Rationale:

The following assignment was selected from the Marketing in Public Health class. It shows some of the skills and competencies I have learned in implementing a public health program that reflects communication, leadership, and advocacy skills. For this assignment we had to select a current public health issue, explain why it was a problem, and develop a marketing campaign around it. I selected a campaign to reduce the amount of texting while driving that was occurring, especially with young adults and teenagers. I developed several interventions like an education curriculum packet for schools and driver’s education programs to use, advertisements, brochures, etc. I created partnerships with insurance companies and tried to combat the peer pressure involved in the constant need to interact with another form of peer pressure, role playing, and involvement in a national summit on the topic. I listed several outcomes of this campaign that I hoped to achieve and selected a variety of process and outcome measures that would help me identify which initiatives were working, which needed tweaked, and which should be dropped because they were ineffective. This fits because I was able to show that I can design and implement a program around a health program, develop several different strategies that could have an impact on the problem. These strategies included advertising and educational activities that needed to effectively communicate with this audience. The program developed strategies for partnering with insurance companies and schools that could help to advocate for reducing texting while driving through individuals and also by enacting laws against the problem.

Paper:

Texting While Driving: A Dangerous Distraction Among Young People

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An extensive, multifaceted social marketing plan was developed to decrease texting while driving among teens and young adults. This is a serious public health risk as texting creates a severe distraction for drivers, thereby increasing the likelihood of car accidents by 23 times (VTTI, 2013). In order to evaluate this program, both process and outcome measures will be included. Process evaluation of a public health campaign involves measuring the extent to which a program was implemented, whether or not it reached the intended audience, and the fidelity with which the program was implemented. Outcome evaluation measures the extent to which the program had its intended effect and resulted in increased knowledge, awareness, and behavioral change. Ultimately, outcome evaluation in public health measures the extent to which the program decreased health risk or increased safety for the intended audience.

**Process Evaluation**

**Educational curriculum**

A structured educational curriculum is a major thrust of this social marketing campaign. This curriculum will be professionally developed by educational experts and media producers. It will consist of written material detailing facts about texting while driving, short videos, and interactive exercises designed to be facilitated by a teacher. This eight hour curriculum is designed to be offered in junior high and high schools as well as driver education schools and court-ordered programs in sessions from one to eight hours long. Following are process measures that will be employed to assess the extent to which this program reached its intended audience and was implemented according to its design and intention:

- A questionnaire will be administered to students prior to beginning the curriculum (i.e., at the beginning of session one) gathering demographic information, whether or not the student is a licensed driver, and asking about texting while driving behavior.
Additionally, this questionnaire will include several questions based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) asking about the participant’s attitudes about texting while driving, their perceived social norms (do other people approve or disapprove of the behavior), and their perceived behavioral control (to what extent do they believe they can control whether or not they engage in this behavior).

- One of the goals of this social marketing campaign is that this educational curriculum will be offered in 50% of junior high and high schools by 2015. Data will be tracked on the number of schools in which the program is offered by the end of 2015, and the percentage the total count represents of the total number of junior high and high schools. Additionally, data will be collected on the total number of students who participate in the program. As the program progresses, these data can be used to determine states or regions that are slow on the uptake and may need more marketing efforts.

- Data also will be gathered on the number of driver education and court-ordered programs offering this educational curriculum as well as on the total number of participants. Similar to the schools, these data can be used to determine states or regions that are slow on the uptake and may need more marketing efforts.

- A survey will be sent to teachers who provide this curriculum asking what they thought about the curriculum and suggestions they may have for changing it. Responses will be aggregated and used to shape future versions of the curriculum.

- Research assistants will be trained to observe and rate teachers in their provision of various aspects of the program (e.g., did they include interactive discussions, did they facilitate role plays according to the manual, etc.). These research assistants will be
sent to a random sample of schools to observe teachers and complete these implementation fidelity assessments. Results will be aggregated and used to modify and revise the curriculum and supporting materials (e.g., facilitator manual).

- Following completion of the curriculum, participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire very similar to the one at the beginning of the program, but with some additional questions about how they liked the program, what parts they liked better or worse than others, etc. These questions will be evaluated as a measure of participants’ satisfaction.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships will be key to the success of this social marketing campaign. Partnerships will be developed with insurance companies to offer discounts to students who complete the educational program. Additionally, partnerships will be developed with cell phone manufacturers and providers to develop apps that prevent texting in a moving vehicle. A third key partnership will be with the manufacturers of driving simulators, so that these devices can be used to teach young people how distracted they become while texting and how this creates a serious danger while driving. Following are process measures that will be used to evaluate how well this component of the program is implemented:

- Data will be collected on how many insurance companies participate as well as on how many students get discounts. As the program goes forward these data can be used to guide marketing efforts both in terms of soliciting insurance companies to participate, but also to increase awareness of the opportunities for discounts among young people and parents.
• Data will be collected on how many cell phone manufacturers and providers get involved in development and dissemination of applications that prohibit phones from texting in a moving vehicle, but allow the user to program an auto response. Additionally, data will be collected on how many young people use them, whether by their choice or as a parental requirement. These data will be aggregated by state and region and used to guide marketing efforts. Finally, surveys will be sent via text and link to a website to some users asking about the usefulness of these apps and user satisfaction.

