

Douglas Niedt

Phone: 816.235.2922

Email (no spaces): Douglas Niedt @ Douglas Niedt . com

Website: DouglasNiedt.com

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About PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)

Douglas Niedt, Guitarist

If you are a nonprofit organization, you are eligible for free radio and television public service programming: commercial spots called public service announcements or PSAs, or public interest programs.

If you want to investigate the possibilities, call the radio and television stations in your area and ask for the name of the person who handles public service announcements. Also ask for their job title. This may be the public affairs director, community relations director, or community development director.

When you get that person on the phone, tell him or her that you are nonprofit and you would like to know the station's requirements for submitting public service spots. Follow these requirements exactly because a lot of people are competing for the air time. Radio stations may require a lead time of over four weeks, television stations up to six or eight weeks. Don't forget to ask if there are other public service possibilities such as interviews on community affairs programs.

PSAs are aired during commercial breaks and are of varying lengths. We have supplied you with ten second and thirty second examples. You may write your own or simply retype this sample on your own letterhead or copy and paste into your email, filling in the missing information. Most radio and television stations prefer that you send the PSA by email rather than a hard copy.

It is best to double space the copy. Spell out numbers under ten and type dates with ordinal suffixes (October 8th, April 21st). Include phonetic spellings for foreign or difficult to pronounce words and names **as we have done for Douglas Niedt: (pronounced "neet")**. Use short active words and sentences in your announcements for the most impact.

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Time your copy in a normal conversational voice at a normal speed. But remember it is better to run just a bit long and let the station trim words than not to supply enough copy.

Ticket prices often may not be mentioned in a PSA. Just state the phone number to call for information. Also, you have no control over the scheduling of your PSA. Even though they may be aired at odd hours, you will be amazed at how many people manage to hear them.

Finally, if your organization is not familiar to the radio/television stations, be sure to send a cover letter on official stationery. This should be brief and include a description of your organization. You might also have to certify your nonprofit status.

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