

Smart Thinking: Reaching LGBT Smokers on their Smart Phones

N.C. Chronic Disease and Injury Section 2015

Summary

The N.C. Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch (TPCB) used existing artwork from the CDC's Tips from Former Smokers Campaign to place digital ads specifically aimed at North Carolina Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) audiences to educate them about the hazards of tobacco use and secondhand smoke and the availability of QuitlineNC as a free tobacco cessation resource. The eight week campaign delivered 1.76 million impressions and 2,000 click-throughs to QuitlineNC.com, along with modest increases in QuitlineNC calls and website visits, while spending only around \$8,000 in advertising funds.

Challenge

The Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) community has smoking rates estimated higher than those of the general population, and appear to be less likely to quit. According to the CDC, about one in four LGBT individuals smokes cigarettes, compared with one in six heterosexual/straight individuals. Although CDC's Tips from Former Smokers Campaign includes at least two LGBT cast members – Brian (who is living with HIV and suffered a stroke from smoking) and Ellie (who gave up a job she loved because of the impact of secondhand smoke on her health) – traditional media outreach has not increased LGBT use of QuitlineNC.

Solution

These days, digital advertising allows for very specific geographic, demographic and content-based targeting of messages. Placing Ellie's and Brian's digital Tips from Former Smokers ads on the laptop, tablet and smartphone screens of people who have shown interest in LGBT or smoking topics could be a new way to reach this minority group with important messages about tobacco cessation. Clicking on the ads took viewers to QuitlineNC.com. Approximately \$8,000 in federal grant funds was spent to place static and animated digital ads that appeared to people in urban parts of North Carolina (cities of 70,000 people and over) who showed interest in the following content: LGBT, smoking, entertainment, nightlife, and alternative lifestyles.



Results

The ads ran January 5 until March 1, 2015. Two weeks into the campaign, it was clear that smartphone users were clicking through our ads to QuitlineNC.com at much higher rates than were tablet and computer users, so by the end of the first month, the remaining budget was shifted to smartphone ads. The total campaign delivered 1.75 million views and 2,000 click-throughs. The click-through rate (CTR) for the whole campaign was .11 percent, but was higher for smartphone users, at .2 percent. The highest CTR came from central-city areas of Raleigh, Greensboro, High Point, Charlotte and Fayetteville. The highest performing websites were Pandora, The Blaze, USA Today Sports, Hollywood Life, OK Cupid, Answers.com, OpposingViews.com, TVGuide.com, GiantRealm.com and EllaDaily.com. The larger ads also had the highest CTRs. The population that saw the ads were more likely to be single, female, African American, 25-34, college graduates, \$25-\$50,000 household income and IT occupation.

When QuitlineNC call results from the campaign were compared with the previous year, the percentage of callers who identified themselves as LGBT increased by 1.4% during the campaign, but by 7% in February alone. Users of QuitlineNC.com increased by 45.87% during the campaign, when compared with 2014, with sessions up by 47% and page views by 26.19% for the same period.

Sustaining Success

QuitlineNC continues its outreach to the LGBT community by serving as a co-sponsor for OutRaleigh in May and participating in the N.C. Gay Pride Festival and Parade in September. Some local health departments are working with their local LGBT Centers and HIV testing programs to place cessation messages inside LGBT bars.

Get Involved

Contact the TPCB to help with OutRaleigh and NC Pride QuitlineNC promotional activities, or to keep TPCB informed about tobacco promotions directed at the LGBT community.



“Sexual minorities are at high risk of dying from smoking,” said TPCB cessation director Joyce Swetlick. “Reaching LGBT with life-saving information and services is what we are all about at QuitlineNC.”

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