

Reducing Teen Tobacco Use in Rhode Island

A **Functional Analysis** for **Cultural Interventions**

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Executive Summary

Rhode Island (RI) is currently ranked as the third lowest state in high school smoking prevalence at 11.4%. Compared to the nationwide prevalence of 18.1%, RI's achievement is significantly impressive. However, with tobacco use continuing to be the primary cause of preventable death and diseases, it is pertinent for RI to continue its efforts to reduce youth tobacco use.

RI now faces the unique challenge of reducing teen tobacco use within a very small segment of the youth population. To address this challenge, the Tobacco Control Program of the Rhode Island Department of Public Health (RIDOPH) contracted Rescue Social Change Group (Rescue SCG) to conduct its proprietary Functional Analysis for Cultural Interventions (FACI) study. The FACI study was specifically designed to understand the identities of teens who still use tobacco and why they continue to do so. The ultimate goal of the study is to inform and guide future tobacco prevention efforts in RI to ensure that limited resources are efficiently targeted to teens who are most at-risk in an efficient manner. Specifically, the study was designed to address the following objectives:

- Identify RI teens who are at risk for tobacco use and the personal characteristics that increase risk.
- Understand how the previously identified characteristics increase risk of tobacco use among RI teens.
- Identify values that are particularly important and relevant to teens in RI.
- Identify tobacco fact messages that will motivate RI teens to live tobacco-free.
- Identify characteristics of tobacco prevention TV ads that increase or decrease their effectiveness.

To achieve the above-stated research objectives, Rescue SCG researchers conducted 17 focus groups with 166 high school students (ages 14 to 19) between May 28 and June 6, 2013. These focus groups were conducted at an LGBT center in Providence and four different high schools in Providence, East Providence, Woonsocket, and Coventry.

51% of focus group participants had used tobacco at some point in their life, with 36.75% reporting tobacco use in the past 30 days. Additionally, 68% of respondents reported that more than half of their friends used tobacco products. Gender was approximately equally distributed. The majority of participants were White (49%), followed by Hispanic (22%), Black (8%), Asian (2%), American Indian (2%), and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (1%). 6% of respondents reported being multiple races while another 10% identified as "Other." As the target sample was high school students, the age range was 14 and up with 15- and 16-year olds accounting for 50% of the respondents.

Youth Tobacco Prevention Secondary Research

Previous research indicates that some of the most significant personality predictors of adolescent tobacco use are risk-taking, rebelliousness, sensation seeking, and novelty seeking. Additionally, a large body of academic research indicates that there is a significant association between depression and smoking, with some research suggesting that the link between depression and smoking initiation stemming from increased susceptibility to peer smoking influences.

In addition to psychological predictors, research has repeatedly identified peer influence to be one of the biggest predictors of teen tobacco use. During adolescence when parental influence decreases and peer influence increases, youth are psychologically vulnerable, self-conscious, and concerned about "fitting in" and appearances. However, peer influence does not usually manifest in the traditional manner typically ascribed to "peer pressure." Research overwhelmingly suggests that peer pressures related to tobacco experimentation and initiations are largely not direct or

coercive in style. Amongst peers, behaviors and attitudes held by influential members are likely to be replicated by others. The act of tobacco use, then, can be perceived as simply an essential behavior to identify with the peer group or crowd.

Although research has shown that mass media campaigns are an effective strategy for preventing youth tobacco use, the findings also stress the important role that message type, format, tone, and delivery play in the success of campaigns, as well as the effect that age-targeted messaging can have on increasing successful outcomes, specifically among the youth population.

Messages focused on the health effects of smoking have consistently been found effective among youth. However, the health information must either be new to the youth or presented in a new way in order to resonate with the population. Several recent youth-targeted campaigns within the United States have employed messaging centered on the deceptive practices of the tobacco industry. Results from several studies of mass media campaigns involving tobacco industry messaging suggest that careful message testing must occur to prevent possible confusion and ensure that the message is well received by the target youth population.

There is consensus that successful ads must evoke emotion, and research suggests that negative emotion (such as disgust, loss, sadness, or anger) is more effective than positive emotion. Studies of past youth-targeted media campaigns also suggest that it is important for the campaign tone to avoid being “preachy” or authoritarian. Careful testing of the individual featured in the ad is necessary to ensure that the format is not interfering with the message itself.

Qualitative Analysis: General Teen Tobacco Use

The perceived rates of tobacco use among teens in Rhode Island are relatively high. Teens at all schools estimated that 20-40% of students at their schools smoked “boges” (cigarettes) or used other forms of tobacco. Students across all schools spoke frequently of the lack of activities for teens in RI, so people turned to smoking for lack of anything better to do. Besides boredom, they cited several reasons why teens start smoking, including peer pressure, stress and anxiety, to stay thin, and family influence.

For cigarettes, Newport, Marlboro Reds, and Marlboro Smooths were mentioned repeatedly. Most teens said that dip/chew was relegated to specific peer crowds (usually Country) and the occasional baseball player, though it is a common sight in rural areas. Students reported that it is not uncommon to see dip/chew and e-cigarettes used in classrooms. Hookah use is perceived to be extremely popular among RI teens, with teens or their friends having a hookah and smoking at parties. Additionally, underage admission to hookah bars was commonly reported.

Qualitative Analysis: Peer Crowds & Perceived Tobacco Use

Peers, cultural identities, and social groups have repeatedly been associated with tobacco use in the literature. Rescue SCG measures these factors using a comprehensive variable known as “peer crowds.” A peer crowd is defined as *the macro-level connections between peer groups with similar interests, lifestyles, influencers and media consumption habits across geographic areas*. In other words, while a teen has a local peer group he/she socializes with, the teen and his/her peer group belong to a larger “peer crowd” that shares significant cultural similarities across cities and even states. It is critical to identify the peer crowds that define the teenage landscape in RI to understand the mechanics of peer interaction, and how cultural identities and social groups may be risk or protective factors in regards to tobacco

use. Additionally, identification of the peer crowds most at risk for tobacco use is critical to developing and/or maintaining an effective tobacco prevention strategy, especially in RI where such a small fraction of teens use tobacco.

Rescue SCG researchers identified six teen peer crowds and estimated prevalence of tobacco use based on focus group activities as summarized below:

1. Preppy – This group is interested in mainstream pop culture and athletics. Tobacco use among the Preppy peer crowd is debated among students in RI. Because athletes belong to the Preppy peer crowd, some believe that tobacco use is low. On the contrary, those who perceive tobacco use exists think that peer crowd members smoke to be cool or lose weight.
2. Hip Hop (Flashy and Hard) – Flashy Hip Hop taps more into current pop culture for its look, while Hard Hip Hop associates with dark, often fatalistic imagery, like selling drugs, participating in street violence, and general street gang activities. The Hip Hop group is perceived to have higher rates of smoking relative to other peer crowds, second only to the Alternative peer crowd. Teens reported that Hip Hop peer crowd members smoke Menthol and cigarillos, with Black and Mild as the favorite brand.
3. Alternative (Scene and Goth) – Scene youth were called the “friendly Emo/Scene Kids,” whereas the Goth teens were more concerned with dressing in black and projecting an image of depression and noticeably smaller in size than the Scene group. This group is identified as having the highest rates of smoking, which is attributed as a coping mechanism to intense emotions.
4. Mainstream– Mainstream teens are the norm, the average teenagers that do not stand out as visually as some of the more distinct peer crowds. This group is ranked low on the tobacco use risk scale because they are perceived to not want to get in trouble with their parents or school for smoking.
5. Country – Albeit a small peer crowd, the rural areas of RI provide an inherent country influence that manifests in the Country peer crowd. These youth enjoy riding all-terrain four-wheelers, going “muddin” in pick-up trucks, and are passionate about riding horses. This group is associated with moderate cigarette use (mostly Marlboro Reds), but high levels of chew/dip.
6. LGBT – An entirely LGBT teen focus group was conducted in Providence. In general, most have not splintered off into niche LGBT peer crowds common among LGBT young adults. Non-LGBT youth did not perceive a high smoking prevalence among LGBT youth, but LGBT youth reported differently, citing stress, peer pressure, sexiness, masculinity (for men), and avoiding further exclusion as primary reasons for smoking.

Quantitative Analysis: Risk Factor of Peer Crowds

All recruitment surveys were analyzed to estimate the size of each peer crowd and tobacco use risk estimate. The most popular peer crowd is Preppy, which influences 77.7% of teens in this study. The smallest peer crowd, Hip Hop, only influences 17.1% of the sample, a much smaller percentage than expected based on qualitative peer group discussions. The other peer crowds, Alternative, Mainstream, and Country, influence 29.5%, 63.2% and 26.7% of teens, respectively, which is consistent with expectations from the qualitative findings.

Teens who identify with the Hip Hop and Alternative peer crowds were at highest risk of lifetime smoking at 31.2% and 29.4%, respectively. They were also the two highest peer crowds for current smoking at 20.2% for Hip Hop and 17.2% for Alternative, as well as daily cigarette smoking at 4.5% for Hip Hop and 7.3% for Alternative. Teens in the Mainstream and Country peer crowds were at lowest risk for cigarette smoking. However, Country peer crowd is at

highest risk of lifetime (7.7%) and daily (2.9%) spit tobacco use. Finally, the Hip Hop peer crowd is at the highest risk of consuming cigarillos for lifetime (23.7%), current (19.8%), and daily (3.3%) use. The Alternative, Hip Hop, and Country peer crowds are at high risk of one or more tobacco use categories.

Quantitative Analysis: Summary of Values Survey, Tobacco Ads, & Tobacco Facts Surveys

Quantitative data was sourced from focus group exercises that were designed to evaluate teens' value perceptions, specific ads, facets of effective ads, and tobacco facts. Many of the findings from this investigation were replicated across sections of the study, producing patterns that draw out a set of conclusions with broader applicability. The two ads rated most effective by teens (youththink "Animal Testing Booth" and Smokefree Vegas "Hookah") possessed high ratings in facets that teens related to effectiveness: made them think, evoked emotion, and were interesting. Likewise, the Animal Testing Booth ad focused on values and facts that were perceived as important by the teens in the study. The combination of the facts, ad facets, and values that were rated most highly were present in nearly all of the ads rated as most effective in the current study. Producing more ads and other strategies that combine these findings could result in even more highly effective messaging.

Qualitative Analysis: Ads & Brands

Teens were shown ten tobacco control ads, which they first rated quantitatively and then discussed as a group. The ads included Rhode Island's "Be An Original Campaign," American Legacy Foundation's truth® campaign, ads produced by Rescue SCG, and a variety of other state/local health department's campaigns. The five most effective ads included Be an Original's "Tobacco Lobbyist" ad and youththink's "Animal Testing Booth" ad. Least effective ads were youththink's "Deforestation" ad and youththink's "Attractiveness" ad.

Funny ads were deemed to be less effective while ads that were serious, emotional, or presented new or interesting information were perceived to be more effective. Teens are also affected by ads that show real people reacting to facts and/or street demonstrations. While ads that featured tobacco-related social justice issues were perceived to be interesting, participants believed that those ads would be more effective to prevent non-smokers from becoming smokers than to motivate teens who already smoke to quit.

To obtain an understanding of how different youth-focused tobacco prevention brands appeal to youth in RI, focus group discussions included an activity on brand comparisons where teens were shown the logo, two print ads, and the Facebook page from Truth, Blacklist, and Be An Original. When verbally asked which brand they liked best, the teens gave inconsistent responses with similar numbers of teens choosing each brand, but for different reasons. The majority of positive comments were in response to the truth and Blacklist brands.

Implications & Discussion

The following implications have been compiled based on a combined analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data sets to unearth hidden truths pertinent to tobacco prevention in RI.

Reaching High Risk Teens in RI

1. Not all teens are at risk for tobacco use – Unlike traditional segmentation approaches that focus on demographic data, psychographic segmentation based on identity, peer crowds, and lifestyles are necessary

to truly understand teen tobacco use risk.

2. Peer crowds are a reliable measure of tobacco use risk – Significant congruence between qualitative and quantitative analysis suggest that peer crowds can be used as reliable measure of tobacco use risk in RI.
3. Hip Hop, Alternative, and Country cultural influence account for most tobacco use in RI – Developing targeted interventions for youth who identify with Hip Hop, Alternative, and/or Country peer crowds would reach high risk teens more efficiently and effectively.

Selecting The Right Fact for Messaging

4. What teens think is important may already be well known – Facts about animal testing, litter, and bad breath were not well known to teens and present more of an opportunity to cause change.
5. Teens are concerned about how their behaviors affect others (i.e. animal testing, cigarette litter, women’s rights, and siblings) – Even if teens do not feel they can personally make a difference, these facts provide socially acceptable justification for influential teens to promote their tobacco-free lifestyles.
6. Tobacco marketing practices are less important to teens – Tobacco marketing was not very important to teens. Be an Original’s Tobacco Lobbyist Ad was likely received positively more so because it is serious, has an emotional appeal, and was produced in an interesting way.
7. Teens may not believe facts about attractiveness and breath – While teens are lowly ranking tobacco facts related to breath and attractiveness, their higher marks as values suggest that there is significant potential in these facts at actually causing change through well-executed creative. Teens’ skepticism about these facts, however, will make them difficult to pursue in messaging.
8. The addiction contradiction – Teens may not consider addiction as a relevant possibility in their lives, which may significantly limit the potential effectiveness of addiction as a fact.

Improving The Effectiveness of Tobacco Prevention TV Ads

9. Authenticity is king – Ads that show “real teens” in the same peer crowd as the target group rejecting tobacco use for a good reason are likely to be effective to reduce tobacco use among youth who identify with the targeted peer crowd.
10. Thoughtful, emotional, and interesting messages rule – Programs should avoid humor-focused messages.
11. Reality ads are overwhelmingly preferred – Reality ads seem to have the most potential to cause change, but authenticity will be critical for ads to be effective.
12. Reality strengthens many messages – Teens prefer reality ads, but facts also became more powerful when presented in a reality-based scenario.
13. “This ad speaks to me”: Niche ads cause more passionate responses from targeted teens – Messages targeted to the most at risk peer crowd are likely to be more effective than general ads intended to appeal to all youth.

Recommendations

Based on the need to reach a small fraction of teens who continue to use tobacco, the limited resources available to RIDOPH for tobacco prevention campaigns, and the findings of this study, Rescue SCG provides four key recommendations:

1. Shift messages from tobacco industry marketing to social justice issues caused by the tobacco industry.

Teens do not experience strong emotions regarding general tobacco industry marketing considering the high levels of marketing they are exposed to from other non-tobacco industries. In contrast, teens react emotionally to facts about tobacco industry animal testing, exploitation of women and minorities, and, to a lesser extent, impact on the global environment. Consequently, we recommend for RIDOPH to shift its messaging from general tobacco industry marketing to tobacco-related social justice issues, which teens deemed to be more important.

2. Utilize authentic, reality-based messaging.

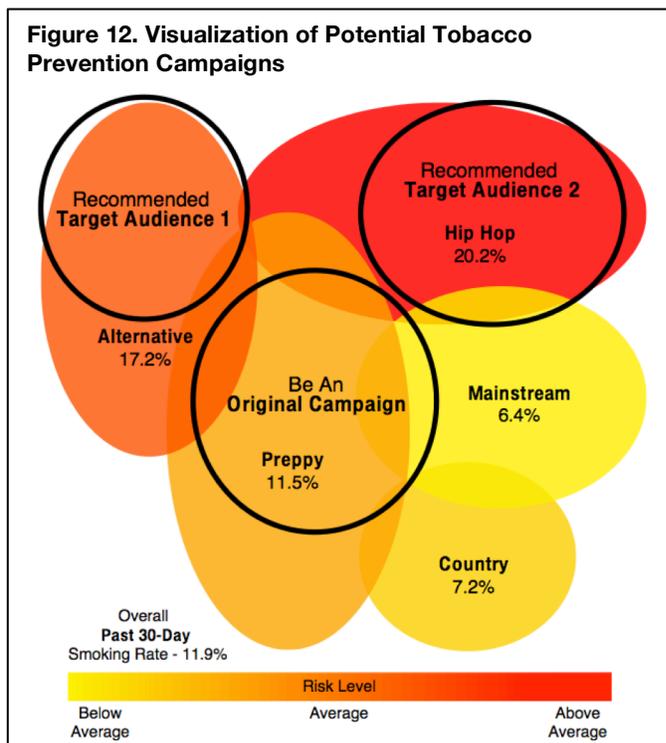
Teens reacted more positively to ads that were perceived to be reality-based than typical ads. They liked that these ads depict authentic reactions from “real people” versus actors. Rescue SCG recommends utilizing reality-based ads.

3. Continue focusing on serious, thought-provoking and emotional messaging.

Study findings show that Be An Original campaign’s approach to messaging is on the right track. Rescue SCG recommends RIDOPH to continue to focus on serious, thought-provoking, and emotional messaging, while resisting the lure of humorous advertising in tobacco control.

4. Consider developing one or more campaigns to directly target high-risk peer crowds rather than a general “teen” campaign.

Study findings provide strong evidence that teen tobacco use is concentrated within certain teen peer crowds. Considering the low teen tobacco use rate in RI, we believe this is one of the most important findings from this study. RI teens that identify with the Alternative peer crowd were most likely to use tobacco, followed by teens in the Hip Hop peer crowd. It is a common misconception that teen marketing campaigns can reach all teens equally. Because of the cultural differences between teen peer crowds, including interests, styles, slang terms, influences, music, etc., it is not possible to reach all teens with a single message. From the teen responses to the Be An Original campaign and the imagery used in the print ads, we conclude that this campaign appeals the most to teens in the Preppy and Mainstream peer crowds. Based on this study, particularly the significant differences between the tobacco use rates of each peer crowd, we recommend for RIDOPH to consider implementing a campaign designed to reach a high-risk peer crowd rather than Preppy or Mainstream teens. The two peer crowds that need a targeted effort the most are the Alternative and the Hip Hop peer crowds. Figure 12 illustrates the current estimated reach of the Be An Original campaign and the potential reach of more optimally targeted campaigns.



Introduction

High school cigarette smoking has continuously decreased in Rhode Island from 35.4% in 1997 to 11.4% in 2011 (CDC YRBS), ranking Rhode Island as the state with the 3rd lowest high school smoking prevalence. While this is a reason to celebrate, it also presents new challenges for future tobacco control programming. Specifically, can the Rhode Island Department of Public Health (RIDOPH) effectively approach the remaining 11.4% of teens who use cigarettes and/or other tobacco products using the same strategies that were used to reach teens in previous years? Are teens who continue to use tobacco today different from the teens who were once at risk of tobacco use but have been successfully prevented from starting, and thus require a different approach? The current research study is designed to investigate these questions by understanding the identities of the teens who continue to use tobacco and how they are different from those who do not choose to use tobacco. This study is known as a Functional Analysis for Cultural Interventions (FACI) and is designed by Rescue Social Change Group to understand why teens choose to use tobacco today. In other words, what is the positive “function” of tobacco use that at-risk teens seek to fulfill. With this function in mind, this study is also designed to understand what kinds of tobacco prevention messages have the most potential to effectively reach those Rhode Island teens who continue to be at risk for tobacco use. Conducted on behalf of the Tobacco Control Program of the RIDOPH, this study was designed to address five specific objectives:

1. Identify Rhode Island (RI) teens who are at risk for tobacco use and the personal characteristics that increase that risk.

A goal of this research project was to identify the characteristics and peer crowd affiliations associated with increased risk of tobacco use among RI teenagers. By qualitatively and quantifiably identifying these characteristics, we can better pinpoint the segments of RI teen population that requires intervention and prevention messaging.

2. Understand how the previously identified characteristics increase risk of tobacco use among RI teens.

In addition to identifying characteristics associated with increased risk of tobacco use, it is essential to understand how the characteristics and peer crowd affiliations in the teenage population that increase their risk for tobacco use. By understanding these characteristics we can better incorporate them into future tobacco prevention programs.

3. Identify values that are particularly important and relevant to teens in RI.

Understanding what teens value can help us identify tobacco prevention messages that are most likely to appeal to at-risk RI teens and motivate them to live tobacco-free.

4. Identify tobacco fact messages that will motivate RI teens to live tobacco-free.

While the health consequences of tobacco use are widely known, not all facts have appeal or relevance to every audience. This study was designed to determine which particular tobacco-related facts appeal to specific peer crowds of RI teens that are currently at-risk of tobacco use.

5. Identify characteristics of tobacco prevention TV ads that increase or decrease their effectiveness.

Hundreds of tobacco prevention ads have been developed, produced, and aired around the world and, while many have been successful, most have not. This study aims to determine which ads can provide input for the development of an even more successful campaign targeting RI teens.

This report is designed to present all of the findings from the study as objectively as possible, followed by analysis and interpretation in the Implications & Discussion section, and then concluded with a final Recommendations section. This format exposes the reader to the raw data that was collected among various activities, which often may seem contradictory. This should not raise alarms, however, as it is simply the nature of teen research. Besides being a heterogeneous group, teens also struggle to express their own opinions and attitudes in a consistent fashion. Whether it is due to changing opinions, a lack of self-understanding, or simply confusion, individual teens often provide contradictory information throughout a study, which, when combined with the responses of their peers, results in a final dataset that is difficult to interpret. As experts in adolescent lifestyles and health behaviors, it is our duty to comb through these convoluted data points to identify patterns, which we have done in the Implications & Discussion section. To accomplish this, we looked for data that could be triangulated across multiple study activities and/or could be reinforced with secondary research or our own past teen tobacco prevention studies in other states. This allows us to confidently provide findings that can provide RIDOPH with the guidance necessary to reach the small fraction of teens who continue to use tobacco in RI.

On behalf of the research team at Rescue Social Change Group, we appreciate the opportunity to provide this report and truly hope it helps the RIDOPH achieve its objectives.

Youth Tobacco Prevention Secondary Research

Secondary research was conducted prior to this study to inform the study methods and ensure that researchers built upon existing youth tobacco prevention science. The following themes were identified as the most useful during the design of the current study.

