HHS Public Access

Author manuscript

*Health Promot Pract*. Author manuscript; available in PMC 2022 May 01.

Published in final edited form as:

*Health Promot Pract*. 2021 May ; 22(3): 423–432. doi:10.1177/1524839920910372.

# "It's Not Too Aggressive": Key Features of Social Branding Anti-Tobacco Interventions for High-Risk Young Adults

**Gabriela Toledo, MPH**[1,2], **Julia McQuoid, PhD**[2], **Pamela M. Ling, MD, MPH**[2]

[1]Keck School of Medicine of University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, USA

[2]University of California San Francisco, San Francisco, CA, USA

## Abstract

**Purpose.—**Peer crowd–targeted campaigns are a novel approach to engage high-risk young adults in tobacco use prevention and cessation. We elicited the perspectives of young adult key informants to understand how and why two social branding interventions were effective: (1) "COMMUNE," designed for "Hipsters" as a movement of artists and musicians against Big Tobacco, and (2) "HAVOC," designed for "Partiers" as an exclusive, smoke-free clubbing experience.

**Design.—**Qualitative study (27 semistructured qualitative phone interviews).

**Setting.—**Intervention events held in bars in multiple U.S. cities.

**Participants:** Twenty-seven key informants involved in COMMUNE or HAVOC as organizers (e.g, musicians, event coordinators) or event attendees.

**Measures.—**We conducted semistructured, in-depth interviews. Participants described intervention events and features that worked or did not work well.

**Analysis.—**We used an inductive-deductive approach to thematically code interview transcripts, integrating concepts from intervention design literature and emergent themes.

**Results:** Participants emphasized the importance of fun, interactive, social environments that encouraged a sense of belonging. Anti-tobacco messaging was subtle and nonjudgmental and resonated with their interests, values, and aesthetics. Young adults who represented the intervention were admired and influential among peers, and intervention promotional materials encouraged brand recognition and social status.

**Conclusion.—**Anti-tobacco interventions for high-risk young adults should encourage fun experiences; resonate with their interests, values, and aesthetics; and use subtle, nonjudgmental messaging.

### Keywords

smoking; health behavior interventions; young adults; peer crowds; bars



Address correspondence to Pamela M. Ling, Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education, University of California San Francisco, 530 Parnassus Avenue, Suite 366, San Francisco, CA 94143-1390, USA Pamela.ling@ucsf.edu.

## BACKGROUND

Young adults are less likely to receive smoking cessation assistance (Ling et al., 2014), although quitting smoking before age 30 years greatly reduces tobacco-related morbidity and mortality (Doll et al., 2004), and young adult smokers are more likely to successfully quit smoking (Messer et al., 2008). About a third of smokers start between the ages of 18 and 26, and population-based national data show higher smoking prevalence among young adults (18-24) than older adults (Kasza et al., 2017). Messages that stigmatize smokers or emphasize long-term health consequences may fail to resonate with young adults (Gough et al., 2009). A novel approach to develop relevant and accessible interventions for young adults is social branding (Lee et al., 2014). This approach utilizes peer crowd segmentation to identify and engage high-risk young adult groups (Lisha et al., 2016) to decrease tobacco use (Fallin, Neilands, Jordan, & Ling, 2015; Ling et al., 2014). Peer crowds are groups of young people that share common interests, values, and lifestyles (e.g., “Hipsters,” “Partiers,” “young professionals”) both within and outside of one’s immediate peer group.

Peer crowd targeting is a theoretically grounded strategy for encouraging young adults to embrace healthy behaviors (Moran et al., 2017). Peer crowd identification may affect behavior by influencing social identity (where identifying with a group confers a sense of belonging and self-esteem; Abrams & Hogg, 2006) and through social norms (where individuals tend to adopt behaviors normative to their peer crowd; Terry & Hogg, 1996). An individual’s identification with a group influences the effect of communication on behavior (Comello & Farman, 2016). Moran and Sussman (2015) found that adolescents who strongly affiliate with a peer crowd report greater anti-smoking attitudes after viewing peer crowd-tailored anti-tobacco advertisements.

