

Case Studies



Savings Education



**Choose
to Save.®**

www.choosetosave.org



CASE HISTORY: A Multi-Organizational Approach to Public Education

The seeds for the Choose to Save® (CTS) public education program were first planted in 1995 as the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) worked with the US Department of Labor on ways to implement a public education campaign on the importance of savings and financial security.

The Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of the Treasury joined with over 100 private and public sector partners to launch such a program in July of 1995. At that time EBRI formed a new umbrella program, the American Savings Education Council (ASEC), bringing public and private partners together. Their purpose was to develop an ongoing communications initiative that would bridge any gaps between changes in political administrations.

The initial public relations plan developed for the US Department of Labor included a proposal for radio and television public service announcements (PSAs) but funding was not available. Fidelity Investments, which had produced and distributed a video news release from the US Department of Labor to help launch the campaign, agreed to provide underwriting for development of PSAs. The initial plan was to air the spots in the Washington, DC metro area as part of a funded partnership of EBRI/ASEC/WJLA-ABC- and two Bonneville radio stations, WTOP, an all-news station and WGMS, a classical music station. To supplement the paid spots, each station contributed heavy pro-bono advertising support to the effort. A plan was then developed to launch a national campaign using the same creative used in the Washington market.



In July 2000, the Employee Benefit Research Institute, the American Savings Education Council, and the National Partnership for Financial Empowerment retained Goodwill Communications to distribute a public service announcement (PSA) to broadcast and cable television outlets. The campaign theme, "Choose to Save[®]," developed as part of a multi-year program by EBRI and ASEC, encouraged the public to increase their savings, provided information on the importance of retirement planning, and directed respondents to both a toll-free telephone number and the program website where they could get more information. The Choose to Save[®] website at: **ChoosetoSave.org** features many financial planning tools and materials such as the *Ballpark Estimate*[®] retirement planning worksheet, over 100 financial calculators, and access to all television and radio PSAs created for the CTS public education campaign.

The following facts illustrate how important it is for consumers to plan for their future:

- 58% of workers say they are currently saving for retirement, but the amount they have saved is low. 45% of all workers report total household assets, excluding the value of their home, of less than \$25,000.
- Only 42% of workers report that they and/or their spouse have tried to calculate how much money they will need to save to live a comfortable retirement.
- The average Social Security benefit for the year 2000 is only \$804 per month.
- Medical advances could keep you alive until age 100.
- 72% of savers say they could save an additional \$20 per week.

The Choose to Save[®] campaign was unique in a variety of ways:

- ? Some of the television spots that were in the package distributed to TV stations as PSAs also aired as paid spots on WJLA-TV/ABC7 in the Washington DC market. This guaranteed exposure among opinion leaders and legislators which are so important in terms of influencing legislation on the savings issue.
- ? The initial PSA package included ten executions from three different organizations - those produced by Choose to Save[®], spots produced by the U.S. Savings Bonds, and PSAs produced by the Social Security Administration, all of which had similar communications objectives. The wide variety of spot lengths, gave public service directors options in terms of spot length and subject matter.
- ? A half-hour program called "The Savings Game" was distributed along with PSAs to cable stations *that ordered the program* thus increasing the chance materials would be used.



Promotional/Packaging Tactics

In light of the tight competitive environment for PSAs - especially for television - the campaign incorporated several promotional strategies to insure that the Choose to Save[®] PSAs received maximum public exposure and a receptive audience among public service directors. These techniques included:

- Describing the CTS PSAs in Goodwill Communications' Broadcasters Café and CABLEPAK newsletters inserted into PSA packages sent to 1,200 broadcast stations and 600 cable outlets. The CTS PSA was the featured campaign in the broadcast newsletter with a front-page story and the newsletter was distributed to all attendees at the annual conference of the National Broadcast Association for Community Affairs.



- Using colorful and graphically enticing TV PSA packaging as a way to cut through the PSA clutter at stations and get public service directors to notice the CTS PSAs. This included a six panel, four-color storyboard, a 4-color dub box label and individual labels for each dub format.



