



**Inventory No:** 6BW-0702C04

**Format:** Campaign Profile-A two-page summary of a Silver-Anvil Award winner, addressing research, planning, execution and evaluation.

**Title:** Reputation Management - A Critical Factor for V.A. Medical Center in Phoenix AZ

Silver-Anvil Award Winner

Carl T Hayden V.A. Medical Center, **2007**

**Summary:** 2007 Silver Anvil Award Winner – Reputation / Brand Management – Government

This entry is an example of a continuing reputation campaign which creates a significant enhancement of the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center to the Phoenix community. Our goal: To consistently improve the perception of our VA as a quality medical facility amongst key publics. Key publics include employees, opinion leaders, the media and the community at large. Strategies include direct communications with key publics, a patient education cable access TV show, and special events (particularly the VA Veterans Day parade event). Challenges included a former non reputation in the Phoenix community. All objectives were achieved, several were exceeded.

**Full Text:** Research:

In order to determine how different publics perceive us, each year we consistently utilize several survey instruments that have been refined since 1998. We gather feedback from the general community via a telephone survey (Attachment 1), our patients via a business reply card survey (Attachment 2), our employees via an internal vista survey (Attachment 3), and our Veterans Service Officers via a mail and phone survey (Attachment 4). When we first initiated the research in 1998 we discovered VA had no image in the community even though we had been here for nearly 50 years. We also learned that one of our major image problems was with our own employees, only a third of whom said they were very proud to work here. So the research reinforced what we thought: We needed to improve our reputation both internally and externally by establishing better relationships with key publics.

Planning:

We knew our overall goal was to improve the reputation and perception of our VA as a quality medical facility so we created a Strategic Plan (Attachment 5) using goals, key themes and messages, a situation analysis, identifying our opportunities and barriers and our key publics—employees and volunteers, patients, the medical center community, the media, Congress, and others. We outlined our activities by creating measurable objectives including a public, a level, an outcome, and a time frame. Fifteen objectives and nearly 70 tactics were created.

The five primary objectives:

- 1) Build VA's positive image in the community improving it by at least 10% throughout the upcoming year and maintaining improvement over time;
- 2) Increase the percentage of employees who are very proud and somewhat proud to work at our VAMC and maintain that over time;
- 3) Increase the image of VA health care amongst employees by 5% thus encouraging them to consistently come to VA for their health care;
- 4) Work with the media to increase overall media coverage with a special emphasis on the VA Veterans Day Parade and
- 5) Increase the level of support by 10% from the external opinion leaders group the Veterans Medical Leadership Council. We were allocated \$150,000 (not including salaries) for a 12-month program.

In regards to budget, since the campaign is a sustained one it is important to note that measurable results helped us garner steady budget increases from 1999 at \$60,000 to the present \$150,000 providing an almost three fold increase.

Execution:

Objective 1:

Build VA's positive image in the community improving it by at least 10% throughout the upcoming year and maintaining improvement over time, we employed several different tactics. These included continuing our cable access TV show called "To Your Health" (Attachment 6 show lineup, photos) that outlines ways the general public and veterans can get more from their physical exams, learn proper exercise techniques, etc. There are six shows designed to air monthly from January through June and then repeat from July through December.

According to community polls, approximately 6-7% of Maricopa County residents watch To Your Health. Since its inception four years ago, Cable TV outlets rerun the shows which now consist of 21 editions.

We continue to refine our publicity kit to include a four-color fact sheet and four inserts—Our History, Leadership and Values, What We Offer, Community VA Clinics, and VA Research (Attachment 7). Since its inception nearly 1500 copies are presented annually to members of the media, community and congressional members and the packets bolster VA support at speaker presentations.

We continue to provide a four-page patient education newsletter called Health Trends to 70,000 patients on a quarterly basis. Our department creates the front page article and we purchase copyrighted health care information from the publisher who designs it and mails it to each of our 70,000 patient's homes (Attachment 8). And we continue with our news releases, preparing more than 200 different patient education brochures, sharing our VSO Newsletter and maintaining our congressional letter and mailings. And everywhere we can we brand our products and services with our CTHVAMC logo (Attachment 9, supporting samples)

**Objective 2:**

Increase the percentage of employees who are very proud and somewhat proud to work at our VAMC and maintain that over time; we maintained a program created by public affairs in 2001 called the "Pride Campaign." This program allows employees, managers, and others to offer on-the-spot recognition to those who promote VA in a positive light. Once they receive this award, they can go to the "gift shop" in HR to pick out a gift. Award items range from flashlights to briefcases (Attachment 10). Transparency in an organization can also help lead to pride. Thus we continued our one-way and two way communications forums and incorporated our special techniques to consistently improve communications and instill pride (Attachment 11 samples).

