

OTHER WORLDS & PROPAGANDA: PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT PROJECT

"Wheels must turn steadily, but cannot turn untended. There must be men to tend them, men as steady as the wheels upon their axles, sane men, obedient men, stable in contentment."

—*Mustapha Mond, Brave New World*

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your job offer and welcome to the [INSERT SOCIETY NAME HERE] Department of Propaganda. As a new employee, it is imperative that you understand clearly and completely your role in our future world of stability, harmony, and never-surpassed human happiness. Please read the following closely.

The Department of Propaganda plays a key role in maintaining the paradise we have constructed. This world of ours did not come about by accident—in fact, mankind almost destroyed itself first, and only the prospect of imminent extinction through instability and war brought about the necessary changes leading to a better tomorrow. We have less freedom now than in previous societies, but we are happier and more stable for it; in fact, we have discovered that stability is more important than freedom. Our way of life is controlled and planned down to the smallest details, and endless attention and care is required if society is to maintain its steady progress towards an ever improving quality of life.

Hence your job in the Department of Propaganda. You play a vital role in the health of our state. We can never rest in our efforts to ensure stability through social engineering and advanced science. As you know, individual citizens need to know their role in society and how to fulfill their expectations; everyone must be reminded how to stay happy and stable. In doing so, we keep the gears of our social machine running smoothly.

Your job is precisely to remind citizens of this correct way to live. Virtue and sanity in our world rely, in large part, on how well you do your job. You must supply the healthy thoughts that will occupy the minds of our citizenry. You must craft the powerful words and dynamic images that effortlessly but effectively persuade and therein ensure obedience.

Your efforts here at the Department of Propaganda are central to the stability and strength of our civilization. The ideas you fashion and then communicate are the glue which helps hold our social structure together, the grease that keeps the machine humming smoothly and contentedly.

Good luck!

JOB DESCRIPTION

Your group will be assigned to one of following Department of Propaganda subdepartments responsible for reinforcing correct thought and correspondingly correct behavior. With the resources and virtually unlimited media access of the State, you will design and shoot a public service announcement (PSA) for your subdepartment to be broadcast over the airwaves and through the digital pipes of our world. **Your video presentation should be polished and smooth, upbeat yet to the point, and simple but catchy. It must effectively and dramatically convey the message that obedience to the values and organization of our society leads to individual virtue and sanity, thereby bringing about stability and happiness for all.**

■ Consumerism Subdepartment:

You are responsible for promoting the idea that increased production and consumption leads to happiness and virtue. Newer is better! More is best! In our perfect society we control the people by encouraging materialism. Design a concrete product or develop a program that will push this philosophy. Devise a 2-3 minute government-sponsored public service announcement to sell the product or program and the philosophy.

■ Health Subdepartment

You are responsible for promoting the idea that to be happy is to live healthily. In our perfect society we control the people by encouraging certain health habits. Design a concrete health product or develop a program that will push this philosophy. Devise a 2-3 minute government-sponsored public service announcement to sell the product or program and the philosophy.

■ Entertainment Subdepartment

You are responsible for promoting the idea that a normal person just wants to have non-stop 24-7 fun! Sensory stimulation is the highest pursuit of the best form of happiness. In our perfect society we control the people by encouraging them to indulge in the latest and greatest forms of amusement. Design a concrete product or develop a program that will push this philosophy.

■ Technology Subdepartment

You are responsible for promoting the idea that technology makes life easier and better for everyone. In our perfect society we control the people by encouraging them to utilize certain technologies. Design a concrete health product or develop a program that will push this philosophy. Devise a 2-3 minute government-sponsored public service announcement to sell the product or program and the philosophy.

REQUIREMENTS

The broadcast should last between 2-3 minutes and should be perfectly understandable and equally digestible to society members young and old. Your message will be broadcast over and over again, and millions of viewers will be exposed to it, so your work must be of the highest quality. It cannot seem stale and boring after only a handful of viewings. Be advised!