- Producing a joint SSA/EBRI/ASEC website to promote a national savings education month. Its purpose was to educate the media on the goals of the savings education campaign and the National Savings Education Month.

In addition to these promotional tactics, the campaign helped to cultivate a strong tie-in between the EBRI/ASEC and their long-standing partner, the Social Security Administration, since all three organizations are essentially working to accomplish the same goals - increasing the financial security of the American public. Since SSA was introducing its latest PSA at about the same time as the national tape distribution Choose to Save[®] PSA campaign, both organizations realized synergies between the two campaigns via several techniques:

- Arranging for the CTS logo to be incorporated into the ending tag of a SSA TV PSA entitled: "Quiz Show," which was premiered in Washington, DC and attended by many SSA and EBRI/ASEC/NPFE representatives.
- Including the CTS logo on the "Quiz Show" PSA which was shown in movie theaters in the Washington/Baltimore markets as a test.

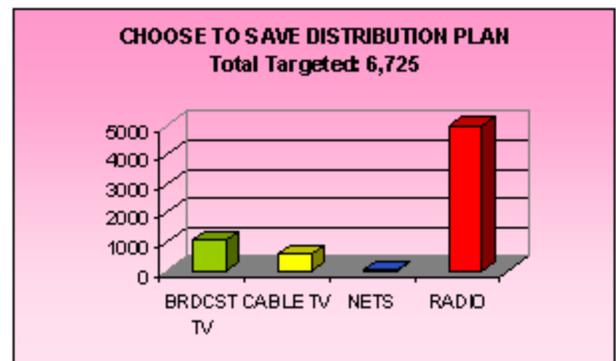
- ? Producing a banner ad jointly sponsored by SSA/EBRI/ASEC, promoted to various websites, particularly those that reach consumers interested in financial education subjects.
- ? Creating a tool kit that was mailed to ten SSA Regional Communications Directors, as well as 125 SSA Public Affairs Specialists around the country. The purpose of the kit was to provide samples of all media materials distributed in their locale, inform them about the aforementioned website, and how to access media reports posted to a special website for SSA public affairs at www.psaresearch/ssareports.asp.



Distribution Plan

The Choose to Save[®] TV PSA distribution plan covered all 212 top TV markets, as well as those stations most likely to use PSAs on savings education.

Using proprietary data in our Public Service Advertising Analysis System, the PSA distribution focused on those stations that are the heaviest users of PSA materials according to a unique PSA "user frequency index" we maintain on every outlet in the system. Additionally, the distribution plan targeted those stations, which have used PSAs on financial topics, including campaigns from Savings Bonds, the IRS and SSA.



The PSA plan used seven different distribution channels to reach the nation's broadcast and cable television outlets:

- Direct Delivery - mailing PSAs to the top 1,100 broadcast television stations in the country that regularly use PSAs, in the station's preferred tape format.
- ? Network Delivery to the four broadcast networks - ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox - as well as direct delivery to 35 national cable networks that accept PSAs.
- ? NAB Closed Circuit - arranging for the National Association of Broadcasters to transmit the CTS PSA to its member stations via its closed circuit system. AP Radio also distributed the PSA to its subscriber stations.
- ? "Super Station" Transmission - distributing the CTS PSA to WTBS, WOR and WGN, all of which reach national audiences via satellite feeds.

- ? Distributing the CTS PSA to 600 leading cable systems, each of which has more than 15,000 subscribers, as part of our shared-reel distribution service called CablePAK®.

- ? Choose to Save® radio PSAs were distributed to 5,000 radio stations that regularly use PSAs as part of a shared-disk distribution program called Radio DiskPak®. By participating in the shared-CD approach, we were able to reduce distribution costs by two-thirds.



- ? Finally, we packaged and distributed a half-hour video program to leading cable systems, along with PSAs.

To promote the half-hour program Goodwill Communications created a solicitation package that was sent to 2,000 major cable systems. The package included a storyboard showing the PSAs and visual frames from the half-hour program, statements from the leading spokespersons appearing on the tape and an business reply card to order the program. Most importantly, cable stations were permitted to replace any two of the four PSAs on the half-hour program with paid commercials to make the program self-sustaining.

