STATEWIDE IMPAIRED DRIVING

Informing the Campaign through Testing
OBJECTIVES

- Measure how prevalent driving after consuming marijuana is in Texas
- Understand perceptions surrounding danger of driving under the influence of marijuana
- Test messages designed to change behavior and mindset surrounding marijuana impaired driving
WHAT THIS PROJECT IS NOT

This project is not:

• A study related in any way to the legalization of marijuana
• A study related to the science behind marijuana impairment
• A study related to the number of crashes or fatalities caused by marijuana impairment
GOALS OF STUDY

- Compile information necessary to build assets related to marijuana impaired driving for the statewide impaired driving public information and education campaign
- Compile information necessary to target those creative assets to the audiences most at risk of driving under the influence of marijuana
STUDY METHODOLOGY

• Literature Review
• Quantitative
• Qualitative
LITERATURE REVIEW

• Review national studies into marijuana impaired driving and studies from on marijuana impaired driving from other states

• Review messaging being used nationally and in other states
Fielded January 11–21, 2019

775 Sample size using internet panels
- 300 quota of current marijuana users
- 75 quota of Spanish dominant speakers

Weighted and balanced to be representative of Texas across geographic, demographic and psychographic categories
QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

Conducted March 19–21, 2019

Six focus groups conducted in Dallas, El Paso and Houston
  • Two groups conducted in Spanish: One 18–24 year old and one 25–40 year old
  • Four groups conducted in English: One 18–24 year old and three 25–40 year old

All participants current marijuana users, mix of all other characteristics
KEY FINDING ONE

Texans are engaging in dangerous behaviors with regard to usage of marijuana and driving.
KEY FINDING ONE:
Texans are engaging in dangerous behaviors with regard to usage of marijuana and driving

- **15%** Texans who have driven at least once a month over the past year after using marijuana
- **9%** Texans who have driven at least once a month over the past year impaired by alcohol
Certain demographic characteristics correlate to having driven at least one time a month over the past year after using marijuana.
KEY FINDING ONE: Texans are engaging in dangerous behaviors with regard to usage of marijuana and driving

• The overwhelming majority of marijuana users (67%) report either not having a plan or having a weak or inconsistent plan for a sober ride after they have used marijuana
KEY FINDING ONE:
Texans are engaging in dangerous behaviors with regard to usage of marijuana and driving

• More than one-third of Texans (35%) report they have been a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone under the influence of marijuana this year
KEY FINDING TWO

Texans are not knowledgeable about the dangers of driving after using marijuana
KEY FINDING TWO: Texans are not knowledgeable about the dangers of driving after using marijuana

- Danger of crash
- Danger of arrest
Danger of Crash

28% Texans that view driving after using marijuana as extremely dangerous

51% Texans that view driving under the influence of alcohol as extremely dangerous
Danger of Crash

• Users are far less likely (20%) to view driving after using marijuana as extremely dangerous than the total population

• Fewer people believe marijuana is extremely dangerous than driving while texting or driving after using other illegal drugs
Danger of Crash

• When forced to choose whether driving after using marijuana made one a safer or less safe driver, 33% of Texans state marijuana makes a person a safer driver
Quantitative Results

Danger of Crash

Marijuana users believe it makes them a safer driver - 59%

Non-users believe marijuana makes a person a safer driver - 17%
Danger of Arrest

- 37% of respondents believe driving under the influence of marijuana is either not illegal or has a lower penalty than driving under the influence of alcohol.
- 31% of Texans report a police officer would have no way of knowing if someone was under the influence of marijuana upon being pulled over.
Police departments are investing in new equipment and training officers to detect people driving under the influence of marijuana.
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

• Most persuasive message for increasing perception of dangers of driving after marijuana use

• 27% of Texans increased their perception of danger of driving after marijuana use after being exposed to complete message battery
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

• However, amongst those most likely to use marijuana (males, 18–24 year olds, those who are less than college educated), most individuals either maintain their current perception or feel it is less dangerous after exposure to messaging battery.
If a person gets behind the wheel while under the influence of marijuana, they could get in a crash and kill themselves.
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

- Most persuasive message for likelihood of being pulled over for driving under the influence of marijuana
- 27% of Texans increased their perception of likelihood of being pulled over for driving under the influence of marijuana after being exposed to the complete messaging battery
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

• However, amongst those most likely to use (males, 18–24 year olds, those who are less than college educated), most individuals either maintain the same perception of likelihood or feel it is less likely after exposure to complete messaging battery.

