**Oregon Health Authority / HPCDP**

**TID Phase 2 Focus Groups**

**Agency Takeaways -- Revised**

**July 22, 2014**

The Coates Kokes team believes the following are the most valuable takeaways from the Phase 2 TID Focus Groups conducted with Latinos, African Americans, Native Americans and Asian Americans last month in Portland – at least with regard to future Tobacco Industry De-normalization (TID) communications planning.

1. **Respect was the dominant and consistent values issue.**

This term is used by all the focus group audiences with at least a couple different meanings. First, they feel that their cultural issues are not reflected in policies from decision makers. Second, they see a lack of respect in the tone of the general political and social dialogue.

This issue was important with all four populations, but especially the African American groups. Demonstrating a concern for and sensitivity to this respect issue in our communications will help us build a broad and multi-cultural following. If we get this issue right, we have the opportunity to turn a potential negative – lack of respect – into a potentially empowering motivation for change. Enlisting community leadership will likely help.

1. **“Family,” “Compassion” and “Honesty” were the runner up values.**

The line between what is the “value” and what is the “word for the value” can be a little thin. These are the words, and for the most part the issues, that participants saw as values we should all be concerned with as Oregonians.

Family was particularly important to the Latino audience. They believe their community holds this as a higher value than the rest of the population – that concern for family is inherent to their identity as a people.

“Family” also provides an opportunity to tap into the “Security” value we have heard much about from the Gillings School of Global Public Health at UNC.

Compassion and honesty were also repeatedly discussed as values we should collectively hold. Most often they were brought up in the sense of something we’re currently lacking and need to greater degrees in our community dialogue.

1. **The words, if not the values themselves, of Equity/Equality, Liberty/Freedom and Efficiency (Not Wasteful) were problematic.**

The values of Equity/Equality, Liberty/Freedom and Efficiency/Not Wasteful did not test well, at least as words, but we can still look for dotted-line connections to the values noted above that these groups of Oregonians are talking about.

While participants didn’t connect with the words from the UNC group, we know from our social media work that the Liberty/Rights value is alive and well in Oregon and that an inclination to preserve smokers’ rights still exists with many Oregonians.

1. **Perceived smoking rates mute the perception of tobacco as a problem for specific audiences.**

While every group overestimated the percent of total Oregonians who smoke, guessing near the 50% mark, only the Native American groups guessed their population has a higher than average rate.

The Hispanic audience doesn’t see tobacco as an issue for their community. They believe they’re less affected than the white population to a significantly greater degree than is true. Hispanic Oregonians believe it is more commonly discouraged in their community than in others, and they see this difference rooted in the stronger sense of family they see in their cultural identity.

1. **The African American population doesn’t believe they’re being targeted.**

They believe their disparity is based strictly in their disproportionate level of poverty –with no regard to their race. Given people’s inherent unwillingness to believe in the effect of advertising on their motivations and actions, we face an uphill battle in convincing African Americans that they are being targeted by their race.

Simply showing menthol cigarette ads with black models will not meet their bar for “race” targeting. Rather they see this type of promotion as merely the kind of marketing that is within the bounds of modern day U.S. commerce – a marketer marketing to its audience. They are willing to believe they’re targeted because they’re low income.

1. **Native American groups were inconsistent and their issues may be difficult to make engaging to the majority population.**

The “sacred” issue was acknowledged and created a source of tension for Native Americans discussing the tobacco issue. While we do see potential TID communications fodder in Big Tobacco’s attempts to make in-roads into this community by equating their products to sacred traditions, it may be hard to build empathy among the majority audience around this issue.

1. **The Asian American audience will be difficult to address as a community affected by smoking and we see little benefit in attempting to do so.**

The Asian American groups correctly perceived that they smoke less than the general population. Further, they do not see any racial or cultural issues that connect them with or bind them to the tobacco issue as a community or set of communities. One positive to note is there was no noticeable affinity for Asian-owned markets as any kind of core community feature to be proud of or to protect in the discussion of tobacco.

1. **Kids and youth are a universally compelling issue.**

All audiences found the targeting of kids to be egregious and compelling. They also found the evidence we already have to support this claim to be more than sufficient. The “$1 million per hour” factoid and the names of the flavors appealing directly to kids, e.g. Cap’n Crunch, were particularly effective in eliciting calls for needed action.

We should consider exposing the instructions Big Tobacco companies provide to retailers, e.g. placing signage at a child’s eye level, as a potential new entry into this pool of evidence of the tobacco industry’s targeting of our kids. The Madras Truck Stop video does a good job of revealing this very issue.

1. **The Heroes videos were very engaging.**

In comparison to the advertising shown to these groups – the same national ads that ran in the most recent campaign – the Heroes videos were far more engaging to all of the focus group participants. We do need to acknowledge people’s tendency to discount advertising in general and specifically to be hesitant to admit it would be effective. That noted, the audiences were genuinely engaged by the stories in the videos coming from the voices of the “heroes.”

With regard to the lower rating of the same advertising that had tested more highly in previous focus groups, it may be that low income groups are less easily swayed by sad stories (e.g. Hallways) because they see more of those stories in their everyday lives.

The personal and non-ad-like nature of the videos made them more engaging to the audience. The George Wilson video was the most universally appealing and the gold standard we should strive for in future video subject recruitment.

1. **E-cigarettes are a good subject for messaging to the degree that they’re connected to the youth-targeting story**

Confusion exists amongst all of the groups about the value of e-cigarettes as a cessation tool. However, there is overwhelming willingness to keep them from children and to feel ill-will toward the tobacco industry for targeting kids (with flavors) regardless of the lack of current regulation.

Until such an age ban does go into place e-cigarettes and their Cap’n Crunch-like flavors could provide motivating fodder for TID messaging. We may also want to bring forward the evidence that shows e-cigs are not a successful cessation tool.