

Process Evaluation of a Poster Campaign

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The Campaign

Every Drink is a Choice is a media campaign targeted to post-secondary students that promotes responsible drinking. The objectives of the program include:

- To increase knowledge of the risks associated with alcohol use.
- To reduce the incidence of binge drinking (5+ drinks on a single occasion).
- To increase knowledge of healthy and responsible alcohol choices.

The ***Every Drink is a Choice*** campaign was launched in September 2004 and is promoted via print advertising, posters, magnets and other promotional items. There is also a website component to this campaign. The website is uniquely Kingston and is an interactive domain.

Key Messages

- Every drink is a choice
- Know yourself, know your limit
- Take care of yourself and your friends

Campaign Context

The campaign is part of an overall post-secondary strategy that includes other components such as alcohol policies and residence education.

The Greater Kingston Area Safe & Sober Community Alliance

The Greater Kingston Area Safe & Sober Community Alliance is a group of dedicated individuals from the education, not-for-profit, and health sectors in the community. The Alliance is one of 22 FOCUS Community sites in Ontario. FOCUS is a provincial substance abuse and injury prevention program funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health. KFL&A Public Health is the lead agency in our area and supports all programs and activities.

Partnership involved in this campaign

- KFL&A Public Health
- Queen's University
- Royal Military College
- St. Lawrence College
- Centre for Addiction & Mental Health
- Kingston: Partners for a Safe Community

The Process Evaluation

The objectives of the process evaluation included:

- *Determining if existing campaign messages are appropriate and well-received by the target audience*
- *Generating appropriate messages for responsible drinking for local post-secondary students*

Methodology

A series of focus groups were conducted to obtain in-depth data regarding responsible drinking messaging targeted to local post-secondary students. The target audience for the focus groups was first year students living in residence at participating institutions. This particular population was selected for focus groups for two reasons. Firstly, given that the rate of binge drinking is highest among this group of students, they are the primary target audience of the ***Every Drink is a Choice*** campaign. Secondly, limiting the focus group participants provided the homogeneity necessary for successful focus group discussions.

A semi-structured interview guide was used to facilitate the focus group discussions (Appendix A). There were two focus groups at each of the three participating institutions – one for males and one for females. Separate focus groups should be held for males and females if the topic of discussion is experienced differently by each sex.

Analysis

The analysis of the focus group data is presented by campaign poster. The top three or four themes that emerged from the data analysis are presented from the most common themes to the least common themes.

What They Said About Charlie

You can't relate to Charlie unless you or someone close to you has been in this situation.

I was actually having this discussion last night with a friend just about how um, people just in general, like, as we are, um, things can really change how we think. If we are affected by it personally, like if we know a friend who had say died from alcohol poisoning, that would be something to change maybe your views on it because it happened to you as a person. And, like, this is just like natural, but if it's someone else, someone you don't even know, than it's really hard to have that affect on you....and yeah, like I think that with Charlie. Like if you knew someone in this situation then you could relate to Charlie and think, like, yeah, this could happen to me. But if you've never, like known anyone, you'd be like, this will never happen to me.

Graphic photographs catch my attention

Speaker 1: *The picture is an attention getter.*

Speaker 2: *Yeah. Totally, people are obviously going to read the poster to figure out what it is all about. So it is a good idea to have the picture on the poster.*

Speaker 3: *The picture does capture your attention, for sure.*

Speaker 1: *Like the hospital bed, all the wires around him, his eyes are all blacked out. You're like, what's going on here?*

This message does not come to mind when drinking.

Most people just look at [this poster] and go "Wow" and like, that "Wow" is 30 seconds of our life and they won't think about that when they are having, like their 10th beer. They won't think about Charlie unless Charlie is right in front of them. They are not going to remember something this bad. They don't WANT to remember. And they won't remember until they are in that position.

The name, age and location personalize Charlie for males, but not for females.

I see Charlie as Charlie but I don't know who Charlie is. I have no feelings associated with Charlie...They're not making me feel like anything about him. It's just like, "Oh, this is too bad". But, I don't know. It doesn't evoke that like emotional issue.

Female

I think the fact that he's local really helps get the message across. Like he's from Kingston, right? So like it happened like around this area. You might think that this like only happens in the U.S or something, but it happens here too....And it's not like it's an older person. He's 19. I'm 19, so, I don't know about you guys, but like that really brings it home

Male

General conclusions:

Shock or fear messages catch the attention of post-secondary students. However, it is not a message that they personalize or that they think about when drinking. A shocking poster once in a while will serve as a good reminder of the more severe consequences of drinking but this type of messaging cannot be the mainstay of an advertising campaign.

What They Said About Sarah & Sam

Picture does not grab your attention.

