



Neighbourhood WATCH

Toolkit

Module 6: Producing publicity material

This module looks at how to produce high-quality publicity material for your Neighbourhood Watch group. It starts by looking at successful advertising and then gives tips for making your own effective publicity material.

By the end of this module you will be able to:

- identify what makes advertising materials work; and
- design materials for your own scheme.



Remember

As well as using your own publicity, you can use the range of leaflets and posters produced by the Home Office. These are available free of charge from the Crime Reduction website (www.crimereduction.gov.uk/publicity_catalogue/index.php) or from Prolog, the company responsible for distributing Home Office literature (Prolog's contact details are in the Contacts module).

The practical, user-friendly publicity materials are suitable for use both in national campaigns and local initiatives.

Introduction

We are bombarded with publicity - out on the street and in our own homes - in the form of street posters, television commercials and newspaper advertisements. It is all designed to influence what we do, what we think and what we buy.



Stop and think

Do you respond to all of the publicity you see? How does publicity influence your actions?



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In general, we don't respond to all of the publicity we encounter. You probably only take in a small proportion of all the advertising thrown at you, but occasionally something catches your eye. If it's a leaflet, for example, you may keep it for later and you may even respond to it.

When you create publicity material - such as a poster or leaflet - for your Neighbourhood Watch scheme, it must be one that catches the eye. Ideally, it will be the one that people read, remember and respond to.

You could also consider creating a website for your Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

How advertising messages work

Whether we realise it or not, every successful advert takes us through the same set of stages to persuade us to act on its message. The four stages are:

Stage 1: It draws your attention.

Stage 2: You find it of interest to you personally.

Stage 3: Because you are interested, you decide to act on the message.

Stage 4: You actually carry out what the advertisement wants you to do.



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Making your publicity effective



Stop and think

Can you recall an advertisement that persuaded you to buy a product or service in the last few months? It may have been on television, in a magazine, on a website or a piece of direct mail.

- How did it attract your attention?
- What did it offer that was of interest to you personally?
- Why did you decide to act on the message?
- What did you do as a result of the advertisement?

Your publicity material must aim to be effective in the same way.

Suppose you are putting together a simple poster or leaflet to advertise that you are holding a meeting to start up a new Neighbourhood Watch scheme. What must it do?

- 1 First, it must **stand out** among all the other advertising the public are subjected to, and **draw attention**.
- 2 Having drawn attention to itself, the poster or leaflet must **generate interest** in the reader. The reader must be so interested that they seek to find out more.
- 3 The tone of what you say must be so **persuasive** that the readers make a **commitment to act** on what they have read. So it is not enough to tell people about the meeting - ideally, it will persuade them to attend.

When you design your poster, you should always **think about the audience** you are trying to attract. If you want more younger people to attend your meetings, make sure that your publicity appeals to that generation. Whether you are trying to reach a particular sector or the community as a whole, make sure that your publicity is relevant and attractive.



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Getting the layout right

The layout of your material will have a great deal to do with taking people through the stages.



Stop and think

Pick up any magazine or newspaper and look at how the professionals lay out their advertising material. What methods do they use to draw attention and stimulate interest?

- Why do some advertisements draw your attention more than others?
- How do they do this?
- What difference does the size and colouring of the lettering make?
- What effect do the pictures have?

You have probably noticed that most advertisements avoid using bland statements. You could apply the same principle to your advertising.

If you simply head your poster 'Neighbourhood Watch meeting' it may not attract much attention, because it could be aimed at anyone. On the other hand, you could head your poster: 'let's make Anyplace Estate safer'. These are two different approaches to the same thing, but the latter is far more attractive because it emphasises the benefit to the reader.

Take a look at the glossy car advertisements in newspapers or magazines. They are usually very colourful and attractive to grasp your attention. Once you have decided that it is of interest to you personally and moved on towards making a decision, you will want to know the detailed information and price of each model. If you look at the bottom of the page, these details are usually in the small print.



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And finally...

Be very careful not to overload your posters or leaflets with too much information or it will turn off the readers.

When you have decided what you want to include in your publicity material, create a number of different layouts. Show them to three or four people to get their opinions of which they find most appealing.



Practical activity 6: Creating publicity material

The aim of this activity is to help you design effective Neighbourhood Watch publicity material.

1 How is it done?

Collect together some magazines aimed at different age groups and at people with different interests. For example, you could use magazines on sports, fashion, computers and home improvements, and a 'lads' or teen magazine.

Stage 1: Attracting attention

Look at the advertisements in the magazines. How do they attract the reader's attention?

- What images do they use?
- What sort of text do they use?
- How do they use colour?
- Is the approach different when the advertisement is aimed at either women or men?

Stage 2: Targeting the message

- What are the key messages in the advertisements?
- What benefits do they offer the reader?
- How have they been designed to attract the target audience?

Stage 3: Providing detailed information



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- How much information is provided in each advertisement?
- How is the information presented? Is it easy to read?

Stage 4: Encouraging action

How does the advertisement encourage an interested reader to take action? Is there a number to phone or text, an e-mail address or website, or an address to write to? If appropriate, are there details of where to obtain the product?



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2 Planning your poster

You are going to create a poster for either:

- a meeting to start up a new Neighbourhood watch scheme; or
- a planned activity for your Neighbourhood Watch members.

Start by answering the following questions. Use what you learnt from the first part of this activity.

- Who do you want to come to the meeting? What is the best way to attract their attention? Where should you display your poster?
- What is the key message in your poster?
- What detailed information should you provide? (e.g. where, when, how to get there, other attractions.)
- How will you encourage readers to take action and attend the meeting?

3 Putting it on paper

On an A4 sheet of paper, roughly design your poster. Determine:

- the style;
- the headline;
- the image; and
- the detailed text.

If you are not sure what works best, create several designs and ask several different people what works best for them (you may get a different opinion from each one, of course!).

Work up your design into a finished poster. If you need artistic help, there are many graphics programs that make it easy to produce a good-looking poster. Alternatively, you may know someone with an artistic talent who could help you.