• Current marijuana users are the least likely to believe they would be pulled over at the conclusion of the survey.
The penalties for operating a motor vehicle under the influence of marijuana are the same as operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol.
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

- Most persuasive message for likelihood to have a sober ride home moving forward
- 21% of Texans increase their likelihood to have a sober ride home moving forward
- While males were more likely to positively change their likelihood than all Texans, current marijuana users showed no statistically significant movement
Poll results show incredible divergence on both mindset and willingness to change based. Two distinct audiences emerged:

- General public
- Current marijuana users
AUDIENCES

General Public

- Mindset far more mailable with higher likelihood to switch positions
- Important audience to create social change
AUDIENCES

Current Marijuana Users

- Tend to have firm engrained opinions
- This is the audience we must reach to reduce incidence of driving after using marijuana
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

KEY FINDING ONE
Driving under the influence of marijuana is extremely common
Key Finding One
Driving under the influence of marijuana is extremely common

- Average age of first use: 16
- Most users consume multiple times per week and often daily
- Marijuana users state they enjoy smoking while driving without being prompted
- Many users drive multiple times per week after using marijuana
- This contrasts with alcohol where the average drunk driver drives 80 times prior to their first arrest
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

KEY FINDING TWO
Marijuana perceived as improving driving ability
Key Finding Two
Marijuana perceived as improving driving ability

- Increases focus
- Drive slower
- More patient
- Isolated examples of members of some groups state they personally cannot drive after using marijuana
  - These people are all fully comfortable riding in car with people who have used marijuana
Key Finding Two
Marijuana perceived as improving driving ability

• When asked if they would find it acceptable that a school bus driver would drive their children after having consumed marijuana almost all responded they were fine with that
Key Finding Two
Marijuana perceived as improving driving ability

“I think for the most part you’re pretty safe. You’re just in a flow state kind of thing, where you’ll play some music and just drive away. I mean, it can even be like therapeutic, at least for me. I like driving…Yeah, you’re in the zone.”

— El Paso participant
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Key Finding Two
Marijuana perceived as improving driving ability

“I got a big old line of traffic. As all of us know, living in Houston, 45, 59, Beltway, it don’t matter; it’s always crowded and most of us probably drive in rush hour. For me, it is a way to not have road rage, to not hate the process…”

— Houston participant
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

KEY FINDING THREE
Planning for a sober ride not even a consideration
Qualitative Findings

Key Finding Three
Planning for a sober ride not even a consideration

- Participants believe police cannot tell who is driving under the influence of marijuana since driving ability is not impacted
  - They believe appearance of smoke or smell of smoke is only clue
- Many do have a plan for after smoking that involves going through a drive-through fast food restaurant or driving to a grocery store for the munchies
- This contrasts with alcohol where almost all participants always have a plan for a sober ride
Key Finding Three
Planning for a sober ride not even a consideration

“I will get in a car with somebody that’s high, but I won’t get in the car with somebody that’s drunk.”

— Houston participant
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Key Finding Three
Planning for a sober ride not even a consideration

“If I’m drunk and trying to get home, I would probably take an Uber. It would be safer for me, versus if I was stoned at a friend’s house or a club. I’m like, ‘I can get home fine.’”

— Houston participant
KEY FINDING FOUR

Marijuana users sensitive to two stereotypes
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Key Finding Four
Marijuana users sensitive to two stereotypes

• Reefer madness: the belief that marijuana is evil and will cause one to “go crazy”
• Cheech and Chong: the belief that marijuana makes a person a joke
• All response to any platforms that play on either of these frames is to immediately dismiss the message
Key Finding Four
Marijuana users sensitive to two stereotypes

“They portray them as goofy, silly, something bad is going to happen or they’re not proper or something like that. I’ve never seen a positive—it ended up fine, but it’s always a comedy, you know.

