USING ADOLESCENT PEER CROWDS TO DEVELOP AND DISSEMITE HEALTH MESSAGES THAT RESONATE WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

Health Communication Matters Webinar: Tobacco prevention

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This presentation is not a formal dissemination of information by FDA and does not represent Agency position or policy.
Multiple efforts over several years targeting discrete audiences:

- General market at-risk youth
- Multicultural (African-American, Hispanic, Asian / Pacific Islander) at-risk youth
- Young adults who identify as LGBT
- Rural male youth at-risk of using smokeless tobacco
- Adult smokers who want to quit (implemented at point-of-sale locations)
- American Indian / Alaska Native at-risk youth
- Tobacco Retailers
Approximately **5 million multicultural youth** are open to smoking or are already experimenting with cigarettes, highlighting a critical need for stronger, more targeted youth tobacco prevention efforts.

Among at-risk multicultural youth, it is estimated that **1.4 million** identify with **hip hop culture**.
October 2015: FDA launched **FRESH EMPIRE™**, a national youth tobacco education campaign

- First ever national peer crowd-focused campaign

- Campaign developed for multicultural youth, including African American, Hispanic, and Asian-Pacific Islander youth, 12 to 17 years old who are at-risk for tobacco use and also influenced by the Hip Hop peer crowd
The Fresh Empire campaign leverages the peer crowd approach to reach at-risk teens and encourage them to live tobacco-free.

A peer crowd focuses on youth who share core ideals, have similar life experiences and common interests.

Social branding utilizes peer-crowd-targeted brands to associate healthy behaviors with desirable lifestyles.
Fresh Empire pilot launched in May 2015 in the southeast and expanded to 36 markets (DMAs) in October 2015.

Pilot: May 12, 2015 - October 11, 2015
Multimarket: October 12, 2015 - September 30, 2017
INFLUENCING ADOLESCENTS: HIERARCHY OF PERSUASIVE EFFECTS

Exposure → Attention → Liking → Cognition
Reactance
→ May lead to rejection of health messages

Peer influence
→ Peers thoughts, opinions, behaviors are prioritized – tough for media to compete

Cluttered media environment
→ 9 hours with entertainment media each day...need to break through
GUIDELINES FOR AUDIENCE SEGMENTATION

1. Associated with risk behavior

2. Actionable
   • Provide guidance on message and material design

3. Accessible
   • Can be reached through specific channels
Peer crowd – a reputation-based subculture or group with shared norms, values, styles and behaviors
PEER CROWDS/ PEER CROWD THEORY

They only met once, but it changed their lives forever.

They were five total strangers with nothing in common,
 except for the red tape.

A brain, a beauty, a jock, a rebel, and a recluse.

Before the day was over, they broke the rules.

Bared their souls.

And touched each other in a way they never dreamed possible.

The Breakfast Club
Which peer crowd did you identify with when you were a teen?
SOCIAL IDENTITY$^{1-4}$ AND SOCIAL NORMS$^{5,6}$

- “A self definition in terms of social category membership”$^4$

- Each social category has a corresponding prototype
  → Whether or not there is a smoking norm

- Adolescents

- Prototypes informed by personal and mediated interactions

Match each behavior with the peer crowd(s)!

- High academic performance
- Indoor tanning
- Alcohol use
PATTERNS OF RISK BEHAVIOR BY PEER CROWD

- Mainstream
  - Dieting and weight control
    - Low risk for smoking, drug use, alcohol use
- Preppy
  - Alcohol use
  - Indoor tanning
  - Unhealthy eating
- Alternative
  - Alcohol, drug, cigarette use
  - Unhealthy eating
  - Bulimic behaviors
  - Self harm
- Hip Hop
  - Cigarette and cigarillo use
EVIDENCE FOR PEER CROWD TARGETING IN HEALTH COMMUNICATION

In the U.S., 1,200 people die every day from tobacco-related diseases. One tobacco company called younger adult smokers “replacement smokers.” Another transformed targeting potential smokers in school bathrooms, playgrounds, YMCAs, and city parks.

Skater

Preppy

Hip Hop

PHILIP MORRISSEY.

HEAVEN KNOWS I'M MISERABLE NOW.

#ARTAGAINSTBIGTOBACCO
Tuning in/Reach

- Peer crowds have cleanly defined media use and behavioral patterns where campaign materials can be directed
  - Skaters: skate websites/message boards, skate videos on youtube, skate parks, X-games on TV
  - Hipsters: ‘hipster’ bars and clubs, indie rock shows, local art galleries, independent art and culture websites (e.g. Vice)

- Can help overcome cluttered media environment by placing ads in most relevant media
CONNECTING PEER CROWDS TO PERSUASION

Attending

- Peer crowds offer an arsenal of cues that can be incorporated into campaign materials so that the targeted crowd knows it is ‘for’ them and will attend

  - Skater might be more likely to pause on a commercial featuring skating

  - Hip-Hop might take notice of an hip-hop song

- Can help overcome challenge of teens’ large daily media diet by grabbing the attention of targeted youth
Liking

- Cultural cues can also enhance liking for the ad
- Ad is filled with things the target audience already likes (music, activities, styles, people)
- Can signal that the agency/brand is ‘one of us’ (in-grouping), which can overcome reactance
Persuasion: Modifiable Targets of Change

- Social norms – peer crowds have consistent variations in risk behavior, yet identification with a peer crowd is not contingent on peer to peer contact
  - Media play an important role in shaping peer crowd norms
  - Potential intervention point for health campaigns

- Peer crowds also vary on other targetable factors such as beliefs, attitudes, values
  - Ex: Hipster – values social and environmental causes
CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT

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CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Message Development
- Perform extensive literature review
- Conduct early strategic research to identify salient message themes
- Consult experts in tobacco public health education and the Multicultural community

Concept Development
- Use focus groups to identify promising creative concepts
- Consult experts in tobacco public health education and the Multicultural community

Copy Testing
- Conduct copy testing of final rough cut ads to measure perceived effectiveness, level of engagement, and message comprehension
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Tobacco use isn’t fresh

Someone who is fresh is successful, attractive and always in control.