Psychological Motivation to Use Tobacco Among Youth Populations

To understand how to prevent youth tobacco use, we must understand the factors that contribute to youth tobacco experimentation and initiation, including the underlying psychological factors that put adolescents at higher risk. During adolescence, youth do not have fully developed cognitive skills, which make this age group psychologically more susceptible to tobacco use than adults (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2012). According to the 2012 U.S. Surgeon General's Report, "adolescents and young adults are uniquely susceptible to social and environmental influences to use tobacco" (p.460) given their present developmental stage.

Several psychological traits have been shown to be risk factors for tobacco experimentation and initiation. Previous research indicates that some of the most significant personality predictors of adolescent tobacco use are risk-taking, rebelliousness, sensation seeking, and novelty-seeking (Griffin, Botvin, Doyle, Diaz, & Epstein, 1999; Hu, Muthén, Schaffran, Griesler, & Kandel, 2008; Stanton, Li, Cottrell, & Kaljee, 2001). In general, it is widely acknowledged that youth are more willing to take risks because brain development, in regions associated with impulsivity and motivation, is not yet complete (Chambers, Taylor, & Potenza, 2003; Lebel & Beaulieu, 2011). However, even among the youth population, those who have a higher propensity to take risks are more likely than their peers to experiment with cigarette use (Griffin et al., 1999; Stanton et al., 2001). For instance, boys and girls who were classified as high risk-takers in the seventh grade based on an adapted version of the Eysenck Personality Inventory were almost three times as likely to become heavy smokers by their senior year of high school compared to low risk-takers (Griffin et al., 1999). Rebelliousness, including the rejection of adult authority, also positively correlates with an adolescent's chance of using tobacco (Santi, Cargo, Brown, Best, & Cameron, 1994). In a study of 1,101 youth in grades seven through eleven, rebelliousness and independence were both strong predictors of smoking initiation (Mittelmark et al., 1987).

Novelty-seeking and sensation-seeking are two additional personality traits strongly associated with youth tobacco use (Hu et al., 2008). Although risk is not a required part of either trait, both novelty and sensation-seekers will often endure or seek out high-risk situations in order to meet their need for novelty or sensation. In a study of urban, low-income African-American youth, smokers scored significantly higher than non-smokers on the Zuckerman's sensation-seeking scale, which is designed to measure the extent to which a person requires and enjoys stimulation (Griffin et al., 1999; Stanton et al., 2001). Novelty-seeking is also highly correlated with smoking, with higher levels of novelty-seeking tendencies linked to experimentation with cigarettes in both males and females (Hu et al., 2008; Wilkinson et al., 2013).

During childhood and adolescence, youth do not yet possess the ability to consider future events or consequences to the same degree as adults (Orr, Beiter, & Ingersoll, 1991). This, in part, leads to youth taking personal health risks less seriously (Levenson, Morrow Jr., & Pfefferbaum, 1984; Millstein, 1991). Among all youth, however, research suggests that youth who are less capable of considering future consequences have a higher risk of becoming tobacco users than their peers (Strathman, Gleicher, Boninger, & Scott, 1994). The reverse is also true, that is, being future-oriented is associated with a lower risk of smoking among youth (Piko, Luszczynska, Gibbons, & Teközel, 2005).

In addition, a large body of academic research indicates that there is a significant association between depression and smoking (Patton et al., 1998; Patton, Coffey, Carlin, Sawyer, & Wakefield, 2006; Pesa, Cowdery, Wang, & Fu, 1997; Wang, Fitzhugh, Westerfield, & Eddy, 1995). In fact, some research suggests that depression and anxiety during the teenage years predicts smoking in young adulthood (Patton et al., 2006). A national study of 6,900 youth found that three specific symptoms of depression – “feelings of unhappiness, sadness, or depression,” “hopelessness about the future,” and “trouble going to sleep or staying asleep” – were significant predictors of smoking, even after controlling for all other factors, including demographics (Wang et al., 1995). Similarly, in a study of Mexican-American adolescents, researchers found significant differences in reported feelings between non-smokers and smokers (Pesa et al., 1997). For example, female smokers were 2.8 times more likely than female non-smokers to report regularly feeling unhappy, sad, or depressed, and 1.9 times more likely to often worry too much as well as often feel nervous or tense. Among males, smokers were 3.2 times more likely to report having trouble sleeping (Pesa et al., 1997). Though much of the research to date has focused solely on examining whether depression is associated with smoking initiation rather than the underlying reasons why depression might lead to an increased risk for cigarette use, some research suggests it is possible that the link between depression and smoking initiation stems from increased susceptibility to peer smoking influences (Patton et al., 1998).

Social Motivations to Use Tobacco Among Youth Populations

Beyond individual psychological traits, one of the most prominent predictors of tobacco use or avoidance is a youth’s self-identity and the influence of his or her peers and/or peer groups. Indeed, youth embark on the search for self-identity during early adolescence, during which time they are psychologically vulnerable, self-conscious, and concerned about “fitting in” and appearances (Steinberg & Morris, 2011; Tanti, Stukas, Halloran, & Foddy, 2011; Konopka, 1991; Elkind & Bowen, 1979; Rosenberg, 1985). Thus, the decision to try cigarettes has been linked to the attempt to gain social approval, to achieve a sense of autonomy or independence, and to avoid exclusion by peers (Evans, Dratt, Raines, & Rosenberg, 1988; Nichter, Nichter, Vuckovic, Quintero, & Ritenbaugh, 1997). During this critical period, parental influence tends to decrease while peer influence increases, giving peers and peer groups exceptional power over each others’ behavior and decisions (Wang, Fitzhugh, Westerfield, & Eddy, 1995; DeGoede, Branje, Delsing, & Meeus, 2009; DeGoede, Branje, & Meeus, 2009; Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006).

Research has repeatedly identified peer influence to be one of the biggest predictors of teen tobacco use (Wang, Fitzhugh, Westerfield, & Eddy, 1995; Robinson, Murray, & Alfano, 2006; Brook, Pahl, & Ning, 2006). In a national study of adolescents ages 14 to 18, peer influence was found to be the most significant predictor for both males and females across all age groups (Wang, Fitzhugh, Westerfield, & Eddy, 1995). However, peer influence does not usually manifest in the traditional manner typically ascribed to “peer pressure.” Research overwhelmingly suggests that peer pressures related to tobacco experimentation and initiation are largely not direct or coercive in style (Kniskern, Biglan, Lichtenstein, Ary, & Bavry, 1983; Urberg, Degirmencioglu, & Pilgrim, 1997; Sussman, et al., 1993).

The behaviors and attitudes demonstrated by groups of peers also influence an adolescent’s likelihood to start smoking. Research demonstrates that youth who smoke tend to belong to groups containing other smokers, with the majority of those peer groups being composed of a mix of smokers and nonsmokers. On the other hand, youth who do not smoke typically belong to peer groups comprised of almost exclusively non-smokers (Kobus, 2003; Ennett & Bauman, 1994; Urberg, Degirmencioglu, & Pilgrim, 1997). In peer groups, behaviors and attitudes held by influential members are likely to be replicated by others (Bandura, 1977; Kobus, 2003; Rogers, 1983; Bandura, 1977). In fact, in

an experimental study, researchers found that when youth smokers were exposed to a confederate smoker as part of the study, the youth smokers altered their smoking behavior to match the behavior of the actor, including cigarette volume and the frequency of puffs (Kniskern, Biglan, Lichtenstein, Ary, & Bavry, 1983). Additionally, in a 6-year study of American students, peer attitudes proved to be the strongest predictor of later smoking in girls. Girls who reported that their friends were not strongly opposed to smoking were almost 11 times more likely to become heavy smokers by the 12th grade (Griffin, Botvin, Doyle, Diaz, & Epstein, 1999). These studies show that behaviors and attitudes demonstrated by influential peer group members are likely to be replicated by others in the peer group.

In short, as stated by the U.S. Surgeon General, the “evidence is sufficient to conclude that there is a causal relationship between peer group social influences and the initiation and maintenance of smoking behaviors during adolescence (USHHS, 2012).” The significant role that peers and peer group norms in tobacco use make it difficult to reach diverse youth populations with generic interventions. Instead, tailored and targeted efforts are needed to address the specific cultural images, norms and interests of each peer group that needs to be targeted.

Effectiveness of Mass Media Campaigns Among Youth Populations

With nearly 1,000 youth becoming new daily smokers each day, mass media campaigns are a crucial component to reducing and preventing youth tobacco use. Extensive evidence shows that mass media campaigns can effectively reduce youth tobacco use and prevent initiation, even in cases where the campaign is not specifically geared towards youth (Schar, Gutierrez, Murphy-Hoefer, & Nelson, 2006; Tan, Montague, & Freeman, 2000). However, although research has shown that mass media campaigns are an effective strategy for preventing youth tobacco use, the findings also stress the important role that message type, format, tone, and delivery play in the success of campaigns, as well as the effect that age-targeted messaging can have on increasing successful outcomes, specifically among the youth population.

A number of studies have analyzed the effect that mass media campaigns have on youth populations. Studies of mass media campaigns in Australia, England, California, and Massachusetts show that general population mass media campaigns, and in some cases campaigns targeted specifically at adults, effectively impacted youth smoking rates and youth attitudes about smoking (Biener, 2000; BRMB Social Research, 2002; Hassard, 2000). In Australia, for example, the “Every Cigarette Is Doing You Damage,” campaign was targeted at adults, aged 18-40, but resulted in higher levels of campaign awareness among teenage smokers and recent quitters (96%) than the intended adult target (87%) (Tan et al., 2000). A separate national study of Australia’s campaign found that 90% of adolescents surveyed recognized the campaign by its “Every cigarette is doing you damage” slogan (White, Tan, Wakefield, & Hill, 2003). Of those surveyed, only 16% of adolescent smokers thought the campaign was not relevant to them, and 84% of adolescent smokers felt that the campaign made smoking seem less cool and desirable (White et al., 2003).

Although mass media campaigns intended for the general population have unintentionally impacted youth, research also suggests that age-targeted campaigns can improve results among youth populations (Schar et al., 2006). For instance, studies have found that youth attitudes and behaviors have been successfully changed through youth campaigns in Florida, Minnesota, and Mississippi, as well as the truth® campaign that exclusively targeted teens (Farrelly et al., 2002; Schar et al., 2006).

Mass Media Message Types

Although mass media campaigns have been shown to effectively reduce youth smoking, not all campaign messages are equally impactful and many have seen mixed results. Furthermore, different subsets of the youth population have been found to respond differently to certain types of messaging. Thus, careful attention must be paid to message type in order to successfully impact the desired target population.

Of the message type that has been tried and tested, messages focused on the health effects of smoking has consistently been found effective among youth (Schar et al., 2006). However, the health information must either be new to the youth or presented in a new way in order to resonate with the population. In a comprehensive report on youth-targeted media campaigns in nine countries released in 2006 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, researchers concluded that campaigns must present persuasive new information or perspective about the health risks of smoking in “innovative ways that engage the viewers emotionally” (Schar et al., 2006). Graphic depictions of health effects, for example, are more likely to be effective due to the strong emotional reaction they produce. However, to be received as credible, the effects depicted must be real and youth must be presented with information they may not have previously considered (Schar et al., 2006).

Several recent youth-targeted campaigns within the United States have employed messaging centered on the deceptive practices of the tobacco industry. Research to-date indicates that these messages “can be effective, but audiences probably need to be exposed over time to several different messages regarding tobacco industry behavior” (Schar et al., 2006). Perhaps one of the most well known examples of anti-tobacco industry messaging is the American Legacy Foundation’s truth® campaign. A 2002 evaluation of the truth® campaign found that exposure to truth® advertising positively changed youths’ attitudes toward tobacco, increasing the percentage of youth who agree that cigarette companies lie (+12.3%), try to get young people to start smoking (+12.2%), deny that cigarettes are addictive (+10.6%), and deny that cigarettes cause cancer and other harmful diseases (+21.0%) (Farrelly et al., 2002). Youth exposed to truth® advertising were also more likely to agree that *not* smoking is a way to express independence (+22.5%) and would like to be involved in efforts to get rid of smoking (+26.4%). Though researchers concluded that truth® advertising successfully changed the way youth think about tobacco, the percentage of nonsmokers who said they would not smoke one year from the time of the study did not increase significantly (Farrelly et al., 2002). Despite this finding, based on their survey results, researchers hypothesized that continued exposure to truth® advertising would lead to decreases in youth smoking (Farrelly et al., 2002).

Data from Florida corroborates the hypothesis made by the researchers involved in the truth® campaign evaluation, and suggests that youth attitudes towards tobacco industry marketing techniques are in fact one of the strongest predictors of smoking initiation (Siegel, 2002). In a recent study of Florida’s youth media campaign, declines in youth smoking were closely associated with a change in attitudes towards tobacco industry behavior. In addition, youth with a high level of knowledge about the tobacco industry’s manipulation of youth through marketing were 14 times less likely to start smoking over an 18-month period (Siegel, 2002). Similarly, a Florida Anti-Tobacco Media Evaluation found that increased exposure to and awareness of tobacco industry deceptive practice ads, particularly amongst younger teens, strongly correlated with a reduced likelihood to start smoking, as well as an increased likelihood of quitting (Sly, Heald, & Ray, 2001).

However, results from several studies of mass media campaigns involving tobacco industry messaging suggest that careful message testing must occur to prevent possible confusion and ensure that the message is well received by the target youth population. One of the first ad campaigns that highlighted the deceptive practices of the tobacco industry was a CDC-created print and TV ad in 1992. Based on previous focus group testing, the CDC chose to create a campaign directly attacking the tobacco industry's advertising practices. However, in testing the campaign's print and TV ad with 240 teens from various backgrounds in nine different U.S. cities, the ad message was deemed so confusing that 38% of youth actually believed that the message promoted smoking (McKenna & Williams, 1993). A similar cautionary tale arose from a 1999 CDC-sponsored multistate focus group in Massachusetts, California, and Arizona (Teenage Research Unlimited, 1999). In the focus group study, messages focusing on tobacco industry deceptive practices were better received in areas where the messages were familiar, but were widely seen as confusing in states where the messages were new (Teenage Research Unlimited, 1999). Limited research also suggests that anti-tobacco industry messaging may not be as effective in tobacco growing states, such as North Carolina, where deceptive practice ads were rated less likely to cause youth to stop and think, in part because North Carolina youth reported that the tobacco industry has a right to make money (UNC, 2001).

In light of relatively limited research on youth-specific messages, particularly around tobacco industry practices, some research suggests that utilizing both message types might result in higher success. In California, for example, its campaign focusing on the harm caused to others by tobacco use while also exposing tobacco industry practices had the highest combination of recall (Independent Evaluation Consortium, 1998). An analysis of California's combination campaign concluded that it successfully decreased youth smoking (Balbach & Glantz, 1998; Goldman & Glantz, 1998).

A comprehensive review of youth-targeted campaigns in 9 countries failed to find consistent evidence for other messaging types, including social approval skills, secondhand smoke, cosmetic effects, and individual choice messaging. In reviewing campaigns that utilized social approval or disapproval skills, researchers concluded this type of messaging can be effective in increasing awareness and reducing intention to smoke. However, research is limited to controlled trials, and broad population programs have not seen success in changing actual youth smoking behavior even when high campaign awareness exists (Schar et al., 2006). Although there is limited data, the same review concluded that messaging focused on the cosmetic effects of smoking, addiction, or smoking's impact on athletic performance is less effective than ads that directly address long-term health effects or the industry's deceptive behavior (Schar et al., 2006).

Overall, it is important to note that although a consensus is slowly emerging, research focusing on ad themes has produced findings that are mixed (Farrelly et al., 2002). Two possible reasons include differences in research methodologies and ad execution. Additionally, differences in youth cultures, geographic nuances, and campaign length may also play a part in explaining these discrepancies. Careful testing of proposed ad messaging among the intended youth audience is recommended to prevent counterproductive results and ensure success.

Mass Media Message Tone

In recent years, a variety of tones have been employed in youth-targeted campaigns with varying success. Overall, a consensus exists that successful ads must evoke emotion, and research suggests that negative emotion (such as disgust, loss, sadness, or anger) is more effective than positive emotion. In general, research tells us that emotional messages are more likely to be remembered (Lang, Dhillon & Dong, 1995). Thus, engaging viewers emotionally is

important to an ad's overall effectiveness, as recall is crucial to a successful ad campaign (Biener, 2000). In a multi-city study, youth were most likely to recall, discuss, and think about ads with personal testimonies or a "negative visceral element" (Wakefield, Flay, Nichter, & Giovino, 2003). The same study was conducted in Australia and Great Britain with similar results (Wakefield et al., 2003). A study of Massachusetts' youth ad campaign also found that youth were more likely to recall ads that produced negative emotions than ads that produced positive emotions (Biener, 2000). Likewise, in a multistate focus group study where youth rated a series of tobacco prevention ads according to whether the ads would cause them to "stop and think" about not using tobacco, three-fourths of the ads with the highest ratings generated strong negative emotions (Teenage Research Unlimited, 1999). Youth involved in the focus group study consistently gave the highest ratings to ads that "graphically, dramatically, and emotionally" depicted the serious negative consequences of smoking. In the same study, the ads least likely to make youth "stop and think" were the ads sponsored by the tobacco industry, possibly because the messaging utilized did not challenge the viewer's beliefs or produce an emotional response (Teenage Research Unlimited, 1999).

Although research suggests that negative emotions are most effective, the research also indicates that any variety of negative emotions may work, not just fear, loss, or sadness. For example, in Norway, researchers developed a media campaign targeted exclusively at girls intended to evoke shame. At the time, the smoking rate in Norway was higher among girls than boys, and the Norwegian campaign targeted girls with the message, "Girls are stupid because the more we know about the health risks of smoking, the more Norwegian girls start to smoke." A significantly higher percentage of girls exposed to the campaign stopped smoking as compared to the control area (25.6% vs. 17.6%) (Hafstad, Aarow, Engeland et al., 1998). However, the study cautioned that such a campaign might not be as well received in the United States (Hafstad et al., 1998). Overall, a CDC review of youth-targeted campaigns in nine countries concluded that "ads with strong and credible negative emotional appeal – leading the viewer to feel a sense of personal loss, sadness, anger, disgust, or fear – increases the attention to, and recall of, ads among youth audiences and enhance the ads' effectiveness" as youth respond more strongly to ads that produce negative emotions than ads that are humorous (Hafstad et al., 1998).

Studies of past youth-targeted media campaigns also suggest that it is important for the campaign tone to avoid being "preachy" or authoritarian. Ads that come across as "preachy" are often rejected by youth and can become counter-effective (Schar et al., 2006). Similarly, current research suggests, "emotionally compelling ads (such as personal testimonies) and those with strong graphic depictions run the risk of emotionally exhausting certain audience members if these ads are broadcast for significant periods of time, potentially producing a defensive response to the message (Schar et al., 2006). The possibility of burnout further supports utilizing multiple messaging types and formats, as seen in California's ad campaign (Balbach & Glantz, 1998).

Mass Media Message Format

Within the youth population, different message formats have been shown to work better with different age groups. One crucial format factor is whether a member of the youth community is used to deliver the message itself. For example, research shows that youth often discount messages that appear to speak to a younger age group and that youth typically respond better to ads that show people who are perceived as attractive, cool, and several years older (Zollo, 1999). Those findings are supported by a study of The Target Market campaign in Minnesota, which found that using teen members as spokespeople was not successful among high school students because other youth were not interested in watching youth who looked their age or younger (Ergo International, 2001). However, the same campaign

was effective among middle school students (Ergo International, 2001). These findings are supported by the CDC's comprehensive review of past youth media campaigns, which concluded that youth should be used in ads with caution due to a high probability of other youth finding the messenger too close to their own age, not attractive enough, too attractive, or not cool enough (Schar et al., 2006). Therefore, careful testing of the individual featured in the ad is necessary to ensure that the format is not interfering with the message itself.

Several past youth-targeted media campaigns have used testimonials or personal stories with success. Testimonials tend to elicit a strong emotional response and appear credible (Schar et al., 2006). Research suggests that personal testimonies are also less likely to be received as preachy or authoritarian since they are not coming from an expert authority (Schar et al., 2006). Another potential cause for the success of highly emotional, personal testimonial ads is attributed to the power narratives have to reduce the tendency towards counterarguments and self-exemptions, unlike an expert testimony or demonstration (Biener, 2000).

Mass Media Message Reach and Frequency

With any mass media campaign, an increase in media expenditures (and therefore media placements) directly translates into increases in individual awareness of campaign advertisements (Farrelly et al., 2002). When designing a youth-targeted campaign, research suggests that messages must be shown frequently as youth require time to internalize material before any behavior change can occur (Schar et al., 2006). This finding is supported by a study of New York's youth-focused media campaign which found that for every \$1,000 increase in the TV, radio, and print expenditures, calls to the quitline increased by 0.1%, 5.7% and 2.8% respectively (Davis, Nonnemaker, & Farrelly, 2007). Likewise, research shows that multiple message strategies and media channels can increase the effectiveness of a youth-targeted campaign (Schar et al., 2006).

Research Methods

Between May 28 and June 6, 2013, a team of eight Rescue SCG researchers travelled to RI where they conducted 17 focus groups with 166 high school students, ages 14 to 19.

Locations

The state of RI includes multiple geographic regions including Blackstone Valley, Block Island, Newport, Providence, Warwick, and South County. Although the majority of RI is white (85.9%), there are varying levels of socioeconomic status and education represented throughout the state (United States Census Bureau, 2012). In order to maximize the results from this research and their applicability, four high schools and one LGBT center were selected by RIDOPH to be part of this research effort, which includes Coventry, Beacon Charter, East Providence, and MET High School in addition to Youth Pride Inc. Rhode Island in Providence. Breakdowns of participating high schools can be found in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Student Demographics from Participating Schools and Organizations

| School | Enrollment | White | Black | Hispanic |
|-------------------------------|------------|-------|-------|----------|
| Coventry HS | 1,904 | 97% | 1% | 1% |
| East Providence HS | 2,029 | 80% | 14% | 4% |
| Beacon Charter HS | 115 | 82% | 4% | 12% |
| MET High School | 691 | 25% | 29% | 42% |
| Youth Pride Inc. Rhode Island | 723 | NA | 14% | 43% |

Demographic data for all high schools were obtained from High-Schools.com.

