CHOOSING THE MESSAGE

The AIDA formula is an excellent model to follow
Attention - include colourful text and dramatic graphics
Interest - link to reader's need, offer of possible solutions or a possible reward
Desire - activate a positive thought 'What is in it for me?'
Action - clear directions 'Mark your calendar'

1. Message content
How do you appeal to the prospective delegate? Which type of appeal would be relative for this conference?

- **Rational Appeals** – relates to the audience self-interest
- **Emotional Appeals** – provoke emotions that motivate the purchase
- **Moral Appeals** – directed to the audience’s sense of what is right and proper

2. Message Structure
How are you going to draw the prospective delegate's attention? The most effective message structure is to present the message first to create a strong attention by the reader, for example: what does the conference offer the reader?

Copy/Text

Write text for the conference promotional material with the following considerations:

- lead (first paragraph) with a strong message to gain attention
- include details of goals and objects, topics and speakers
- include information on the organisation, if relevant
- write in a clear, concise and lively style
- include a registration form or form to register an interest for further information - easy to respond
- allow enough room to gain full database details of the participant
- identify restrictions on text, eg the size, inclusion of other items (response card) and costs when considering bulk mail-out

3. Message design: instructions for the designer

- What will entice the reader to open the envelope?
- Does the front page grab the attention of the target market?
- Decide on the headline, text, illustrations and colours
- Does it 'look professional': eg. lots of white space for easy reading, an image to gain the attention quickly
- Provide information on company/organisation's profile, image and culture
- Choose paper type and size, also design without losing sight of the budget
- It may be beneficial to obtain three written bids from designers and printers. Also check references, samples of previous work, their work schedules compared with the conference lead time
- Maintain a promotional file with ideas from other events (adapt don't reinvent the wheel) and keep a thorough record and examples of the current promotional program.
Most brochures are printed in two colours, as four colour is expensive, but very impressive if you have budgeted for this expense.

Convention centres and bureaus also airlines will supply 'shells' to print your program. The service is either free or at a nominal amount.

A 'shell' is a standard brochure-sized, (625mm x 30mm or 400mm x 21mm), which have been pre-printed with a few words and pictures covering the conference destination or airline logo.

The remainder of the page is available to print vital conference information.

Melbourne Convention and Marketing Bureau. [http://www.mcmb.net.au](http://www.mcmb.net.au)

4. Message format: instructions for the public relations consultant

Content needs to be written to suit each media format:

- **Advertisers** - can use novelty and contrast, eye-catching, pictures and headlines, distinctive formats, message size, position, colour and shape
- **Radio** - choose words, sounds and voices
- **TV** - as for radio, also body language, dress, posture and hairstyle

**The message source**

The use of celebrities or personalities as a spokesperson for the conference attracts higher attention, recall and also gives credibility to the event.

A spokesperson that is highly credible is very persuasive, the three factors most often found are:

- **Expertise** - the degree of authority to back the claim
- **Trustworthiness** - how objective and honest the source appears to be
- **Likeability** - those who are open, humorous and natural

**Delivery**

The promotional material will range from an article in a professional magazine to a bulk mail-out run but there are three elements to consider when forming a successful promotional strategy.

- How will the package be distributed - mail, fax, email?
- What is included - cover letter, response card and agenda with speakers' names.
- Encourage further communication by telephone, or by follow-up fax to create a relationship, which will solidify the attendance.