Choose to Save®

"THE SAVINGS GAME"
A Half Hour Video About Savings Education

Hosted by Dennis Holmes, an Emmy award winning TV anchor and news reporter, this half-hour program features five leading experts on money, money management and how to use simple techniques to increase your financial security. To order your copy of the video, complete the enclosed business reply card.

Paul H. O'Sullivan is the 12th Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Treasury.
"This campaign of improvements comes from other nations. It's not public assistance or from employer come donations. Because the average American gets with these additional contributions to retirement and helps to the four commissions of change."

Nichelle Singletary is author of the "The Color of Money" column in The Washington Post and a regular contributor to MSNBC.com.
"I think you have a tremendous idea when you are saving for yourself you are also helping your family's future. So you absolutely have to save and give other ways for yourself, or whatever it is for yourself for."

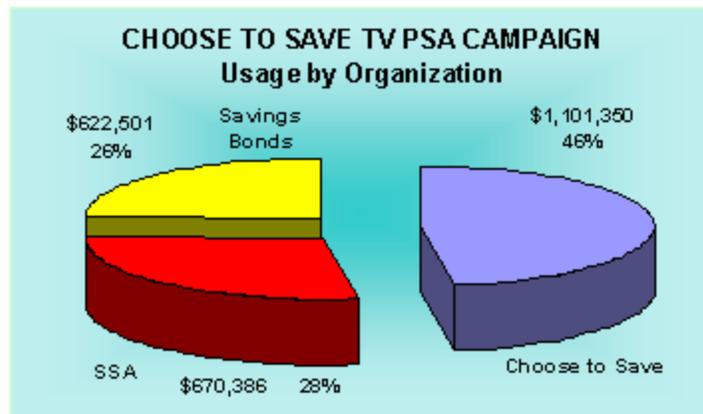
Colin Finkler is president and CEO of the Employee Benefit Research Institute and chairman and CEO of the American Savings Education Council.
"Automatic payroll deductions - your employer can do it for you. And what are the risks you're involved retirement accounts and how many for the longer record of your life. And the 25 year's that will be your retirement."

Key Usage Trends

Choose to Save® TV PSAs were uniquely coded so that each execution and each client's PSAs could be tracked independently using the A.C Nielsen SIGMA electronic monitoring system. As shown in the following graphs, the initial joint issues campaign generated \$2.75 million in value from broadcast and cable usage.

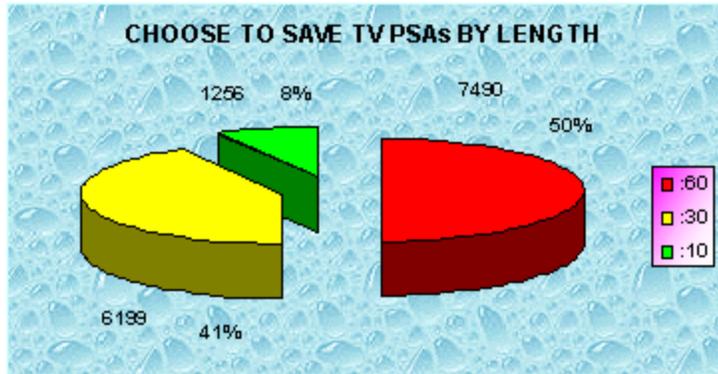
Usage by client:

The CTS PSA values contributed to 46 percent of the total airtime, with those produced by the Social Security Administration and U.S. Savings Bonds evenly splitting the balance. Of the 14,945 total airplays, just under half were those for the CTS campaign.



