

CHAPTER 7

Product Development



The processes of mission analysis, intelligence gathering, target selection, theme and symbol selection, media selection, and product design come together in the PDC. The PDC uses the product development process to develop prototypes of products and actions that will help accomplish the PSYOP mission. The goal in product development is to get the right message or action (theme and symbols) said or done in the right way (persuasive presentation) through the right channel (media selection) at the right time (intensity and timing) to the right audience (target analysis).

Process

The product development process is an interactive system used to develop models of PSYOP products and psychological actions that become aspects of PSYOP programs. Although the process is numbered sequentially, the steps listed in Figure 7-1, page 7-2, interact with each other and can occur simultaneously.

Developing products is a three-phase process that takes all available PSYOP target information, knowledge, and material and expresses them as artwork, words, symbols, sounds, texts, manuscripts, and actions.

Integration

The first phase requires the integration of target analysis with the appropriate media. The PSYOP personnel must ensure that this process addresses six major questions. If these questions cannot be answered, the development process must be repeated until the information is obtained. These questions are—

- Who is the target audience?
- What is the PSYOP message (or action)?
- When will it have the most effect?
- Where is the target audience located?
- What is the purpose of the PSYOP message or action?
- How should the message be said or the action performed?

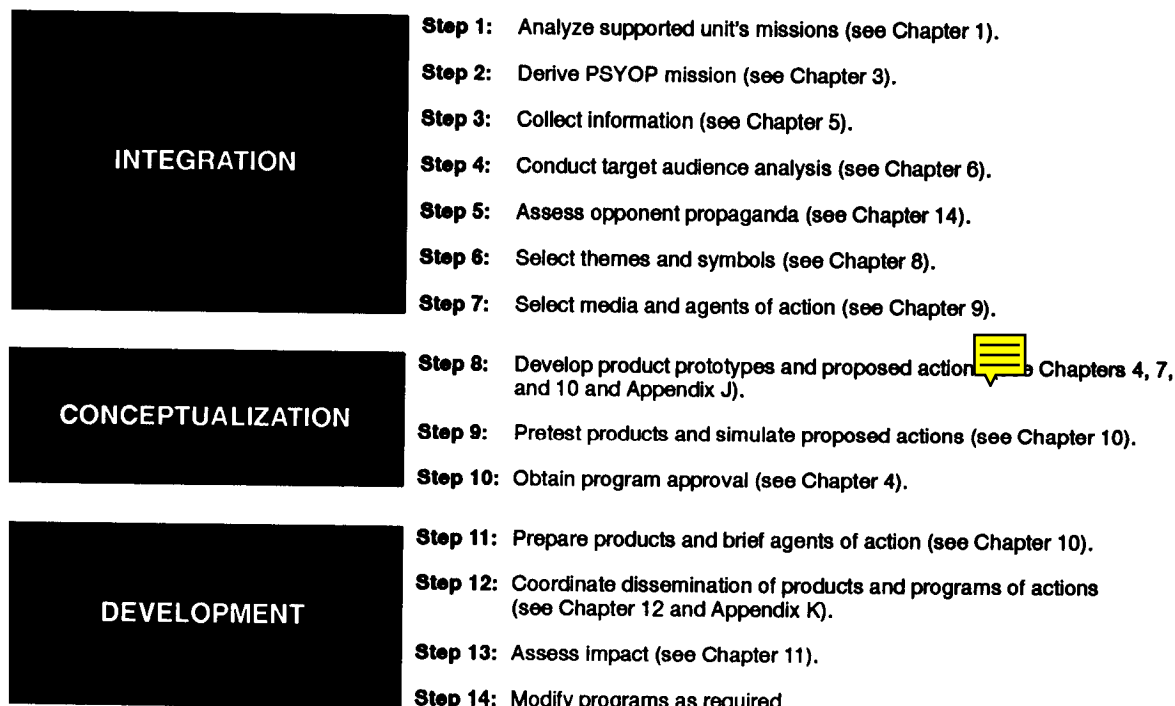


Figure 7-1. Product development process.

Conceptualization

The second phase is conceptualization, which occurs when all the questions are answered. Conceptualization transforms target analysis and media selection into a workable plan.

Development

The third phase is the development and pretesting of prototypes. It includes—

- Planning and developing face-to-face communication programs.
- Developing radio and television scripts, speeches, pamphlets, rumor programs, tape appeals, leaflets, handbills, posters, and similar materials, as well as psychological actions.
- Planning their place in the program sequence.

Once prototypes have passed this phase, they are delivered to media personnel for refinement and production. See Appendix J for guidance on development of specific prototypes.

Programs of Psychological Actions

Developing and coordinating programs of psychological actions in support of military operations follow the same general sequence as product development.

But much of the time, the assets required to execute these programs are not organic to PSYOP units, and orchestrating these actions requires that the supported commander give a great deal of freedom to the PSYOP planner. A closely coordinated and timed series of psychological actions, however, can yield results that thoroughly justify the investment in time, equipment, and personnel.