Youth Pride Inc. RI provided demographic data for their organization.

Table 2. Percent Drop Out Rates And Free Lunch Eligibility At Participating High Schools

| School | % Dropped Out (2011-2012) | % Eligible for Free Lunches (2011-2012) |
|--------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Coventry HS | 7.7% | 6% |
| East Providence HS | 15.9 | 15% |
| Beacon Charter HS | 2.4% | 33% |
| MET High School | 6.5% | 50% |

Data for all high schools were obtained from High-Schools.com.

Youth Pride Inc. Rhode Island (YPRI), in Providence, RI is a drop-in Center for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQQ) youth and allies aged 13-23. In a 2012 survey conducted by YPRI, 24% of surveyed YPRI attendees identified as homosexual or lesbian, 16% as bisexual, 30% heterosexual, and 5% or fewer identified as pansexual, queer, questioning, unsure, or other (YPRI, 2013).

Focus Group Recruitment

All respondents were recruited through convenience sampling during lunch periods at their respective schools or organization. Participants were selected based on self-reports on a 37-item recruitment survey inquiring about risk behaviors (including tobacco use history) and social tendencies. The selection process prioritized the following order: students who reported having used tobacco products (cigarettes, cigarillo, spit) in the past 30 days, students who reported that they had ever used any of the previously named tobacco products, and students who reported that more than half of their friends used tobacco.

The recruitment survey also included the I-Base Survey™, a Rescue SCG innovation that displays images of a number of anonymous youth that represent various peer crowds. A peer crowd is defined as *the macro-level connections between peer groups with similar interests, lifestyles, influencers and media consumption habits across geographic areas*. In other words, while a teen has a local peer group he/she socializes with, the teen and his/her peer group belong to a larger “peer crowd” that shares significant cultural similarities across cities and even states. The purpose of the I-Base Survey™ is to identify the peer crowd that the youth respondent identifies with. Along with risk behavior questions included in the survey, the peer crowd identification information is then used to identify which peer crowds are most at risk for tobacco use. This information, however, was analyzed after the focus groups were completed and was not used as part of the focus group selection process.

Students who were selected to participate in the focus groups were provided with a passive parental consent form and scheduled to participate in focus groups in the following one, two, or three days. Because of scheduling restrictions, recruitment and focus groups were scheduled and executed at each of the two MET School campuses on the same day. Each participant received a \$25 incentive in the form of a prepaid Visa gift card in exchange for his or her participation in a 2-hour long focus group.

Focus Group Activities

After the check in process, the focus groups conducted at each location were composed of 10 different exercises in addition to the Welcome portion, as described below:

Individual Picture Sort – Each attendee received identical stacks of 94 pictures of anonymous teenagers that represented various peer crowds. As an individual exercise, participants were asked to organize the photos into groups of friends that would socialize with one another in their school or community, with a limit of 10 groupings. Youth were instructed to make a separate group for photos that were not represented in their school or community. Facilitators worked with each student to clarify any misunderstanding and recorded key words that youth used to describe the groups. All focus groups fully completed this activity. The facilitator recorded this information on an individual group picture sort sheet.

Values Survey – Participants were given a worksheet that included a series of 20 non-tobacco related value statements to which respondents agreed or disagreed on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from “I really do not agree” to “I really agree.” The statements focused on social issues, health issues, and environmental values.

Welcome – This portion consisted of an introduction to the study, discussion of confidentiality, ground rules, and secured verbal agreements to participate. At this time, participants consented to have the discussion group audio recorded on a tape. Facilitators used this time to create a conversational tone with the group, to reduce discomfort,

and attenuate situational factors (i.e. presence of adults in a classroom setting) that could affect the validity of self-reported risk behaviors during the discussion (Brenner et al., 2003). This occurred after the Individual Picture Sort Activity and Values Survey had already started because different participants arrived at different times and it was the most opportune time to address all confirmed participants at once. Before this introduction occurred, no audio recording was conducted.

Group Picture Sort – Using the same 94 images from the individual picture sort, participants were asked to work together to reach consensus on the picture groupings. When the groupings are completed, a facilitator engaged participants in a discussion to determine descriptive keywords, estimates of risk behaviors, and projected size of the social groupings. The facilitator recorded this information on a group picture sort sheet.

Discussion of Local Youth Culture – This part of the discussion group was designed to provide insight into youth culture in RI, including how/where specific peer crowds socialize and spend their free time, what brands of clothing they wear, what music they listen to, which shows they watch, and other types of media they consume. The groupings made in the Group Picture Sort allowed researchers to more easily discuss each peer crowd separately.

Discussion of Local Tobacco Use – Participants were asked to discuss the type of teens who smoked at their school and in their community, tobacco types used, and peer crowds believed to use tobacco in RI.

Identity Projection – Facilitators used a projector to show the group one anonymous teen image at a time and asked the group several questions about the teen, based on the image alone. Selections from the same set of 94 pictures were shown and assessed in each focus group. Participants were asked what they believed the individual photographed did for fun, the peer crowd they belong to, their motivation in life, and questions related to risk behaviors, including tobacco use. If participants believed that the individual used tobacco, the facilitator asked the group why and when they initiated tobacco use. All responses were verbal.

Tobacco Fact Survey – Participants were given a survey with 20 facts about tobacco with topics ranging from environmental, social, and health impacts. Participants were asked if they already knew the fact and evaluated how important they thought the fact was on a five-item Likert-type scale.

Tobacco Ad Test – This exercise lasted approximately 45 minutes due to the volume of videos tested. Respondents were asked to watch 10 tobacco prevention advertisements. After each ad viewing, participants individually answered a set of written questions, followed by a group verbal discussion. The questions focused on understanding the potentially effective facets of an ad and an overall effectiveness rating for each ad. The discussion was focused on understanding perceptions of the ad and its effectiveness in persuading teens not to use tobacco. Ads from Be An Original, truth®, ydouthink, Venomocity, Viva Smokefree, Smokefree Vegas, and Syke were presented. See Table 3 for a full listing of the ads that were evaluated.

Table 3. Tobacco Videos Evaluated

| Name | Brand |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Unsweetened Parade | truth® (National USA) |
| Attractiveness (Male and Female) | Ydouthink (Virginia) |
| Be An Original Campaign | RI Department of Public Health |
| Hookah Ad | Smokefree Vegas (Nevada) |

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Craving | Venomocity (Arizona) |
| Winds of Plague | Syke (Virginia) |
| Animal Testing Booth | Ydouthink (Virginia) |
| Ultimate Truth | truth@ (National USA) |
| Hispanic Concept | Viva Smokefree (Rescue SCG Concept) |
| Deforestation | Ydouthink (Virginia) |

Brand Comparison– Teens were shown the logo, two print ads, and the Facebook page from three separate campaigns: American Legacy Foundation’s truth@, Blacklist (Used by the Utah, Nebraska, Vermont and New Mexico Departments of Health), and Rhode Island’s Be An Original. Students were asked to evaluate these brands on both a visual and content basis and then asked which were their favorites and least favorites. They were then asked to provide honest opinions about design, the name, what works, and what did not work. Finally, respondents were asked to identify the brand they liked best and which they thought would work best. Due to the variability in time for the discussion following each video, some activities may have been skipped to allow rich conversation to reach its natural conclusion.

Tobacco Believability Survey – A second sheet with identical facts from the Tobacco Fact Survey was distributed to participants at the end of the discussion. Participants were asked how “believable” the different tobacco facts were on a 5-item Likert scale.

Instrument and Activity Design

Rescue SCG carefully crafted each activity and instrument using general best practices in qualitative and quantitative research, and when possible, specific tobacco control research best practices. For quantitative collection, retrospective self-reports of tobacco use history have been validated as an accurate method of collecting accounts of tobacco use history from adolescents (Brener, et al 2003). RSCG further reduced the possibility of inaccurate recall by asking participants to recall their tobacco use in the previous 30 days, to account for infrequent or episodic smoking episodes (Brener, et al 2003). Questions that inquire about short-term and recent tobacco history tend to be more accurate than questions asking participants about tobacco use in the last year, where recall tends to be inaccurate (Brener, et al 2003). In light of the necessity of situational factors required to collect qualitative risk behavior data (i.e. adult facilitators asking participants about risk behaviors in front of their peers in a school setting), RSCG reduced threats to validity by creating a safe, conversational environment for discussions in addition to separate measures for accurate personal accounts (Brener, et al 2003). Quantitative collection tools during the focus groups allowed participants to answer personal questions independently to reduce the potential for social disapproval (Brener, et al 2003), while group activities (i.e. group picture sort, discussion) allowed groups of participants to reach a consensus. These mixed research methods allowed participants to express diverse perspectives that may diverge from the group. However, by facilitating both personal and group response opportunities, we attain a more comprehensive look at this population.

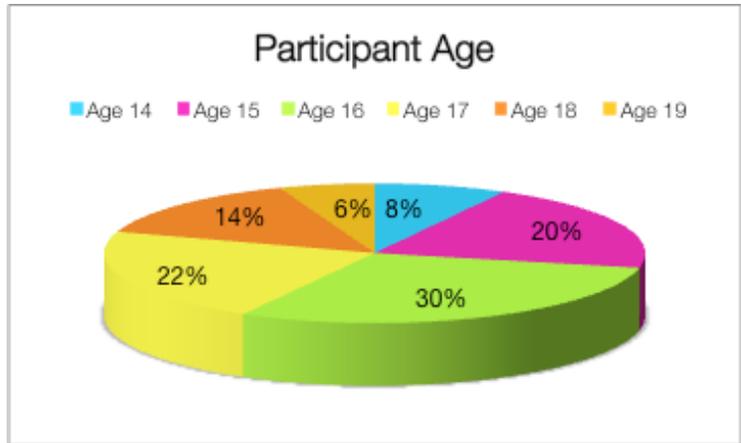
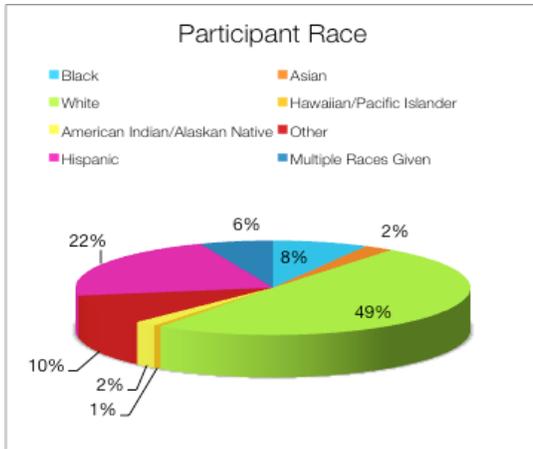
Participant Description

Gender was approximately equal with 51% of the participants reporting their sex as male. The majority of participants were White at 49%, followed by Hispanic (22%), Black (8%), Asian (2%), American Indian (2%), and Hawaiian/Pacific

Islander (1%). 6% of respondents reported being multiple races while another 10% identified as “Other.” As the target sample was high school students, the age range was 14 and up. 15 and 16 year olds accounted for 50% of the respondents, as was expected. Demographic information for the participants is shown below in Figures 1 and 2.

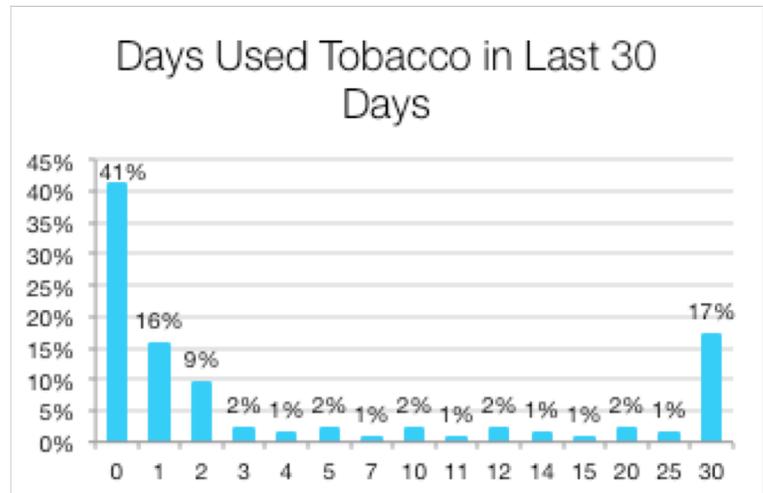
Figure 1. Participant Race

Figure 2. Participant Age



At 51%, a majority of the respondents indicated that they had used tobacco at some point in their life, while 68% of the sample reported that more than half of their friends used tobacco products. In addition, 38% of participants that had used tobacco previously said that more than half of their friends used tobacco products. When asked how many times they have used tobacco in the last 30 days, 36.75% indicated that they have used tobacco in the last 30 days, while 21.3% said they had used tobacco on at least 15 of the past 30 days. Of the sample, 17% reported using tobacco every day. The full distribution is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3.



Qualitative Findings Part 1: Peer Crowds of Rhode Island Teens

Researchers studying tobacco behaviors have long cited peers, cultural identities, and social groups as a strong factor in the decision to use tobacco, as we summarized in the secondary research section. Understanding the peer crowds that define the teenage landscape in RI is important to understanding how peers interact with each other and how their cultural identities and social groups can protect them or predispose them to tobacco use risk. Understanding which peer crowds are at highest risk can be critical to developing and/or maintaining an effective tobacco prevention strategy, especially when such a small fraction of teens use tobacco, as is the case in RI. Separate from any quantitative analysis and primarily through focus group qualitative discussions, Rescue SCG researchers identified sixteen subcultures or peer crowds, including some with discernible tangent groups, including Preps, Hip Hop (Flashy and Hard), Alternative (Scene and Goth), Mainstream Floater, Country, and LGBT. Slight geographic distinctions were present, as certain subcultures like Country were heavily represented on the more rural areas of RI, but were not as visible in the central hub of the city. Regardless of the varying size of the peer crowds in different high schools, the characteristics of teens within these subcultures themselves remained relatively consistent. The following section provides qualitative descriptions of each of the identified peer crowds along with relevant imagery of each peer crowd as well as examples from the photos used in the focus groups. The peer crowds are placed in order of perceived size, from largest subculture to smallest, as vocalized by participants in each group respectively.

Preppy

The Preppy peer crowd in RI is interested in mainstream pop culture and athletics. Often called “the popular crowd,” “privileged,” and/or “the pretty people” by youth participants, Preppy teens were projected to prioritize having an outgoing disposition, maintaining their physical appearance, and becoming a stereotypical popular teen. One youth participant described the Preppy females as “[the] girls who take pictures on Instagram that say ‘no filter, no makeup.’” These youth find their fashion at Abercrombie and Fitch, American Eagle, Aeropostale, and Hollister. Preppy teens in RI listen to accessible, popular music, like Top 40 Rock, Hip Hop, R&B, and Country, or as one teen stated, “They listen to whatever is popular at the moment.

Basically, whatever is hip right now.” Unlike other peer crowds, like Hip Hop and Alternative youth, Preppy teens are less focused on music than they are on what activity the music is accompanying, like a night of drinking at a house party or attending a school dance.

Hip Hop

As rap music and Hip Hop fashion continue to inspire both traditional and new media, Hip Hop culture is an increasingly dominant teen subculture in RI. Hip Hop, as will be seen with the Alternative culture, has several offshoots. Flashy Hip Hop taps more into current pop culture for its look, while Hard Hip Hop associates with dark, often fatalistic imagery, like selling drugs, participating in street violence, and general street gang activities. These two factions of Hip Hop are explained on the following pages.



Flashy Hip Hop

The Flashy Hip Hop peer crowd looks mostly to mainstream Hip Hop for cues in fashion, slang, music, and cultural clues in general, but are also interested in the Hip Hop mixtape circuit. Discussion group participants also called these youth “the swag kids.” Clothing brands preferred by this subculture include LRG, Gucci, Crooks and Castles, and True Religion, and are usually loose-fitting for males while tight-fitting for females. Flashy jewelry comes in sparkling earrings, low-hanging chain necklaces, and diamond-encrusted bracelets and watches. Flashy Hip Hop teens in RI vocalized an affinity for New York and East Coast rappers like Jay Z, Ace Hood, and Meek Mill, but were also enthusiastic about Chief Keef (Chicago), Lil Wayne (New Orleans), and Wacka Flocka (Atlanta).



Hard Hip Hop

Some youth extended their affiliation with Hip Hop to a style called “gangsta” or “ratchet” that will be referred to as Hard Hip Hop. This corner of Hip Hop positions itself as rowdy, tough, and occasionally explicitly links itself to street gang culture. The term “gangsta,” however, is often used loosely by youth to describe this subculture and usually does not literally refer to gang participation. Instead, it is a categorical term used to define all those that identify with a more callous Hip Hop disposition. The Hard Hip Hop peer crowd also housed a considerable amount of “wannabes,” which were described as teens who were “trying too hard” to fit into the rougher Hip Hop peer crowd. A teen participant expanded on the perceived psychology of the “wannabes”:



“I hate people that try to portray a certain image for a stupid reason. Like these kids are like, ‘I want to portray this gangster image,’ but if you grew up in a bad neighborhood you realize that's not a good thing to do. The people who do dress like that, dress like that because they grew up in a bad situation where they didn't have a lot so they buy these clothes to make them feel better about themselves through whatever way they made their money. And the fact that that's a cool image in society today just irks me. Like, that's not cool. I'm gonna dress like a gangster because that's what's cool, but the reality of it is that people are in bad circumstances and this is just what they do to feel better about themselves,” (Male, East Providence).

While their Flashy Hip Hop peers may occasionally dress in “skinny” jeans and possibly wear skate shoes, the Hard Hip Hop teens are almost always seen in baggy jeans and oversized t-shirts. They are generally less approachable, as they prioritize an image that is often the antithesis of welcoming.

Alternative

Modern Alternative teen culture is made up of Emo, Goth, and Skater types. In RI, these groups fractured and fused, creating two Alternative peer crowds: Scene and Goth. It is possible to be influenced by Goth and still be Scene, as both fall under the Alternative canvas. Scene youth were called the “friendly Emo/Scene Kids,” whereas the Goth teens were more concerned with dressing in black and projecting an image of depression. While the Scene subculture held a strong presence across the research sites in RI, the Goth group was smaller, as it is the more extreme of the Alternative peer crowds amongst RI teenagers.

Scene

The Scene group is the more traditional and more approachable branch of the Alternative youth peer crowds in RI. Scene teens were observed to be friendlier and more forthcoming than Goth youth, and seemed to socialize with teens outside of the Alternative peer crowd. Scene youth that are heavily influenced by skateboard culture shop at Pacific Sunwear, Tilley’s, and Zumies, where brands like Volcom, Empyre, and Billabong are the standard. Scene teens also shop at Hot Topic where a bevy of Scene band t-shirts are sold. Generally, the aforementioned clothing is tight-fitting, features brightly colored band t-shirts, and is punctuated with lip piercings called “snake bites.” Popular Scene bands include Asking Alexandria, The Devil Wears Prada, Bring Me The Horizon, and Blood On The Dance Floor. Consequently, these youth prefer to socialize at concerts rather than house parties, with one teen participant explaining, “I know a lot of kids like that and on weekends they go to shows. They go to different venues in Providence and North Providence and hang out” (Male, East Providence).



Goth

Goth teens embrace the darker, heavier side of Alternative style. While their Scene peers listen to music that contains both screaming and singing vocals, Goths prefer music that is almost all screaming, such as metal and deathcore acts such as Suicide Silence, Emmure, Slipknot, and sometimes rap/rock outfit the Insane Clown Posse, which, while deviating musically from the Goth Scene, still attracts the same visual aesthetic and attitude of the Goth peer crowd. Current Goth styles are baggy, strictly black, decorated with chains, and purchased from Hot Topic. Though this group was said to sometimes associate with Scene teens, it was agreed across discussion groups that this subculture generally isolates itself from most high school peer crowds and bonds over their perceived feeling of being “outcasts.”



Mainstream

Mainstream teens are the norm, the average teenagers that do not stand out as visually as some of the other, more distinct peer crowds. Simple, nondescript clothing is purchased from Old Navy or Walmart, while taste in music rarely deviates from mainstream pop/rock radio. Participants described this group as “average,” “friendly,” and “not trying too hard.” A youth participant stated, “[They] are the kids who come to school, they do enough to pass. They worry about their grades,” (Male, East Providence). Other teens, though, described Mainstream youth as studious, or even as “nerds.” Mainstream teens prioritize school and family over a social life, and are perceived as focused on successful long-term goals, like having a promising career or going to college.



Country

The rural landscape that lies on the rural areas of RI provides an inherent country influence to some youth that manifests in what teen participants called Country. These youth enjoy riding all-terrain four-wheelers, going “muddin’” in pick-up trucks, and are passionate about riding horses. One participant added that, “Going mudding with people like that is pretty fun,” (Male, East Providence). Whereas Hip Hop teens use clothing as a vehicle for bravado, Country youth dress for function. Carhartt and Wrangler are brands exemplary of a Country youth’s attire in Providence, along with the occasional camouflage sporting jacket. This peer crowd favors country music, like Florida Georgia Line, Lee Brice, and Taylor Swift. They were also described as having little to no concern about the social pecking order. As one teen stated, “They really don’t care with what everyone else is like. They just go their own way” (Female, Beacon). While this attitude might be true about how Country teens feel about other peer crowds, they work to maintain a specific identity within their peer crowd.