They're smiley, happy people. They're like normal. Like I don't know. There's nothing wrong in this picture. I see Sarah and Sam smiling and there's nothing wrong so I don't need to read further. They're O.K.

There's too much writing on the poster.

Speaker 1: *Like, everyone here criticizes this poster for having too much reading.*

Speaker 2: *Yeah, like it has far too much writing on the polaroids and stuff.*

Speaker 3: *The average person who walks by is not going to walk by and want to stop and read all that.*

Speaker 4: *That's so true 'cause like I've NEVER read it.*

It's not clear that this poster is about alcohol.

Because you see the black girl and the white guy with "Created Equal?" it first hit me as a racism poster. You have to read everything to get the actual message.

And once we got the message, it was not new or important information

Girls all know they can't drink as much as guys; that they get drunk more easily. That's common knowledge.

Conclusion

In a poster, the message must be conveyed in the title of the poster and the picture.

What They Said About Tina & Tim

This is a common, or at least realistic, consequence of drinking.

Yeah. [I can] definitely [relate to this poster]..Like I said, it makes you think a lot. Like, when you are drinking, like you have lower judgment. Like especially like when you're a little bit tipsy. And then you see this poster when you're walking into res and I would be like...you look at it and you're "Oh yeah. I can relate to that".

It's funny.

I like this one. I find it so funny!

We will remember this message when we are drinking.

Because you are probably thinking about whatever at the bar, like making out with a girl or bringing her home or whatever, you are like going to be thinking "Oh yeah, that poster. That could happen".

For some males, this poster did not display any negative consequences of drinking.

I think it would be a lot better if they showed one of them as a single parent or something. Like, just like, this picture "Oh, they went back there for fun". Like there's no repercussions in this picture. It actually might make you want to drink more! If there were some repercussions, like a girl with something majorly wrong with her...like if you got AIDS or Herpes or God knows what, then it would show something. Because this just looks like, "Oh. They got drunk and went back to her place and" that's it. There's nothing left here.

Conclusion:

Using humour and the sexual connotation of the poster caught students' attention. Furthermore, the combination of humour and a common consequence of drinking allowed students to recall this message even when drinking. While this scene is a fairly common consequence of excessive drinking at post-secondary institutions, females were much more likely than males to indicate that they didn't want to be in that situation, and for some males this poster did not portray any negative consequences of alcohol use.

Advertising Tips from the Students

- Convey your message in the title and the picture.
- Poster needs to be related to common experience.
- Use humour when you can.
- Advertisements during Frosh Week are noticed more.
- Advertise where students drink (e.g., local bars).

Suggested Future Themes

- Financial cost of drinking
- Someone throwing up from excessive drinking
- STDs or unplanned pregnancy
- Be a good friend

Future Directions

Next Steps 06-07

- Complete process evaluation report
- Use information from both the focus groups and web survey in designing future materials
- Update / modify the www.everydrinkisachoice.com website based on evaluation results
- Re-launch campaign in September 2006 to new first year and returning students

Appendix A

Focus Group Discussion Guide

Today we are surrounded by media messages and advertising. These messages are trying to sell us products, ideas and lifestyles. Name a recent advertisement that caught your attention and tell us what it is about that ad that got your attention.

Sometimes instead of products, advertisers are selling us ideas or lifestyles. Can you think of an example of an advertisement selling an idea or lifestyle that caught your attention? What was it in that ad that got your attention?

We've had lots of ideas about lifestyle advertising. Let's focus now on alcohol advertising. There is a lot of advertising about drinking alcohol (e.g., beer commercials). Think about an advertisement that was trying to get you to think about the risks of drinking? Have you seen any advertisements? What did you think about those ads?

If there is no mention of print ads and/or posters...

I have heard lots of examples of advertising on television or the radio. What about print ads or posters? Have you seen any print ads or posters on the risks of drinking?

- Where did you see them?
- What were the messages?

What are some of the messages that you would like to hear in advertisements that were telling you to think about your drinking or to drink responsibly?

Show poster 1 "Charlie's Story"

What are your thoughts on this advertisement?

- Things you like
- Things you don't like

Do you relate to this ad – could it be you or your friends?

How would you change the ad?

Show poster 2 "Created Equal?"

What are your thoughts on this advertisement?

- Things you like
- Things you don't like

Do you relate to this ad – could it be you or your friends?

How would you change the ad?

Show poster 3 “Don’t Wake Up With More Than a Hangover”

What are your thoughts on this advertisement?

- Things you like
- Things you don’t like

Do you relate to this ad – could it be you or your friends?

How would you change the ad?

Summarize the discussion.

Is this an adequate summary?

Summarize the purpose of the focus group.

Did we miss anything?

Any final thoughts or comments that you would like to make?