

Cassies 2006 Cases

Brand/Case: “Stupid” Anti-Tobacco

Winner: Government & Advocacy—Gold

Best Integrated Campaign—Gold

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Crossover Notes: All winning cases contain lessons that cross over from one case to another. David Rutherford has been identifying these as Crossover Notes since Cassies 1997. The full set for Cassies 2006 can be downloaded from the Case Library section at www.cassies.ca

- Crossover Note 2. Brand Truths.
- Crossover Note 10. Conventional Wisdom—should it be challenged?
- Crossover Note 11. The Eureka Insight.
- Crossover Note 20. Emotional versus Rational.
- Crossover Note 21. Likeability.
- Crossover Note 22. Humour in a Serious Category.
- Crossover Note 23. Problem versus Solution.
- Crossover Note 24. Tough Topics.

To see creative, go to the Case Library Index and click on the additional links beside the case.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Business Results Period (Consecutive Months): November 26, 2004 – May 15, 2006
Start of Advertising/Communication Effort: November 26, 2004
Base Period for Comparison: Historical data

Here's a newsflash: a lot of kids smoke. They know they shouldn't but they do anyway. So the objective of this campaign, to reduce smoking uptake among 12 to 15-year-olds, was pretty ambitious.

Of course, getting through to kids is never easy. So how did we do? Perhaps most importantly, Statistics Canada reported smoking prevalence among 12 to 17 year-olds dropped to 8% in 2005 from 10% in 2003—and attributed this to significantly reduced smoking experimentation. Read on for the full story.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

a) Overall Assessment

Anti-tobacco advertising is well-trodden ground. By the time kids are thinking about starting, they've already been bombarded by images of blackened lungs, rotting teeth and clogged arteries. They've heard stories from victims and people who've lost loved ones. They get it: Smoking is bad for you. [Crossover Note 10](#).

But they're still doing it. Even with decades of ad campaigns to stop people from smoking, 25% of Canadian kids in grades 5 to 9 are still experimenting with tobacco. Almost half of kids have experimented with tobacco by grade 9.¹ The choice not to smoke isn't a one-time decision. Even if kids say no in the playground at school, they may still say yes when they are offered a cigarette at a party.

It's pretty easy to figure out why. They want to fit in. They think it's cool. They think it relieves stress. They think it will make them skinny.² Those are pretty serious beliefs to have to confront. [Crossover Note 24](#).

b) Resulting Objectives

Find a new way to keep kids from caving in to the pressure or appeal of smoking, to stop them from starting, and to make it stick.

STRATEGY & INSIGHT

Past anti-tobacco advertising efforts have taught us that you can't be all things to all people. Kids just don't react to the same messages as adults. And to make matters more complicated, a single message wasn't going to resonate with both a kid who smokes and a kid who was just thinking about it.

¹ 2002 Youth Smoking Survey, Statistics Canada, June 2004.

² 2002 Youth Smoking Survey, Statistics Canada, June 2004.

We decided that we had to narrow our focus. We didn't have to worry about the 5- to 10-year-olds – they are some of the biggest anti-smokers around. And we couldn't concern ourselves with older kids who were already hooked – that was a “kick the addiction” message.

We had to strike the middle ground. We chose to fight for those kids who are leaving the lower grades to enter the social minefield of middle or high school. They're the ones who are most vulnerable to tobacco's appeal. They're going from the top of the social ladder to the bottom. They're looking for ways to exert their independence. And, at 12 to 15 years old, smoking can be very appealing.

So we want to talk to adolescents. The problem is, they don't want to listen. Parents are lame; teachers are pathetic. And government officials? Forget it. Authority figures are a force to react against. Peers are the ones to please. [Crossover Note 2](#).

That meant execution was crucial. We needed to talk to kids in the way they would talk to each other – when adults aren't around. Unfortunately, we weren't kids. So we set up an advisory panel of kids involved in anti-tobacco initiatives, and some who were just non-smokers. We walked them through our strategy and asked them to help us refine it. When we had five creative concepts, they helped narrow this to three. They even attended our creative presentation to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. And as you might have guessed, the client went with the concept the kids recommended: “Stupid.”

It was built around three elements:

1. **Entertainment** – The advertising had to capture kids' attention and get them talking. So everything featured humour, with a "created-by-youth-for-youth" feel. [Crossover Note 22](#).
2. **Situations Kids Could Understand** – Kids don't care that they might have lung cancer when they're old enough to be grandparents. But they do care about looking stupid. [Crossover Notes 11 and 20](#). Holding a metal pole in a lightning storm, or making toast while in the bath, showed smoking – the far more likely way to kill yourself – for what it really is. [Crossover Note 23](#).
3. **The Web Site** – Stupid.ca was engaging, informative and funny – like the TV ads – and a forum where kids could interact, share stories, ask questions and get answers. They could even learn how to get involved by becoming an anti-tobacco advocate at their school or in their communities.

