Using Mass Media to Promote Smoking Cessation in Low SES Populations: 
*The Example of the EX Campaign*

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What is the EX Campaign?

EX is a branded, mass media campaign aimed at encouraging adult smokers to quit.

- In the spring of 2008, the National Alliance for Tobacco Cessation (NATC)—a partnership of states, national public health organizations, foundations and corporations—launched EX as a national campaign.
- Current effort is web-based with display ads and paid search

www.becomeanex.org provides:
- Evidence-based three-part quit plan
- Online community of smokers quitting together, social networking, blogs
- Mobile apps allow greater accessibility
- Advice from nicotine addiction expert Richard Hurt of Mayo Clinic
Developing EX
Overview of Resources

• **Legacy Consumer Research**
  – Multiple cycles with over 1,500 respondents
  – Qualitative and quantitative

• **Cessation Resources**
  – National, state and local cessation experts
  – Stages of Change Model
  – Addiction Theory
  – Cessation materials/research/literature

• **Lessons learned from past Legacy efforts**
  – Great Start; “Letters”; Circle of Friends; DC Learn to Quit Line; Bob/Mary Quits;
Blue Collar Analysis and Segmentation

• To gain a deeper understanding of the “blue collar” segment of the EX target since it is well established that those in Blue Collar jobs are more likely to smoke

• Consulted multiple sources on adults 18+ years of age, including data from:
  – Simmons
  – CDC
  – US Department of Commerce
  – MRI (Mediamark Research and Intelligence)
  – others
The Blue Collar Worker

- There are a variety of jobs that fall under ‘Blue Collar’ occupations

![](chart)

- The majority of Blue Collar Smokers have low education (HS education or below)

- Blue-collar jobs are evolving as traditional manual labor jobs are shrinking, tech skills are becoming more essential

- Those in Blue Collar jobs have limited job opportunities, limited growth potential, and less access to the ‘American Dream

- Saving or investing for the future is not a priority. They are heavy impulse buyers that spend money on things that make them more a part of the mainstream culture

- They are younger and more diverse than prior generations.

- They are using new media, and are catching up to the total population in exploring Web 2.0 functions

- They ‘enjoy life’, socialize, are huge sports fans, watch a lot of TV, and play a lot of games
Smoking is more socially acceptable for the Blue Collar than White Collar Worker

Daily activities can involve many smoking triggers

Decreased access to resources for smoking cessation (income, insurance, etc).

Social support is critical as they are more likely to quit if their spouse/friends/family quits
### Three Blue Collar Segments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Bottom Blues</th>
<th>Basic Blues</th>
<th>Light Blues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24 = 22% , 25-29 = 11% , 30-39 = 16% , 40-49 = 22% , 50-59 = 12% , 60-69 = 9% , 70-85 = 8%</td>
<td>18-24 = 16% , 25-29 = 11% , 30-39 = 21% , 40-49 = 24% , 50-59 = 16% , 60-69 = 7% , 70-85 = 5%</td>
<td>18-24 = 23% , 25-29 = 12% , 30-39 = 19% , 40-49 = 20% , 50-59 = 16% , 60-69 = 7% , 70-85 = 3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male = 56% Female = 44%</td>
<td>Male = 55% Female = 45%</td>
<td>Male = 50% Female = 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in HH</td>
<td>Average: Two children under 17 years old per HH</td>
<td>Average: Two children under 17 years old per HH</td>
<td>Average: Two children under 17 years old per HH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Less than $35K</td>
<td>Less than $50K</td>
<td>Less than $75K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Ethnicity (Note: Question allow respondents to choose more than one ethnicity)</td>
<td>Spanish/Latino = 22% White = 62% Black/African American = 13% American Indian/Alaska Native = 2% Asian = 1% Other = 1%</td>
<td>Spanish/Latino = 8% White = 76% Black/African American = 13% American Indian/Alaska Native = 2% Asian = 1% Other = 1%</td>
<td>Spanish/Latino = 8% White = 79% Black/African American = 10% American Indian/Alaska Native = 2% Asian = 1% Other 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Less than 12th grade</td>
<td>High School Graduate or GED</td>
<td>Some College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Food preparation &amp; service, construction, transportation &amp; maintenance, building and grounds cleaning</td>
<td>Manufacturing and processing, construction, retail, food service, repair personal and entertainment services, hospitals &amp; specific trades</td>
<td>Transportation, communication &amp; utilities, department store, food service, trade, business service, accounting, human resources, personal training, manufacturing, production, sales &amp; military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Affiliations</td>
<td>They are less likely to be affiliated with any organizations and view religion as “average” in terms of importance.</td>
<td>Slight skew to Veterans Clubs, but overall they are less likely to be affiliated with any organizations.</td>
<td>They are not strongly affiliated with any organizations, but are more likely than the other segments to participate in environmental groups and causes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Media age break is 25-49 years old  
Source: MRI 2007 / People who smoke one pack per week
The EX Blue Collar Segment

• **Acceptance is Key**
  There is a strong desire to be accepted by their family, peers and society. Acceptance means being a part of the mainstream – “fitting in” – despite their limited income and education.

