

IT'S ONLY DANGEROUS... SOCIAL MEDIA INITIATIVE

TARGET POPULATION: Men who have Sex with Men (MSM)

LOCATION: Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona

PROGRAM DESIGN: Community Awareness Campaign

ESTIMATED COST: \$300,000

FUNDING SOURCE: State and CDC Funding

CORE ACTIVITIES

CORE ACTIVITY 1

Digital ads on Grindr were designed to reach MSM within a 50-mile radius of Phoenix and Tucson, AZ. These placements were complimented by digital ads that popped up based on a user's viewing habits (such as banner ads on MSM-themed websites, Google searches, or Facebook use). Traditional placements included posters, cocktail napkins, and even urinal screens in MSM bars, with limited print, transit and outdoor sites. A local CBO adapted the campaign to create T-shirts and event giveaways that used the campaign branding.

CORE ACTIVITY 2

For events, such as Phoenix Pride and AIDS Walk Arizona, custom Snapchat filters were created and geocoded to the event site. When people used Snapchat, the filters, which mimicked the campaign by having an attacking shark or falling meteor in the background, became accessible. Images were shared more than 4,000 times.

“When the Arizona HIV Prevention Program began contemplating a social marketing initiative, we knew we wanted to veer away from fear-based messaging. Population assessments showed that most MSM knew about HIV, but weren't really engaging in prevention methods or testing (“I forgot to ask or take precautions,” “the guilt afterward is easier to deal with than the pre-discussion”). Our media initiative, “It's Only Dangerous When You Don't Know It's There,” uses comical depictions of everyday life gone wrong, because the person encountered an unknown hazard. Ads end with the tagline, “Awareness is the Answer.” Using a combination of highly targeted digital and traditional ad placement, custom Snapchat filters, and volunteers posting on Facebook, visitors were directed to HIVAZ.org for comprehensive testing, prevention and care information and search functions.”

OUTCOMES

The HIV Prevention Program compared testing data for October to January 2014 to the same time period for 2015. The comparison showed the following increases: October: 8%, November 41%, December 26%, and January 3%. However, these percentages cannot be fully attributed to the campaign, as a comprehensive survey at the time of testing was not carried out. However, a two-month prevention survey of 177 HIV-negative individuals found that 69 of the respondents (39%) had seen a print ad, 79 (45%) had seen a digital ad, and 61 (35%) had seen a Facebook or blog post.

Community Awareness

The launch and success of the campaign garnered local and national media attention. The campaign reignited conversation and awareness of HIV in Phoenix and Tucson, and the positive response was supported by several HIV messages being included in the Arizona Department of Health Services Director's blog. –

DATA

Before the campaign, HIVAZ.org experienced approximately 3,000 visits per month. Within days after the campaign launched, web traffic increased to 800 to 1000+ visitors a day, with more than 39,000 visits over the course of the initial campaign. Currently, new visitors account for 80% of all visits, with the Find HIV Testing, Free Condoms, and PrEP pages being the most visited.

EVALUATION

Based on the significant increase in website visits, and the increase in the number of HIV tests completed, the social marketing initiative was deemed a success. For 2016, the initiative has been extended to target the African American/Black community in Phoenix.

“The campaign clicked with viewers because it eschewed shaming and judgment,” said Nidhi Agrawal, professor of marketing at the University of Washington, who has studied the effect of P.S.A.s for drinking and driving. “You’re taking the stigma away, and when we create distance from the stigma, people can think about it more objectively.” – New York Times, December 27, 2015

“People are shown in everyday situations, oblivious to the dangers of their surroundings, underscoring the perils of proceeding through life without knowing your HIV status and the status of your partner(s).”

FUNDING & COST

The production costs for the campaign were diminished by the generous discounts provided by the creative team and photographer. Use of less expensive digital media allowed for greater ad placement, and easy tracking of metrics via Google Analytics. Community-based organizations were allowed to adapt campaign designs to produce more provocative ads and giveaway items with their own funding.

STAKEHOLDERS

An advisory group of 12 individuals was established to inform the campaign development process, review assessment data, and evaluate outcomes. This group included people living with HIV, representatives of two public health departments that implemented STD media campaigns, State and County public information officers, private media/design firms, and community-based organizations that utilized social media to promote events.

Two small-scale assessments of special populations were conducted. High-risk HIV negative individuals were asked about their perceptions about HIV and prevention activities. People who were diagnosed with HIV within 18 months were polled about what put them at risk for contracting HIV, their HIV testing and linkage to care experiences, and their exposure to HIV information prior to testing positive.

Volunteers were recruited to use their personal Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts to share prepared messaging to their MSM peers.

STRENGTHS

The campaign's creative development, production, media placements, and strategy were informed by a stakeholder advisory group. The campaign is easily adaptable to promote other HIV prevention activities, such as *It's Only Dangerous If You're Not PrEPared*, promoting pre-exposure prophylaxis. A CBO-owned website, HIVAZ.org, was utilized for online information and service searches. This relationship allowed the CBO to present information appropriate to target audiences that could not be hosted on the state health department website. Inexpensive placements were surprisingly successful. For example, urinal screens placed in MSM bar restrooms promoted free HIV testing during National HIV Testing Day. A unique website address for the event was used on the screens. One-third of all visits to this page (approximately 90 people) came from the urinal screen address.

LIMITATIONS

Sensitivities to issues of sex and sexuality limit the ability of the HIV Prevention Program to use images and messages that might more easily engage focus populations. Stakeholders felt overly constrained by the limitations imposed upon the creative process. There was also concern that the messaging and images would not resonate among different race/ethnic groups.

PROGRAM CONTACT

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