EXECUTION

The game plan was to have a big launch that grabbed kids' attention and interest. We wanted to start a youth buzz that developed curiosity and interest, and then hold their attention with a multimedia campaign, all of it leading to the web site.

Launch – November 26, 2004

This started with a five-city concert launch in Toronto, London, Thunder Bay, Kingston and Ottawa—promoted two weeks in advance by wild posting teasers. It featured bands like Goldfinger, De la Soul, Brass Munk, Dead Celebrity Status and Closet Monster, and was hosted by MuchMusic VJs. How did it go? The web site got more than 32,000 hits in the first four days.



TV – November 26, 2004 – April 2005

The youth panel made sure that the ads had it right. Seven English TV and one French spot used different means to show the stupidity of smoking. We had two flights. During November 26, 2004 to April 2005 we rotated two ads at 138 GRP a week, refreshing the creative every month, and rotating through all the spots. We followed up with a light weight sustaining flight of the three most popular ads in August 2005 and into the fall.

The TV ads were ranked third “Most Noted” in Feb. and March by *Marketing Magazine*, and were the most liked ads in Canada in March. **Crossover Note 21**. They were also the third most hated... guess we were hitting a little too true. The campaign also won a Silver Marketing Award in Public Service, a Certificate from the British Television and Advertising Awards, and was a finalist in the Cannes Lions and One Show.



Antlers



Hardware Store



Cereal



Stupid Stunt



Dog Park



Bath Time

Cinema – December 2004 and January 2005

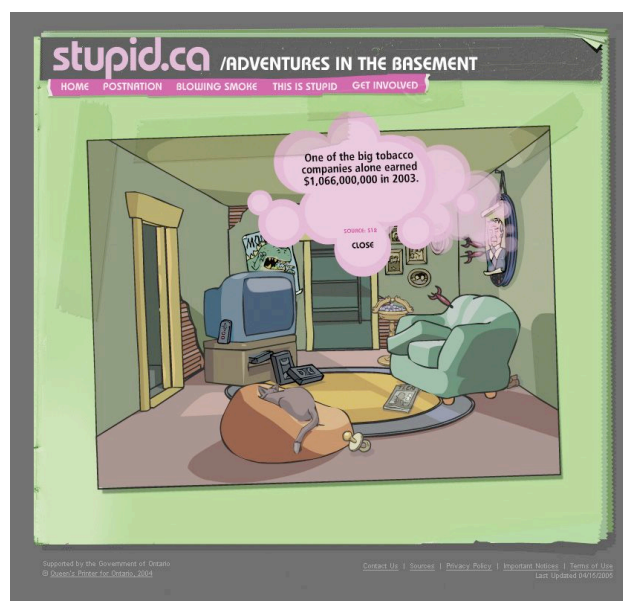
We took advantage of the big sound and big screen of cinema to get the message through. “Lightning” played in theatres December and January.



Web site

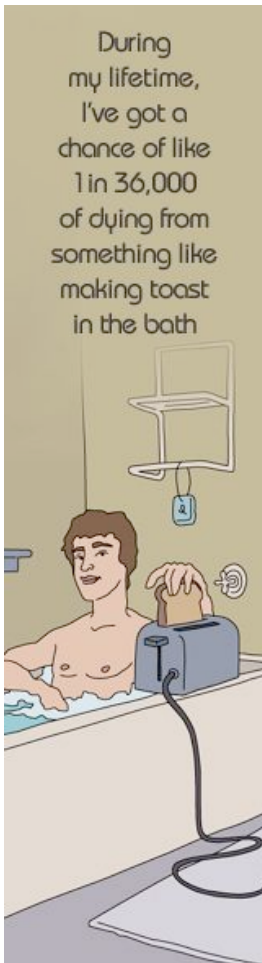
Stupid.ca was an immersive experience that balanced education with entertainment. It was real, honest and funny, and it continues to reach an ever-expanding audience. The site has become a mainstay for the anti-tobacco youth movement, and a tool for helping deliver the anti-tobacco message.

In addition to getting over 1.2 million unique visitors, the web site won “Best in Show” from the Digital Marketing Awards, the Flash in the Can “People’s Choice” award for educational web sites, and “Site of the Day” from Favourite Web Site (FWS). It was also a finalist at the One Show Interactive.



Magazine, Web Banner and Ticket Back

To increase the reach and reinforce the message, we also developed a couple of magazine ads and a web banner, and took advantage of Ticketmaster ticket backs.