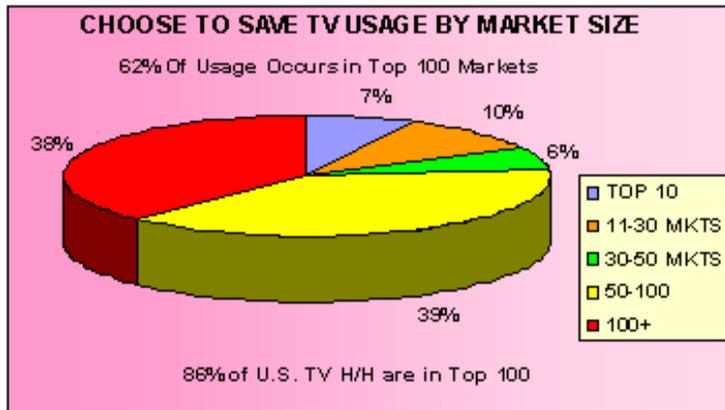
Usage by length:

Half of all exposure was generated by the 60-second PSA, even though there were only two 60-second PSAs in the package of ten spots.



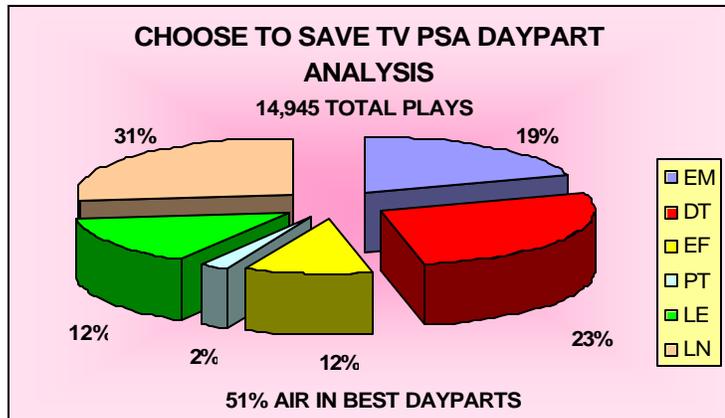
Top Market Usage:

Nearly two-thirds of all broadcast usage occurred in the top 100 markets, which is where 86% of all U.S. TV households are located.



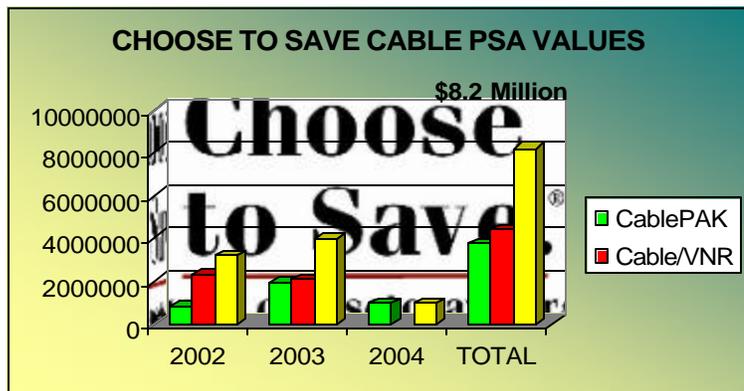
Daypart Usage:

Contrary to popular thought, most PSAs are aired in the better times of the day, ranging from Early Morning through Late Evening dayparts. For the CTS campaign, over half of the PSAs aired during these dayparts.

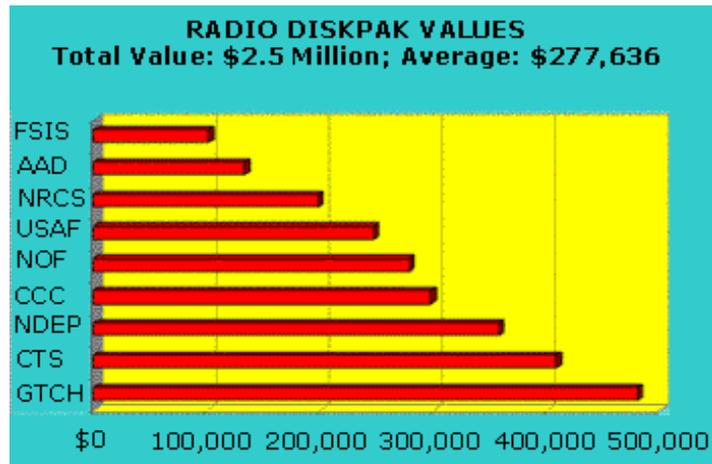


Cable/VNR Usage:

The independent cable mailing accounted for \$4.4 million, or over half of all the exposure generated among cable stations, with the balance coming from CablePAK usage.

