

Concept Testing for Drug Impaired Driving Campaign

Summary

Prepared for: Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada

Supplier: EKOS RESEARCH ASSOCIATES INC.
PWGSC Contract: OD160-195506/001/CY
Contract Value: \$56,192.64 (including HST).
Contract Award Date: January 09, 2019
Delivery date: February 18, 2019

POR Registration: 107-18

For more information on this report, please contact Public Safety Canada at ps.publicsafety-securitepublique.sp@canada.ca

SUMMARY

Public Safety Canada is updating their ongoing national marketing and advertising campaign designed to increase public awareness of the dangers and risks associated with cannabis-impaired driving, even as its legal status changes. The purpose of the research is to test reactions to three creative concepts to support final decisions around the implementation of messages and creative for the advertising with youth who is the primary target audience for the campaign.

Ten focus groups were held across five locations. Groups were held in Moncton, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. Two sessions were held in each centre and were attended by six to ten participants in each group (77 participants in total). Participants ranged in age between 16 and 24, with a good mix of ages. Groups were held in English with the exception of Montreal.

Highlights

Participants described a range of intensity of cannabis use from daily use to infrequent use (e.g., monthly or less often), indicating that patterns of use have not changed significantly in the lead up to or since legalization in 2018. They also described a range of behaviour when it comes to driving high, from those who never do so, to those who do and are convinced that cannabis improves, or at least does not impair, their driving ability.

Some participants said that they had seen the first campaign ad; In An Instant, at some point in the last year or so, although more than half said that they did not recall seeing it. Many agreed that the ad would command attention and send a clear message, although some described it as somewhat unclear, particularly in terms of the connection with cannabis use. The use of social media in the video was most often described as relevant for the age group and an interesting or unique approach.

Participants were shown rough animatics of three proposed concepts for a new video to be introduced in 2019, in a second phase of the public education campaign aimed at 16 to 24 year old Canadians. Once shown the video concept several times they were asked to rate their impressions of it along a number of dimensions and then reactions were explored in more detail. Ratings reflected closely the reactions described in discussions, although the ratings also helped to distinguish the relative ranking among the two more popular concepts.

W to L –This concept depicting a party scene, featuring cannabis use, followed by a car scene and being pulled over by the police, was viewed as the least favourable overall. Although it was found to be relatable to some in terms of the party scene, it was also seen as a poorer depiction of realistic cannabis use, with too much focus on the energetic party and not enough attention on the message of how cannabis can impair driving, or the specific consequences (a ticket, loss of

license, or criminal record) of driving high. Some appreciated this concept as a more likely scenario of driving impaired, and that not all commercials should end with a tragic accident; however, acknowledged that it has less emotional impact. Ratings provided by participants confirmed this to be the weaker of the three concepts.

Shattered - This concept depicted a scene where someone who had driven high waited alone, with heavy guilt while hospital staff worked to save his girlfriend who was a passenger, told through flashbacks to earlier cannabis use and an accident. At the end of this video the police were seen approaching the driver in the background. This concept was described as a strong and clear depiction of the message about the consequences of driving high. Participants who preferred it liked the impact of guilt of harming another, combined with the legal consequences of the decision to drive high. Some, however, found it somewhat confusing and/or bland, and a few others suggested that the legal consequences need to be clearer. While many participants in the discussions said that they liked it and even preferred it because of the combination of consequences depicted, ratings placed this concept second among the three presented.

Eye Opener – This concept also depicted a hospital scene shown from the first-person perspective of the high driver who has been hurt, as has his girlfriend passenger. This concept relies on greater suspense, and brings in anxiety and concern from parents who are hovering over the hurt driver. This concept was preferred by many in the discussions, saying that the harm to the driver, the girlfriend and the anxiety caused to parents made the greatest emotional impact. Many also liked the style of the concept, told through blinking of the eyes and flashbacks, creating a suspenseful effect that may found captivating “like a movie”. A few suggested, however, that the use of flashbacks may be confusing to some, and need to be depicted more clearly. Ultimately, although seemingly almost tied with Shattered in reactions from participants during the discussions, ratings place this concept as the clear front-runner among the three presented. Many participants said that the approach and introduction of parents made it the most effective concept, although some also said that finding a way to introduce the legal consequences into this approach could increase its effectiveness even farther.

Reactions to all three concept suggested the need for a stronger and clearer connection of the driver’s use of cannabis to ensure that there is no mistaking what lead to the harm. Some also suggested that alcohol impaired driving is widely acknowledged as dangerous and not socially acceptable, although some do not necessarily make the same connection with cannabis use and driving. Illustrating how cannabis impairs driving, and sending the message that “impaired is impaired” no matter the cause of the impairment could be effective, according to these participants.

Some participants saw how the creation of either Shattered or Eye Opener as a sequel to In An Instant could be helpful in commanding even greater attention. Many argued that if you had not seen In An Instant this would not be obvious, although no one felt that this would detract from the ad. Either of the two more popular concepts were seen to work as a natural extension. Either concept was also seen as likely to have

greater impact than the first ad because of their focus on the aftermath of the crash and the consequences, making them harder hitting emotionally and more effective.