• The driver simulation machines will automatically collect data on how many people use them and what features people use. Additionally, at the end of each user session, users will be asked a few survey questions about what they thought of the experience of simulating texting while driving and if the experience affected their intentions to engage in this behavior in the future.

• It is hoped that by having driving simulators at colleges and universities, some professors and/or graduate students might take advantage of the opportunity to use them in research activities. Data will be collected on the number of research studies that are conducted using these devices.

**Information Blitz**

The information provided from media, internet, brochures, and other sources will be an important component in reaching the parents and young people. Brochures will be available in colleges and universities, junior high and high schools, doctor's offices, gyms, and other public places. Magazines will contain personal stories with the public service announcement. Television advertisements will air periodically and a story line will be included in a popular
primetime health show. The internet will run similar ads and also allow for a more interactive approach and quizzes. Internet news sources will include some information on the dangers of texting while driving with messages on alternate behaviors and sites for additional information when they run articles on the subject. All of these sources will include alternate behavior suggestions, sites where the person can access further information, the incentives developed through the partnerships discussed previously, and information on the educational program being offered in schools. The following process measures will evaluate how successful this information was at reaching the target audiences. The data on all of these items will be collected monthly for at least the first six months of the initiative, paying particular attention to time periods after different advertising occurs.

- Data will be collected on the number of brochures distributed and where they were distributed.
- The number of magazines sold or distributed with the texting while driving article in them will be counted. This will be used to estimate the number of people that would have seen the story, providing a "gross impression" on the opportunities there were for the message to be seen (Resnick & Siegel, 2013).
- The internet sites with the quizzes and interactive messaging will be tracked to count the number of people that accessed them.
- A vendor will be contracted with to track the number of times on the internet that public health information was included in an article on texting while driving. What site the article appeared on, when, and how long it remained on the site will be tracked. This will provide another opportunity for tracking circulation of the message.
• Reach and frequency will be estimated prior to the television advertisements airing when the plan is laid out (Resnick & Siegel, 2013).

• The Nielson tracking service will be used to estimate the number of viewers to the television program with the texting while driving storyline.

• A brief survey will be set up on the internet sites listed in the brochures, the magazines, and the television advertising. There will be several different questions, but for measuring this item, people will be asked where they learned about this site. This will allow the campaign to identify which methods of communication reached the most people: internet advertising, role play, and quizzes; brochures; magazines; television advertising, internet news stories, etc.

• The phone numbers also will be tracked. A calling center will be set up. When a person calls asking for information about the apps, the education program, simulators, etc, they will be provided this information. The operator will ask the person where they learned of the app or the program. An analysis of the call volume will be compared to when different ads ran, brochures were distributed, television programming ran, etc. Since live operators will be used, they also can ask for a profile of the person, including some basic demographics, to get a better idea of who the messages reached (Resnick & Siegel, 2013). Again, this will help with identifying the best methods of communication for this program.

Peer Pressure

This campaign will be attempting to use peer pressure to encourage people to stop texting while driving. This will be done through the role plays that are part of the educational program, through community and teen involvement in the national distraction driving summit, and
bracelets given out that symbolize the commitment of the person to not text and drive. Through these efforts, the campaign hopes to increase awareness of the danger and encourage alternate behaviors. Following are process measures to evaluate the increase in awareness using the bracelets and the summit.

- Attendance at the National Distraction Driving Summit will be collected. The attendance will be compared to prior years before the campaign was introduced.

- The number of teens that attend the summit and then organize community events will be counted. This will show if the information provided at the summit was enough to prompt the teen to become involved and begin to try to change the behavior in others. The data will be collected the first year after the summit and then the next year to see if the teen continues to sponsor community events, if they increase their support or if their support tapers off.

- Community events will be tracked through the teen sponsors. The teen will be given a phone number to call to identify the community that is holding the event, provide information on the type of event, and be given support for the event. The phone number will be listed as a support for the young person; a place to receive brochures, bracelets, other materials, and guidance for the event. This will hopefully encourage more calls and allow better tracking of the events held.

- The number of bracelets given out to schools, sponsored programs and events, and other locations will be tracked. Also, teachers at many of the schools that completed the educational program will be surveyed to see if they have noticed teens wearing the bracelets after the program and an approximate number of people they have seen wearing them.
Outcome Evaluation

Educational Program

The structured educational program is designed to have a direct impact, reducing the texting while driving behavior of students. By increasing awareness of the health risks associated with this behavior and teaching specific skills for avoiding or discontinuing it, it is expected that participants will reduce this behavior after they complete the course, or not start the behavior for those who weren’t already doing it. Following are outcome measures that will be used to assess these effects:

- A questionnaire very similar to the one given at the beginning of the educational program will be administered at the end of the program. This version will not repeat questions about demographics, but will repeat the TPB questions and questions about actual texting while driving behavior (e.g., In the past week how many times have you read a text message while driving?, How many times have you responded to a text? etc.). This will allow for an evaluation of changes in attitudes, perceived social norms, perceived behavioral control, and texting while driving behavior as a result of being in the program. Additionally, questions will be added about the intentions of students to text while driving in the future. This will allow for an analysis of the factors that predict intentions to text while driving.