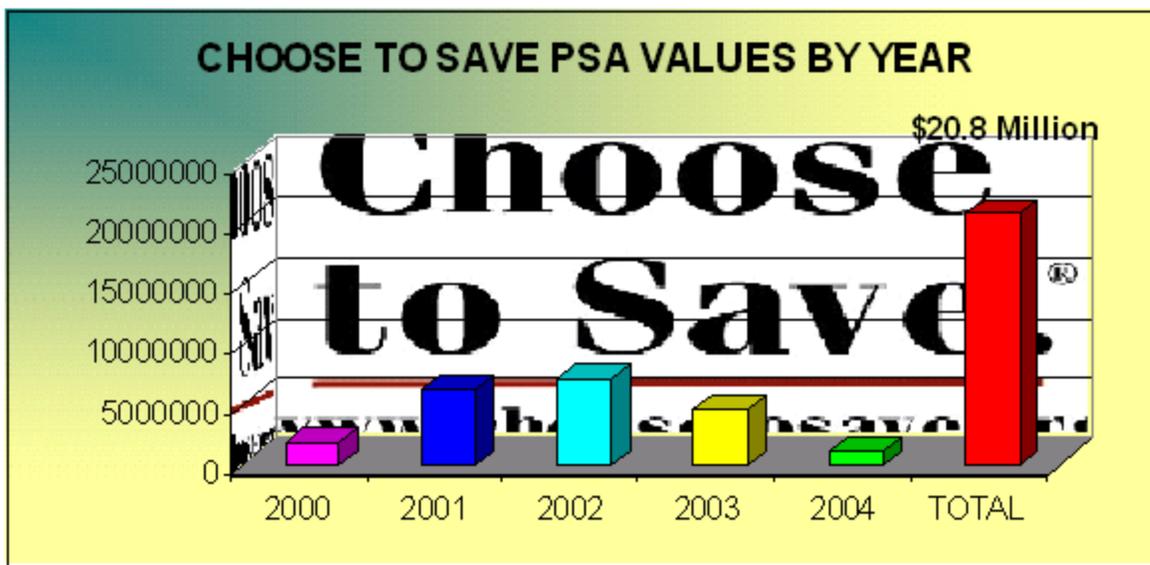


To distribute Choose to Save[®] radio PSAs, Goodwill Communications' shared-reel service called Radio DiskPak was used to target 5,000 stations. The radio PSAs aired 28,266 times on 253 stations in 179 markets. Of the nine campaigns shown in the graph below, the CTS campaign generated the second highest exposure of all DiskPak participants - \$407,773 in airtime value, and 47% above the benchmark for all participants.



The Choose to Save[®] TV PSAs were also shown on the Nashville Network with 69 million viewers, as well as the Armed Forces TV Network, with one million viewers, reaching both U.S. service personnel and their families worldwide.

Subsequent to the original release, three other campaigns were distributed to the media which have generated just under \$21 million in verified advertising equivalency value.



The Choose to Save[®] campaign is an excellent example of how various organizations with similar messages and communications objectives can work together to generate synergy and lower distribution costs by sharing the packaging, replication and evaluation expenses. It also demonstrates that it is possible – when done on a very strategic basis – to place both paid advertising and PSAs without “poisoning the well” of earned media. Finally, it demonstrated that cable stations are much more flexible in terms of the type of material they will use, especially when you give them an opportunity to sell advertising adjacent to relevant programming.

For more information about the Choose to Save[®] education program visit the following websites:

www.choosetosave.org

www.ebri.org

Employee Benefit Research Institute

2121 K St., NW Suite 600

Washington, DC 20037-1896

Dallas Salisbury: (202) 775-6322

Fax: (202) 775-6360

E-mail: **salisbury@ebri.org**

* This case study was written and provided by Goodwill Communications, Inc.