LGBT

A discussion group was held with an entirely LGBT teen population in Providence. In general, these teens have not splintered off into the niche peer crowds associated with LGBT young adults, but rather inhabited one of the identities from the peer crowds described previously in this report. There were, however, some LGBT teen participants that were actively cross-



dressing or “gender queer,” which is notable behavior for teens. The LGBT teens discussed their peer crowd as being “cool” yet “dramatic,” and being highly guarded when meeting others, which may be a result of getting bullied to varying degrees. While relevant cultural capital to the LGBT community is included, photos are not provided for this crowd due to the aforementioned immersion into other established peer crowds. In addition, the small numbers of out LGBT teens at each high school often prevent them from forming their own peer crowd until they are older.

Qualitative Findings Part 2: Teen Tobacco Use

Qualitative Analysis of General Teen Tobacco Use

The perceived rates of tobacco use among teens in Rhode Island are relatively high; “Cigarettes, to the youth in Providence, it's a high rate of cigarette smokers. A really high rate,” (Male, Youth Pride). Teens at all schools estimated that 20-40% of students at their schools smoked “boges” (cigarettes) or used other forms of tobacco. Many do not admit to being full-fledged smokers; “Until you get really into it and you do it on your own all the time, I don't think you're a smoker,” (Female, Coventry) but acknowledge smoking as part of their social lives; “If one of us just so happens to have a cigarette, then [we smoke],” (Male, MET).

At Coventry High School, teens explained that students there engage in the “Three S's: Skate, Skip, and Smoke,” (Female, Coventry). Students across all schools spoke frequently of the lack of activities for teens in RI, so people turned to smoking for lack of anything better to do; “You can't find anything to do out here. It gets wicked boring,” (Male, East Providence) and “You smoke because you're bored,” (Female, Coventry). Students say that teens start smoking relatively early, with many indicating that they had their first cigarette between the ages of 12 and 14; “I started smoking when I was 12. My dad passed it to me,” (Male, Coventry) and “I started when I was 14. I was corrupted,” (Female, Coventry). Besides boredom, they cited several reasons why teens start smoking, including peer pressure, stress and anxiety, and family influence.

Another interesting concept that came up at several schools was smoking to stay thin, citing it as a reason teens engage in tobacco use; “Females smoke to get in shape,” (Male, Youth Pride), “Hookah and shisha taste delicious. So it's like you're eating but you're not getting fat,” (Male, Coventry), and “I have actually seen it a lot...some people start smoking because it makes you not hungry. It's an eating disorder...that's why I started,” (Female, Beacon).

One brand of cigarettes was mentioned with inordinate frequency: Newports. Some people thought this to be a good brand, widely used among teens, stating:

- “They're just classic,” (Male, Coventry),
- “If you are a high school kid, there is a 96% chance that you smoke Newports,” (Female, Coventry), and
- “My parents smoke Newports, my friends smoke Newports,” (Female, Coventry).

However, many spoke of Newports in disparaging terms, saying:

- “They're cheap,” (Male, Coventry),
- “Newports are the scumbag cigarettes,” (Female, Coventry),
- “People get made fun of when they smoke Newports,” (Female, Coventry),
- “I think they're the worst for you,” (Female, Coventry), and,
- “I will not sleep with anyone who smokes Newports. None at all. They smell so bad,” (Male, Youth Pride).

Other brands that were mentioned repeatedly were Marlboro Reds, also known as “Cowboy Killers” (Male, Coventry) or “Marlbreds” (Male, Coventry) and Marlboro Smooths, which one teen indicated, “taste just like a York Peppermint Patty,” (Male, East Providence).

Most teens said that dip/chew was relegated to specific peer crowds (usually Country) and the occasional baseball player. However, in Coventry, a decidedly more rural area of Rhode Island, students explained that dip/chew use was

a common sight, saying, “It’s new that a lot of people dip. It used to be just a few people, but now it’s a lot,” (Female, Coventry) and “A lot of juniors and seniors dip,” (Female, Coventry). They indicated that many students do this in class, using water and soda bottles; “People dip at school. They spit in water bottles. So many people ask me for empty water bottles. They hide it in their sleeve,” (Female, Coventry) and “You can see the spit bottles,” (Female, Coventry). They insist that the teachers are not aware of what is going on.

E-cigarette is described as rampant among teens across the state, another activity youth engage in while in class:

- “E-Cigarettes are awesome! But that’s because we can’t go out for a cigarette break. People just hold ‘em in their hands and smoke ‘em in class,” (Female, Coventry), and
- “People use e-cigs. It’s the kids who are trying to quit cigarettes or the kids who need something to get them through school,” (Male, East Providence).

They indicated that teachers and school staff are unaware, saying, “I don’t think [school administration] knows that [students are smoking E-cigarettes]” (Male, MET) and “Some people do it right in the classroom. They just put it up their sleeve and teachers don’t see. And it doesn’t smell,” (Male, East Providence). There is also the perception that E-cigarettes have less negative health effects, or are even healthy, with one student saying, “I would start smoking an E-cig because it’s healthy,” (Male, Beacon).

Finally, hookah use is described as extremely popular among Rhode Island youth:

- “The majority of my friends...smoke hookah all the time. All the time,” (Female, Coventry),
- “Hookah be popular here. I be smoking that like it’s a juicebox,” (Male, MET), and
- “I am on the hookah all day,” (Male, MET).

Some teens own a hookah or have friends that do, indicating that they smoke it at parties, “You’ll see some music going on. Hip hop. Twerking music, actually. Some people are smoking hookah...some people might bring some stuff with them,” (Male, Youth Pride). It is interesting to note that teens indicated the ease with which they can enter hookah bars, despite being underage:

- “People in hookah bars just let teenagers go in and smoke them,” (Female, MET),
- “If you look old enough, they will let you in,” (Female, MET),
- “My brother is 16 and he goes right in,” (Male, East Providence), and
- “Whenever I go into a hookah bar, they never ask me for ID,” (Female, MET).

Teens in RI perceive hookah to be healthier than cigarettes, stating, “[Hookah] is better to smoke because of the flavor and it’s healthier than cigs and weed,” (Male, Beacon). There is also the perception that “more girls do it than guys,” (Male, East Providence).

Qualitative Analysis of Peer Crowd Tobacco Use

At several points during the focus group teens were asked about tobacco use among peer crowds. The facilitator first introduced the topic during the group picture sorting activity (though teens may have mentioned smoking behavior earlier). After teens sorted the pictures into the groups they see at their schools, they were asked to rank the groups in order of size and then in order of tobacco use. Much of the following analysis is based on their statements during this

discussion. Teens also discussed perceived smoking behavior of individuals shown during the ID Projection exercise, which adds further insight to our understanding of smoking behavior among the various peer crowds.

Preppy

Tobacco use among the Preppy peer crowd is debated among students in Rhode Island. Some indicated that few Preppy people smoke, stating, “Preppy’s would be last [in smoking]. They’re more into alcohol and drugs,” (Male, Coventry). Jock and athletic types are often tied in with the preppy crowd, so students said, “No [they don’t smoke]. They’re athletes. Athletes don’t smoke cigarettes,” (Male, East Providence). When compared to other groups, it was indicated that smoking rates among Preppy teens would be relatively lower; “Alternative kids smoke more than the Preppy kids,” (Female, Coventry). However, some said that Preppy and “pretty people” do smoke, stating, “Preppy kids smoke menthols,” (Female, Coventry), “The Preppy guys smoke cigarettes,” (Female, Coventry) and “The [Preppy] girls smoke too,” (Female, Coventry). Students indicated that image was a big reason why Preppy teens might smoke; “The pretty girls and pretty guys wanna look cool [so they smoke],” (Female, Beacon). They also applied the smoking for weight-loss concept to this group; “Abercrombie smoke; they gotta stay thin, y’all,” (Male, Youth Pride).

Hip Hop

It is acknowledged that students who fall into the Hip Hop peer crowd (of both the Flashy and Hard Hip Hop variety) have higher rates of smoking relative to other peer crowds (with the exception of Alternative). It was agreed in many groups that “Gangsters smoke the most tobacco,” (Female, Coventry), and “They all smoke cigarettes. Probably two packs a day,” (Male, East Providence), with some emphasis on menthol, “He only smokes menthols because he’s black,” (Male, Coventry). It was noted that many students in this peer crowd smoke cigarillos more than cigarettes; “Gangsters don’t really smoke cigarettes, they smoke cigarillos,” (Male, East Providence). Black & Mild was the stated popular brand.

Alternative

In almost all focus groups, the Alternative teens, particularly those who are part of the Scene subculture, were identified as having the highest rates of smoking relative to other peer crowds; “Scene kids puff back cigarettes everyday. (Male, East Providence), “A lot of Scene girls smoke cigarettes,” (Female, Coventry), “These are pack a day smokers,” (Male, East Providence), and “They inject tobacco,” (Male, East Providence). It was suggested that these teens tend to feel intense emotions and that smoking may be a way that they cope with them; “Scene [teens] smoke to get rid of their depression,” (Male, Coventry), and “They smoke because they are trying to numb their emotions,” (Male, Beacon). Alternative teens who were in the focus groups did not confirm these reasons, but did confirm the high cigarette smoking rates.

Mainstream

Mainstream teens, alternately referred to as “Normal,” “Nerds” and “Mutual Kids,” (i.e.: teens that talk to everybody) were perceived as having lower relative rates of smoking. The teens did not discuss these groups in depth, but when they created a mainstream group during the group picture sort activity, they usually ranked that group low on the tobacco use risk scale. Occasionally, they were perceived not to smoke because of fear of getting in trouble at school or with parents.

Country

Teens indicated that there are not very many Country teens in Rhode Island, but narrowed down the local group to

those who wear camouflage and go mudding or ride ATVs. This group is associated with moderate tobacco use, particularly chew/dip and the cigarette brand Marlboro Reds; “Country kids smoke Marlboro Reds,” (Female, Coventry) and “Most of those country kids pack tobacco,” (Male, East Providence). They refer to Marlboro Reds as “Cowboy Killers,” (Male, Coventry). It seemed to be accepted that dip tobacco use was an engrained part of the Country culture; “The hicks chew tobacco,” (Male, Coventry). Some students were very passionate about their chew tobacco, with one stating, “Redman is loose leaf tobacco and you actually chew it. You don't pack it, you just put it in the side of your cheek. You chew on it. It will change your life forever. It's amazing,” (Male, Coventry).

LGBT

There is an interesting contrast between the perception of LGBT smoking behavior among non-LGBT teens and LGBT teens. When discussing LGBT peer crowd in the focus groups, many non-LGBT teens indicated that they did not believe smoking was common in this group; “I don't know any gay guys who smoke. I think most kids who are our age don't smoke if they're gay,” (Female, Coventry). In regards to one teen perceived to be gay in the ID Projection activity, teens said, “He doesn't smoke. His whole room is too healthy to smoke. His bed is made, his walls are perfectly white,” (Female, Coventry) and “He doesn't look greasy enough to smoke,” (Male, Coventry). Only a couple students perceive gay teens to smoke, stating, “They smoke Virginia Slims,” (Male, Coventry).

By contrast, there was a robust tobacco discussion on tobacco use in the dedicated LGBT teen group held in Providence. LGBT teens indicated high rates of smoking among their peers. They indicated that it was a social activity, teens often smoking outside of clubs and parties, or “catching up with somebody outside as a reason to smoke,” (Female, Youth Pride). They explained that there is peer pressure to smoke; “If your friends are smoking, they may not want to hang out with you because they know you don't smoke. Either because they don't want to offend you, or because you don't smoke, you're not on the same level as them,” (Male, Youth Pride).

They want to avoid a feeling of exclusion; “It's more of a sense, like, if your friends smoke, you don't want to be excluded. In the LGBT community, there is a lot of exclusion already. So you don't want to be excluded from your friends who are smoking now. So you pick up a cigarette because everyone else is smoking,” (Male, Youth Pride).

They indicated that being a gay teen leads to higher levels of stress than average and that smoking is a way to cope, stating:

- “[Being a gay teen] creates more stress. Some of us may not come out to our parents or to everyone. And they keep hearing derogatory terms like fag, or ‘you're so gay.’ It creates a huge stress on them,” (Male, Youth Pride),
- “Being a person of color in the queer community, there's even more stigma on that because of really strong religious beliefs. So you're even more inclined to having a cigarette or two,” (Male, Youth Pride).

There are also issues associated with gender identity that lead to smoking among LGBT teens; “When you hear those derogatory terms, it becomes a masculinity thing for guys. So you gotta show like, ‘Oh yeah, I smoke so I must be tough, I must be a regular dude,’” (Female, Youth Pride) and “They say that smoking is a sexy sort of thing for girls. Like smoking is more badass, sexy, cool,” (Female, Youth Pride). Finally, it was vaguely suggested that LGBT teens may engage in other risk behaviors (likely of a sexual nature) in order to obtain cigarettes, “I find that most kids in high school will do anything to get cigarettes. I've bought my friends cigarettes because I'm 18 and they're underage, but they'll do anything to get cigarettes. Same with people downtown,” (Male, Youth Pride).

Quantitative Analysis

Unlike conventional discussion-based focus groups, Rescue SCG supplements focus group discussions with quantitative data collection activities during both the recruitment and focus group phases of the research to achieve a well-rounded data-based approach. Specifically, the recruitment survey included the I-Base™ photo-focused peer crowd questions to allow us to determine the peer crowd influences of all teens who completed the recruitment survey. In addition, the quantitative components of the focus group were the values survey, tobacco ad assessment, and the tobacco fact survey. In this section, results from these quantitative exercises will be discussed.

Risk Factors of Peer Crowds

In the recruitment survey, participants were asked to indicate whether they had ever engaged in a particular risk behavior, including varying levels engagement with different forms of tobacco. For each type of tobacco, respondents were asked to indicate if they had ever used the product, and to write the number of days in the previous month that they had used each type of tobacco. In addition, participants were asked to fill out the “I-Base Survey™,” which consists of twelve photo-based questions to measure how much each of the most common teen peer crowds influence these teens. The survey presents teens with an array of pictures of unknown teens and asks them to select which pictures would best fit and worst fit into their main group of friends. Each picture is associated with a specific peer crowd. Consequently, Rescue SCG is able to determine how much a teen is influenced by each measured peer crowd using the photos s/he selects. Since this survey was designed before local research was conducted, Rescue SCG had to rely on past teen research from other states to determine which peer crowds would be measured. Rescue SCG included an equal number of photos that were determined by Rescue SCG peer crowd experts to represent the Alternative, Hip Hop, Country, Preppy, and Mainstream peer crowds. Each set of photos included an equal number of photos per race/ethnicity to control for any potential racial bias. The LGBT peer crowd was not represented because in the past Rescue SCG has found it difficult to identify LGBT youth using pictures alone.

Besides the LGBT group, the other five peer crowds included in the recruitment survey matched the peer crowds identified by teens in the focus groups. This allows us to analyze the sizes and tobacco use rates of each of the peer crowds. We caution, however, that the images used on the survey were based on Rescue SCG’s knowledge of teen peer crowds and were not validated locally prior to being used. Consequently, findings from these data should be interpreted with this limitation in mind.

Table 4 provides the proportion of respondents who identify with each specific peer crowd and their associated tobacco use. We counted any positive influence from a peer crowd, rather than assigning each teen to the single peer crowd that influences them the most. This calculation method creates overlap between peer crowds rather than mutually exclusive peer crowd groups. We used this method because it better represents how teens are influenced by peer crowds since many teens mix more than one within their identity. This analysis method allows us to account for these mixed influences. As shown in Table 4, the most popular peer crowd is Preppy, which influences 77.7% of teens in this study. The smallest peer crowd, Hip Hop, only influences 17.1% of the sample, which is surprisingly low based on the qualitative peer crowd findings. We anticipated that the Hip Hop peer crowd would influence 30% - 40% of respondents since focus groups often cited this was the second largest peer crowd in their school. We suspect that the images used to represent the Hip Hop peer crowd must have not aligned well with what the Hip Hop peer crowd

looks like in Rhode Island, resulting in the low peer crowd size. The other peer crowds, Alternative, Mainstream, and Country, influence 29.5%, 63.2% and 26.7% of teens, respectively, which is consistent with our expectations from the qualitative findings.

As shown in Table 4, 22.4% of all recruitment survey respondents indicated that they had smoked cigarettes at least once in their life. Of those who have smoked, 11.9% reported smoking at least one cigarette in the last 30 days. We categorized participants that reported smoking cigarettes 30 out of the previous 30 days as “daily smokers.” 2.7% of all teens reported being daily smokers. Similar statistics were calculated for spit and cigarillos, shown in the table below.

Table 4. Tobacco Use By Peer Crowd (For Entire Recruitment Survey Sample)

| Tobacco Behaviors Measured | Total Sample | | Preppy | | Hip Hop | | Alternative | | Mainstream | | Country | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------|--------|-------|---------|-------|-------------|-------|------------|-------|---------|-------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| | 543 | 100.0% | 422 | 77.7% | 93 | 17.1% | 160 | 29.5% | 343 | 63.2% | 145 | 26.7% |
| % Ever Smoke | 121 | 22.4% | 93 | 22.2% | 29 | 31.2% | 47 | 29.4% | 52 | 15.2% | 20 | 14.0% |
| % Smoked Last 30 Days | 61 | 11.9% | 45 | 11.5% | 18 | 20.2% | 26 | 17.2% | 21 | 6.4% | 10 | 7.2% |
| % Daily Smokers | 14 | 2.7% | 14 | 3.6% | 4 | 4.5% | 11 | 7.3% | 7 | 2.1% | 3 | 2.2% |
| % Used Spit Ever | 28 | 5.2% | 27 | 6.4% | 6 | 6.5% | 4 | 2.5% | 13 | 3.8% | 11 | 7.7% |
| % Used Spit Last 30 Days | 15 | 2.8% | 15 | 3.6% | 5 | 5.4% | 0 | 0.0% | 8 | 2.4% | 7 | 5.0% |
| % Daily Spit | 5 | 0.9% | 5 | 1.2% | 1 | 1.1% | 0 | 0.0% | 3 | 0.9% | 4 | 2.9% |
| % Used Cigarillo Ever | 90 | 16.7% | 72 | 17.2% | 22 | 23.7% | 29 | 18.1% | 36 | 10.6% | 24 | 16.8% |
| % Used Cigarillo Last 30 Days | 52 | 10.0% | 42 | 10.4% | 12 | 19.8% | 12 | 7.9% | 19 | 5.7% | 14 | 10.2% |
| % Daily Cigarillo | 7 | 1.3% | 6 | 1.5% | 2 | 3.3% | 2 | 1.3% | 1 | 0.3% | 2 | 1.5% |

In terms of peer crowds, teens who identify with the Hip Hop and Alternative peer crowds were at highest risk of lifetime, current, and daily cigarette smoking. Teens in the Mainstream and Country peer crowds were at lowest cigarette smoking risk. In contrast, the Hip Hop peer crowd had the highest current use of spit tobacco and the Country peer crowd is at highest risk of lifetime and daily spit usage, while the Mainstream and Alternative peer crowds are the least at risk of using spit. Finally, the Hip Hop peer crowd is at the highest risk of lifetime, current, and daily cigarillo smoking, and the Mainstream peer crowd is at lowest risk of cigarillo use. Overall, the Preppy peer crowd’s tobacco use risk levels are almost identical to the overall tobacco use rates of the entire sample, while the Mainstream peer crowd is at lower risk in all categories. The Alternative, Hip Hop, and Country peer crowds are at high risk of one or more tobacco use categories. These findings match the relative risk levels described by focus group participants. While teens have trouble estimating the actual percentage of teens who smoke (they predicted 20% - 40% smoking prevalence overall), they tend to be good predictors of relative smoking rates, such as the prediction that Mainstream teens smoked the least and Alternative teens smoked the most.

Values Survey

During the focus groups, participants were asked to evaluate a series of statements to which respondents agreed or disagreed with on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from “I really do not agree” to “I really agree.” The items are presented in Table 5, which also provides the relative ranking of each item based on the proportion of people who endorsed the item. To accomplish this, “disagree” and “completely disagree” were combined, as were “agree” and “completely agree,” to provide an indication of low and high ratings of effectiveness. This process was conducted to demonstrate direction in which each item was responded to. This method aims to avoid the response tendency of “picking the middle” option, which can dominate comparison based on mean values.

Table 5 shows that several items were endorsed at very high rates. Nearly all respondents agreed with items regarding pets and animal rights, smelling good, having good breath, air quality, and equality for women. Conversely, the sample agreed and disagreed at relatively high levels on three items, which were attracting the opposite sex, wanting others to think that they are attractive, and maintaining athletic performance levels. This may be due to the composition of the focus group sample and the inherent desire for sports performance in some teens but not others. Finally, three values (asthma, corporations tricking teenagers, and athletic performance) had the lowest levels of agreement, possibly suggesting teens only lightly care about these issues with little passion or importance.

Table 5. Value Statement Level of Endorsement

| Statement | Disagree | Neutral | Agree |
|---|----------|---------|-------|
| I care about the environment and worry about issues like deforestation and want to do something about it. | 12% | 29% | 56% |
| I care about world hunger and want to do something about it. | 9% | 29% | 63% |
| I care about women being treated equally and want to do something about it. | 5% | 10% | 85% |
| I care about the quality of the air I breathe and want to work to keep it clean. | 7% | 22% | 71% |
| I care about animal rights and want to fight against cruel animal testing. | 6% | 20% | 74% |
| I care about preventing pollution. | 9% | 25% | 66% |
| I care about smelling good all the time. | 6% | 4% | 90% |
| I care about minorities (like Hispanics, African Americans, Asians, etc.) being targeted by companies. | 14% | 22% | 65% |
| I care about what the opposite sex thinks of me. | 24% | 16% | 61% |
| I care about pets, like cats and dogs, and care about keeping them healthy. | 4% | 10% | 87% |
| I care about asthma and want to protect myself against it. | 20% | 29% | 52% |
| I worry about corporations trying to trick teenagers with their marketing. | 17% | 31% | 52% |
| I care about poor people and don't want corporations taking advantage of them. | 6% | 28% | 66% |
| I care about government funding and don't want it wasted. | 10% | 29% | 61% |
| I care about how workers are treated in other countries. | 17% | 30% | 53% |
| I want others to think I am attractive. | 24% | 16% | 60% |
| I care about having good breath all the time. | 6% | 11% | 83% |
| I care about my athletic performance levels and work to improve them. | 22% | 24% | 54% |
| I care about being healthy and living a long, healthy life. | 7% | 9% | 84% |
| I care about how companies treat kids and want to stop them from tricking kids with marketing | 8% | 29% | 63% |

Tobacco Ads

Participants were asked to view and rate the effectiveness of 10 different youth-focused tobacco prevention ads. The ratings were made on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from “disagree completely” to “agree completely”. The ads shown represented a wide array of concepts, including stimulating thought, emotionally evocative, funny, and serious.