During my lifetime, I've got a chance of like 1 in 36,000 of dying from something like making toast in the bath

Web banner

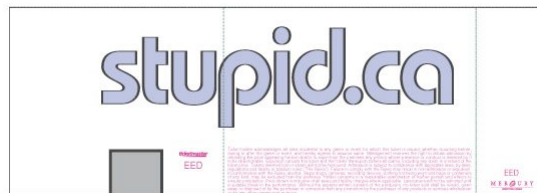


Arsenic has been banned in rat poison. But it's still in some cigarettes. Good thing rats are too smart to smoke.

Supported by the Government of Ontario

want more stupidity? stupid.ca

Magazine



Ticket Back

RESULTS

1. Advertising Breakthrough.

Awareness of anti-tobacco advertising was measured by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care a month before the launch of Stupid, halfway through the first wave of TV, and just after that first wave in April 05.

While anti-tobacco advertising in general had good recall before Stupid, unaided recall jumped by approximately 15 percentage points in February, and stayed at 73% through April. By February, more than half (57%) of kids asked, on an unprompted basis, were able to recall the name of the stupid.ca website.

Awareness of anti-smoking advertising – seen, read, heard in the past 2 months.

62%	77%	73%
Oct 04	Feb 05	April 05

In addition, as noted above, *Marketing Magazine's* Leger Marketing poll ranked Stupid as the third most noticed ads in Canada for February and March 05. Stupid also registered the second most liked ads in February, and the most liked in March. This despite the fact that the majority of the media buy was in Ontario,

Traffic to the web site was impressive. The launch drove more than 32,000 people to the site in the first four days. And when advertising broke through in December and January, the web site got more than 130,000 unique visitors each month—with a total of 569,432 unique visitors by the end of May 05. Then, over the next year, stupid.ca got another 663,000 unique visits, to total over 1.2 million unique visits.

2. Vast Majority of Youth Say the Ads are Working

Ninety-one percent of surveyed kids say that Stupid ads are effective at preventing young people from starting to smoke—versus the 65% who thought the anti-smoking ads before Stupid accomplished the same goal.

Pre Stupid	Stupid Campaign	
65%	91%	88%
Oct 04	Feb 05	April 05

Question: *I would like to know how effective you felt these (Stupid) ads were at preventing young people in Ontario from starting smoking.*

Similarly, kids felt the ads did a good job providing them with relevant information about the dangers of smoking. (86% and 84% agreement for February and April 05.)

3. Statistics Canada Youth Smoking Results

Stupid.ca obviously wasn't the first attempt to stop young people from starting smoking. There has been decades of effort to reduce overall rates of smoking. Higher taxes on cigarettes, large graphic health warnings on packaging, and curbs on cigarette advertising and promotion have all contributed to declining smoking rates. However, Stupid.ca is the first sustained Ontario Government initiative in over a decade targeting youth—and results from the StatsCan Canadian Community Health Survey, coupled with the awareness and perceived effectiveness results from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's tracking, suggest that Stupid.ca may have made a strong contribution to the most recent declines in youth smoking.

Statistics Canada's most recent smoking survey is based on data collected while the Stupid.ca spots were on the air, from January to December 2005, and the findings are directly comparable to data Statistics Canada collected in 2003. The results show a continued decline in overall smoking prevalence, driven by four provinces where the decline was considered statistically significant (Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Manitoba). The survey also observed that of all groups, the "sharpest declines" in smoking prevalence was amongst youth aged 12 -17. Smoking prevalence amongst 12 to 17 year-olds dropped from 10% in 2003 to 8% in 2005. The survey also saw a dramatic increase in youth who never started smoking, from 73% in 2000/01 to 84% in 2005.³

When commenting on the survey, Edward Adlaf, a research scientist at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, who runs the Ontario portion of the survey, said data from the Ontario showed "quite strongly... that we have more and more students who perceive great risk in smoking... so there's been a hardening of negative attitudes and beliefs about smoking."⁴

CAUSE & EFFECT BETWEEN ADVERTISING AND RESULTS

With decades of anti-tobacco effort, public health officials correctly point to the overall package of anti-tobacco policies and initiatives as the cause of declining smoking rates rather than any single initiative. However, since StatsCan's last smoking survey in 2003 there haven't been any significant youth tobacco policy changes in Ontario—and Stupid is the first significant and sustained mass media anti-smoking campaign targeting youth in a decade. As the Canadian Press put it, "After decades of trying, it would appear that something may have taken the "cool" out of teen smoking."

³ *Your Community, Your Health: Findings from the Canadian Community Health Survey 2005*. Statistics Canada. Published June 13, 2006.

⁴ Canada Press, "Teen Smoking rate plunge to single digits." Helen Branswell, June 13, 2006.