- A follow-up questionnaire will be sent to a random sample of students who complete the educational program three months following completion of the program asking the same questions from the TPB model, about actual texting while driving behavior, and about intentions. Six months following completion of the course the follow-up questionnaire will be repeated for the sample who received it at three months as well.
as a separate random sample that did not receive the three month follow up. This second group will be included to account for potential repeated testing effects.

**Partnerships**

Successful partnerships with insurance and cellular companies will be able to keep the message in the campaign going after many of the other informational interventions have ceased. The following outcome measures will assess how strong the partnerships are and whether they have led to an increase in the behavior change.

- Data will be collected on the number of young people that had the incentive and had it removed due to texting while driving behavior.
- Surveys will be sent out to people that have the app that disables texting in a moving vehicle. The surveys will ask questions about the individual’s texting while driving behavior before they began using the app and then after they started using it. This will provide a measure of the direct effect the app had on this behavior.

**Information Blitz**

The information blitz is designed to increase the awareness of the problem and dangers of texting while driving. This increased threat of harm will hopefully lead the target audiences to look into more information or choose alternative behaviors as directed by the information. It is expected that more people will use the information to sign up for the educational course, purchase an app, find a driving simulator, or choose to stop or not text while driving in other ways. The following is the survey used to evaluate the effectiveness of the information blitz:

- The survey given on internet sites and over the phone discussed previously, will include questions to measure the effect the information had on their awareness of the dangers of texting while driving and their perceived risks. Questions will be included
such as: Did the person realize prior to the information they received that texting while driving increased the chance of an accident by 23 times? Did the person realize that texting while driving has been found to be more dangerous than drunk driving? Did the information they received recently help to increase their awareness of the dangers of distracted driving? Was the information helpful in furthering their knowledge of the risks? Was the information helpful in providing alternatives to the behavior? After learning more about these dangers, will you consider an alternative behavior before texting while driving? After learning more about these dangers, will you not text while driving or agree to not start?

Peer Pressure

Given that social connection is such a strong force, peer pressure could be used to influence others to not text and drive. The summit and the bracelets are a way to increase awareness and use peer pressure to encourage the behavior change. The outcome measures will need to evaluate whether these were successful ways to increase awareness and result in behavior change. Following are outcome measures designed to evaluate whether there was an increase in peer pressure leading to less texting while driving.

- The teenagers sent to the summit will be asked to complete a survey on the summit, what they learned, were the alternative suggestions helpful, and whether they will be sharing the information they learned.

- At the community events a survey will be given to those that attend asking several questions about their texting while driving behavior, was the event helpful in increasing their awareness, was it helpful in encouraging behavior change, will they stop texting while driving or never start, etc.
A couple additional questions on the bracelets will be asked during the internet and phone surveys discussed previously. Do you recognize the bracelet as a symbol to prevent texting while driving? Do you see many young people wearing the bracelet? Do you have on or know where you can get one? If you have one, do you wear it often? These questions will help to evaluate the effectiveness of this image for the campaign and whether if it is being worn, is it helping to encourage people to stand up against texting while driving.

Ultimate Outcomes

Ultimately, the goal of this campaign is to make the roads and highways safer as the result of reduced texting while driving by teens and young adults. Thus, yearly statistics will be reviewed from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to determine if there is a reduction in distracted driver accidents for these age groups as well as a reduction in injuries and deaths resulting from such accidents. Although there are many factors that can account for any reductions seen in these numbers, given the extensive, multifaceted, national approach that is proposed in this campaign it is expected that there will be a reduction in accidents, injuries, and deaths due to young drivers distracted by texting while driving.

Conclusion

Texting while driving is a serious and growing concern, and it is even more dangerous when young, inexperienced drivers are doing it. This campaign targeted young adults and parents in order to increase awareness of the serious threat of texting while driving and reduce the behavior. Many interventions were developed in an effort to achieve this. Several process and outcome measures were identified to measure how well the interventions reached the targeted audiences, were implemented, and resulted in behavior change. These measures will be
monitored closely for the first couple of years of implementation to see the affect they have had on the behavior. These measures also will be used to identify weak points in the campaign; areas that the interventions were unsuccessful at either reaching the target audience as intended or changing the behavior after implementation. If problems are identified with interventions through these measures, the intervention or the method of reaching the audience with the intervention will be changed or removed. This will ensure that campaign is adaptive to the environments and has the best chance for success with the overall goal of reducing texting while driving and decreasing accidents and deaths caused by distracted driving.
References


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http://www.vtti.vt.edu/featured/0413-distracted-driving.html