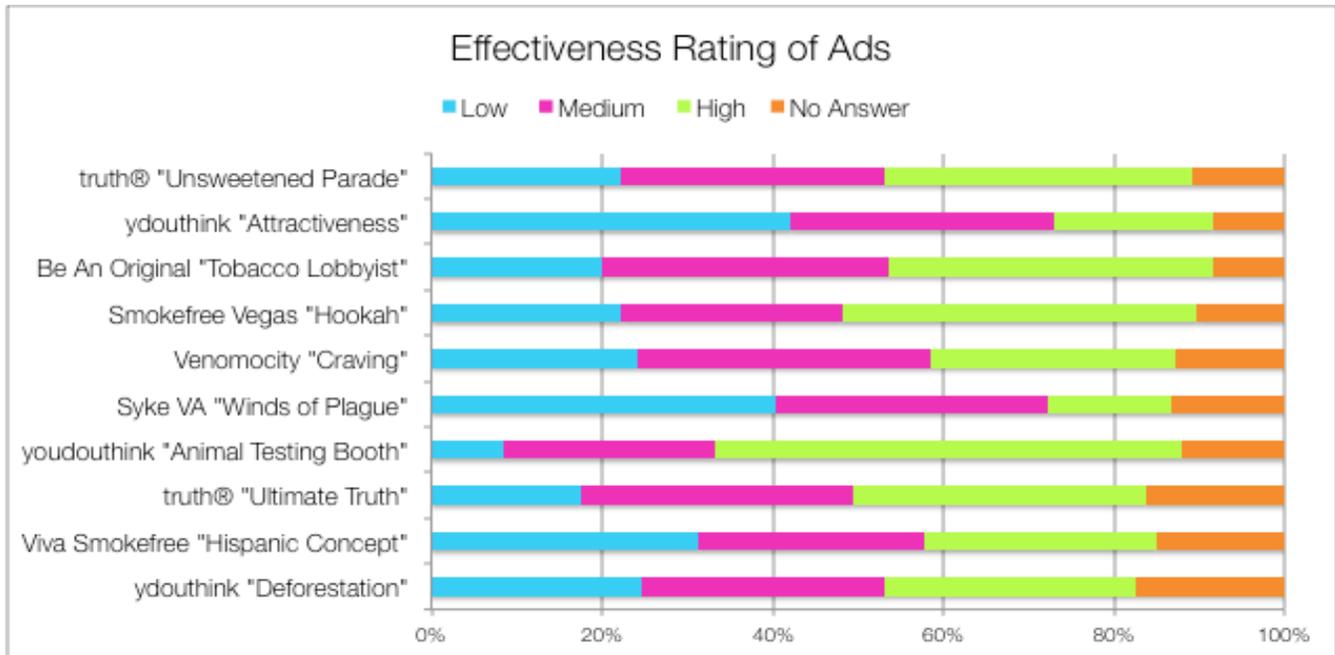
Table 6 shows the effectiveness ratings, indicating how likely the ad is to “make you want to live a tobacco-free life”, across all ads tested. Similar to the discussion in the previous section, “disagree” and “completely disagree” were combined, as were “agree” and “completely agree,” to provide an indication of low and high ratings of effectiveness.

As summarized in Table 6, only one ad, ydouthink’s “Animal Testing Booth”, was rated effective by more than 50% of teens. Figure 5 shows this pattern graphically. Smokefree Vegas’s Hookah Ad was the second highest rated ad. Both truth® ads, “Ugly Truth” and “Unsweetened Parade,” and the Be An Original “Tobacco Lobbyist” ad were rated positively by a large proportion of teens (41%), but they also received a considerable portion of ratings in the middle category, which implies that even top rated ads do not reach all teens in a similar manner. Two ads received low ratings from more than 40% of the sample including the ydouthink “Attractiveness” ad and the Syke VA “Winds of Plague” ad. The Viva Smokefree “Hispanic Concept” ad was rated low by 37% of teens. These findings suggest that while no single ad or group of ads reach all teens, there were two ads rated to be more effective than others: the ydouthink “Animal Testing Booth” ad and the Smokefree Vegas “Hookah” ad.

Table 6. Effectiveness Ratings of Ads

| Name | Brand | N | Low | Middle | High |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-----|-----|--------|------|
| Unsweetened Parade | truth® | 148 | 25% | 35% | 41% |
| Attractiveness (Male and Female) | ydouthink | 152 | 46% | 34% | 20% |
| Tobacco Lobbyist | Be An Original | 152 | 22% | 37% | 41% |
| Hookah Ad | Smokefree Vegas (NV) | 149 | 25% | 29% | 46% |
| Craving | Venomocity (AZ) | 145 | 28% | 39% | 33% |
| Winds of Plague | Syke VA | 144 | 46% | 37% | 17% |
| Animal Testing Booth | ydouthink | 146 | 10% | 28% | 62% |
| Ugly Truth | truth® | 139 | 21% | 38% | 41% |
| Hispanic Concept | Viva Smokefree | 141 | 37% | 31% | 32% |
| Deforestation | ydouthink | 137 | 30% | 34% | 36% |

Figure 4. Effectiveness Rating of Ads



Now that we have some indication of what ads were rated effective, the next step was to identify what ad characteristics make some ads more effective than others. Further analysis was conducted to look specifically at the factors related to effectiveness, summarized in Table 7. Some items were more likely to be associated with a successful ad (i.e. makes me want to live a tobacco-free life) than others. When considered independently, all facets were significantly related to effectiveness across the ads. However, three items showed the strongest relationship with effectiveness: "This commercial made me think," "The commercial affected me emotionally," and "The commercial was interesting." In order to hone in on the key elements of the ads and tease apart concepts that might be similar, all factors were considered simultaneously while controlling for the individual. This type of regression analysis using a general linear model provides a more complete perspective of the data and will help determine which individual attributes was more effective in predicting ad effectiveness in relation to others.

Reported in Table 7 below are the unstandardized regression weights (B), which indicate the relationship between each item and the overall effectiveness when all other variables have already been accounted for. For example, for every unit increase in THINK, there will be a .166 corresponding increase in "want to live a tobacco-free life".

Table 7. Ad Facets and the Relationship to Effectiveness

| | r Relationship with Living a tobacco free life | B Unstandardized coefficient | Significance |
|---|--|---------------------------------|--------------|
| This commercial really made me THINK | .54* | .166 | .000 |
| This commercial affected me EMOTIONALLY | .50* | .126 | .000 |
| The information in this commercial was something I DID NOT KNOW | .40* | .084 | .000 |
| I LIKED the people in this commercial | .35* | Ns | ns |
| This commercial was CREATIVE | .42* | ns | ns |
| This commercial was FUNNY | .12* | ns | ns |
| I can RELATE with the people in this commercial | .30* | ns | ns |
| This commercial was SERIOUS | .44* | .099 | .001 |
| This commercial was INTERESTING | .51* | .108 | .001 |

* All parameters noted with a figure are significant at the $p < .05$ or lower.

These findings suggest that certain characteristics make an ad more effective. First, the ad must be interesting. This is a common theme across all advertising but is particularly salient for teens as an advertisement competes for attention across platforms that dominate their cluttered media environment. Second, the ad must provide something important to think about. Likewise, ads that provide new information to teens were also rated higher. This suggests that new and interesting facts about tobacco may be more effective. While many commercial brands focus only on attention and likability, tobacco prevention ads must make teens think to be effective. The previous and following sections will provide insights on ad facets that can provoke thinking, which will be discussed more thoroughly at the end of the analysis section. Finally, ads that connect with teens emotionally and those that are serious are also perceived as more effective.

Lastly, individual factors not accounted for by the variables in the model still play a considerable role in determining effectiveness. Though the available data does not allow for further investigation, this would suggest that individuals find different ads appealing because of their unique characteristics, personalities, and different social influences.

Tobacco Facts

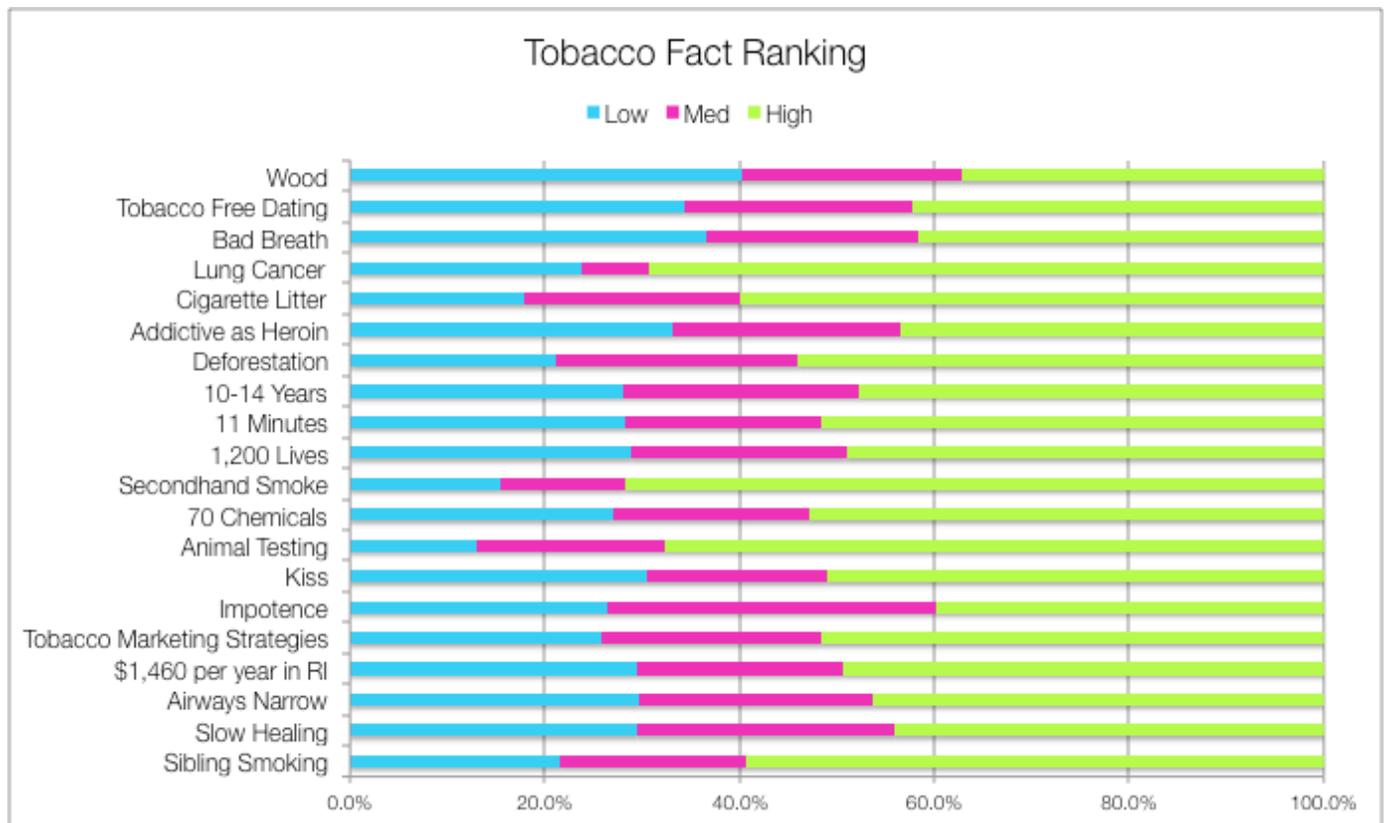
The last analytical section focuses on evaluating participant ratings of importance, previous knowledge, and believability of different tobacco facts filled out by teens in the focus groups. Each teen was given two worksheets with a set of 20 identical tobacco facts. On the first sheet, they were asked to indicate if they had previous knowledge of the fact and how important they thought that fact was. On the second sheet, given at the end of the focus groups, participants were asked to evaluate the same facts on the basis of their believability. To simplify the complexity in the data and to make visual representation more digestible, responses were categorized in a manner similar to the previous sections with rankings classified as High (4-5), middle (3), and Low (1-2). Table 8 provides a list of the facts that were presented and the proportion of respondents ranking in each category.

Table 8. Tobacco Fact Importance Ranking

| Tobacco Fact | Low | Middle | High | No Response |
|---|-----|--------|------|-------------|
| Up to 5.7 pounds of wood are used to make just one pack of cigarettes because sometimes wood is burned to dry tobacco leaves. | 40% | 22% | 37% | 1% |
| Over 75% of teens say they prefer to date someone who is tobacco-free. | 34% | 23% | 42% | 2% |
| Bad breath from smoking doesn't go away with gum or brushing because tobacco dries out your mouth, which leads to bacteria that causes bad breath all day long. | 36% | 21% | 40% | 3% |
| Smoking causes lung cancer. | 22% | 7% | 65% | 6% |
| Over 1.6 billion pounds of cigarette butts are littered every year. Cigarette butts are not biodegradable and release toxic chemicals in oceans and land. | 17% | 22% | 58% | 2% |
| Tobacco is as addictive as heroin. | 33% | 23% | 43% | 2% |
| Worldwide tobacco production causes 494,000 acres of deforestation every year. That's 11 times the size of Washington, DC. | 20% | 24% | 52% | 3% |
| On average, smokers live 10 to 14 years less than non-smokers. | 27% | 23% | 46% | 3% |
| On average, each cigarette a person smokes shortens their life by 11 minutes. | 27% | 19% | 49% | 4% |
| In the US, 1,200 people die everyday from diseases caused by smoking. That's 400,000 people per year. | 28% | 21% | 47% | 4% |
| Secondhand smoke (the smoke that comes from burning a cigarette) causes cancer and hurts people around a smoker. | 15% | 13% | 70% | 2% |
| Cigarettes contain at least 70 chemicals that are known to cause cancer | 27% | 20% | 52% | 2% |
| The tobacco industry has tested its products on thousands of animals including dogs and monkeys. | 13% | 19% | 66% | 3% |
| Most people say they prefer to kiss a person that does not chew or smoke. | 30% | 18% | 49% | 3% |
| Smoking causes impotence in men. Male smokers have a 60% higher risk of impotence than nonsmokers. | 26% | 33% | 39% | 2% |
| The tobacco industry uses marketing strategies to target women, children and minorities. | 25% | 22% | 49% | 4% |
| Smoking a half a pack a day costs an average of \$1,460 per year in Rhode Island. | 28% | 20% | 48% | 4% |
| Smoking causes your airways to narrow, making it harder to breath. This makes physical activity harder for smokers than non-smokers. | 29% | 23% | 45% | 2% |
| It takes smokers 62% more time to heal an injury than non-smokers. | 29% | 26% | 43% | 2% |
| Younger brothers or sisters are two times more likely to smoke when their older brothers or sisters smoke. | 21% | 19% | 58% | 2% |

As Figure 5 demonstrates, only a few tobacco facts were consistently ranked high. The highest ranked facts included those about lung cancer, the effects of secondhand smoke on others around a smoker, and animal testing. However, values including cigarette butt litter and sibling tobacco use came up as new, potential subjects for messages in the future. Impotence was the only tobacco fact rated in the middle category by about one third of the teens surveyed. While the evidence may suggest that impotence is a less compelling or evocative subject for participants, discussion audio from one focus group indicates that participants in one group asked the facilitator to explain the definition of impotence. Thus, a lack of awareness of the term impotence may explain its central ranking location. Finally, facts about deforestation, comparisons to the addictive qualities of heroin, bad breath, and the effect tobacco use on their social life were rated low by a large majority of respondents.

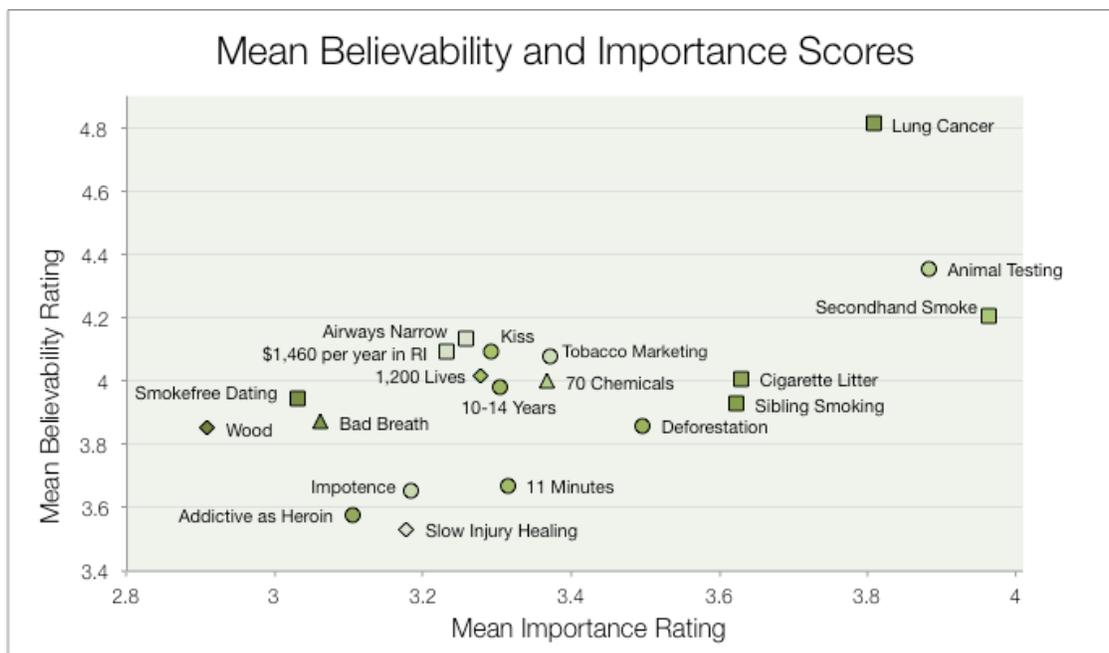
Figure 5. Tobacco Fact Ranking of Importance



Tobacco Fact Importance and Believability Comparison

As noted above, some of the tobacco facts were rated as more important than others. While nearly all facts were rated relatively high in believability, the combination of the mean importance ratings and believability ratings provides a picture of facts that can be leveraged to reach teens. The figure below demonstrates that five facts in particular were rated both high in importance and believability. Consistent with the chart above, lung cancer, animal testing, cigarette litter, sibling smoking, and secondhand smoke all appear in the upper right hand quadrant of the figure indicating that the teens in this study rated them high in both importance and believability. However, two of these facts, lung cancer and secondhand smoke, were already very well known by the respondents. The other three facts were less familiar to teens, especially the litter fact, which was only known by about 40% of the participants. This suggests that animal testing, cigarette litter, and sibling smoking could be used effectively in future messaging.

Figure 6. Tobacco Fact Importance and Believability Comparison

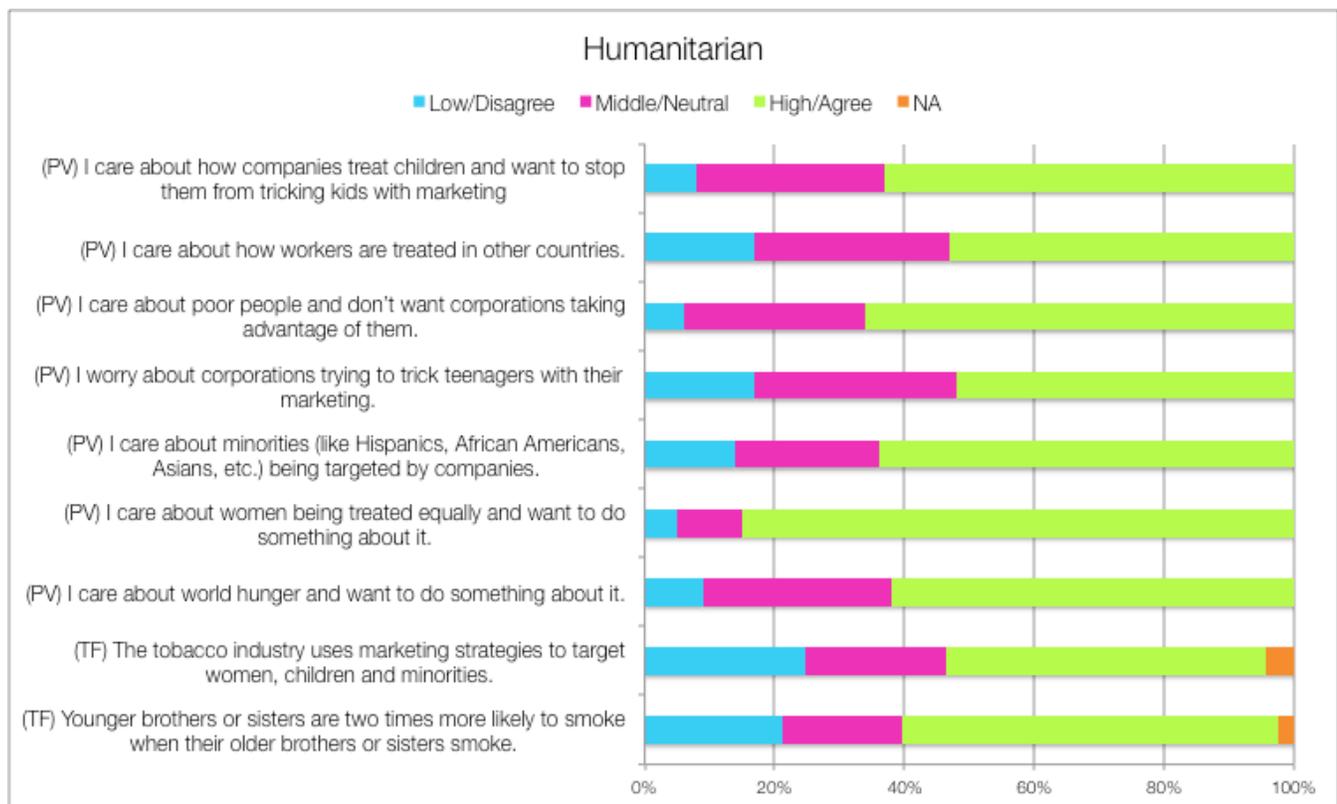


Evaluation of these tobacco facts raised a question regarding the relationship between the value statements assessed at the beginning of the focus group and the tobacco facts evaluated at the end. A considerable amount of information is presented, digested, and discussed in the intervening time that may influence responses and hinder direct comparison so care should be taken when evaluating the relationships. That being said, there was some overlap among concepts but there were also some very notable discrepancies. To make a reasonable comparison, we combined perceived value (PV) and tobacco fact (TF) items with similar concepts into four different topic areas: humanitarian issues, health issues, attractiveness, and environment/animal-related issues. In each topic area, PV and TF items were compared visually using the three category method previously discussed: low/disagree, middle/neutral, and high/agree. These groups are analyzed on the following pages.