Key Insights

- Being “fresh,” a slang term defined as being fashionable, powerful, confident, and a trendsetter
- Overcoming “the struggle” to achieve success and build your empire
- Upholding Hip Hop ideals, which includes being authentic, creative, and aspiring to be a leader
- The importance of straightforward, direct messages from an authentic messenger in relatable situations
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School-based research was conducted among youth age 12-17 to obtain their reactions to draft brand and creative concepts designed to prevent tobacco use among multicultural teens who affiliate with hip hop:

- Focus groups held in Atlanta, GA and Charlotte, NC. Cities were selected based on their location in the pilot Southeast region.

- 10 focus groups were conducted in 5 high and middle schools (n = 80)

- Youth who qualified to participate in the study were susceptible to cigarette use or experimented with cigarettes and influenced by the hip hop peer crowd

- Majority of youth who participated were African-American (90%), followed by Latinos (5%) and 2 or more races (5%)
**Authenticity**
- Authenticity is crucial to positive, effective message reception.
- Youth frequently commented on clothing, background music, style, poses, pronunciation, slang, word choice, voices, and situations with an eye toward what was “real” to them.

**Delivery**
- The target responded positively to straightforward, direct messages.
- Actors need to look, sound, and think like them in relatable situations before they allow themselves to actively consider a message.

**Content**
- These messages include the importance of looking out for one’s family, working hard to achieve success in life, and attaining or regaining control.
- When the messenger was authentic and the message relatable, facts about long-term health consequences were impactful to youth.
The Fresh Empire brand was strongly favored across all focus groups.

Teens understood how the words “fresh” and “empire” connected to both living tobacco-free and their own lifestyle aspirations.

The word “fresh” capitalizes on the notion of looking and feeling good while being a trendsetter—a key tenet of Hip Hop culture.

The word “empire” represents culturally-relevant success and relates to a Hip Hop youth’s domain of influence.

Together, Fresh Empire encourages youth to be trendsetters by keeping themselves and their sphere of influence tobacco-free.
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Quantitative copy testing of four ads was conducted to assess:

- **Overall level of ad performance** – Includes perceived effectiveness, level of engagement and message comprehension
- **Potential for any unintended consequences** – Assessed from responses to health, behavioral, and attitudinal statements

**Perceived effectiveness (PE) is a primary component** for assessing overall level of ad performance

- Validated measure that is predictive of potential for positive attitude and behavior change
- Comprised of six items: (1) This ad is worth remembering, (2) This ad grabbed my attention, (3) This ad is powerful, (4) This ad is informative, (5) This ad is meaningful, (6) This ad is convincing
- Scores are used as an indicator for assessing the effectiveness of ads including FDA’s *The Real Cost* and CDC’s *Tips* campaigns
A school-based study was conducted among youth aged 12-17 exposing them to rough-cut television ads designed to prevent tobacco use among multicultural teens who affiliate with hip hop:

- Data was collected in 29 middle and high schools across 11 cities
- Youth were randomly assigned to view two of the four ads – a total of 722 youth participated with 475 viewing ads and 247 not viewing ad
- Youth who qualified to participate in the study were susceptible to cigarette use or experimented with cigarettes and influenced by the hip hop peer crowd
- Majority of youth who participated were African-American (48%), followed by Latinos (37%), 2 or more races (5%) and Asian/Pacific Islanders (2%)
OVERALL COPY TESTING RESULTS

• All ads were perceived as effective by multicultural youth – responses indicate potential for positive changes in attitudes and beliefs targeted by campaign messages

• All ads performed well on other performance measures – majority of youth who viewed the ads trusted the information in the ads, could identify with the ads, thought the ads were worth remembering, and found the ads to be engaging

• All ads clearly presented FDA-supported messages – overwhelming majority of youth who viewed the ads understood the main message(s) about the risks of cigarette use

• Results support a tailored campaign approach – responses around level of trust and identification are notably high in comparison to responses from multicultural youth who viewed other campaign ads
  o ‘I can identify with what this ad says’ – The Real Cost: 64% | Fresh Empire: 86%
  o ‘I trust the information in this ad’:– The Real Cost: 71% | Fresh Empire: 83%

• No potential unintended consequences were present in any ads
EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Design & Methods
• Cross-sectional design with data collected in 15 campaign-targeted cities and 15 comparison cities for a total of 8,400 baseline and follow up surveys

Timeline
• Follow-ups at approximately 6 month intervals following campaign launch:
  o **Baseline Collection**: June 2015
  o **Follow-up 1**: April 2016
  o **Follow-up 2**: December 2016
  o **Follow-up 3**: August 2017

Evaluation Measures
• Primary outcomes of interest among multicultural youth will be awareness of the campaign as well as tobacco-related knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and intentions