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NC Health & Wellness Trust Fund

2007 Evaluation of the North Carolina TRU Media Campaign:

Executive Summary

November 30, 2007



Executive Summary

North Carolina's teen tobacco prevention and cessation initiative, funded by the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF), has included a statewide media campaign called *Tobacco.Reality.Unfiltered*, or TRU, since 2004. The campaign utilizes a theme of the serious health consequences of tobacco use affecting real people in North Carolina and is evaluated using telephone surveys with a sample of NC youth. After a baseline survey in early 2004, follow-up surveys to examine the impact of the campaign took place later in 2004 and in 2006. These follow-up evaluations showed favorable youth reaction to and increasing youth awareness of the campaign. The HWTF subsequently increased the budget for the TRU media campaign in the fall of 2006 from \$1.1 million to \$4.5 million annually. The 2007 TRU media evaluation began four months after the funding increase.

Highlights from the evaluation of the 2007 TRU media campaign include:

- + Youth awareness of the TRU campaign increased by nearly one-third from 2006 to 2007.
 - o Awareness of the campaign rose from 54% in 2006 to 71% in 2007 (Figure 1).
 - o Over 500,000 youth (11-17) in NC have seen and are aware of the NC TRU campaign.
- + Awareness of TRU campaign brands and slogans rose significantly from 2006 to 2007.
 - o Youth awareness of the TRU brand rose from 42% in 2006 to 58% in 2007.
 - o Youth awareness of the *Tobacco.Reality.Unfiltered.* slogan increased from 48% in 2006 to 55% in 2007.
- + NC youth responded well to the ads run in 2007.
 - o More than 95% of NC youth who had seen the 2007 ads reported that they were convincing, attention-grabbing, and gave good reasons not to use tobacco (Figure 2).
 - o Over 25% of NC youth reported that they talked to their friends about the ads, indicating high "chat value".
- + Anti-tobacco and pro-health attitudes among NC youth have remained stable and strong.
 - o Over 90% of NC youth did not believe that young people who smoke cigarettes have more friends, that smoking cigarettes makes youth look cool or fit in, or that smoking makes youth look attractive.

The 2007 evaluation also notes:

- + Current research continues to support inclusion of a mass media campaign as a critical component of North Carolina's comprehensive tobacco prevention and control program.
- + One-third (34.2%) of NC youth remain susceptible to smoking. While the long-term impact of the TRU campaign on this population is inconclusive, the TRU campaign must continue to target this group of at-risk youth.
- + For the TRU media campaign to continue to move in the right direction in constructing and delivering effective messages that best impact NC youth, it should aim to:
 - o Increase campaign awareness by 2008 to over 80% (a rate that would approach levels seen in other successful state and national campaigns).
 - o Develop and air new ads on an annual basis to continue to capture youth attention. (Current ads may have reached their maximum impact in terms of receptivity among NC youth.)
 - o Increase ad "chat value" (the percentage of youth that report talking to their friends about the ads) from the current rate of 25% to 30%.
 - o Continue to integrate the TRU campaign with statewide community and school programs to maximize campaign effectiveness. (2007 data indicate that nearly one out of three youth participated in a school or community event in the last year to prevent tobacco use.)

Figure 1: Awareness of TRU Campaign among NC Youth (2004-07)