Fact Group 1: Humanitarian Issues

As visualized in Figure 7, teens tend to think some humanitarian issues are important. Treatment of women, minorities, hunger, and corporations taking advantage of children and the poor were all rated high by more than 60% of the teens in this study while others such as tobacco industry targeting teens with marketing, and siblings potentially becoming smokers were rated lower. Notable discrepancies did occur, however, in regards to PV ratings of companies targeting or tricking children and minority groups with marketing where nearly 60% said this was important, but more than 60% ranked a similar fact in the low category once the fact is focused on the tobacco industry. Possible reasons for this apparent contradiction might be due to the contents of the fact list, or the disparity between the idea of “caring” about an issue and being willing to stop smoking in response to a certain issue. This may be due to the fact that youth were not previously aware of some of the marketing facts, leading to higher ratings. In contrast, they may have been previously exposed to targeted marketing facts from truth® campaigns, so the facts are not as novel and may have led to lower ratings.

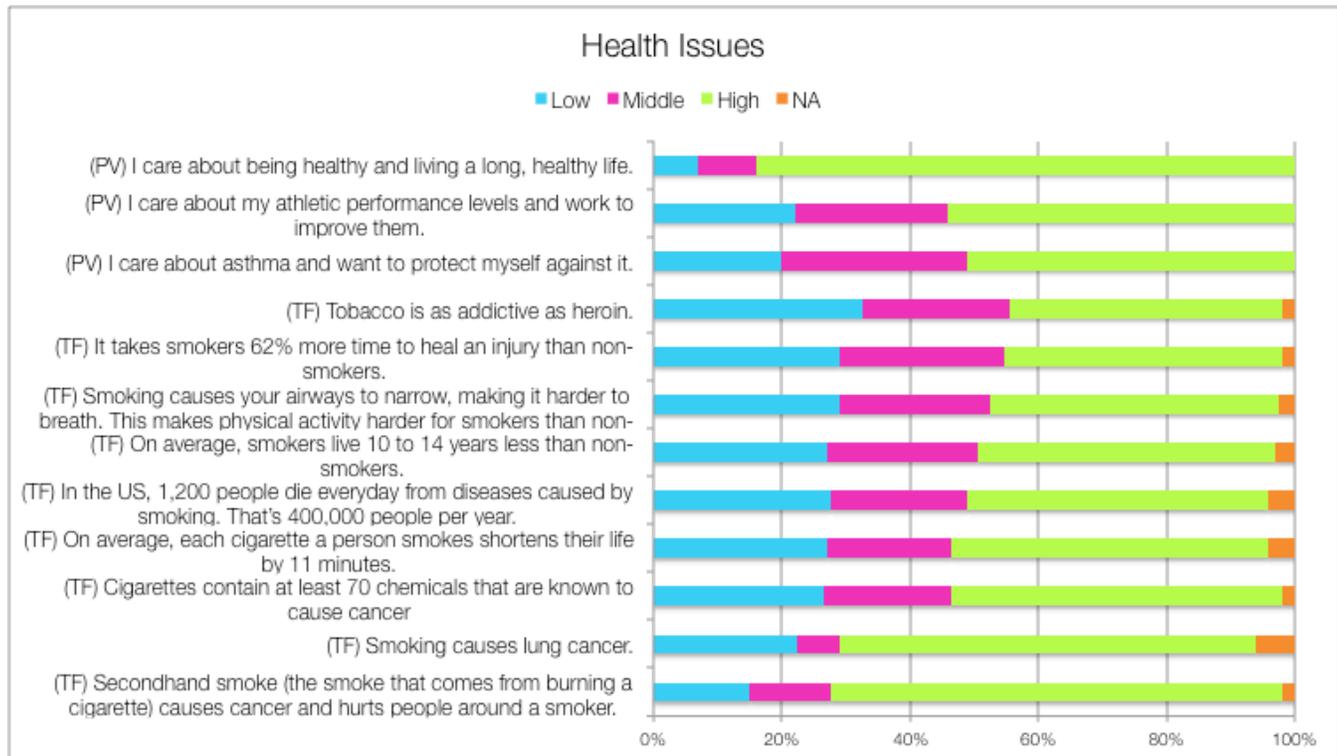
Figure 7. Humanitarian Issues



Fact Group 2: Health Issues

Nearly all of the health issues were endorsed by more than 40% of the teens in this study. Living a long healthy life, athletic performance, asthma, and air quality were all rated at very high levels. There seems to be considerable agreement between the level of endorsement for tobacco facts and value items that relate to health issues, though the tobacco fact were often perceived as less important.

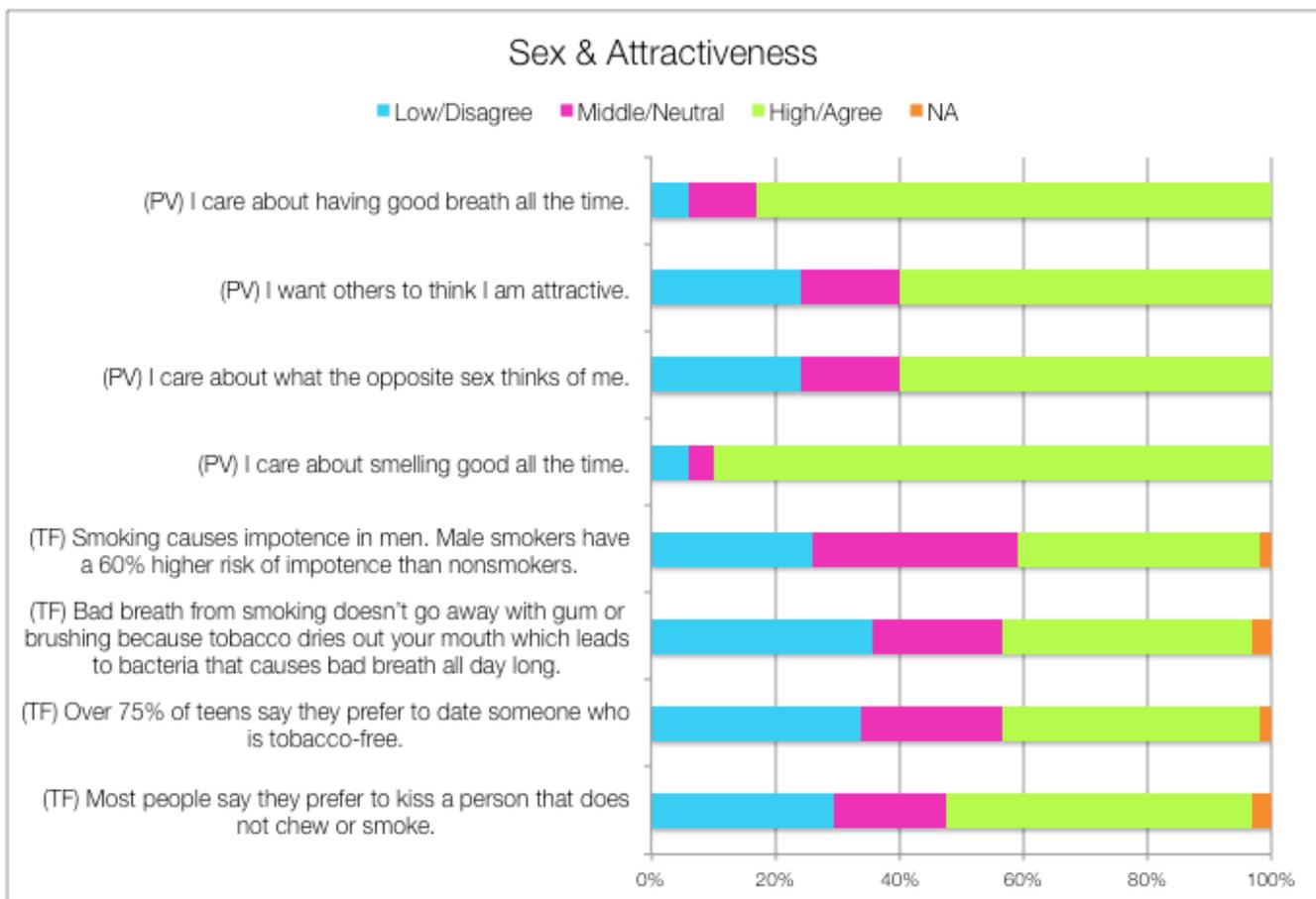
Figure 8. Health Issues



Fact Group 3: Attractiveness

In regards to attractiveness, teens responded to similar items in a manner that seems paradoxical on the surface. Extremely high proportions of teens indicated that smelling good, having good breath, and being attractive was important. However, the tobacco facts related to these concepts, such as not wanting to kiss or date someone who smokes and bad breath from tobacco use, were rated very low on importance. As mentioned earlier in this section, making comparisons between the two exercises should be done with care. Each exercise represents different response conceptualizations. Ranking of tobacco facts requires youth to reconcile a specific fact with their own personal behaviors. In contrast, ranking a value highly does not necessarily point out the contradictory behavior a teen may currently be engaged in. Furthermore, it should be noted that there was a considerable intervention in the form of focus group activities that occurred between these exercises. It may be that the discussion that took place in between these exercises persuaded the respondents to think differently about the facts presented at the end. That being said, this contradiction could also point to a sensitive subject that has promise for behavior change. If a teen values being attractive and does not believe that tobacco use affects attractiveness, it presents an opportunity to cause behavior change. Teens who lowly ranked tobacco facts about attraction and breath might suggest that they are critical of the facts themselves and could be persuaded to change their tobacco behavior if they are convinced it negatively affects their attractiveness.

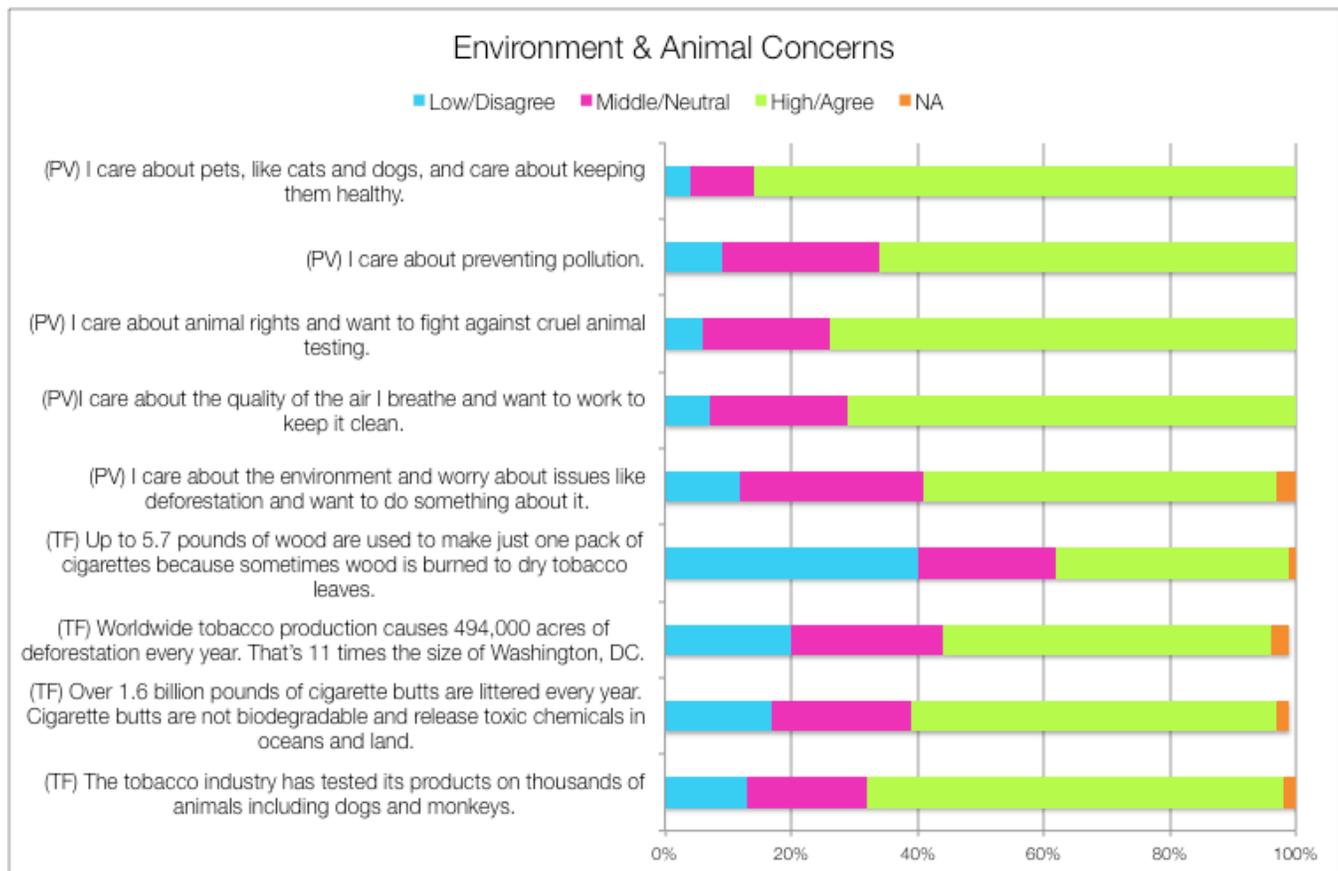
Figure 9. Attractiveness



Fact Group 4: Environment and Animal Concerns

Lastly, environment and animal-related concerns demonstrated some consistency though to differing extents. As shown in Figure 11, animal wellbeing seemed to be a key concern. Nearly all youth indicated that they cared about animal rights and many ranked the animal testing fact high. However, there were lower levels of consensus for teens when it came to the environmental impact of tobacco. More than 56% of teens indicated that they were concerned about the environment but, in comparison to other facts about tobacco, the environmental impact was seen as less important. The fact about how much wood is used to cure tobacco was particularly unimportant to teens. In contrast, they cared more about values and facts about deforestation. It could be that teens do not understand the connection between wood used in the cigarette production process and how that contributes to deforestation.

Figure 10. Environment and Animal Concerns



The overall comparison of findings from the values exercise and ranking of tobacco facts provided useful information. The data indicated that some issues such as health, concern for animals, and some humanitarian issues were supported as both PV and TF. Additionally, some facts including breath, attractiveness and, to a lesser extent, environmental protection rated high as PV, but low as TF. As mentioned, these comparisons should be evaluated with caution given some of the potential confounding factors associated with the data collection methods.

Summary of Quantitative Findings

The previous sections evaluated quantitative data from the teen focus groups. The exercises were designed to evaluate teens' value perceptions, specific ads, facets of effective ads, and tobacco facts. Many of the findings from this investigation were replicated across sections of the study, producing patterns that draw out a set of conclusions with broader applicability. The two ads rated most effective by teens (youthink "Animal Testing Booth" and Smokefree Vegas "Hookah") possessed high ratings in facets that teens related to effectiveness: made them think, evoked emotion, and was interesting. Likewise, the Animal Testing Booth ad focused on values and facts that were perceived as important by the teens in the study. The combination of the facts, ad facets, and values that were rated most highly were present in nearly all of the ads rated as most effective in the current study. Producing more ads and other strategies that combine these findings could result in even more highly effective messaging.

Qualitative Findings Part 3: Ads and Brands

Teens participated in several types of discussions during the focus groups, as described in the previous two qualitative findings sections. This final section describes the final two qualitative exercises. First, after teens rated anti-tobacco advertisements quantitatively, they discussed their thoughts regarding the ads with the entire focus group. Second, teens were shown brand materials and asked to discuss three brands: truth®, Blacklist and Be An Original. In this section, we discuss results from these two qualitative exercises using direct quotes from focus group participants.

Youth Tobacco Prevention Ads Discussion

During the focus groups, teens participated in a discussion surrounding a collection of youth-focused tobacco-prevention TV ads. Ten different ads from various campaigns were shown, including Rhode Island's "Be An Original Campaign," American Legacy Foundation's truth® campaign, ads produced by Rescue SCG, and a variety of other state/local health department's campaigns. For a complete list of the ads, please refer to Table 3.

Some trends were discovered through the ad discussion. For instance, it was determined that funny ads are much less effective, often undermining the serious message they are presenting. To that effect, students made statements such as "It was too funny to get the message through," (Male, Beacon) and "I don't think it would convince people our age to quit smoking because it was funny," (Male, East Providence). It was also determined that when teens thought an ad was serious, emotional, or presented new or interesting information, it was perceived to be more effective. This is demonstrated by statements such as, "It was more serious. I would respect seeing that on TV more than something else," (Male, East Providence) and "You took it really emotional. He was passionate," (Female, Coventry).

Teens are also affected by ads that show real people reacting to facts and/or street demonstrations; "I like that it's real people on the street. Nonpaid actors," (Male, Coventry). Participants also evaluated social justice issues affected by the tobacco industry, such as animal testing and deforestation, to be interesting and effective in the context of anti-tobacco messaging; "That pissed me off because I love animals and they are innocent," (Female, Coventry) and "I prefer the environmental approach...This is universal, everyone can relate to it," (Male, Beacon). However, teens in RI did not tend to think that many ads would be effective in the long term to motivate teens to quit smoking, which is a common response among high-risk teens. They admitted that some might be effective preventative measures, but that most teens who currently smoke would not be influenced by the presented ads.

When asked which of the ads were their favorites, two ads stood out above the rest in this discussion: the Be an Original "Tobacco Lobbyist" ad and the ydouthink "Animal Testing Booth" ad. The ads that stood out as least effective to the teens in Rhode Island were the ydouthink "Deforestation" ad and ydouthink "Attractiveness" ad. Below is a summary of the discussion for each ad shown during the focus groups.

Ad 1: Truth® "Unsweetened Parade"

Teens tended to like this ad. They thought that it was an intense depiction of the consequences of smoking, stating, "It drew you to it. It was intense," (Female, Coventry), "That was dark. That was so dark," (Male, East Providence), and, "That was such a sad commercial. Those poor old people," (Male, Youth Pride). They indicated that it makes the viewer think about the information presented; "I think it's important for kids to hear [this information]," (Female, MET), "It might weigh on some people's minds," (Male, East Providence). They were divided, however, on the long-term effectiveness of the ad. A few youth indicated that it might cause some change among smokers; "It'll definitely start

the thought process like, 'Oh, should I quit? Should I think about what I'm doing?'" (Male, East Providence), "It would change their perspective," (Male, East Providence). However, others indicated that it would not cause lasting change to someone truly addicted; "If you're addicted to cigarettes, you're addicted. If you [sic] woulda' saw that if you're addicted, you'd be like that's sad. And that would suck if whatever happens to me, happens to me. But I can't quit," (Male, Coventry) and "It wouldn't change a tobacco user's habits," (Female, Coventry).

Ad 2: ydouthink "Attractiveness"

Overall, teen reactions to this ad were negative. After seeing it, participants reacted both emotionally and defensively, feeling that it implied judgment of them and their choices:

- "It really upset me. It's like, 'she has to be smokefree or I can't date her' and I just didn't like that at all. I don't think it's attractive when people smoke cigarettes, but it's not [sic] gonna stop me from dating you if you smoke them," (Male, Coventry),
- "It's just a bunch of idiots talking to the camera about what they like and don't like. Wow, great for you, but I don't feel the same way, so why don't you get off my TV screen?" (Male, Beacon), and
- "I didn't like that it made me feel that I was being judged by the opposite sex," (Female, Beacon).

There was a resounding sentiment of "Don't tell me what to do," (Female, MET), with students stating, "I don't care what people think about me, I am going to do what I want to do," (Female, Beacon). They feel that smoking does not change the character of a person:

- "Some people just do it as a recreational thing and it doesn't mean that you are a mess or that your life is a mess," (Female, Coventry), and
- "Your personality doesn't change just because you smoke cigarettes," (Female, Coventry).

Considering these teens are either tobacco users or at high-risk of tobacco use, a defensive response can be telling. Attractiveness seemed to strike a cord with these teens, bringing up a fact that most of them do not believe or do not want to believe. LGBT teens, however, disliked this ad for additional reasons. Specifically, they felt that it alienated their community, stating, "Hell no, it was not inclusive to the LGBT community! Where the gay girls? Where the gay guys?" (Female, Youth Pride) and "They're also very sizeist," (Male, Youth Pride).

Ad 3: Be An Original "Tobacco Lobbyist"

Teen reactions to this ad were positive. They felt that it was serious:

- "I was shocked that tobacco companies lie just to sell that to kids. That's kind of shocking because they obviously know the effects a cigarette can have, especially on a young child and the fact that they need to lie to make sales. It's obviously a lot more serious. It works," (Female, Beacon), and
- "I liked it because of the way they ended it... that's what tobacco companies do, is they lie," (Female, Coventry).

