge using simple and inexpensive techniques.

❑ Use your own and other staff's experience and expertise, but being careful about stereotypes and other biases.

❑ Tap into existing "groupings" of your audience to investigate their needs, preferences and other characteristics.

❑ Involve your intended audience in meaningful ways.

❑ Compare and contrast (triangulate) your findings for the best results (e.g., mix qualitative and quantitative data).

❑ Try writing a description of each segment within your audience (that is, a subgroup for which you will use different messages and/or different communication channels and vehicles to reach them.

❑ Try to visualize and describe one imaginary individual, group of individuals (network), organization or community that defines your audience segment.