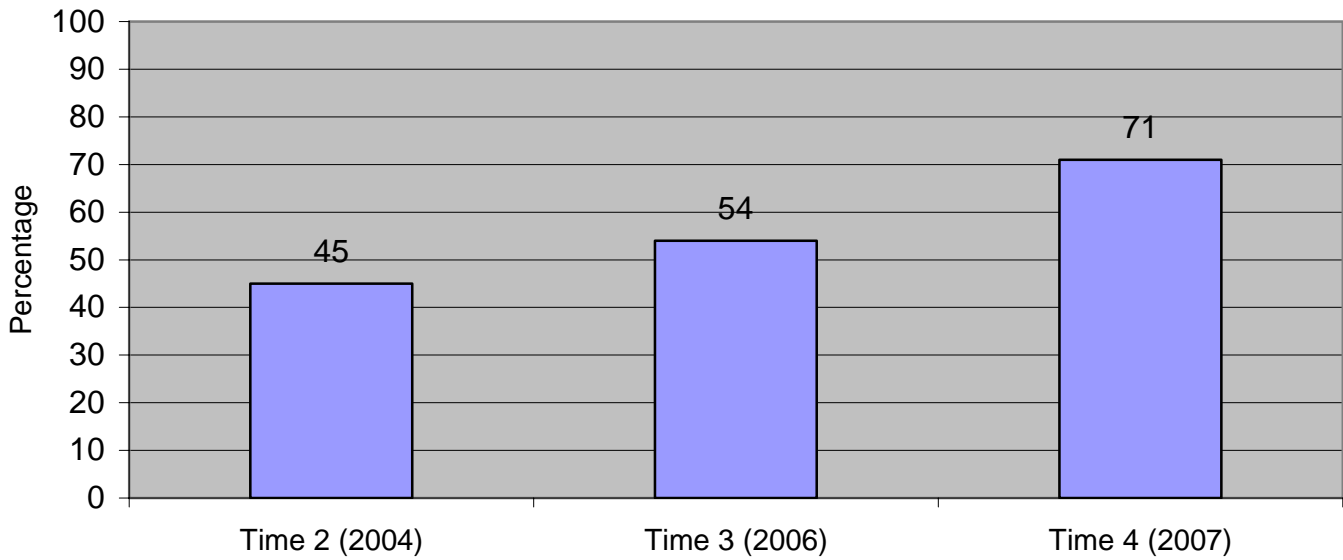
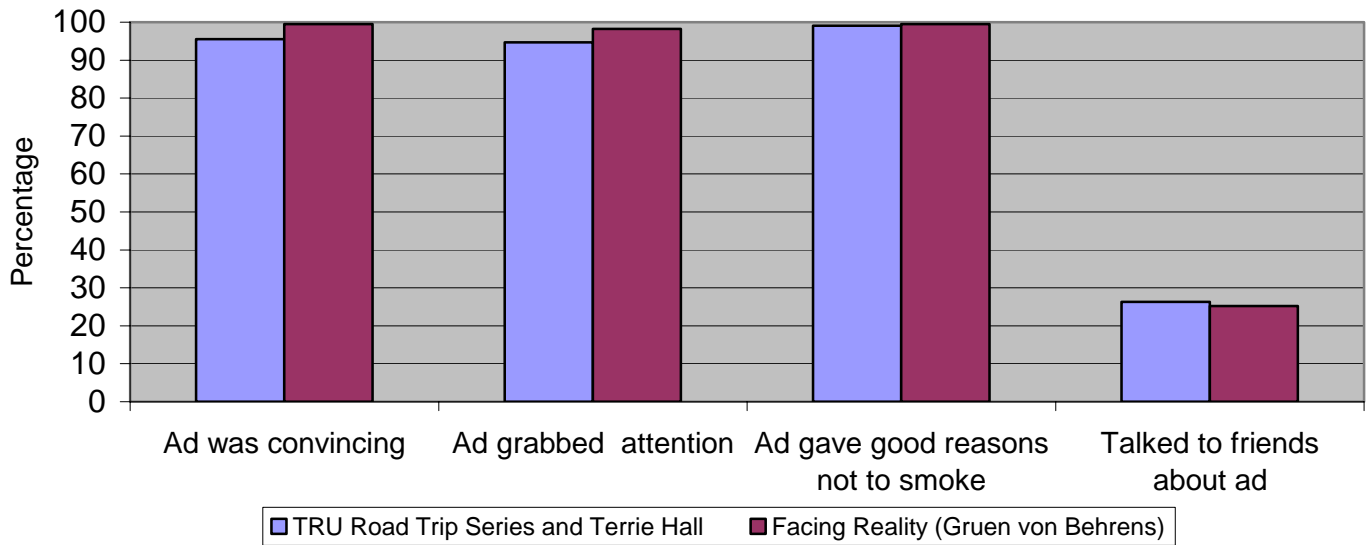


Figure 2. Reactions to 2007 TRU Ads among NC Youth



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