Although of little tactical importance, raids conducted in an opponent's rear area can cause him to dedicate assets to rear area security missions he might otherwise use in offensive operations. For example, raids conducted against truck convoys may gain little tactical value but could cause an opponent to dedicate valuable resources to the protection of these convoys. These actions, of course, will be amplified by dissemination of products designed to reduce the opponent's confidence in his ability to conduct operations successfully when his own lines of communication are threatened. Similarly, the actions of insurgents attacking targets of no military importance are designed to demonstrate a government's inability to provide security, thus undermining the confidence of the governed. These actions are again amplified by dissemination of appropriate PSYOP products. The PDC is responsible for developing such programs.

Elements of Effective PSYOP Products

The rest of this chapter covers the elements of an effective product. PSYOP messages come in many forms. Some straight news, for example, will have less need for special devices than will a persuasive leaflet or an appeal to an opponent's unit by radio. Whatever the kind of messages, however, they have a common characteristic—they ultimately have the same kind of purpose and the same need to be attended, understood, accepted, and acted upon.

Another shared characteristic is that, in one proportion or other, each message is a combination of entertainment, information, and persuasion. Entertainment in its widest sense includes shock, surprise, and the aesthetic pleasure to be derived from appearance and sound, more so than the entertainment comes on familiar to, for example, the U.S. radio listener. The function of entertainment in PSYOP is usually to bait the hook and attract attention and interest for the message itself. For example, Tokyo Rose used this technique by playing popular tunes as a bribe to get U.S. soldiers to listen to her propaganda. Entertainment may, however, also be used indirectly for persuasion. Tokyo Rose's music was calculated to make U.S. soldiers homesick and weary of war. Information may be used indirectly for persuasion—news, for example. And sometimes persuasion becomes merely instruction how to do something the listener is assumed to have decided upon already.

Product Development Techniques or Devices

Appendix J lists specific techniques for tailoring the PSYOP message to a particular audience or goal. The following general techniques or devices, however, apply to any PSYOP product.

Getting Attention. Devices to attract attention include luring the audience to pay heed to a message by indexing it with a picture of a beautiful woman introducing

an item in a radio broadcast with words like “Bulletin just in” or “FLASH”, or a striking headline in a newspaper or magazine. Those devices index a message by classifying it under the needs it might meet. Thus, PSYOP personnel will use a headline or picture or cue phrase to stimulate interest by pointing out a need to which the message relates, thereby attracting attention to it. In addition, the actions of mobile training teams, deep strike operations, and ship visits are attention-getting devices and should be incorporated into program planning.

Building Credibility. PSYOP personnel should manipulate symbols within the product in a way that will lead the recipient to accept its contents. They should establish an atmosphere of authenticity and authority by using prestigious people, naming names, and citing figures, if appropriate. PSYOP personnel should include in the message some item by which the audience can easily check its veracity. They should use pictures that will be recognized. Above all, they should find out the sources and evidence the target regards as credible. PSYOP personnel should establish an atmosphere of consistency, avoiding real or seeming contradictions.

Making Memories. PSYOP personnel should manipulate the words of a product so people will remember them. They should use hard-hitting, easily remembered slogans (Make the world safe for democracy) and labels (Huns). They should build the opponent and opponent leaders (recall U.S. pictures of the Japanese and of Hitler in World War II) into symbols of hate and rejection. They should not hesitate to write in terms of the two-valued orientation—that is, to describe the choices before the target audience as bad (the opponent’s program) and good (America’s program) and black and white rather than shades of gray.

Displacing Aggression. When possible, PSYOP personnel should try to provide targets for aggression. They should identify frustrations in the target audience and try to heighten them, for example, tantalizing opposing troops with reminders of the pleasures and comforts they are missing. They should try to direct the resultant aggression against targets within the opponent’s structure rather than against the opposite side.

Arousing Emotion. PSYOP personnel should arouse emotion where it will be to their benefit. They should appeal to emotional and ego-involved attitudes. They should use rich symbols and stimulate the kind of emotionalism under which PSYOP messages seem to work the fastest change. Intellectual appeals can be resolved by logic; emotional appeals—to the gut or the heart—are not so easily resolved. This difference accounts for the durability of glasnost human rights, prochoice, and prolife as psychological appeals.

Repeating the Message. PSYOP personnel should Repeat the message, varying it as appropriate and ensuring it does not contradict the previous ones.

Packaging the Message

The most important moment in PSYOP occurs when the message is released to its target audience. Once a product is released, PSYOP personnel can do no more about it. At this point, everything that happens will have to happen between the

message and its recipients. Thus, all PSYOP decisions lead up to the crucial second at which the product is released. Examples of decisions include the—

- Specification of purpose.
- Selection of target.
- Choice of actions and media.
- Timing and relation of one transmission to others.
- Creation of the message and the product itself.

A product is expected to attract the attention of the audience and get the meaning across as intended. It is also expected to start a response in that target audience in the direction that accomplishes the psychological objective and the PSYOP mission. The product may be an action, event, or the use of media (audio, visual, or audiovisual). Whatever form it takes, it still must be devised so it goes out by itself and accomplishes its tasks.

Summary

The PDC is the focal point of activity within a PSYOP unit. It develops the prototypes of products and psychological actions that allow the unit to perform its mission.