It’s either one extreme or the other. Totally serious, ‘Oh, my god, they’re going to have a wreck and die,’ because they were high, or super silly, like driving 30 miles an hour on the freeway.”

— Houston participants
If a person gets behind the wheel while under the influence of marijuana, they could get in a car crash and kill themselves.
• Completely ineffective
• Audiences feel safer to drive on marijuana than otherwise
• Felt message was a scare tactic
• Any examples of crashes dismissed since people can get in crashes totally sober
"Yeah, it’s just a driver’s bad whether they’re high or not. I don’t think that weed has any affect on them."

— El Paso participant
“I think anyone that drives is at risk of crashing and dying, not necessarily because you smoked. Someone else could have been smoking or drinking and hit you. It’s not just because of the marijuana. It’s for other reasons.”

— Houston Spanish dominant

(Translator in audio)
It could cost a person up to $17,000 in fines, court costs, and legal fees if convicted of operating a motor vehicle under the influence of marijuana.
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

• Somewhat motivational in that cost makes them pay attention
• However, feel would not be pulled over
• Also believe even if pulled over for something else, police would not know or care
“Even cops know weed is not a big problem. I’ll be honest with you all, I’ve been arrested and I’ve had weed in the car before…

If you look crazy and if you’re acting crazy and you have a little bit of weed, he’s going to think there’s going to be other stuff, you’ve got other kind of dope. But if you just act normal, if you’re cool, like if you’re just regular cool and if you happen to come up on some weed, they’ll probably just throw it away and tell you to get out of there.”

— El Paso participant
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Police departments are investing in new equipment and training officers to detect people driving under the influence of marijuana.
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

• Several believed statement
• Felt it was motivational
• Became defensive and stated police resources should be spent elsewhere
• Some skepticism on new equipment
“I believe that there’s some kind of device that they have or that’s in development or close to being used for that, but not that I know it’s effectively being used or being used here in Texas. I had heard, as recently as a year or two ago, that they were close to having a breathalyzer version of looking for THC…”

— Dallas participant
The penalties for operating a vehicle under the influence of marijuana are the same as operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol.
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

- Moderate motivation as DUI is seen as a big deal
- Do not believe police would pull them over
- Do not believe police would be able to tell that they had used marijuana
If you feel different, you drive different
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

• Universal agreement with statement
• Different does not mean bad. In this instance different is better.
• Statement could encourage people to drive under the influence of marijuana
"I think the main issue is that alcohol and some of these other things, prescription drugs and Prozac and stuff, they’ll affect your motor skills. You’ll get physically tired. You might get a little mentally slow, but you can still function if you’re high. I might drive a little slower. I might be less motivated to be weaving in and out of traffic, but I’m still fine, even if I am different because I’m high. If I was drunk, I might be doing some dumb things just because it’s leaving my mind and also affecting my body in a negative way, too, where marijuana isn’t doing that.”

— Dallas participant
“If they try to use that as a tagline of, ‘Obviously you’re not driving your best right now because you feel different.’ It’s like, ‘Yeah, but I feel better. I feel awesome. I feel relaxed. I feel great.’ You know what I mean? Don’t try to tell me that, because I feel different, now I’m under the influence and I’m obviously a danger to people driving on the road and whatnot and a danger to myself. That’s somewhere where I think they try to take that. It’s like, that’s rude and presumptuous and untrue and, I think, a dangerous rhetoric to start.”

— Dallas participant
• One goal: change behavior. This does not mean finding messages that marijuana users like or make them feel better about themselves.

• To change behavior message must resonate with users. Enforcement messaging that shows:
  • It is a priority for law enforcement
  • There is a real risk you will be pulled over
  • Once pulled over, they have technology to test you and officers trained to detect
MOVING FORWARD

• Tone is vitally important in creative
  • Not over the top
  • Not comedic
• Vitally important to test all creative with users prior to production
MOVING FORWARD

• For societal change, messaging targeting all Texans that stresses it is dangerous to drive after using marijuana and it is also illegal and the state is now taking it seriously and investing in training and officers could be effective.
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