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# **Testing the Size, Colour, and Impact of Contact Information on Tobacco Product Packaging (HC POR-08-22)**

## **Executive Summary**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Health Canada commissioned Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. to undertake qualitative research among smokers to evaluate the format and design of contact information that could be included in health warning messages (HWMs) displayed on manufactured cigarette packages. A set of six focus groups was held, with two groups conducted in each of the following cities: Toronto (English), Winnipeg (English), and Montreal (French). In each location, one group was conducted with daily smokers aged 18-24, and one with daily smokers aged 25 and older who were seriously considering quitting smoking in the next six months. The groups were conducted April 20-21, 2009. Participants were asked to review mock-ups showing how contact information could appear on two types of cigarette packages: slide and shell packages and flip top packages.

### Preferences Regarding Format of Contact Information (i.e. placement, style, size)

When it came to the format for presenting contact information in HWMs, a clear majority of participants expressed preference for each of the following features:

- **Larger size** in terms of space occupied by the contact information, and the font used to present this information on both slide and shell packages and flip top packages.
- **Framed** text for both package formats.
- Placement of the information **below** the picture and warning message on slide and shell cigarette packages. Placement was not tested for flip top packages since only one location is being envisaged for the contact information on such packages.

There was a near consensus regarding size preference for contact information, with all but four participants expressing a preference for the larger size option (many participants said they had trouble reading the smaller size option). As well, majorities in every group preferred framed vs. unframed text in terms of style. Finally, for slide and shell packages, majorities in all but one group preferred placement of the information below the picture and warning message as opposed to beside them. The combination of these preferences resulted in majorities in every group ultimately choosing the following specific mock-ups as their favourites:

- **S-3** for slide and shell cigarette packages (placement below picture, framed text, larger size).
- **F-2** for flip top cigarette packages (framed text, larger size).

The design features included in options S-3 (i.e. placement below picture, framed text, larger size) and F-2 (i.e. framed text, larger size) were routinely identified as making the contact information more noticeable and doing a better job combining/balancing the various elements of the health warning message so that each element is noticeable without drawing attention away from the others. Moreover, many participants, primarily but not only among those 25 and older, felt that the larger size option made it easier to read the text (while the smaller size option actually made this difficult).

### Colour Preferences for Contact Information

When it came to colour options for presenting the contact information, most participants preferred using red against a yellow background and yellow against a black background.

In explaining their colour preferences, participants pointed routinely to the following reasons, individually or in combination: attention-grabbing colour/noticeable, ability to read the text, and working well with the background colour. While most participants pointed to these reasons to explain their colour preferences, there were exceptions. The main exception was participants who liked the use of blue against a yellow background. These participants liked the colour blue because it evokes positive feelings, specifically hope and empowerment.

### Preferences Regarding Taglines

Of the eight potential taglines they were shown to encourage people to call the toll-free number or visit the website, one was rated positively by majorities in both language groups: ***You can quit. We can help/Vous pouvez arrêter. Nous pouvons vous aider.***

Two options were rated positively by a majority of Anglophone participants: ***You can quit. We can help*** and ***You have the will. There is a way.*** Moreover, both were identified by almost identical numbers of participants, and by a mix of young adults and adults. When it came to ranking taglines in terms of their effectiveness in encouraging participants to call the quitline or visit the website, the following were most likely to appear among participants' top three: ***You can quit. We can help, You have the will. There is a way,*** and ***Need help to quit?*** Each of these taglines was included by a majority of Anglophone participants among their top three choices, and each was identified by a mix of young adults and adults.

Among Francophone participants in Montreal, two taglines were also rated positively by a majority: ***Vous pouvez arrêter. Nous pouvons vous aider*** and ***Mieux vaut combattre sa dépendance qu'un cancer.*** When it came to ranking the taglines, these same two were most likely to appear among the top choices. Indeed, identical numbers of Francophone participants included each of these among their top three choices. Following these, the taglines most likely to be included among Francophone participants' top three choices were ***Vous avez la volonté. Nous pouvons vous aider*** and ***Libérez-vous enfin du tabac.***

### Conclusions and Implications

Results from the focus groups provide relatively clear direction regarding the design of the contact information to be included in health warning messages (i.e. larger size, framed text, and placement of the information below the picture and warning message on slide and shell cigarette packages). Moreover, the specific features represented in the mock-ups that emerged as favourites were the genuine preferences of the majority of participants. In other words, most participants were not forced to make a reluctant choice between options they did not like whether in terms of placement, style, or size. In this regard, the following findings related to the assessment of slide and shell mock-ups are worth keeping in mind:

- Asked to express their preference in terms of placement of contact information, participants were almost four times more likely to choose placement below the picture and health warning message than placement beside them.
- Asked to express their preference in terms of style of presentation of contact information, participants were five times more likely to choose framed text than unframed.

- Finally, asked to express their preference in terms of size, participants were more than 10 times more likely to choose larger than smaller size.

Underscoring this is the fact that only a small number of participants changed their minds about their favourite option for slide and shell packages when shown an alternative to the one they identified as their favourite (e.g. changing their preference from S-3 to S-4 when shown the latter as an alternative combination of location, style and size of contact information).

While there was less agreement about taglines than design-features, the tagline ***You can quit. We can help/Vous pouvez arrêter. Nous pouvons vous aider*** was positively rated by a majority of participants from both language groups. Moreover, it is worth noting that this tagline combines themes that resonate with both young adults and adults. Prior to reviewing the proposed taglines, participants were asked if they could suggest taglines to encourage people to call the toll-free number or visit the website. There was a difference between groups in that young adults were more likely to suggest taglines emphasizing initiative and decisiveness (e.g. *Just quit, Just quit it, Just do it, Quit now*), while older participants were more likely to suggest taglines emphasizing assistance or available help (e.g. *Let us help you quit, Want to quit?, You don't have to quit alone, You can do it*). The tagline *You can quit. We can help* combines the theme of initiative and decisiveness with the theme of assistance.

As part of their assessment of potential taglines, participants were asked what makes their preferred taglines more effective than the others. The elements or aspects of taglines that resonated with participants, as well as those that did not have been gathered together and listed below to facilitate their review.

- Elements that work:
  - Being brief and to the point.
  - Personalized message (e.g. references to 'you', 'we').
  - Encouragement/focus on empowerment, without cheerleading.
  - Reference to not being alone.
  - Focus of help/assistance.
  - Reference to freeing oneself/liberation.
  - Clever/catchy use of words.
- Elements that do not work/need to be downplayed:
  - Cheerleading.
  - Being too pushy.
  - Moralizing/preaching tone.
  - Reference/allusion to previous attempts/failures to quit.
  - Marketing or slogan-like/formulaic turns of phrase.
  - Anything with negative connotations.

**More Information:**

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**To obtain more information on this study, please email: [por-rop@hc-sc.gc.ca](mailto:por-rop@hc-sc.gc.ca).**