Young adult–oriented smoking cessation programs at college campus health centers are important (Romero & Pulvers, 2013). However, these programs may not reach those at highest risk. Tobacco companies prey upon the transitional phases of young adulthood, inserting marketing messages that normalize smoking into places where young adults socialize (e.g., bars, sporting and music events; Ling & Glantz, 2002a, 2002b; Sepe & Glantz, 2002). COMMUNE was an intervention designed to compete with tobacco industry marketing in social venues. It was tailored for the “Hipster” peer crowd and reflected interests in alternative music, live shows, social justice, art, and self-expression (Ling et al., 2014). COMMUNE’s branded anti-tobacco messaging focused on tobacco industry business practices; a strategy used successfully by the Truth campaign (Farrelly et al., 2009; Richardson et al., 2010; Vallone et al., 2017) and consistent with research showing that anti-tobacco industry sentiments are negatively associated with smoking and positively associated with intent to quit (Ling et al., 2007). Messages were delivered via opinion leaders, promotional activities, and branded events (Fallin, Neilands, Jordan, & Ling, 2015; Kalkhoran et al., 2016; Ling et al., 2014).

A second anti-tobacco intervention, HAVOC (Fallin, Neilands, Jordan, Hong, & Ling, 2015), was developed for “Partiers.” HAVOC was designed for young adults attending large nightclubs, and messages reflected values of social status, physical attractiveness, confidence, and financial success (Fallin, Neilands, Jordan, Hong, & Ling, 2015; Kalkhoran

et al., 2016). HAVOC also employed sponsored events, brand ambassadors, social media, direct mail, and opinion leaders (Fallin, Neilands, Jordan, Hong, & Ling, 2015; Kalkhoran et al., 2016).

Serial cross-sectional survey evaluations of COMMUNE and HAVOC found significant decreases in smoking prevalence (Kalkhoran et al., 2016; Ling et al., 2014). During COMMUNE in San Diego, there was a 16% relative reduction in current smoking among Hipsters, with decrease in smoking among young adults in other peer crowds (Ling et al., 2014). A 10% relative reduction in current smoking among Partiers was observed in Albuquerque during HAVOC, and the odds of daily smoking decreased significantly among Partiers (Kalkhoran et al., 2016). Partiers in Oklahoma who recalled and understood HAVOC messages had decreased odds of daily smoking, while those not exposed to HAVOC had increased odds of smoking (Fallin, Neilands, Jordan, Hong, & Ling, 2015).

## PURPOSE

While outcome evaluations of the social branding anti-tobacco interventions showed decreased smoking, it is unclear how and why they worked. The purpose of this article was to explore how and why key design features of COMMUNE and HAVOC contributed to the efficacy of each intervention. The analysis draws from event observations and interviews with key informants who organized COMMUNE or HAVOC interventions and young adult event attendees.

## METHOD

COMMUNE ran in San Diego (2008-2011) and San Francisco, California (2013-2016), and in Minneapolis–St. Paul and Duluth, Minnesota (2016-2018). HAVOC events ran in Tulsa and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (2010-2015), and in Albuquerque, New Mexico (2009-2015). Due to logistical and cost constraints, semistructured, in-depth interviews were conducted by phone with 27 key informants (e.g., brand ambassadors, DJs, artists, opinion leaders, or event attendees) for COMMUNE and HAVOC from September 2016 to May 2017. Thus, most event organizers were interviewed at the end of the interventions and needed to recall their past experiences, although some of the organizers from COMMUNE San Diego were also involved in San Francisco, which was ongoing during data collection. More “real-time” data were collected at event observations in San Francisco and Minneapolis–St. Paul, and most event participants were recruited at events and interviewed shortly thereafter. Ethics approval was obtained from the University of California, San Francisco.

### Setting

Core design components of the social branding interventions with specific executions for COMMUNE and HAVOC are listed in Table 1.

### Participants

Participant characteristics are provided in Table 2. Participants were recruited through snowball sampling and event registration lists. Eligible participants either (1)had an

organizing role in COMMUNE or HAVOC or (2)were a member of the priority audience (18-26 years old and had attended at least one intervention event in San Diego, San Francisco, or Minneapolis/St. Paul).

### In-Depth Interviews

Participants completed 30- to 60-minute, semistructured phone interviews conducted by a team of interviewers. Participants gave verbal informed consent and received a $60 gift card.

