

Macro used Olchak Market Research, Inc. (OMR) to recruit the 3 groups in Calverton. OMR had been used successfully by Macro in the past to conduct recruitment efforts for focus groups. OMR maintains a randomly collected database of individuals who are likely to participate in focus groups or other market research projects. To maintain and add to this database, OMR calls individuals at random and explains that they are a market research firm which periodically performs market surveys and recruits for focus groups. They inform the individual that participants in these projects are paid for their time, then they ask whether the individual would be interested in participating in a future project. If the individual is interested in participating, his/her demographic information is recorded for future use. OMR does not use address lists provided by organizations, nor does it use individuals who contact them and ask to be placed on their list since many of these people are "professional" survey and focus group participants.

To ensure that a sufficient sample of adolescents attended, 14 youths were recruited for each group so that each group had 9 participants. OMR called adult individuals who were known to have children in the desired age range (12–17 years old), and used the attached screening instrument in their recruiting efforts. OMR made first contact with the parents of each youth. If the parents approved of their child's participation in the group, the child was then screened to determine if his/her age group (12–14 or 15–17 years old), gender, ethnicity, and smoking status fit the profiles called for in any of the 3 Calverton groups. If the youth's profile matched the desired profile for one of the groups, he/she was asked to participate and offered a \$40 incentive. Cash incentives are routinely used in focus group projects to ensure that participants attend groups that they have been asked to attend. All recruits were sent a confirmation letter by OMR, and OMR also telephoned them within 36 hours of the focus group to confirm their attendance. Each confirmation letter also contained a parental permission form which had to be completed and signed before any youth was allowed to participate in a group or receive the incentive payment.

#### *Other Cities*

Recruiting in Charlotte, Minneapolis, Houston, and San Francisco was performed by the individual focus group facilities with guidance from Macro staff. Each facility's recruiting methodology mirrored OMR's in most respects, except that the facilities in Houston and San Francisco did not screen participants for their smoking status for any group. Pre-screening for these groups was not required because the recruiting patterns in Calverton, Charlotte and Minneapolis indicated that a mix of smokers and non-smokers would result whether smoking status was pre-screened or not.

#### *Statement of Limitations*

In market research, the focus group approach seeks to develop insight and direction rather than quantitatively precise or absolute measures. Because of the limited number of respondents and the restrictions of

recruiting, this research must be considered in a qualitative frame of reference.

This study cannot be considered reliable or valid in a statistical sense since the recruiting of participants cannot be replicated, nor can the moderator ask the same questions of other respondents. This type of research is intended to provide guidance in determining knowledge, awareness, attitudes and opinions about concepts, products, or advertising formats.

Certain biases are inherent in this type of study and are stated here to remind the reader that focus group data cannot be projected to any universe of individuals. First, participants tend to be risk takers and may be somewhat more assertive than non-participants. Second, participants in a focus group study "self-select" themselves by the very fact that they are those people who were available at a time a particular group was scheduled. Participants thus were not selected randomly so that each person in a pool of possible participants did not have an equal chance of being selected. Third, participants who attend focus group sessions may be more articulate and willing to express opinions in a group than non-participants. And finally, people in groups may respond differently to a question than if asked the same question individually. They may follow the lead of a strong speaker or someone they perceive as "expert," despite efforts of the moderator to eliminate this bias.

This report cannot accurately detail the wealth of information in the non-verbal area, such as "body language," (posture, sleepiness, wiggling in the chair, etc.) or the amount of time elapsed between questions from the moderator and actual responses from the group. It also cannot report on the subtle area of "peer pressure"—the willingness to avoid making a particular response because of fear of what others in the group might think, or quickly changing a response when others in the group appear to oppose a particular position.

Finally, the reader is reminded that this report is intended primarily to clarify cloudy issues and point the direction for future research, and that data here cannot be projected to a universe of similar respondents.

#### *Moderators*

Two moderators were used for this project. Both are Macro employees with professional moderator training and significant practical experience moderating focus groups. The moderator for the Charlotte and San Francisco groups was trained at the Burke Institute in Cincinnati, Ohio. The moderator for the groups in Calverton, Minneapolis, and Houston was trained at the Riva Institute in Bethesda, Maryland.

#### *Data analysis*

All of the focus groups were taped. The tapes were used to develop transcriptions of the sessions for preparation of the report. All direct quotations in this report were identified via the professional transcriptions, which were produced by SAG Corporation in Washington, DC with tapes supplied by Macro.

#### *Protection of privacy of participants*

All participants and their parents were promised anonymity for their participation in this study. Thus, no participant names or other identifying characteristics appear in this report.

#### *Format for Discussion*

##### *Phase I—Calverton*

The primary objective of the Calverton groups was to obtain adolescents' reactions to 15 messages that had been developed as possible brief statements directed towards teens. In addition, participants were queried about attitudes toward smoking among their contemporaries and attitudes toward cigarette advertising among this population. Thus, the discussion for these groups followed the following format:

##### *A. Discussion of Cigarette Advertising*

Participants were queried about their knowledge of cigarette advertising and their perceptions of what messages cigarette advertisements were attempting to convey. Sample cigarette advertisements were present to aid the discussion.

##### *B. Discussion of Surgeon General's Warnings*

The moderator focused discussion upon the Surgeon General's warnings currently appearing on cigarette advertisements and elicited reactions to those warnings.

##### *C. Presentation of Sets of Brief Statements*

Participants were presented with four sets of brief statements, with each set containing messages that addressed different aspects of smoking. Statements were presented in sets to ease the process of comparison and selection of the most effective messages, due to the large number of brief statements that were presented to this group. The four sets of messages presented to the Calverton groups were:

##### *Set 1*

Kids who smoke like adults get addicted like adults.

Tobacco kills more Americans each year than AIDS, alcohol, accidents, murder, suicides, illegal drugs and fires \* \* \*

combined.

The earlier you start smoking the greater your risk of lung cancer.

Smoking harms your baby.

##### *Set 2*

Most teen smokers believe they can quit but after six years 75% still smoke.

About one out of three kids who become smokers will die from it.

Tobacco causes shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing, yellow teeth and wrinkles.

Cigarette smoke has more than 4000 chemicals including ones that cause cancer.

##### *Set 3*

Tobacco kills more people every day than 2 jumbo jets crashing with no survivors.

Smoking is a deadly addiction.

Smoking today leads to fewer tomorrows.

##### *Set 4*

Kids who start smoking find they can't stop—once it's too late.

Everyone now addicted to cigarettes started out 'just trying' cigarettes.

Most smokers wish they could quit but can't.

70% of smokers wish they could quit.