It sparked discussion about tobacco companies targeting children, which brought up thoughts about their own siblings; "I think it is effective, because when you think about your siblings...you don't want them to go down that path," (Male, Beacon) and "I couldn't imagine losing my younger brother," (Male, Beacon). The discussion, however, tended to focus on anger towards the industry and a sense of protection towards their siblings without a clear connection to their own tobacco use behaviors. The only negative comments participants had were in regards to the visual impact of the ad, "There was nothing to catch you, maybe if it was in color," (Male, MET) and "It doesn't really draw you in because it's monotone and black and white," (Male, Coventry). Some also questioned the truthfulness of the ad; "It was weird. I don't get it. How'd he make the video if he died?" (Male, Beacon) and "I love this one, but it has to be fake, because it says he died in 1996," (Female, MET).

Ad 4: Smokefree Vegas "Hookah"

Teens had mixed responses to this ad. Many were shocked by the facts presented and responded positively, saying:

- "Oh my god, that's scary. I feel so dirty. The fact that I've done that before. I'm gonna cry. I thought it was at least a little bit better than actually smoking cigarettes," (Female, Beacon),
- "I thought it was interesting and something new, especially because people always talk about it like, 'Yeah, it's so much better, it's not even bad for you,'" (Male, Beacon), and
- "I think that people don't realize that hookah is tobacco. There's all these goody goodies are out there smoking it and they make fun of people who smoke cigarettes and I am like, 'You smoke hookah...you are the same person,'" (Female, Coventry).

Some people reacted defensively to the ad, responding that they were dubious of the facts presented and stating that not all hookah smoking is bad:

- "I smoke hookah. They're not telling you the full thing about hookah. For hookah there is herbal stuff you can smoke. They're only telling you the bad stuff," (Female, Coventry),
- "There is tobacco free hookah, so it is not as effective," (Male, Beacon), and
- "I thought it was ignorant because they generalize that people who smoke hookah, smoke tobacco," (Female, MET).

Some of the critical comments about the ad, however, exposed a misunderstanding of the information presented by the ad. The ad may have been more effective if some of these confusions were corrected. Also, most of them did not care for the infomercial style of the commercial; "It seemed like she was advertising it," (Male, Beacon), "If I saw it on TV, I would just think it was one of them infomercials so I'd probably change the channel," (Male, MET) and "They should just change the beginning," (Female, Coventry).

Ad 5: Venomocity "Addiction"

Teens tended to respond positively to this ad. They liked the representation of addiction and many could relate to it:

- "I like that it showed you what addiction is really about. It shows you that it is a serious thing, you crave that on a regular basis. Like, do you want that?" (Male, East Providence),
- "I liked the symbolism. It expressed how an addiction gets to you. It showed it as an annoying thing that forces you away," (Male, East Providence), and
- "It's like he had to have the cigarette or without the tobacco he wouldn't be him. If you don't have a cigarette in your hand, you're not you. If you haven't smoked one, you'll go crazy or bozonkers," (Male, Beacon).

Some, though, thought the depiction of addiction was hyperbolic, stating, "I thought that was so over-played. I don't think anyone fiends like that," (Female, Coventry) and "I have been there...craving, but its not that bad. Exaggerated," (Male, East Providence). Finally, many appreciated the style of the ad; "Pretty cool. The graphics. I thought it was a movie," (Male, Beacon) and "I liked it. I thought it was kind of cool," (Male, Beacon).

Ad 6: Syke "Winds of Plague"

Teens had a mixed response to this ad. Those who liked it tended to be fans of the Alternative music portrayed, stating:

- "I listen to that kind of music, and that band specifically...if you're into that type of music, you know that if you smoke cigarettes it's harder to be a vocalist in that situation. I'm in a band and I know for a fact that when I'm doing stuff I get worn down a lot quicker than my band mates who don't smoke cigarettes because you can't

breathe as well and it takes a toll. It takes a lot to perform and put on a show. I can dig it,” (Male, East Providence),

- “I would [take that seriously]. Rock on forever,” (Female, Youth Pride), and
- “It was interesting, because it was my music in taste,” (Female, East Providence).

Some did not care for it, but acknowledged that they might be interested if they liked the band:

- “It would be a good commercial if there was more of a variety of bands,” (Male, Beacon),
- “I didn't like it because I'm not into that kind of music. But if it was someone I knew about and liked, I might like it,” (Male, MET), and
- “I don't listen to that kind of music, but I think it's cool that the people who do listen to it have someone to look up to,” (Male, East Providence).

Finally, it was observed that a few Alternative teens were visibly defensive and frustrated at the ad. They would quickly try to undermine the ad stating that smoking helps your vocals, that the band must be “straight-edge,” and that no one likes that band. This defensiveness could be because it is the first time these teens saw a message from within the Alternative peer crowd attacking a norm (smoking) which has been a fixture within the peer crowd as they know it.

Ad 7: ydouthink “Animal Testing Booth”

Teens overwhelmingly liked this ad. They responded strongly to the social justice issue of animal testing, stating:

- “It was an effective commercial, because a lot of people have dogs and pets...they will think of their pets and feel bad,” (Male, East Providence),
- “It would affect people, because they are like, ‘I am not going to put my money towards this,’” (Female, Coventry), and
- “I thought it was creative that, as they read, he was manipulating the dog. I thought it was emotional because I love animals. It hit a soft spot,” (Male, Beacon).

Participants also really liked the style of the advertisement; “I like that it's real people on the street. Nonpaid actors,” (Male, Coventry) and “I like that type of thing [reality type ads],” (Male, East Providence). They also found it effective and provocative, with one student stating, “I'm so quitting,” (Male, East Providence) and “It makes me want to go home and research it,” (Female, Coventry).

Ad 8: Truth® “Ugliest Truth”

Teens found this ad funny but ultimately not very effective, stating:

- “It's not effective on a scale like someone stopping, but effective in like getting people to think, that's really in that?” (Male, East Providence), and
- “Even when I watched it at home I was thinking if I was a smoker this wouldn't affect me,” (Female, Coventry).

They did note that it had a shock factor, however; “The grosser it is, the more it's gonna hit us, because as humans we don't like to see gross things,” (Female, Beacon) and “I found it really gross, even though I've seen it multiple times before, I find it gross,” (Female, Beacon).

Ad 9: Viva Smokefree “Hispanic Concept”

Teens had mixed reactions to this ad. Some really appreciated the spoken word element, stating:

- “That was cool to me, the spoken word thing,” (Male, East Providence),
- “You took it really emotional. He was passionate,” (Female, Coventry), and

- “I liked it because I'm Hispanic. So I connected to him. I connected with that. I liked what he was doing there. It was like poetry. I think that's cool,” (Female, Beacon).

Some felt it was effective because they could connect personally to his story:

- “I liked how it took the perspective of a non-smoker being around someone who was a smoker and how it affected them. Like he said my mom died because she smoked cigarettes. It shows a smoker what they cause for the people around them,” (Male, East Providence), and
- “That gave me the chills, because it was really meaningful. I don't know if it's hearing someone's story about it or the way he was saying it. He was so strong about it. The way it wasn't only about smoking but like wrapped into it together,” (Female, Beacon).

Some, however, did not understand the commercial—the connection between race and smoking and the interjection of Spanish into the script; “It sort of threw me off because I thought it was about racism awareness. I thought we had switched types of commercials. Those two totally different things jumbled together in one commercial. It didn't make sense,” (Male, Beacon) and “The kid was speaking a language that I did not understand at times,” (Female, Beacon). The LGBT teens at Youth Pride all responded with resounding enthusiasm, stating, “Loved it. I think this one is more geared toward our community. So we're more likely to take the message in. And it's a form of poetry, it's very eloquent and simple and not too much to take in,” (Male, Youth Pride)

Ad 10: ydouthink “Deforestation”

Teens were divided on this ad as well. Some really appreciated the environmental message; “The whole trees thing, I think this commercial was good because we need trees to live. It was really interesting and it makes you think whether you're a smoker or not,” (Female, Beacon) and “It was effective, to know how many acres that kills and how many animals that takes,” (Male, East Providence). Others did not find the facts to be compelling, “It was informational but it wasn't all that interesting,” (Male, East Providence). Many did not care for the actress, saying, “She was condescending,” (Female, Beacon) and “I would change the girl,” (Female, Beacon). Finally, a few commented negatively on the quality of the commercial; “I would change the graphics,” (Male, Beacon), and “I thought it was cheesy, the green screen,” (Male, MET).

Youth-Focused Tobacco Prevention Brand Comparisons

To obtain an understanding of how different youth-focused tobacco prevention brands appeal to youth in RI, focus group discussions included an activity on brand comparisons where teens were shown the logo, two print ads, and the Facebook page from Truth, Blacklist, and Be An Original. Students were asked to evaluate the brands on both a visual and content basis, and then asked which brands were their favorites and least favorites. Since this was the final focus group activity, some groups did not have enough time to complete this activity. Comments are included from the groups that were able to complete this activity. The two print ads displayed from each brand are included on the following page along with the findings.

Truth®

Teens generally liked the Truth brand, saying, “They tell you things you wouldn't know, even if it's disgusting,” (Male, MET) and “I respect their hustle,” (Male, East Providence). They tended not to care for the Truth logo, indicating that it was difficult to read; “I never knew that said truth. The font is so weird,” (Male, MET) and “I don't understand the connect the dots,” (Male, Beacon). They liked the first print ad shown, depicting the effects of nicotine



on the brain, stating, “It reminds me of the Obey label,” (Male, Beacon), “I like the graphics,” (Female, Beacon) and “It's very old fashioned to me, but it catches my attention, like, whoa, this is serious,” (Male, Beacon). They also tended to like the second print ad about babies and secondhand smoke; “It is a trippy design. Psychedelic,” (Male, East Providence). They did not find the Facebook page particularly engaging, however, calling it “lame” (Male, East Providence) and saying, “They should have something that captures your attention,” (Male, East Providence).

Blacklist

Despite the acknowledgement that Blacklist is targeting a very specific demographic, most teens liked the brand, saying, “I like it. Looks cool. I'm gonna like it on Facebook,” (Female, Beacon). They liked the logo; “It's cool to look at and the type of people who like that music would like that,” (Male, East Providence) and “It looks like it could be on the side of the wall [graffiti],” (Female, Beacon). They responded positively to the visual style of the first print ad regarding deforestation, saying:



- “That'll definitely reach the kids they're trying to reach because the art style is similar to what bands use on their t-shirts. That's the image they're into. Like I'd hang that up on my wall. That's cool,” (Male, East Providence)

- “They made it drastic to catch people's attention. They put red in with the dark colors to attract attention that something's getting killed,” (Female, Beacon).

They responded to the issue of animal cruelty in the second print ad, saying “I want to find these companies. They should not be allowed in the United States. Or anywhere,” (Male, Beacon). However, they thought the poster was too busy; “It looks too hard to read. Like I wouldn't want to read all that, to be honest. It's too much to look at,” (Male, East Providence). Teens preferred Blacklist's Facebook page than Truth's, saying, “It's a lot more effective than the other one. The photos have a lot more information, they pop out, and it's all teens so it hits you a lot faster,” (Male, Beacon).

Be An Original

Teens had mixed reactions to RI's Be An Original campaign materials. They liked the visual of the logo, saying that it could be a “bumper sticker,” (Male, Beacon) and that “It would look good on a tank top,” (Male, East Providence). However, they found it difficult to read:

- “There needs to be a bigger space. It looks like ‘Bean Original,’” (Male, East Providence), and
- “It's tough if people don't get



the chronology of that. If people don't get that it goes top, bottom, then middle, then they're gonna think it says, ‘Don't be a Be An Original, Replacement,’” (Male, Beacon).

They liked the concept of the barcode print ads, but some did not like the execution, “It's a cool concept, what they're doing with the bar code on the head, like, you're just another number to them. But the way they're doing that isn't very catching. I wouldn't stop and look at that if I saw that. I feel like there's not a lot of effort in that. I could make that,” (Male, East Providence). They also thought the girl in the second print ad was too young and happy for the subject of the ad; “Why is she smiling? She looks happy to be a replacement,” (Male, Beacon) and “The little girl shouldn't know what a cigarette is because she is too young,” (Male, East Providence). They had a mixed response to the Facebook page saying, “That background looks cheap,” (Male, Beacon) and “That's cool. If people saw that, they would start thinking they don't care about us, they just care about our money,” (Male, East Providence).

Favorite Brand Assessment

When verbally asked which brand they liked best, the teens gave inconsistent responses with similar numbers of teens choosing each brand. “I liked Truth and Blacklist because Blacklist, that reaches a specific group of people and I feel like with what they're trying to reach and who they're trying to reach, they're really effective. And Truth isn't marketed towards a specific group of people and they have that interest. They capture your interest with what they do. It teaches you something at the end that you weren't expecting at all,” (Male, East Providence). “I like [Be An Original]. It seems more interactive,” (Male, East Providence).

Implications & Discussion

This section is designed to interpret and discuss the implications of the research findings on tobacco control strategies in Rhode Island. The abundance of data collected as part of this study could allow us to identify and discuss dozens of implications. However, in the interests of presenting succinct study findings, we have focused this section on the 13 most important and applicable implications identified by our research team.

It is important to reiterate, as stated in the introduction, that teens are uniquely susceptible to providing contradictory responses. We gathered data from both qualitative and quantitative exercises, resulting in multiple data sets to analyze, which includes the values survey, the fact survey, the I-Base™ recruitment survey, quantitative TV ads assessment, and qualitative TV ads discussion, amongst others. At times, findings from these data sets were consistent, while at other times contradictions occurred. None of the data sets taken individually can be interpreted as the true finding. However, the combined data sets provide rich and robust findings to understand which facts and strategies can effectively reduce tobacco use. In addition, inconsistencies between the datasets can also reveal additional insights about what teens might be thinking and unwilling to express explicitly. The following implications have been compiled based on a combined analysis of these data sets to unearth hidden truths pertinent to tobacco prevention in RI.

Reaching High Risk Teens in RI

1. Not All Teens Are At Risk For Tobacco Use

Our study began by looking at which teens were more or less likely to use tobacco. We heard during qualitative discussions that certain teens were not likely to use any tobacco products while other teens were very likely to use tobacco products. However, unlike tobacco control literature, which uses demographics such as SES, gender, and race to determine tobacco use risks, focus group participants were predicting tobacco use risk based on what teens were wearing and the peer crowd affiliation they projected. This approach has been replicated in every study we have conducted on teen tobacco use and has led to the conclusion that we must look beyond demographics to truly understand teen tobacco use risk. Identity, peer crowds, and lifestyles can help truly understand which teens are at high risk and improve utilization of prevention resources.

2. Peer Crowds Are A Reliable Measure Of Tobacco Use Risk

We theorize that when teens assess the tobacco use risk of unknown peers in our picture exercises, they are projecting the tobacco use norms they observe in their community and the norms they believe they personally have to adhere to. As such, this information can be extremely valuable when designing tobacco prevention programs because it can define exactly which types of teens need to be reached. However, before this information can be used effectively, it must be organized. Peer crowds can help us organize the factors teens are using to predict tobacco use risk. In the focus groups, we found that teens created similar peer crowds and consistently predicted that certain peer crowds (i.e. Alternative, Hip Hop, and Country) were at higher tobacco use risk than other peer crowds (i.e. Mainstream and Preppy). Then, we were able to use these peer crowds to analyze the picture data from the recruitment survey. Unlike the focus group data where teens are providing predictions about all peer crowds, the recruitment survey only records the actual tobacco use rates of individual teens and their actual peer crowd. Consequently, we are able to compare teen perceptions to the actual local landscape. We discovered significant

congruence between these two findings. This suggests that peer crowds can be used as a reliable measure of tobacco use risk in RI.

3. Hip Hop, Alternative, and Country Cultural Influences Account For Most Tobacco Use In RI

With peer crowds established as a reliable measure of tobacco use risk in RI, we can now look at how the influences of different peer crowds lead teens to use tobacco. As noted in the study findings, we found that the Alternative, Hip Hop, and Country peer crowds all had higher tobacco use rates than the average teen. However, the Preppy peer crowd, despite having lower tobacco use percentages, represented a larger raw number of teen tobacco users. If peer crowds can be used to better target teen tobacco users, then this finding leads us to ask, “Is it better to target smaller peer crowds with higher tobacco use rates, or larger peer crowds with lower rates but a larger total number of tobacco users?” Since most teens mix peer crowd influences (even if they are mainly influenced by a single peer crowd), we cannot look at each peer crowd in isolation. Instead, we must look at how peer crowd influences interact. We can do this using a soup analogy where the ingredients represent the peer crowds and the broth represents the overall teen population. In this soup, some of the ingredients are encouraging tobacco use, while others are neutral or discouraging tobacco use. If we can neutralize the ingredients encouraging tobacco use, then we can reduce tobacco use in the overall population. But first we must understand which ingredients are encouraging tobacco use.

To understand this, we compared all teens that were influenced by the Preppy peer crowd to those influenced by the Preppy peer crowd but not influenced by Hip Hop, Alternative or Country (the three highest risk peer crowds). This created two subsets: the first includes 77.7% of the total sample and the second includes only 33.1% of the total sample. We found that when we removed Preppy teens who are influenced by Hip Hop, Alternative, or Country, the remaining Preppy tobacco use prevalence rates were significantly lower, some more than 50% lower, as shown below in Table 9. This suggests that while the Preppy peer crowd includes many teens who use tobacco, their tobacco use is not because they are Preppy. Instead, these teens are adopting tobacco use through the influences they are absorbing from the Hip Hop, Alternative and Country peer crowds. If the image of these peer crowds can be changed, then tobacco use rates would fall in the overall teen population. Targeting the Hip Hop, Alternative, and/or Country peer crowds could help RI DOPH reach high risk teens more efficiently.

Table 9. Understanding the Preppy Peer Crowd

| Tobacco Behaviors Measured | Total Sample | | Preppy | | Preppy Non-Hip Hop, Non-Alternative & Non-Country | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------|--------|-------|---|-------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Survey | 543 | 100.0% | 422 | 77.7% | 180 | 33.1% |
| % Ever Smoke | 121 | 22.4% | 93 | 22.2% | 31 | 17.3% |
| % Smoked Last 30 Days | 61 | 11.9% | 45 | 11.5% | 9 | 5.4% |
| % Daily Smokers | 14 | 2.7% | 14 | 3.6% | 2 | 1.2% |
| % Used Spit Ever | 28 | 5.2% | 27 | 6.4% | 7 | 3.9% |
| % Used Spit Last 30 Days | 15 | 2.8% | 15 | 3.6% | 3 | 1.7% |
| % Daily Spit | 5 | 0.9% | 5 | 1.2% | 0 | 0.0% |
| % Used Cigarillo Ever | 90 | 16.7% | 72 | 17.2% | 20 | 11.2% |
| % Used Cigarillo Last 30 Days | 52 | 10.0% | 42 | 10.4% | 11 | 6.4% |
| % Daily Cigarillo | 7 | 1.3% | 6 | 1.5% | 0 | 0.0% |

Selecting The Right Fact For Messaging

4. What Teens Think Is Important May Already Be Well Known

When selecting what messages to present to teens, we discovered that some of the messages teens think are very important are already well known. For example, lung cancer and secondhand smoke facts were highly rated but already well known. Since teens already know these facts, it is not reasonable to expect that messages focused on these facts will convince them to change their behavior. In contrast, facts about animal testing, litter, and bad breath were not well known to teens and present more of an opportunity to cause change. However, some of these facts, like animal testing, will be easier to educate teens on than facts that they are highly skeptical of, like bad breath.

5. Teens Are Concerned About How Their Behaviors Affect Others (i.e. animal testing, cigarette litter, women's rights, and siblings)

Promising messages focus on facts related to how teens' behaviors affect others (both people and issues) that they care about, such as siblings, animals, the environment, and women's rights. While some social justice facts like world hunger connected to tobacco use in an overly complicated way, teens reacted strongly to facts and ads with other social justice messages like animal testing. Psychologically, this makes sense since teens are highly sensitive to the image they portray to others. While smoking may make them feel cool or attractive, these feelings can be undermined with concerns about how others perceive the teenager. These lesser known but important facts should be explored in future messaging. It is important to note, however, that some teens do not believe they can have an impact on these facts by being tobacco-free themselves. If there were messaging approaches that more clearly connect living tobacco-free to reductions in animal testing, for example, this would strengthen the fact even further. However, even if teens do not feel they can personally make a difference, these facts provide socially acceptable justification for influential teens to promote their tobacco-free lifestyles.

6. Tobacco Marketing Practices Less Important to Teens.

Tobacco marketing not very important to teens, nor do they feel strongly that they have been taken advantage of by the industry. For example, the Rhode Island "Be an Original" Tobacco Lobbyist Ad that was received very well. However, many youth reported that they are not interested in the tobacco industry marketing strategies before this ad was shown. Also, when asked about how this ad could connect to changing one's behaviors, teens could not provide a clear connection between the two. The ad may have tested so well because it is serious, has an emotional appeal, and was produced in an interesting way. If a new ad were made with the central theme shifted or aligned to be consistent with teen issues, and a similar execution were used, the new ad would be even more effective.

7. Teens May Not Believe Facts About Attractiveness and Breath

The values exercise revealed that teens care greatly about their appearance and breath. In fact, smelling good, having good breath, and being perceived as attractive were all ranked highly in the 20-item values assessment. However, these rankings do not correlate with the tobacco-specific facts about breath and attractiveness, both of which ranked below average. In addition, the only ad focused on these topics was one of the worst rated (youththink Attractiveness). While some of the variability in the ad responses is attributable to the creative concept and execution quality of each ad, there is still a clear discrepancy between values and tobacco facts in this category. We hypothesize that this may be due to teens not believing that tobacco affects their breath and attractiveness, especially teens who currently use

tobacco. This lack of belief could better be described as denial, since attractiveness and breath are highly valued to the same teens. Consequently, while teens are ranking these tobacco facts as low, their higher marks as values suggest that there is significant potential in these facts at actually causing change through well-executed creative. In other words, since teen smokers care about their breath and attractiveness, but do not believe that smoking significantly affect these things, convincing them that tobacco affects breath and attractiveness could lead to significant behavior change. Future studies should add believability measures to the tobacco fact exercise to capture more data on this hypothesis.