The interview guide concerned participants' roles in the intervention, event descriptions, and features contributing to intervention success or failure. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded in Dedoose qualitative data analysis software. Memos were created during data collection in weekly group discussions. Emergent themes were integrated with peer crowd intervention design concepts (Fallin, Neilands, Jordan, Hong, & Ling, 2015; Grier & Bryant, 2005; Kalkhoran et al., 2016; Ling et al., 2014; Lisha et al., 2016) to create an initial coding scheme. The first author coded three interviews and created memos highlighting emergent themes. The second and third authors independently coded two transcripts for comparison for reliability and consistency. The coding scheme was modified iteratively, and the first author coded the remaining transcripts.

## RESULTS

For both COMMUNE and HAVOC, more interview content was coded as features that "worked well" than "didn't work well" and there were many consistent themes. Features perceived as important to intervention success overlapped across COMMUNE and HAVOC and were therefore collapsed into six major themes: (1) fun, interactive social environments; (2) encouraged a sense of belonging; (3) subtle, non-judgmental messaging; (4) resonated with the target peer crowd; (5) delivered through opinion leaders; and (6) promoted brand individuality and recognition. General descriptions of each theme and a corresponding example are in Table 3.

The following section demonstrates how the shared intervention features (Table 3) manifested within each intervention (HAVOC and COMMUNE), and provides contrasting examples of negatively perceived elements.

### Fun, Interactive, Social Environments

Participants reported that interventions were fun, comfortable, interactive, conveniently located, culturally relevant, social, and trendy. When asked to imagine COMMUNE or HAVOC in a more formal setting, such as a conference room, several participants noted that such environments would be sterile and unappealing:

> If [the event] was like at like a hall or a venue that you weren't familiar with and there wasn't like that music draw, I don't think people would just go to hear about non-smoking kind of thing. I think just because it felt so natural and it was at places that we already would hang out at, that it was like no pressure, it just felt fun. (C13, COMMUNE, visual artist)

COMMUNE events were held at local bars, which lent a greater sense of intimacy and authenticity. HAVOC events, in contrast, were held at larger electronic dance music nightclubs, matching Partier preferences for more energetic atmospheres:

> I think [people responded most] to the atmosphere, the vibe that HAVOC was throwing out … we would just be super friendly with them and it was always upbeat. (H5, HAVOC, brand ambassador)

Raffles drew attention to the social brand and made the evening more memorable. Moderate consumption of alcohol helped participants feel less inhibited and more social but was not the focus of events:

> At the events it was more, like, being really proud of your community or really kind of inspired by your local artists or just kind of seeing everyone in the same group or in the room for the same reason rather than just there for a drink. (C4, COMMUNE, event attendee)

Participants negatively viewed venues that were not readily public transit accessible. One did not like that interventions were held in age 21 and over venues, excluding younger adults. Another suggested not to alternate between venues because it confused participants.

### Encouraged a Sense of Belonging and Connection

Participants emphasized the importance of feeling part of a special movement or experience. The presence of friends and community at events encouraged a sense of belonging and greater willingness to learn about the anti-tobacco messages. Opinion leaders drew interconnected friendship networks to the events via their own friends and fans.

HAVOC's trained brand ambassadors ("HAVOC Girls") wore HAVOC branded clothing and themed costumes, delivered anti-tobacco messaging, and enthusiastically welcomed event attendees. Interacting and being photographed with the popular and attractive HAVOC Girls was a social reward:

> The pictures, the photo booth with the [HAVOC] Girls … there would be a line of people waiting to take pictures with the HAVOC Girls, so that was always fun. (H5, HAVOC, brand ambassador)

In contrast, COMMUNE nurtured a sense of belonging by framing the intervention as a social movement against the negative impact of tobacco corporations on their community. COMMUNE employed local artists and musicians to create anti-tobacco messaging. Participants knew many of the opinion leaders and expressed eagerness to support them:

> [It was] a close-knit community … I think that that worked well with COMMUNE because it's supporting local and then taking a stand against something bigger. So it made people feel like they were a part of something bigger than themselves. (C1, COMMUNE, senior brand strategist)

One COMMUNE event organizer cautioned that belonging was undermined in rare cases where event attendees perceived anti-tobacco messages as stigmatizing:

> [M]ost people kind of understood that Commune wasn't, you know, attacking them or anything specific to them. But there were some people who […] as much as you would tell them, you know, it's not anti-you, it's not anti-smoking—it's just anti-Big Tobacco. […] And they still just can't see it, because they still just feel like they're being attacked. (C7, COMMUNE, event organizer)

