

APPENDIX J

Development of PSYOP Products

Printed material is a major medium for disseminating the PSYOP message. It includes all products disseminated in printed form: leaflets, posters, magazines, pamphlets, books, and such items as novelties, trinkets, and gifts with a printed message. Printed material, in contrast with other media, can transmit messages of any length or complexity. It can be passed from person to person without distortion, an important factor in PSYOP product effectiveness. It generally has a high degree of credibility, acceptance, and prestige.

Preparation of Printed Material

As with other media, printed material must gain and hold attention, be credible, and persuade the target audience. Audio and audiovisual materials are effective for short, simple messages, but for a well-reasoned analysis, they are no substitute for printed material. It should offer the solution that guides the audience to a COA the PSYOP planner desires.

Common Characteristics

The elements of layout in almost all printed materials are format, display lines, illustrations, copy text, and white space. All of these elements are critical to successfully communicating the message.

Format. The printed material must be in a format familiar to the target audience—it must be presented in a style the target audience is accustomed to seeing printed material. The way the material is presented is an important factor in gaining the audience's attention and interest. A format that is strange or unfamiliar to the target audience may detract from the credibility and acceptance of the material.

Display Lines. Display lines include headlines, subheadlines, and captions for illustrations. The purpose of display lines is to attract attention and to enhance the written message.

A headline must be easy to read and understand and must be provocative. A subheadline should bridge the gap between the headline and the text. It directs the reader's eye to the copy text. A subheadline is generally used only when the headline requires elaboration. Captions explain illustrations.

Illustrations. Illustrations support the central theme of the message. They enable both literate and illiterate audiences to understand the general idea of the message without reading the text. When preparing leaflets, developers should use a single predominant illustration to communicate a central theme. Graphically, the illustration should contrast with the background so that, as a mass, it is identifiable at a distance. Editorially, the illustration must be intimately tied to the text to convey the message to the reader. Indigenous artists and photographers should be used to ensure that the intended message is conveyed.

Copy Text. The copy text is the written message, less display lines. It contains a detailed discussion of the appeal being made, supporting and justifying it. A good text convinces the reader that only by accepting the course of action stated or implied in the text can his needs be fulfilled. The text must contain terms, phrases, and vernacular familiar to the target audience. For this reason, indigenous personnel should be used to write messages. Direct translation from English text is generally unclear and does not relate to the frame of reference of the audience.

White Space. White space is the area around the text or illustration where nothing is printed. Although called white space, this area may be any color. When properly used, white space cannot be effectively overprinted by the opponent force, since it complements the other elements.

Visualization

Once the theme and elements of layout to be used have been determined, the idea must be fused into a single, well-balanced product. This process is known as visualization, or a mental representation of the ideas. Visualization involves two primary principles of layout: balance and eye direction.

Balance. Balance is the distribution of weight around a central point, called the optical center. This point is located slightly above the mathematical center of the visual presentation. On a sheet of paper, for example, it is approximately one-third the distance to the top edge. Balance around this point can be formal or informal. There are four categories of balance: formal balance, informal balance, informal diagonal balance, and grouping.

Formal Balance. Formal balance is the equal distribution of weight around the optical center. It helps portray dignity, conservatism, dependability, and stability but generally lacks visual appeal and interest.

Informal Balance. Informal balance is the casual spread of material across the page. It is usually more dynamic and provocative than formal balance and has a better chance of arousing interest.

Informal Diagonal Balance. Informal diagonal balance is the distribution of weight diagonally around the optical center. One way of achieving informal diagonal balance is to place illustrations and text opposite each other on either side of the optical center.

Grouping. Grouping is the combining of two or more forms of balance in a single presentation.

Eye Direction. Eye direction is the way the eye is led through the presentation of the material. It may be employed through several techniques-suggestive eye direction, sequential eye direction, and mechanical eye direction.

Suggestive Eye Direction. In this method, the product designer attempts to direct the eye by subtle means not obvious to the reader.

Sequential Eye Direction. In this method, the product designer uses a logical sequence familiar to the audience to direct the eye through a series of presentations. Examples include a series of numbered frames or other natural sequences, such as a clock-face presentation, to direct the eye in a clockwise direction around the presentation.

Mechanical Eye Direction. In this method, the product designer uses arrows and guiding lines to direct the reader's attention through the significant points of the visual presentation. Mechanical eye direction is the most obvious method of eye direction.

Form

Printed material is a form of visual communication. It includes all messages delivered in any printed form. It may or may not require written text and may consist of graphics only.

Physical Characteristics

The major physical characteristics of printed material are permanency, color, and shape. Each characteristic may convey a message to the target audience.

Permanency Printed material is a relatively permanent document. Once printed and delivered, it may remain in existence indefinitely-until it is physically destroyed.

Color. The color of the printed material alone may have meaning. Using colors that have significance to the target audience frequently enhances the impact of the material. For example, to an American, red generally signifies danger and yellow caution. To a communist, however, red, which is his homeland's national color, signifies loyalty and patriotism.

Shape. Shapes may convey a message to the target audience. The product designer, therefore, must have a thorough knowledge of the symbols relevant to a particular society when preparing a PSYOP product. For example, a leaflet in the shape of a leaf may signify death in some societies.

Audio and Audiovisual Materials

Refer to Chapter 10 for audio and audiovisual script preparation techniques. Generally, the same techniques apply for audiovisual material as for audio products. Bear in mind, however, that simulation of effects and objects can be used to a much lesser extent in audiovisual presentations.