8. The Addiction Contradiction

The fact that tobacco is as addictive as heroine was a fairly highly rated fact, but an ad about addiction by the Venomocity campaign was rated as highly effective by only 33% of respondents. Through analysis of the qualitative discussion of the ad, we found that many teens did not connect the severity of addiction to their own lives. A few noted that they identified with the ad and honestly did not see what was wrong with having a craving. We hypothesize that teens may have a hard time understanding the concept of addiction because of their limited experience with it. Even teens who are currently addicted to smoking may not be troubled by this addiction if they have not been frustrated by failed quit attempts. While the statement “tobacco is as addictive as heroin” sounds shocking and scary, it may not actually be registering with teens as a relevant possibility in their lives, which may significantly limit the potential effectiveness of addiction as a fact.

Improving The Effectiveness of Tobacco Prevention TV Ads

9. Authenticity Is King

In many different ways, teens commented about the authenticity about ads. Some teens complained that some ads that were designed to look like reality actually looked scripted. Other teens commented that ads with too many peer crowds and types of teens were “trying too hard” to reach all teens. Additionally, a few teens complained that one print ad included a girl that did not look like she could ever smoke. All of these comments relate to the authenticity of the ad and its message. Regardless of which strategies are implemented in the future in RI, it is critical that ads reflect authentic high risk teens, feature authentic messages, and represent authentic high risk peer crowds. Programs should avoid trying to reach all teens at once and instead focus on reaching one peer crowd at a time effectively. Using reality ads with believably “real” participants will strengthen the ad’s impact even if some control is lost over the wording of the message. Ads that show “real teens” in the same peer crowd as the target group rejecting tobacco use for a good reason are likely to be effective to reduce tobacco use among youth who identify with the targeted peer crowd.

10. Thoughtful, Emotional, and Interesting Messages Rule

As noted in the quantitative findings, ads that were perceived to be thoughtful, emotional, and interesting were most likely to be rated as effective by teen smokers. While these ad facets were the strongest predictors of effectiveness, all other variables were also associated with effectiveness to a lesser extent except for one. Funny was the only characteristic not associated with effectiveness. Through qualitative discussions, teens reiterated a point we have heard in the past; that is, if we expect teens to take a message seriously, then the message should not be presented as a joke. This continues to be one of the most consistent findings of our multiple rounds of research in different states. Programs should avoid humor-focused messages regardless of how appealing marketing agencies may perceive them to be. In addition, programs must focus on making messages thought-provoking and creative executions interesting.

11. Reality Ads Are Overwhelmingly Preferred

Teens overwhelmingly prefer reality-based ads to other ad types presented. We hypothesize that this is in part due to the unique characteristics of this generation. Growing up targeted by sophisticated marketing strategies with often dubious intentions cause teens today to not trust advertising and have learned to ignore gimmicky sales tricks. They do not trust actors and recognize that there is someone behind the curtain paying them to present specific information in a specific way. In addition, TV programming over the past decade has shifted away from scripted shows to reality-based television. Once believed to be a fad, it is now clear that reality entertainment is here to stay with wide teen appeal. The combination of these two forces makes reality-based advertising a powerful communication strategy to reach teens. However, this approach requires teens to perceive ads as reality and not scripted. Some of the ads, like the ydouthink Animal Testing Booth, successfully came across as reality and were rewarded for it, while others, like ydouthink Attractiveness, were too often perceived to be scripted. Reality ads seem to have the most potential to cause change, but authenticity will be critical for ads to be effective.

12. Reality Strengthens Many Messages

During the qualitative discussions, we observed that not only do teens prefer reality ads, but that facts became more powerful when presented in a reality-based scenario. For example, teens have often seen images of tobacco-related diseases. However, the truth Unsweetened Parade showed how people on the street react to tobacco use victims who suffer from tobacco-related deformities. Similarly, the ydouthink Animal Testing Booth ad showed the shock expressed by “real people” when they learned of the tobacco industry’s animal testing. These demonstrations seem to communicate more than just the fact and include a type of social norming message. Teens are not only told that “tobacco cause illness,” but are also subconsciously shown how others will react to them if they have these diseases. This example SHOWS them how to behave rather than just TELLING them how to behave. Thanks to the reality format, teens believe they are seeing real people express genuine disapproval of tobacco use, its health effects, and/or the impact of its production and this teaches them that they should also care. Through repeated exposure to these ads, it is possible that we are not only teaching teens about these facts but also teaching them to care about these facts. We believe this benefit is unique to reality ads.

13. “This Ad Speaks To Me” - Niche Ads Cause More Passionate Responses From Targeted Teens

The “Hispanic Concept” and “Winds of Plague” ads did not rate highly overall. However, to a select group of teens, these ads were perceived to be highly effective. Since these ads were designed to target a specific teen peer crowd, it makes sense that not all teens like the ads. However, teens from the targeted peer crowds usually reacted to these ads passionately. Most of the time this passion was positive, but sometimes it was also a passionate defense, likely protecting a long-held view about tobacco use within their peer crowd. Messages targeted to the most at risk peer crowd are likely to be more effective than general ads intended to appeal to all youth. While this requires more messages to be created, it is likely that these custom messages and even brands are necessary to reach teens who continue to use tobacco in RI.

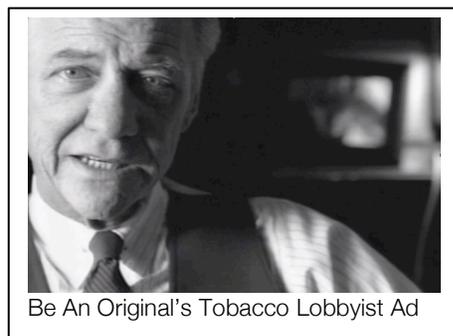
Recommendations

Recognizing that teen smoking prevalence in RI fell to a record low of 11.4% in 2011 (CDC YRBS), we began this study by asking the following questions: 1) “Can the Rhode Island Department of Public Health (RIDOPH) effectively approach the remaining 11.4% of teens who currently smoke using the same strategies that were used to reach teens in previous years?”; 2) “Are teens who continue to use tobacco today different from the teens who were once at risk but have been successfully prevented from starting?”; and 3) “If so, are novel approaches required to reach them?”. This research study was designed to understand the identities of teens who continue to use tobacco and how they are different from those who chose to not use tobacco. Through this study, we have acquired a better understanding of which teens are currently at risk of tobacco use and why. We have also discovered which tobacco prevention facts and messages are most likely to reach those at risk teens.

The following recommendations are based on both the findings of this study and the resources available locally to RIDOPH’s Tobacco Control Program. Considering the resources available are limited, the following recommendations would be different if more resources were available. Nonetheless, by combining our experiences in tobacco control in other states with the research findings from this study, we are confident that there are strategies that can be deployed in RI with the available resources to further reduce teen tobacco use rates.

1. Shift messages from tobacco industry marketing to social justice issues caused by the tobacco industry.

During this study, we tested ads from the Be An Original campaign that focused on tobacco industry marketing and how they manipulate teens. The execution of the TV ad matched many of the factors that were associated with effective ads: it was interesting, it made them think, and it was emotional. However, data regarding various facts independent of the ads revealed that teens are not very interested in how the tobacco industry markets their products. We have seen this finding in other states as well, with some teens even defending the tobacco industry’s right to market their products however they want. We have also found it difficult to connect tobacco industry marketing to teens’ own personal experiences. As tobacco



control professionals, we know that advertising in magazines and convenience stores reaches teens. However, teens compare the volume and frequency of tobacco ads with non-tobacco ads and do not see an issue. Considering how many ads they are exposed to from companies like Pepsi, Coke, Taco Bell, Doritos, and others, marketing from the tobacco industry seem minimal. With these life experiences, it is difficult to generate a strong emotion from teens using general tobacco marketing facts. This finding, though, is specific to general tobacco industry marketing practices. Teens do react emotionally to facts about tobacco industry animal testing, tobacco industry exploitation of women and minorities, and, to a lesser extent, the tobacco industry’s impact on the environment worldwide. If the Be An Original ad were redeveloped using the same style but with another fact that teens identified to more effective, such as tobacco industry animal testing, it is likely that the ad would have been rated as even more effective. Consequently, we recommend for RIDOPH to shift its messaging from tobacco industry marketing to something that teens believe is more important, such as social justice issues caused by the tobacco industry.

2. Utilize authentic, reality-based messaging.

Reality-based commercials are perceived to be more effective and impactful than non-reality-based ads, which is consistent with our research findings in other states. Ydouthink's Animal Testing Booth ad and the Truth Campaign's Unsweetened Parade ads both received high marks from teens and comments pointed to the reality-based execution. This preference amongst teens could be for many different reasons. First, it is possible that the successful truth campaign's reality-based approach, which originally launched in 2000, has led teens to expect tobacco prevention messaging to be reality-based. However, considering smaller media spending after budget cuts occurred in 2004, it is unlikely that today's high school students would have seen enough truth ads to create such an expectation. Another reason could be that teens today are skeptical towards manipulative marketing tactics and pay more attention to reality ads because they are perceived to be more truthful. Considering that today's high school students have grown up in such an advertising-rich, multi-device, multi-channel environment, this is a reasonable theory. Finally, it could also be that the amount of reality-based television programming has led teens to prefer this type of ad execution, or at least made them more aware of what is "real" and what is "fake" from their perspective. Regardless of the reasons, RI teens believe that reality-based ads are more effective. However, it is critical for teens to believe in the authenticity of the reality-based execution. Specifically, the ydouthink Attractiveness ad was designed in a reality-format but was not perceived to be effective because teens did not believe it was truly authentic. .



ydouthink's Animal Testing Booth Ad



truth's Unsweetened Parade Ad

3. Continue focusing on serious, thought-provoking and emotional messaging.

The Be An Original campaign's approach to messaging is on the right track based on the findings of this study. Teens perceive that serious, thought-provoking, and emotional messages more effectively change behavior. In addition, they believe that messages that are humorous or otherwise not serious are less likely to change behavior. This finding is consistent with studies we have conducted in other states. We commend the RIDOPH for executing this messaging approach and encourage it to continue. While humor can be luring, especially with so many humorous ads on television that are often very memorable, tobacco prevention works differently than selling chips or fast food, requiring messages to remain serious to be most effective.

4. Consider developing one or more campaigns to directly target high-risk peer crowds rather than a general "teen" campaign.

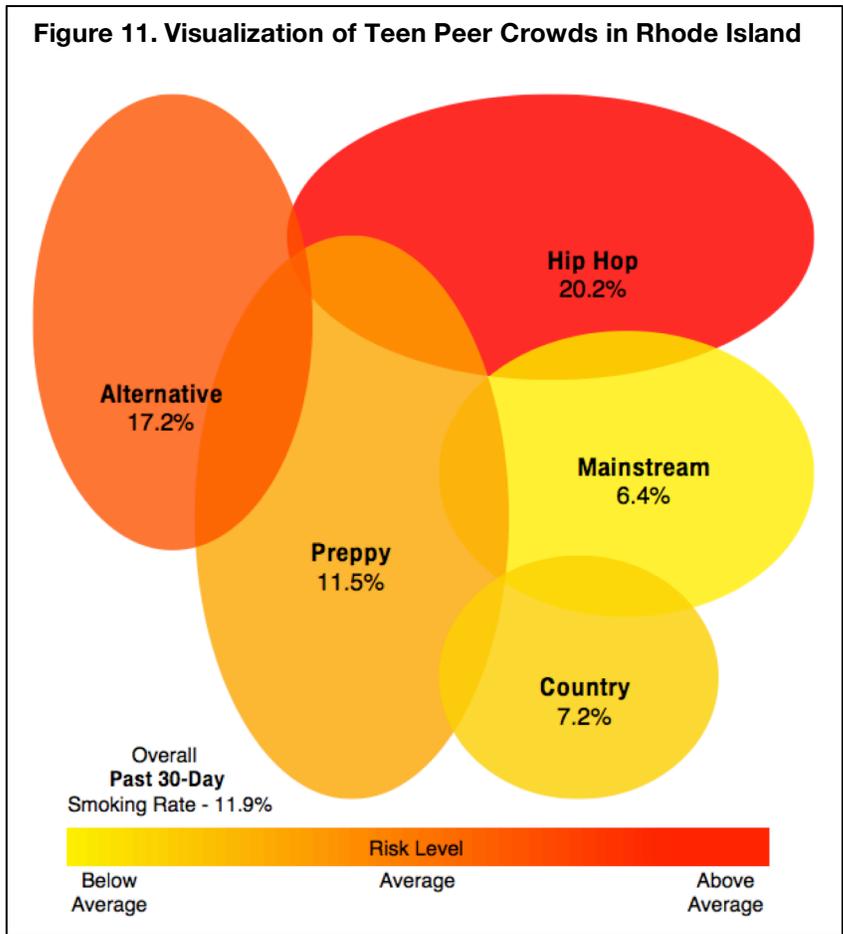
Findings from this study provide strong evidence that teen tobacco use is concentrated within certain teen peer crowds. Considering the low teen tobacco use rate in Rhode Island, we believe this is one of the most important findings from this study. Teens that identify with the Alternative peer crowd were most likely to use tobacco, followed by teens in the Hip Hop peer crowd. All other peer crowds had below average tobacco use risk, both according to our quantitative analysis and teens' own perceptions. Taking into account the limited resources available annually to prevent tobacco use in RI, it is critically important that campaign efforts minimize waste and target the teens most at risk of tobacco use. Figure 11 illustrates this finding. It is a visualization of teen peer crowds, including the estimated

size of each peer crowd in RI and how they overlap with each other. Here, one can see that certain peer crowds, like Mainstream and Preppy are large, but at significantly less risk than Hip Hop and Alternative. In fact, as discussed in the Implications section, when teens that are also influenced by the Hip Hop, Alternative, and Country peer crowds are removed from the Preppy peer crowd, we are left with an even lower teen tobacco use rate of just 5.4%.

It is a common misconception that teen marketing campaigns reach all teens equally. Because of the cultural differences between teens, including interests, styles, slang terms, influences, music, etc, it is not possible to reach all teens with a single message. Often, campaigns that are believed to reach all teens actually reach Preppy or Mainstream teens since those are usually the largest and most accessible groups of teens.

From the teen responses to the Be An Original campaign and the imagery used in the print ads, this campaign appeal most powerfully to teens in the Preppy and Mainstream peer crowds. For example, when students saw the print ad on the right, they described the young girl in the ad with the same descriptors they used to describe the Mainstream and Preppy peer crowds earlier: innocent, goodie goodie, would never smoke. This may or may not have been the intended target audience for this campaign, but this is the impression that teens have when they see the campaign images and designs. For most commercial brands, reaching the Mainstream and Preppy peer crowds is a shrewd strategy because they are trying to sell their products to the largest number of teens possible. However, for a teen tobacco prevention campaign, reaching the largest number of teens sounds like the best approach until one examines which teens are being reached and which are being left out. Considering that 88.6% of teens in RI already do not smoke, targeting high-risk youth becomes even more importance in RI to minimize waste and maximize impact.

Figure 11. Visualization of Teen Peer Crowds in Rhode Island

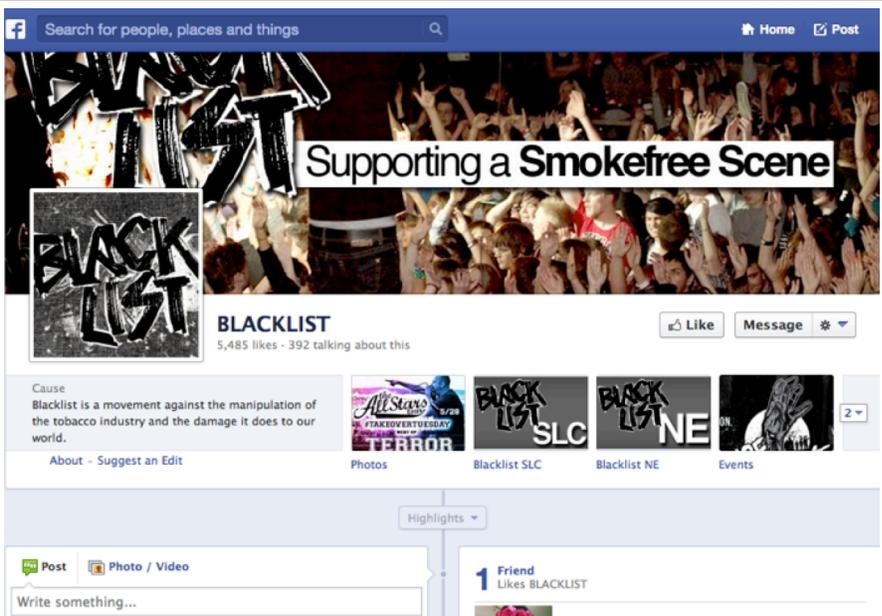
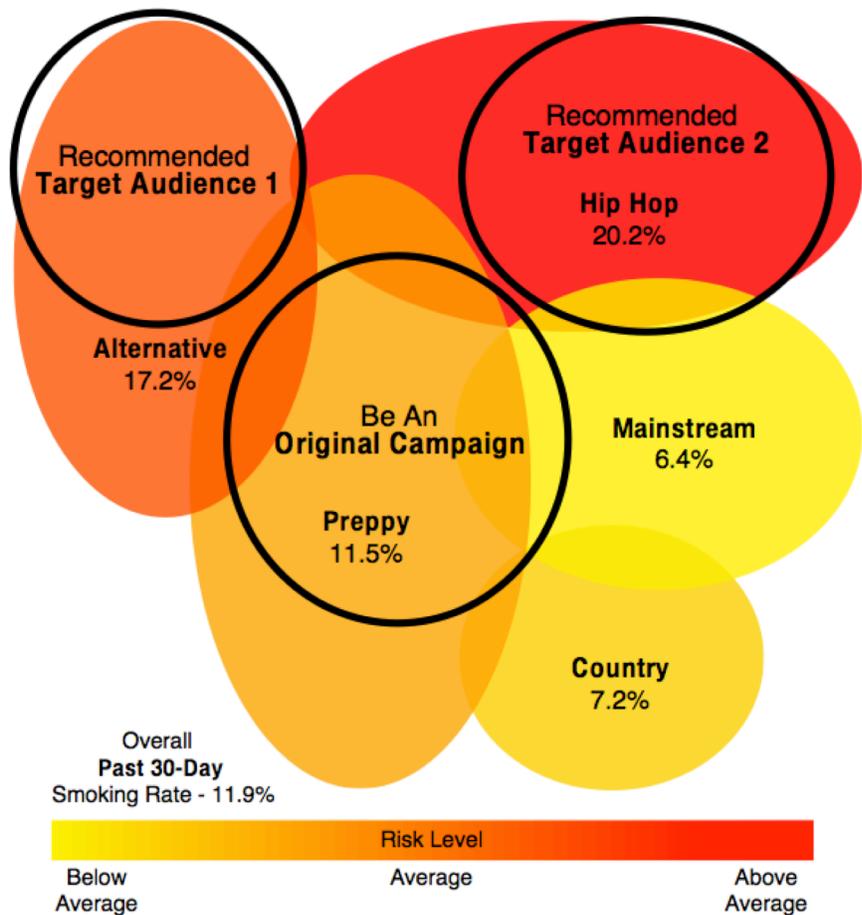


In RI, as well as in many other communities where we have conducted research, teens who are most likely to use tobacco are at the fringes of teen culture. They define their identity as different from the norm. They dress and behave in ways specifically to be different from Preppy teens. We observed these same attitudes in RI. Alternative and Hip Hop teens were defining their identity as anti-Preppy in their own way, and tobacco use was a part of that identity. Consequently, if a campaign is perceived to be designed for Preppy teens, those who most need to hear the tobacco prevention message in RI are the ones most likely to ignore it.

Based on these findings, particularly the significant differences between the tobacco use rates of each peer crowd, we recommend for RIDOPH to consider implementing a campaign designed to reach a high-risk peer crowd, rather than Preppy or Mainstream teens. The two peer crowds that need a targeted effort the most are the Alternative and the Hip Hop peer crowds. Figure 12 illustrates where we believe the Be An Original campaign currently reaches teens and where more optimally targeted campaigns could be reached.

Targeting a specific peer crowd influences every element of a campaign, including the brand name, imagery, language, media placements, facts, and tactics. For

Figure 12. Visualization of Potential Tobacco Prevention Campaigns



The Facebook Page for “Blacklist” – a teen tobacco prevention campaign shared by VT, NM, UT, and NE to directly target Alternative peer crowd teens.

example, during this study, we tested Blacklist (pictured on the previous page), a campaign that is specifically targeted to Alternative peer crowd teens. The Blacklist campaign looks and feels like a teen from this peer crowd. In the states where Blacklist is implemented, the campaign visits local rock shows with carefully selected brand ambassadors, develops partnerships with local bands, and designs its materials to look and feel as if Alternative teens made it themselves. This represents the difference between simply placing a campaign within a peer crowd and designing a campaign to feel like it comes from within the peer crowd itself. The latter ensures that teens embrace the campaign and its messages, which is more likely to cause behavior change, rather than perceive the campaign as an outsider.

Considering the limited resources available in RI, Rescue SCG recommends targeting one high-risk peer crowd at a time. If unlimited funds were available, separate campaigns to reach each peer crowd could be developed and implemented to truly reach 100% of teens. However, when funds are limited, as they are in most states, it is critical that those funds are leveraged to reach both the largest number and highest concentration of high-risk teens. We conclude that targeting the Alternative or Hip Hop peer crowds would be more effective to reduce youth tobacco use in RI than targeting the Preppy or Mainstream peer crowds.

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