

Case Study: *Resist Meth*

BWA is proud of our ability to create campaigns that result in behavior change. A relevant example of this is our work developing *Resist Meth*, a campaign created with the goal of reducing meth use among men and decreasing the harm caused to those who use.

The campaign was created for men who had never used meth, as well as casual and heavy users and men in recovery. The San Francisco Department of Health officials wanted to be careful to avoid stigmatizing the users, while at the same time reaching out to the target community at larger to address the social norms that perpetuate meth use. To build community support for the campaign, BWA created community dialogue on the issue as part of the campaign development process. The most visible billboard in the Castro neighborhood was secured, and for five weeks the billboard featured an ad soliciting community advice, experiences, and opinions at a special websites. Ads with clip-out response forms were also sent to local newspapers seeking input via mail.

Community response to the invitation was significant. With this public input in mind and with the participation of an advisory committee made up of community members, agency representatives and former users, BWA developed and tested and launched the campaign in San Francisco and Boston. The *Resist Meth* campaign featured a bold iconographic image and simple call to action. Influenced by early 20th century poster art, the visuals were meant to portray both the individual struggle of these men against the temptations of meth used and the community imperative to confront the surge in use.



Ads were created and distributed in a variety of media.

These included traditional mass media channels such as radio and outdoor transit ads as well as nontraditional “grassroots” or guerilla marketing methods such as chalk stencils, stickers, and wheat-pasted poster on construction barricades. BWA also designed a well-received website for the campaign, as well as a pamphlet, entitled *Methifisto*, for which BWA received a Davey Award for pamphlet design. Additionally, BWA was honored with an American Graphic Design Award for the campaign, and *Resist Meth* generated significant earned media from CBS, the Bay Area Reporter, and numerous websites throughout the country and the world.

A campaign evaluation was conducted in which trained interviewers surveyed 177 members of the target audience. Survey participants were recruited in neighborhoods where the campaign appeared: on the street, in parks, coffee shops, bars and clubs, street fairs and community centers. The surveys utilized open-ended questions, Likert, nominal and ordinal scales. Data was analyzed utilizing the statistical analysis program, SPSS. The survey contained questions that



sought to assess the reach, repetition, recall and understanding of the campaign messages among the target population.

The results of the evaluation showed that by utilizing a combination of traditional and non-traditional media channels, the *Resist Meth* campaign was able to reach a remarkably high percentage of the target population surveyed. The bold, appealing graphics, and simple, empowering message struck a chord with target audience members across lines of age, race, and income, with meth users, ex-users, and those who had never tried the drug. The campaign also resulted in a normative change. The survey results were as follows:

- When asked if they had seen any crystal meth advertising in the previous six months, 85% said yes. When these men were asked to describe what they remembered, 94% described the message and/or images from Resist Meth. When prompted with an image of the campaign, each of the remaining participants recalled the ad.
- Survey participants reported seeing the campaign in a variety of forms and places. Sixty-six percent saw posters, 65% saw ads on bus shelters, 24% in magazines, 24% remembered seeing stickers, 20% saw the campaign at community organizations, 18% saw T-shirts, and 5% saw the chalk sidewalk stencils.
- When asked how many times they had seen the campaign, more than one-third reported seeing the messages more than 20 times. Eighty-four percent either agreed or strongly agreed with the campaign's message.
- Eighty-six percent said the message was clear and 84% said it was "memorable". Two-thirds felt the campaign was "cool", 46% said it was "empowering", and only 14% felt the campaign was "preachy".
- In addition to reaching a great number of men and engendering a favorable response, the campaign also spurred conversation about the issue with a substantial portion of the target population. Nearly one-third of respondents said they had discussed the campaign with someone else—a substantial rate of diffusion of the message throughout the community. Among those who had not discussed the campaign with anyone, more than one-third said they planned to.
- Participants were asked to assess the impact of the Resist Meth campaign on their attitudes and behaviors related to crystal meth. Seventy-nine percent of respondents agreed that after seeing the campaign they felt that crystal meth was a problem. Fifty-eight percent felt that "meth use was less socially acceptable in the community." Seventy-one percent agreed that "the community is coming together to confront the meth problem."
- The campaign was quite successful in impacting community norms about meth use and promoting community mobilization. When asked if, after seeing the campaign, they were more likely to talk to a friend about meth, 60% of



participants agreed, and 32% said they were more likely “to get involved in community efforts to deal with the meth problem.” Forty-seven percent said they were more likely to seek out more information about crystal meth, and 58% of survey participants said they were less likely to use meth after seeing the campaign.

BWA’s work on *Resist Meth* is one of numerous campaigns created by BWA that have resulted in demonstrable change in at-risk communities.