**Objective 3:**

Increase the image of VA health care amongst employees by 5% thus encouraging them to consistently come to VA for their health care: We remained consistent with our medically oriented communications highlighting many aspects of our VA and the health care we provide. These included providing health information in the employee newsletter the Desert Sun improving the communications of research studies via our bulletin boards, on hold message system and marquee; and enhancing the director's town hall meetings with medical information in his PowerPoint presentations (Attachment 12 supporting samples).

**Objective 4:**

Work with the media to increase overall media coverage with a special emphasis on the VA Veterans Day Parade: In 2006 we hired a contract PR writer team to assist us in our news release efforts. This allowed us to more than double our pitches and assists in media placements. We partnered with ABC 15 to support their Welcome Home Project for Purple Heart Veterans which also assisted VA in sharing their VA health care stories. We continued our VA Medical Center's Veterans Day Parade that is coordinated by Public Affairs and supported by a volunteer parade committee. In 2006 we partnered with CBS Radio and garnered \$350,000 of promotional highlights of the parade. Coverage was spread throughout the air on three radio stations—KOOL FM, KMYL and the ZONE and the event was also promoted on their websites More than 200,000 people attended yielding a 64% positive impact of our VA, the best to date (Attachment 13 supporting samples).

**Objective 5:**

Increase the level of support by 10% from the external opinion leaders group (Veterans Medical Leadership Council). We continue to work with an external opinion leaders group called the Veterans Medical Leadership Council. Their role is to assist us in improving the image of the CTHVAMC in the community, provide support to enhance employee morale, and ensure there is adequate health care funding for veterans in Maricopa County. The group is comprised of high profile opinion leaders in the community who are veterans. They meet bimonthly and have followed through on a fourth annual fundraising event which garnered \$125,000 (Attachment 14 samples).

**Evaluation:**

We achieved all objectives.

**Objective 1: Build VA's positive image in the community improving it by at least 10% throughout the year and maintaining that over time.**

According to our Community Telephone Survey, 90% believe we play an important role in the community; 67% believe we are dedicated to continually improving our services; 67% believe we have a good reputation; 61% say we treat people fairly and justly and 60% (6 of 10) would recommend our VAMC to their friends and families (Attachment 15). The cable access TV show called "To Your Health" improved opinions from 39% in 2003 to 57% in 2006—an 18% improvement (Attachment 16, SLIDE 26). The revamped press kit reflects our improved health care services, and requests for this tool have increased. Looking at Quality of Care, 30% rate the care excellent with 22% saying it is very good (Attachment 17, SLIDE 17). This culminates to sustained improvements over time of 20% per year allowing us to consistently exceed our goal!

Objective 2: Increase the percentage of employees who are very proud and somewhat proud to work at our VAMC and maintain that over time.

According to the electronic survey of employees who responded to the question about feelings of rating the care of the medical center 82.7% rate it good to excellent while 86.8% are proud of where they work. Together this is an improvement of 7.6% which is 2% ABOVE the targeted objective and is 23.8% improvement over time (Attachment 18, VISTA Report on medical center ratings and pride).

Objective 3: Increase the image of VA health care amongst employees by 5% thus encouraging them to consistently come to VA for their healthcare:

The image of VA employees and their perception of the care we provide our veterans are at a 90.1% positive rating an increase of 5% (Attachment 19, VISTA Q1 perception of care).

Objective 4: Work with the media to increase overall media coverage with special emphasis on the VA Veterans Day Parade:

The PR writers helped us increase our media pitches from 25 to 53 news releases and improved media coverage from 84 to 188%! (Attachment 20, Media Report). The promotional publicity from CBS on three major radio outlets allowed us to garner \$350,000 worth of free publicity and they also provided professional radio hosts as announcers at the parade speaker towers along the parade route. In the past this function was covered by broadcast students from ASU or the broadcasting school. Thus, CBS's involvement adds value not only in promotions and announcing, but also maintaining strong attendance of 200,000 people, making the Phoenix VA Veterans Day Parade the fourth largest attended Veterans Day parade in the country. Awareness of the VA Veterans Day Parade is at its highest level since the trending began in 2001 and now stands at 76% (Attachment 21, SLIDE 24).

Objective 5: Increase the level of support by 10% from the external opinion leader's group (Veterans Medical Leadership Council).

In 2006 the council hosted their fourth annual fund-raising lunch improving by 12% with \$139,000 in donations (Attachment 22, financials).

Since 1999 until now this sustained reputation campaign has dramatically enhanced our reputation—from no notice to a 67% good reputation rating, nearly two-thirds of Phoenix residents who recommend VA as a health care provider of choice and 90% of the community who feels we play an important role.