Using Research to Refine Messages for Health Behavior Change

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The Challenge
Key Questions

We know that, regardless of where they live in Colorado, people largely *smoke for the same reasons*.

They have similar smoking habits, similar feelings about smoking, and similar concerns about quitting.

But *why do some quit*, while others don’t?

And how can we target them with messages that *increase their likeliness to change* behavior?
What We Knew

From TABS and focus groups, we knew…

- **Who** smokes (age, gender, location, insurance)
- What predicts someone’s **likelihood to smoke** (income, education)
- **Why** they smoke (addiction, habit, boredom, stress)
- Potential **drivers for quitting** (family, cost, health)
- **Barriers** to quitting (addiction, stress, living w/ smokers)
Smoker Segmentation Survey

Set out to **quantify** current learning and **validate** our hypotheses:

- 971 interviews conducted
- 801 by telephone (66% cell phone, 34% landline)
- Weighted to reflect TABS data by age, gender
- Margin of error $\pm 3.14\%$
- English and Spanish
Map Where People Are
I really want to quit, am actively trying to quit.

I know I should quit, but not at this time.

I really enjoy smoking and don’t want to quit, now or in the future.

Respondents asked to give a number (1-10) describing intention re: quitting
CHANGE-READINESS SPECTRUM

10’s 7-9’s 4-6’s 1-3’s
(12%) (14%) (49%) (25%)

Total of 971 interviews
Target Messages to Move People
Messages need to…

- Show **grim health impacts** of smoking
- Increase concern about their health (**“uh-oh” moment**)
- Make them **think about quitting** more frequently
- Increase **awareness of quit resources** when they’re ready
Messages need to...

✓ Increase awareness that their **health is suffering**
✓ Illustrate **what tobacco is taking** from them
✓ Deepen concern about **impact of smoking** on loved ones
✓ Increase understanding of addiction, that **willpower alone isn’t enough**
Messages need to...

- Encourage and inspire them
- Illustrate what life can be like, reasons to quit
- Increase understanding of what quitting is like
- Reassure them that failing is ok, part of the process
There’s no silver bullet.

- Smokers on different parts of the quit spectrum **respond differently**, at different times, to different types of messages.
- The decision to quit is **highly personal**, reflecting a combination of experiences, lifestyle, relationships...
- Smokers become ready to quit along a **non-linear progression**.
You need a mix of messages.

Messages that **shock and scare**, show grave effects of smoking.
You need a mix of messages.

Hopeful, aspirational messages showing a tobacco-free life

THE DAY I QUIT,
nothing will get in our way.

THE DAY I QUIT,
I'll reach new heights.

THE DAY I QUIT,
I'll do more.
You need a mix of messages.

Encouraging, **educational** messages promoting quit resources
There's a lot to consider.

**Who** you’re talking to
- Income, education, age…

**Why** they smoke
- Habit, boredom, stress…

**Drivers** for quitting
- Family, cost, health…

**Barriers** to quitting
- Addiction, willpower illusion…

**Fears** about quitting
- Stress, failure…
Questions?
Get in Touch with Us

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