

Youth Marketing Products Validation

HC POR 22-10

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

March 2023

Prepared for:

Health Canada

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 His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Health, 2023.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Background

In recent years, there has been a greater focus on marketing activities aimed specifically to youth audiences ranging in age from 11 to 19 years. When possible, these marketing elements were created through feedback received by youth who participated in Health Canada led student workshops, youth engagement committees or student ambassador networks. However, the input provided through these groups was not representative of youth from across Canada (i.e. socio-economic status, cultural backgrounds or even urban vs rural experiences, etc.).

To ensure these marketing activities are as effective as possible in producing the behaviour change required, it is critical that marketing elements be tested directly with youth. To accommodate the need for validation across a variety of campaigns, each with their own timelines for product development, three waves of focus groups were designed to test a range of products for three specific campaigns:

- the Canada Dental Benefit
- Food safety
- Tobacco cessation

Research Objectives

The overall objective of the research is to test a variety of marketing elements across different campaigns directly with youth.

The specific objectives for each of the three waves of research are as follows:

Wave 1: Canada Dental Benefit

The specific objectives of the research on the Canada Dental Benefit were:

- To determine if the content of the Canada Dental Benefit advertising concepts presented is:
 - clearly understood by the audiences (parents of children under 12 with a household income under \$90,000, with and without dental insurance)
 - credible, relevant and of value to the audience(s);
 - appealing and appropriate to the audience(s);
 - memorable in the minds of the audience(s);
 - able to motivate the audience(s) to take intended action(s).
- To elicit suggestions/options for improving the campaign materials

Wave 2: Food Safety

The specific objectives of the research on food safety were:

- To understand how interested and involved young focus group participants (11-12 years and 20-28 years) are in cooking and food preparation; and specifically,
- To gauge reaction to the “rap” (11-12 years), “nuggets” and “pink chicken” videos and a series of posters (20-28 years) that were produced to help communicate the message of safe food preparation and handling to this target group

Wave 3: Tobacco Cessation

The specific objectives of the research on tobacco and vaping cessation were:

- To test messaging on vaping as a way to quit smoking with the unintended audience (youth 13-18); and,
- To assess the reaction of youth 13-18 to tobacco cessation ads for adults that mention vaping as a method to assist in quitting smoking, and to identify if the ads might (inadvertently) increase the appeal of vaping products to youth.

Summary of Findings

Outlined below are the key findings and conclusions from each wave of the research.

Wave 1: Canada Dental Benefit

The Canada Dental Benefit garnered a lot of positive reaction (by potentially helping to alleviate the cost of dentist visits for children).

The ads effectively communicated the message of the availability of the Canada Dental Benefit but created many questions, specifically around eligibility (i.e. what would it take to qualify?) and coverage (i.e. what dental services are included?).

Participants felt that any ad must clearly identify the Government of Canada and should use its well-established brand (e.g. Canada watermark) especially if the intent is to drive traffic to the website – many are concerned about online scams and would be hesitant to click on a link (most notably on social media sites).

The imagery used was well received; however, the most impactful were those that the participants found relatable such as the child with the missing tooth in the “Smiles” Concept poster.

The icons (tooth or smile) used on the posters were not visually appealing nor impactful (in terms of message), many questioned its utility.

There is no clear ‘winner’ in terms of the two ad concepts among the English groups, but Quebec groups came out more strongly for “Deep Dive”. Both have merits that appeal to different segments of parents. The “Smiles” concept was well liked for the relatable imagery and limited information provided (it raises interested as these parents want to know more), while the “Deep Dive” concept was preferred by those parents who want the ads to provide as much information as possible.

The additional information provided in the “Deep Dive” concept, combined with the more relatable images in the “Smiles” concept would have the largest impact on viewers of the ads.

Wave 2: Food Safety

- **Children, 11-12 years**

Most children do basic cooking (or food preparation); some on their own, but mostly with their parents. There is fairly widespread knowledge among the children that hand washing is important but other aspects of food handling and preparation are more limited, with limited mentions of washing vegetables or separating meats from vegetables. The children claimed they learned any safe kitchen practices from their parents.

Children had a mixed reaction to the rap video. Many (and most in the French groups) found the tone and delivery too young for themselves (11-12 years), while others enjoyed it. The message of the video was clear (keep in mind it was played twice for recall). Suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the video include:

- ❖ Slowing down the pace – in a ‘live’ situation such as on an online site, children might not take in or understand the message
- ❖ Consider using real kids and images instead of animation that would appeal more to the target audience (11-12 year olds)

Parents are the main source of knowledge for food handling and preparation. Increasing the reach of the food handling and preparation message could include:

- ❖ Targeting elementary schools through posters and a cooking course
- ❖ Developing online games about food safety

- **Youth, 20-28 years**

Young adults are more likely to be engaged with video and streams than static content.

The Nuggets and Pink Chicken videos both caught the attention of young adults through the effective use of humour, music and imagery. The Pink Chicken video had more impact and resonated better with the English-speaking young adults as it articulated clearly (and more effectively than the Nuggets video) the specific steps to take when cooking chicken, the consequences of not doing so, and where to get more information. While most French participants found the video funny, they didn’t see the link between the humour and the message, although the fact that the video was in English with subtitles also played a role in this.

Young adults will generally not click through to look for more information so the ad should be self-contained and present all of the key information in a logical and clear manner. Verbalization of the key messages appears to be an effective approach.

The posters in their current form do not have broad appeal to young adults. The captioning is needed for it to make sense, but this audience is not likely to take the time to read it. The tone (e.g. ‘safe’, use of drawings) is also not exciting and vibrant enough to capture their attention.

The best way to reach young adults with messages related to food safety is through online channels related to cooking, recipes and food (such as recipe websites, food blogs, etc.).

Wave 3: Tobacco Cessation

Most teens, especially 16-18 year olds, are exposed (know of others) who vape, and to a lesser extent smoke. Teen-participants of all ages are aware that smoking and vaping have negative and harmful effects on health. The younger teens (13-15 year olds) were less sure about the difference in health effects between the two.

Some teens (more so those in the 16-18 year age group) are open to the idea of trying vaping despite their knowledge of the health risks, and several had already tried it, but did not continue vaping. Influencers include friends, interesting flavours and the fact it is a common occurrence in their social settings (such as school).

The ad was effective in communicating the message that there are different options for quitting smoking. However, many participants, particularly the older ones, expressed the opinion that the ad communicated that vaping is a preferable alternative to smoking (although not necessarily healthier); a few even thinking that the ad was “promoting” vaping. Many participants expressed their view that they felt this was not a good message to communicate, with a few participants questioning the appropriateness of the Government of Canada logo at the end.

Participants claimed that the ad did not have any material influence on their likelihood or interest in trying vaping, as their mind was already made up about vaping.

Interpretation of Results

Please note that qualitative research is directional in nature and cannot be used to extrapolate to a wider population. It is designed to reveal a rich range of opinions and interpretations rather than to measure what percentage of the target population holds a given opinion. These results must not be used to estimate the numeric proportion or number of individuals in the population who hold a particular opinion because they are not statistically projectable.

Contract Value

The total value of this contract is \$166,703.24 inclusive of HST.

Certification of Political Neutrality

This certification is to be submitted with the final report submitted to the Project Authority.

I hereby certify, as a Representative of Entegrit  Consulting, that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Government of Canada’s Policy on Communications and Federal Identity and Directive on the Management of Communications.

Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, party standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.



Signature

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February 23, 2023

Date