

# Getting the Word Out: Creating an Information Campaign that Works

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**S**taff education is at the heart of effective wound management. Unfortunately, educational sessions are often poorly attended despite the staff's strong desire to learn more. With bulletin boards cluttered with signs advertising upcoming educational sessions, it becomes doubly difficult for the clinician to decipher what to attend and where. This problem was effectively solved by Donna Beddis, the Director of Nursing (DON) at Grace Villa, a long-term-care home in Hamilton, Ontario. Beddis and the facility's 12-member multidisciplinary wound-care committee created a successful approach to advertising an upcoming educational session for staff in wound care.

The campaign started simply, but effectively, with a sign in the elevator. The sign had a large black circle located in the centre of the page. Inside the circle, written in white, were the words "Offloading: Coming Soon to Grace Villa." Near the nursing station was a similar sign tacked to the bulletin board. No time and no place were mentioned—simply the words "Coming Soon."

Two weeks later, new signs began to appear. The second sign read "Offloading: Look for this." The saying was located inside a red circle on a white piece of paper.

This sign was posted for two weeks. The next sign in the series was a circle that was half pink and half red on a white piece of paper. On the red portion of the circle the sign stated, "Offloading: Can't find these" and on the pink portion of the circle the sign stated, "Look for this." It too was posted for two weeks. The final sign, a white piece of paper, stated, "Offloading should look like this."

## Results

The posters met the committee's goals. Once the signs were posted, staff started talking, and they were asking questions. They appeared interested in the concept of offloading. Some residents even began to ask questions regarding offloading. People were communicating.

Beddis recognized the success of the campaign by the volume of responses she received and the amount of guessing, conversations and effort the staff put into answering her pre-session question about offloading. It may have been easier to simply put up a sign informing the staff of the upcoming offloading session, but it would not have been so widely received. In this case, an effective communication campaign became the key to building interest in the education sessions. ☺

## What an Information Campaign Can Achieve

It is important to determine what you want to achieve before embarking on an information campaign. Some goals may include<sup>1</sup>

- gaining positive coverage or increased exposure for your event
- enhancing your facility's image and reputation among residents, prospective residents and staff
- attracting and communicating with prospective residents
- creating closer ties among residents and staff within your facility

### Reference

1. Small Business Association. Developing an effective media campaign. 1997. Available on-line at [www.sba.gov/test/wbc/docs/market/mk-campaign-pr.html](http://www.sba.gov/test/wbc/docs/market/mk-campaign-pr.html). Accessed November 7, 2005.