As you complete your work for the Department of Propaganda, do not lose sight of the following questions:

- How can you fashion your message to gain maximum acceptance by the target audience?
- What propaganda techniques can you use to influence people? (see list below for further details)
- Is your message upbeat, and does the tone reflect the ideals of our paradise?
- Will your slogans and/or jingles stay in people's minds afterwards? Are they simple? Are they catchy?
- Is the video polished and attention grabbing? Does it reinforce the core message of your subdepartment?

PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES

There are many techniques utilized in the dissemination of propaganda. Since you are working for the Department of Propaganda, it is important that you utilize at least *one* of them in your public service announcement. Here is a list of six approaches commonly used to persuade people:

APPROACH	EXAMPLE
BANDWAGON: The basic idea behind the bandwagon approach is just that, "getting on the bandwagon." The propagandist puts forth the idea that everyone is doing this, or everyone supports this person/cause, so should you. The bandwagon approach appeals to the conformist in all of us: No one wants to be left out of what is perceived to be a popular trend.	<i>Everyone in Lemmingtown is behind Jim Duffie for Mayor. Shouldn't you be part of this winning team?</i>
TESTIMONIAL: This is the celebrity endorsement of a philosophy, movement or candidate. In advertising, for example, athletes are often paid millions of dollars to promote sports shoes, equipment and fast food. In political circles, movie stars, television stars, rock stars and athletes can lend a great deal of credibility and power to a political cause or candidate. Just a photograph of a movie star at a political rally can generate interest in that issue/candidate or cause people to become supporters.	<i>"Sam Slugger", a baseball Hall of Famer who led the pros in hitting for years, appears in a television ad supporting Mike Politico for U.S. Senate. Since Sam is well known and respected in his home state and nationally, he will likely gain Mr. Politico many votes just by his appearance with the candidate.</i>
PLAIN FOLKS: Here the candidate or cause is identified with common people from everyday walks of life. The idea is to make the candidate/cause come off as grassroots and all-American.	<i>After a morning speech to wealthy Democratic donors, Bill Clinton stops by McDonald's for a burger, fries, and photo-op.</i>
TRANSFER: Transfer employs the use of symbols, quotes or the images of famous people to convey a message not necessarily associated with them. In the use of transfer, the candidate/speaker attempts to persuade us through the indirect use of something we respect, such as a patriotic or religious image, to promote his/her ideas. Religious and patriotic images may be the most commonly used in this propaganda technique, but they are not the only ones. Sometimes science becomes the means to transfer the message.	<i>The environmentalist group PEOPLE PROMOTING PLANTS, in its attempt to prevent a highway from destroying the natural habitat of thousands of plant species, produces a television ad with a "scientist" in a white lab coat explaining the dramatic consequences of altering the food chain by destroying this habitat.</i>
GLITTERING GENERALITIES: This approach is closely related to what is happening in TRANSFER (above). Here, a generally accepted virtue is usually employed to stir up favorable emotions. The problem is that these words mean different things to different people and are often manipulated for the propagandists' use. The important thing to remember is that in this technique the propagandist uses these words in a positive sense. They often include words like: democracy, family values (when used positively), rights, civilization, even the word "American."	<i>An ad by a cigarette manufacturer proclaims to smokers: Don't let them take your rights away! ("Rights" is a powerful word, something that stirs the emotions of many, but few on either side would agree on exactly what the 'rights' of smokers are.)</i>
FEAR: This technique is very popular among political parties and PACs (Political Action Committees) in the U.S. The idea is to present a dreaded circumstance and usually follow it up with the kind of behavior needed to avoid that horrible event.	<i>The Citizens for Retired Rights present a magazine ad showing an elderly couple living in poverty because their social security benefits have been drastically cut by the Republicans in Congress. The solution? The CRR urges you to vote for Democrats.</i>

assignment adapted from foothilltechnology.org and from shepherdenglish@pbworks