• **Image is everything**
  They strive to portray an image of wealth and success to their peers and will pay more for products and brands that are consistent with the image they want to convey.

• **Income is a barrier to the life they want to live**
  The lack of disposable income makes them dependent on coupons and discounts. At the end of the day, price is more important than brand names.

• **They want a better life**
  They want to achieve a higher social status but their career aspirations and personal financial habits and attitudes hinders their momentum – they buy on impulse, only save money for a specific need and feel it’s better to get what you want now because you don’t know where you’ll be tomorrow.

• **Life is supposed to be fun**
  They are always looking for a new thrill and seek out activities and events that provide that sort of rush. Yet they admit their interests are somewhat narrow and limited which impacts the variety of things that they do.
The EX Blue Collar Segment

- **Want to get ahead**
  Material possessions and having a lot of money are a way of proving that they are achieving wealth and a higher social status. Still, spending money rather than saving and making impulse purchases prohibits them from moving forward.

- **They live for the moment**
  They want to enjoy life. They crave excitement and need to be a part of (or at least aware of) the next big thing. They are drawn to the outrageous and seek out variety in their life.

- **Still, they are drawn to the familiar**
  While they are open to experiencing new things, they admit that they are narrow and limited in their interests and like knowing their life is pretty much the same week-to-week.

- **They are traditionalist**
  They believe in traditional gender roles, prayer in school and the bible. They respect their ancestors (those who came before them) and buying American products is important to them.

Basic Blues
Represent 38% of the smoking population
The EX Blue Collar Segment

- **They seek to enjoy life to the fullest**
  They are living in the now, buying and doing whatever they want to make them happy. They crave excitement and seek out adventure and risk.

- **They are ambitious and want to get ahead**
  They aspire to be better than they are now and truly believe they will be better off in the future. Interestingly, they refer to their current job as just a job, not a career.

- **Consider themselves to be intellectuals and open to new ideas and experiences**
  They are interested in new challenges, learning new theories and things that may never be of use to them. They like learning about art, culture, history and the universe and feel like they have more ability than most people.
Top Themes of Formative Work

• Smokers are not a monolithic group
  – Segments of this audience are at different stages of behavior change

• The process of quitting is similar across segments

• Provide those who want to quit with a sense of structure

• Provide action-oriented cessation advice

• Avoid language with anti-smoking overtones

• Be real/acknowledge the struggle
EX Messaging Strategy

• Target audience is lower income and blue collar, diverse race/ethnicity, adult smokers interested in quitting

• EX messages are characterized by empathy
  – “Re-learning your life without cigarettes” messaging aims to help build confidence
  – Breaks down the overwhelming nature of quitting into manageable/achievable pieces
  – Helps smokers prepare and plan for situations where they experience smoking triggers
  – Positions success in one area (e.g. having a cup of coffee without smoking) as a building block for success in other areas (e.g. driving without smoking or starting the day without smoking)
EX Media and Outreach

- Ran on programming (networks and websites) that reaches the blue-collar segment (e.g. Deadliest Catch, ESPN, History Channel)

- Culturally-tailored materials for distribution via state quitlines, clinics, community centers and other organizations (also available for download on BecomeAnEX.org)

- Partnerships with Carl Edwards and Bassmasters
Welcome to EX

A new way to think about quitting smoking...

EX is a whole new way to think about quitting smoking – it’s about re-learning life without cigarettes. We can help you learn how to do everything you currently do while smoking cigarettes, but without them.

The free EX quit smoking plan is based on personal experiences from ex-smokers, as well as the latest scientific research from the experts at Mayo Clinic. Whether this is your first try to quit smoking or your 10th, the free EX plan can help you stop smoking.

Roll over icons to learn more about the EX quit smoking plan.
The Impact of EX
Effectiveness among low SES Smokers

• Ad awareness was associated with positive changes in cognitions about quitting among smokers with less than a high school education.

  • Among smokers with less than a high school education, confirmed awareness of EX **doubled** the likelihood of making a quit attempt over a six month period.
Conclusions

• Extensive formative research, including segmentation, was used to develop EX

• Research indicated that an empathetic tone accompanied by a positive, practical message would resonate with the target audience

• Studies show the EX campaign is an effective tool for promoting smoking cessation, including among low SES populations
Questions?

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