

NICO

De-glamourisation of smoking

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INTRODUCTION

19% of school going children and 34% of 18-34 year olds smoke. Peer pressure and the belief that they will look more sophisticated and 'cool' means that young people are easily persuaded to take up the habit, a habit that will be difficult to break and could even last a lifetime.

BACKGROUND

The National Health and Lifestyle Survey (SLÁN) was first commissioned by the Health Promotion Unit of the Department of Health and Children in 1998. This study is undertaken at four yearly intervals and serves to identify and monitor behaviour trends among the population. The data gathered is vital for policy development, programme planning and priority setting by the Health Promotion Unit.

The results from the initial research (1999 Slán Report) highlighted that smoking rates among young adults far exceeded the target anticipated for 2000 (the target was to reduce the percentage of those who smoke by at least 1 percentage point per year so that more than 80 per cent of the population aged 15 years and over are non-smokers by the year 2000). Over 40% of boys and girls reported smoking a cigarette by the age of 12-14 and by the age of 15-17 40% of girls in social class 5 and 6 are smokers. The results of this research gave rise to the birth of the Nico campaign.

MARKETING OBJECTIVES

The objective of the initial phase of the Nico campaign was to target young teenage girls with a relevant message about the negatives associated with smoking and by doing so reduce the attractiveness and incidence of smoking amongst this group. Teenage female smokers in Ireland were increasing in numbers at the time (12-14 year old girls were the fastest growing group of new smokers).

During the second phase of the campaign, which launched earlier this year, the target audience was broadened to include young teenage males. The most recent Slán report highlights that 15-17 year old males, as a group, is still reporting an increase in smoking levels. The early teenage years are the time when the majority of people take up smoking (eight out of ten smokers become addicted in their teens) and it is hoped that a successful campaign would reduce the number of smokers in the younger age groups and ultimately reduce the number of smokers overall.

THE TASK

Teenagers do not believe that antismoking messages focusing on the health risks associated with smoking (cancer, heart and lung disease etc.), are relevant to them. These risks are too far into the future to worry about now so a campaign using 'threat based' advertising would have little or no effect. This group believes that they are invincible.

What does matter to them however is the impression they make on their peer group. Their 'fashion choices' of clothing, footwear, music, even of attitude are very important to them. This is particularly true for teenage girls who are hugely concerned about looking good and being attractive to the opposite sex.

The task for advertising was to make cigarette smoking unfashionable and something that reduces rather than increases attractiveness to the opposite sex. Tone of voice is absolutely critical in successfully influencing this audience. Patronizing or preachy advertising will result in a rejection of the message and prompt the opposite behaviour to that which we want to achieve.

THE STRATEGIC SOLUTION

The approach taken was to provide them with ammunition to defend their decision not to smoke to their peers by highlighting that smoking has a significant and immediate impact on their appearance.

All of the positive associations that teenage girls have with smoking are to do with appearance. Smoking makes you look confident, sophisticated and more like an adult i.e. more attractive. Being attractive is more important to these young girls than the cancer risks associated with continued smoking.

When it comes to appearance teenage girls are information hungry and will spend hours ploughing through the pages of magazines looking for tips on hair, skincare and overall image creation. Similarly teenage boys will use cigarettes to look 'cool' and 'tough' in front of their peers. They are hugely influenced by their peers and seek acceptance from them. Their greatest fear is of being ridiculed or laughed at.

Highlighting the immediate negative effects smoking has on appearance exploits our target audiences' insecurities. In order to be successful we needed to speak to our target in a language and style that was appropriate. For the initial phase this involved the use of similar language to that which is used in cosmetic advertising and which is familiar to all teenage girls. In phase two it involved emulating the style and theme of the popular MTV show "Cribs" where wealthy celebrities show a tv crew around their home.

THE IDEA

The campaign entitled "Nico" was originally designed to target young women with a very distinct and clear message delivered via impactful, striking images. It motivated our target audience to avoid smoking because it could make them less attractive. We created a range of 'ANTI-COSMETICS' called 'NICO' and presented them using a brand character (also NICO) in the style of a cosmetics campaign. The essentials of the NICO character were that he was not saying "Don't", he was saying "Do"! Do buy his perfume, his lipstick, his hair products.

NICO starts off by looking attractive and in character for a TV personality selling a cosmetic product. His character goes from being pleasant to oily and ingratiating and eventually ends up a loathsome, sinister, yellowtoothed nightmare. Like smoking, he is a 'turn-off'.

Phase two of the campaign was produced earlier this year and follows the theme and style of MTV Cribs. MTV Cribs is a very popular programme amongst young teens primarily because it feeds their desire to know more about the lives of their celebrity idols.

In this ad NICO welcomes the tv crew into his mansion and is initially portrayed as a successful, sophisticated and charming businessman who has made a lot of money from marketing his range of NICO products. As the commercial develops, we get the sense that all is not as it seems. Nico's world is not as glamorous and fun as we think. Subtle off-camera details and undertones strip away at the façade. We're left with the reality of what Nico really is: very unhealthy, exploitative, highly addictive and potentially lethal.

