Public Service Announcement

TASK: Write a PSA to warn people about the overuse of antibiotics and antibacterial products.

“Public service announcements, or PSA's, are short messages produced on film, videotape, DVD, CD, audiotape, or as a computer file and given to radio and television stations. Generally, PSA's are sent as ready-to-air audio or video tapes, although radio stations (especially community or public stations, such as campus radio or National Public Radio affiliates) sometimes prefer a script that their announcers can read live on the air. They can be done very simply with a single actor reading or performing a message, or they can be elaborate, slickly-produced messages with music, dramatic story-lines, and sound or visual effects.”

**Key points to remember about the writing:**

* Because you've only got a few seconds to reach your audience (often 30 seconds or less), the language should be simple and vivid. Take your time and make every word count. Make your message crystal clear.
* The content of the writing should have the right "hooks" -- words or phrases that grab attention -- to attract your audience (again, you need to know who your audience is). For example, starting your PSA off with something like, "If you're between the ages of 25 and 44, you're more likely to die from AIDS than from any other disease."
* The PSA should usually (though maybe not 100% of the time) request a specific action, such as calling a specific number to get more information. You ordinarily want listeners to do something as a result of having heard the PSA.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Length of PSA** | 10 seconds | 15 seconds | 20 seconds | 30 seconds |
| **Number of words** | 20-25 words | 30-35 words | 40-50 words | 60-75 words |

**Sample radio PSA script -- live copy**

Use: IMMEDIATE:   
Time: 20 seconds  
Agency: AIDS Awareness  
Title: "Day of Compassion"

Main Point: Day of Compassion will be held June 20 .Fifteen years ago, most people thought it couldn't happen to them. Today we know better. AIDS has taken more than 320,000 lives nationwide. It could happen to someone you love. Turn on your radio or TV on June 20th and experience a Day of Compassion. It could save lives. Be aware. Be safe. Be compassionate.

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(Source: <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/participation/promoting-interest/public-service-announcements/main>)

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