

Youth Tobacco Prevention and Education Program

Project: Thomas T. Melvin Youth Tobacco Prevention & Education Program*

Purpose: Knupp & Watson worked with the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services on the Thomas T. Melvin Youth Prevention and Education Program. Research completed was used to evaluate and test various marketing efforts for tobacco prevention and education.

Result: Students evaluated radio advertisements, the web site, and a video storyboard for tobacco prevention and education. The radio evaluation helped determine which spots merited airtime and the types of stations to air the advertisements on. The web site evaluation resulted in recommendations from students that were used to change the content and design of the site to make it more appealing to the target groups. Finally, the video evaluation identified areas that needed to be enhanced.

Summary of Research Stages

- **Advisory Committee:** An advisory committee consisting of members of the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services was formed. The committee helped identify key partners across the state as well as perceptual and branding issues for this program.
- Focus groups and questionnaires distributed through on-site assessments were utilized with students across the state of Wisconsin. Students evaluated several different advertising and marketing efforts related to tobacco prevention and education. Knupp & Watson, under the direction of Dr. Peltier conducted these focus groups and other evaluation methods to identify the most effective messages and media usage.
- **Radio Focus Groups:** Five production-ready radio advertisements were played to students in grades 5th to 8^h at six sites across the state of Wisconsin. Each of these five radio advertisements was from a different genre, including (1) R&B (Wanna), (2) Alternative Rock (Smokescreen), (3) Salsa/Contemporary Latin (Fumar es la Muerta), (4) Pop Rock (You're Smoking Me Down), and (5) Country (What'll You Bet). Students evaluated these production-ready radio spots in terms of their overall liking for the ad, how interesting the ad was to them, the song, the singer, and the music. They also commented upon what they thought the advertisement was trying to convey to them, what they liked most and least about the ad, how they might change the ad, and their feelings about the messages conveyed in the ad. After filling out a questionnaire designed to collect quantitative ratings of the radio ads, the students discussed the ads as part of several focus groups.
- **Radio Advertisement Selection & Consistency:** Results suggested that all five of the test radio advertisements should receive consideration. Since no meaningful differences emerged depending on respondents' gender, age, whether someone smokes in their household, or whether they have friends who smoke, decisions relating to which groups should receive which ads were not needed.
- **Radio Station Formats to Target:** Ads that matched the students listening preferences were better liked and consequently matching station format and ad music type was desirable. Additionally, based on higher ratings for other ad music-format/listening preferences, the findings suggested that three of the ads played well on more than one station. Results also suggested that developing a greater number of ads in R&B, alternative rock, and pop rock formats would not exclude many individuals.
- **B-FREE[®] Web Site Testing:** Students from across the state were asked to comment on the B-FREE[®] web site by visiting the website and completing a questionnaire. Students ranked site features and provided comments to open-ended questions regarding the web site. The research team also held discussions with some students regarding the web site. Students had a very positive perception of the B-FREE[®] web site including the introduction and start-up graphics. The average overall rating indicated an overall positive evaluation of the site and no student rated the web site as being bad or terrible. Recommendations provided by the students were used to make changes to the web site.
- **Television Ratings:** Students from five schools rated nine video storyboard segments (all were illustrated) and provided an overall evaluation of the video. The average overall rating of the video was very high given that students viewed storyboard formats as compared to a production ready format. Each segment also scored high and indicated that the students liked each of the individual segments as well. Based on the student evaluations, it was recommended that some effort was needed to enhance the effectiveness of the opening portions of the video as well as the closing segments.

* Dr. Peltier as Director of Research for Knupp & Watson.