THE COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY

The initial phase of the Nico campaign ran from 2000-2003. The campaign was led by TV and also included Cinema, Radio, Outdoor and Press advertising. Media developed an integrated strategy to place these ads "at the scene of the crime" i.e. Utilising six sheets close to convenience stores, pubs and colleges – all areas where the target might "light up".

The second phase which launched in Cinema and TV earlier this year will run for a further burst in October. The overall investment in media is approx €2.7 million with a further €1.1 million invested in developing the campaign.

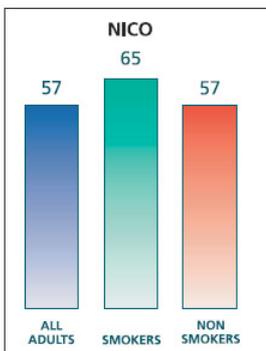
POST CAMPAIGN EVALUATION

On prompted recognition of the campaign 65% of smokers and even 57% of non-smokers recognized the Nico campaign. 67% of 15-34 year olds were aware of the campaign, while 69% of our target group, CD2E's were also aware.

THE RESULTS

On attitudes towards advertising by demographics, these were the results: The effectiveness of the initial phase of the Nico campaign can be seen from the results of the National Health & Lifestyles Survey (Slán 2003). Among school going children, 19% overall reported that they were current smokers, down from 21% in 1998 (this equates to approx 20,000 teenagers) and rates have dropped most particularly in the key 12-14 year old female group.

Whilst the campaign objectives have been met and indeed surpassed the total success cannot be ascribed to the media campaign alone. However the Health Promotion Unit firmly believes that the campaign was a major contributing factor in ensuring young people did not take up the habit, and has contributed significantly to a large number of smokers breaking the habit.



Age			Social Class		
15-34	35-54	55+	ABC1	CD2E	F
%	%	%	%	%	%
67	57	37	61	69	35

The first Nico campaign won Silver and Gold Apple Awards (British Health Awards) for TV and print in London and was the most recalled poster in Ireland for three years between 2000- 2003.

Following the launch of the second phase of the campaign earlier this year, research figures are as good, and in some cases higher than for the original campaign, although the Department's research is not yet concluded. The effectiveness of the second phase will be not be known until the 2006 Slán four-yearly health survey is published and this will also allow a direct comparison with the results from the first phase of the campaign.

	Total 2001	%	AGE			SOCIAL CLASS		
			15-34	35-54	55+	ABC1	CD2E	F
			%	%	%	%	%	%
Messages are easy to understand	59	69	92	86	90	67	89	
Smokers smell of nicotine	68	63	68	67	71	66	67	
Smokers have stained teeth	66	63	70	58	69	64	67	
Wigs make me pay attention	64	67	67	53	66	65	59	
I'd remember them the next day	64	64	65	55	66	63	62	
Smokers age quicker	61	62	63	56	64	59	58	
They're not relevant to me	57	53	60	61	58	50	60	
Are messages I can identify with	51	55	50	46	49	52	48	
Smokers are less attractive	47	67	50	43	50	44	51	

PAYBACK OR RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- Approx 6000 people a year die in Ireland due to smoking related diseases.
- 50% of today's young smokers will die prematurely from smoking related diseases.
- Smoking causes three major diseases
- lung cancer, heart disease and bronchitis/ emphysema.
- Smoking is a major cause of 90% of lung cancer deaths, 25% of deaths from heart disease and about 75% of deaths from bronchitis and emphysema.

It is impossible to put a value on the return on investment for this type of campaign as the return could be measured in lives saved through quitting early or by not taking up the habit at all.

Any success that the Nico anti-smoking campaign has in reducing the number of young smokers will, in the longer term, contribute to reducing the above statistics, reducing financial and operational pressure on the health service and will ultimately contribute to a healthier and happier society.

SUMMARY

The 1999 Slán report highlighted that over 40% of boys and girls reported smoking a cigarette by the age of 12-14 and by the age of 15-17 40% of girls in social class 5 and 6 are smokers.

The Nico anti-smoking campaign, aimed at reducing the attractiveness and incidence of smoking amongst teenage smokers in Ireland, launched in 2000. The initial phase of the campaign focused on teenage girls with the target broadening out to include teenage boys for phase two (launched earlier this year).

The challenge with targeting young teenagers with anti-smoking messages is that as a group they feel that they are invincible so messages about the long-term effects on health do not have cut through with this group.

The approach was taken to provide them with ammunition to defend their decision not to smoke to their peers by highlighting that smoking has a significant and immediate impact on their appearance.

The Nico ads used a style and imagery that was relevant to this young target, the first was produced in the style of a commercial for cosmetics and the second in the style of the popular MTV programme 'Cribs'.

The Nico campaign has been extremely successful, both in terms of advertising awards won and in the reduction in the numbers who smoke in the target – incidence of smoking is down 20,000 amongst the target with the largest reduction in the 12-14 year old age group.



THERE'S NOTHING SEXY ABOUT SMOKING.

BREAK THE HABIT FOR GOOD

CALL FOR YOUR ADVICE KIT
1850 218 121

Hi, I'm NICO. You'll love my range of beauty products.

Spray me on your hair and clothes, and everyone will know I've made a conquest.

My fragrance is deceptive... while it makes you look older, it will take years off you.

Put me on your lips, and when you kiss, he'll know who you really love.

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