

## Top tips for planning a media literacy campaign

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There are plenty of examples of successful and impactful media literacy campaigns across Europe and further afield such as the International [Safer Internet Day](#) campaign. The work that goes behind the scenes in terms of designing, developing, implementing and managing media literacy campaigns is somewhat less well documented.

This document outlines some of the key considerations when developing and delivering a media literacy campaign, based on the experience of the [Be Media Smart](#) campaign organised by Media Literacy Ireland, the network established and supported by the [Broadcasting Authority of Ireland](#).

### Top Tip 1: It is going to take longer than you think

The planning for a campaign is really the crucial part of it, as the planning will determine whether the campaign is successful or not. Not only that, but the planning phase will also relieve the pressures on the planning team. Campaigns, especially large-scale campaigns, can be demanding and the more advanced planning is done, the easier it is on all involved.

An Irish media literacy campaign had been discussed for a number of months, however, the work of effectively planning this event only started in early January 2019 for a campaign to be delivered by the 18<sup>th</sup> March. What we guessed at the time, and had absolutely confirmed by experience, is that this is not enough time for a cross-sector, multi-stakeholder, multi-channel, national campaign.

Based on our experience, a multi-stakeholder, national campaign requires a minimum of a 9-month timeline. Ideally, the Be Media Smart campaign would have benefited from a 9-month planning window.

### Top Tip 2: Understand the problem

Albert Einstein is quoted as saying that “If I had an hour to solve a problem, I'd spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and 5 minutes thinking about solutions” This is excellent advice when considering running a media literacy campaign.

Media literacy is a complex concept with many inter-related themes and topics, and many challenges. However, before trying to ‘fix’ any of these issues it is wise to first try and identify:

- 1 the problem
- 2 the target audience
- 3 the stakeholders who are best placed to reach and support the target audience.

This is where insight, and specifically research come in. The better understanding you have of the problem and the target audience, the better you will be able to create an effective campaign that empowers partners to work to their strengths.

In addition, try to articulate and quantify what the campaign objectives are and what you are trying to achieve. This will help with identifying partners and with evaluation.

### **Top Tip 3: Get the right partners in place**

Put simply, a campaign is essentially a call to action, where you are asking the target audience to do something, or not do something. Three critical elements of a multi-stakeholder campaign are:

- 1) understanding the roles that the different stakeholders have, whether that is delivering the message, signposting to support, providing support or some other role.
- 2) Empowering partners to work to their own strengths.
- 3) Making sure that all stakeholders stay on message.

### **Top Tip 4: Get the concept right**

Once you know what the problem is, and who the target audience is, and who might be able to help, the next step may be developing a concept that will work for the audience – and the stakeholders.

Our advice would be to:

- 1) Don't call it media literacy – Media literacy is a term that media literacy professionals can't agree on so try to keep it out of the public-facing language or it will get lost.
- 2) Do make it topical and relevant and
- 3) Make it easy, fun and enjoyable.

Depending on who your partners are, there may be one or two stakeholders who have experience in concept development and who could lead on this aspect. As well as the concept, careful attention should be paid to the tone and approach used for the campaign to ensure that it resonates with the target audience and is also appropriate for the key partners.

### **Top Tip 5: Build evaluation into the planning stage**

As previously discussed in an [EPRA Top Tips paper](#), evaluating media literacy initiatives is very important: it allows you to know what's working well and what could be improved, and it also enables

useful data to be gathered such as: how many people has the campaign reached? How many people accessed the resources developed for the campaign? Etc.

To achieve effective evaluation, you need to agree the evaluation mechanisms that you are going to use during the campaign at the planning stage. In evaluating the Be Media Smart campaign, we looked at several factors, but also found that it was hard to get common data across all the stakeholders involved in the campaign. While [Kirkpatrick](#) is a useful model for evaluating media literacy initiatives, it may be harder to use it for a campaign. We have looked at a public health campaign evaluation tool called the LOGIC model (see [www.cdc.gov/eval/logicmodels](http://www.cdc.gov/eval/logicmodels) for more information) in order to identify the various impacts of the Be Media Smart campaign. In general, public health information campaigns are very well set up in terms of evaluation, so using such a model is useful as it allows you to capture all the elements of the campaign in order to assess success and impact.

Don't forget to involve partners in the development of the evaluation framework, as they may be able to provide different forms of data (such numbers of people attending partner events, or qualitative data on the event).

#### **Top Tip 6: Don't underestimate the amount of coordination required**

Delivering a multi-stakeholder campaign takes a significant amount of coordination. For the Be Media Smart campaign, some elements were delegated to other stakeholders who had more experience in that particular area. For example, the PSB led on the concept design and the development of marketing resources such as TV, radio and social media ads and assets. The umbrella organisation for news publishers in Ireland coordinated the involvement of the news publishers, and the Safer Internet hub in Ireland, Webwise, coordinated the social media aspect of the campaign.

However, all these individual elements also require co-ordination, and it can be a case of balancing the needs of the campaign with the existing resources and the remaining timeline. Ideally, there should be one experienced project manager with oversight of everything.

Using a project management tool might also help to manage the coordination of multiple elements as the project gets into the delivery stage and help everyone know what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, who should do it and what the consequences might be of missing deadlines might be on other tasks and stakeholders.

An Excel spreadsheet could suffice or for larger campaigns or a greater number of stakeholders, use some of the free planning tools on the market like Trello (see [www.trello.com](http://www.trello.com))

#### **Top Tip 7: Develop a Campaign Tool Kit**

One way of helping a wide range of partners to stay on message, is to create a Campaign Tool Kit which includes an overview of the campaign including the objectives and key messages, a press release, links to all assets that can be used, lists of potential interviewees for editorial content such as

interviews, contact details for the coordinators, a schedule for the broadcast or publication of ads, editorial and events.

It would also be very useful to include the evaluation framework for campaign in the Campaign Tool Kit. Every partner or stakeholder involved should have access to the campaign kit well in advance of the campaign start, ideally with all key partners meeting face to face before the launch of the campaign to go through the Campaign Tool Kit in detail and trouble-shoot any foreseen challenges.

#### **Top Tip 8: Identify spokespeople for the campaign**

It can be difficult to estimate what the media interest might be in a campaign. If the campaign relies on advertising (TV, radio, press and/or social media), it is likely that it will also generate some editorial coverage. The Be Media Smart generated much more media interest than anticipated and it was a struggle to meet the media demand for interviews and spokespeople.

Depending on the target audience, the tone and the approach of the campaign, it might be worth having 4-5 people briefed and ready to speak on behalf of the campaign.

#### **Top Tip 9: Plan a nationwide event to launch the campaign**

Again, depending on the audience, approach and tone of the campaign, it may be worth launching the campaign with a flagship event that provides all key partners with a PR opportunity and offers the media an opportunity to engage with the campaign from the very start.

#### **Conclusion:**

Media Literacy is the literacy of our age and running public awareness campaigns is an important element of a coordinated approach to promoting media literacy. Before you embark on one though, plan it carefully!