### Subtle, Nonjudgmental Messaging

Overwhelmingly, participants viewed the delivery of anti-tobacco messaging as a secondary focus and that it was important for attendees not feel forced to engage with the social brand:

> They're just saying, "Thanks for coming out. We're COMMUNE. This is what we do. You can come over [to the COMMUNE table]" … They are not necessarily telling you anything about quitting or telling you to quit. (C22, COMMUNE, event attendee)

COMMUNE participants viewed the brand's use of art to deliver anti-tobacco facts as "subtle," "well-received," and more intriguing and memorable than conventional anti-tobacco messages. Similarly, the HAVOC Girls endorsed a smoke-free lifestyle by showing rather than telling:

> [HAVOC] is smoke-free and sexy. It's our group showing that you can go out and have fun and not smoke. (H2, HAVOC, brand ambassador)

COMMUNE informants also suggested that attendees, especially smokers, were more open to the intervention when they learned that it focused on the social impact of tobacco companies. They liked that anti-tobacco messaging was delivered without being "judgmental" or "preachy":

> What really works is that we don't tell anyone what to do. So, it's not like, "Don't smoke." It's very accepting where it's like we know people are going to quit when they're ready and they want to. (C1, COMMUNE, senior brand strategist)

However, messaging that is too subtle risks being misunderstood; one COMMUNE event attendee thought that events were funded by Big Tobacco. Alternatively, one HAVOC Girl felt that greeting event attendees immediately at the door and engaging them may have been "intimidating" for some attendees.

### Resonates With the Target Peer Crowd

Alignment with the values, interests, and aesthetics of the peer crowd was important. The most well-attended events featured music popular within the respective peer crowds. Art commissioned for COMMUNE resonated with peer crowd–related concerns for the environment, world poverty, social justice, and anticorporate sentiments. COMMUNE participants liked that event pop-up stores sold the work of local artists:

> There was people that were coming for the pop-up, people that were coming for the free band, our friends, and then people that were coming to get the free T-shirt. (C6, COMMUNE, event coordinator/band member)

For HAVOC, the female brand ambassadors embodied Partier peer crowd values of attractiveness and social status:

> They had fishnet long socks and then boots, and then their shirts were like crop tops, and they said HAVOC on the front. (H6, HAVOC, event attendee)

Both COMMUNE and HAVOC were introduced first as social events, with anti-tobacco messages introduced after 3 to 6 months.

The importance of resonating with the peer crowd was made visible when the intervention "got it wrong," as when a HAVOC event was held at a venue that was perceived as "way too touristy" (H4, HAVOC, promotions coordinator).

### Deliver the Intervention Through Opinion Leaders

Both brands worked with party promoters, bartenders, journalists, and others familiar with the local bar scene to recruit DJs and live bands. Over time, bands and artists referred their friends to the organizers. COMMUNE participants described the events as a "change of pace" because the artist brand ambassadors engaged with them:

> It's more like people are talking to each other in the crowd and people are checking out the COMMUNE booth. The artists don't usually hang out in the like the green room in the back. They're usually out talking to everybody that's like showing up to the show. (C14, COMMUNE, event coordinator)

HAVOC brand ambassadors, and other opinion leaders like DJs, demonstrated that one could have fun at the nightclub without smoking and maintain confidence and social status:

> I feel like HAVOC kind of showed … these people are basically models for HAVOC, and they don't smoke. These people are dancers, and they don't smoke. This person is the DJ who's playing all these shows all over the place, and they don't smoke. Like, you can be cool, and you can be famous and you can do all of these things without smoking. (H2, HAVOC, brand ambassador)

Participants noted that challenges recruiting peer crowd opinion leaders may arise when organizers are not socially embedded locally. Budget limitations can reduce access to influential artists with a large fan base. In rare occasions, opinion leaders may not model the intervention message (e.g., band members smoking backstage).

### Promote Brand Exclusivity and Recognition

Providing free events and items, such as shirts, coasters, and posters, promoted brand recognition and triggered curiosity about the message. Free shirts printed with the COMMUNE/HAVOC logo were particularly popular, and a "merchandise table" was visibly located so attendees could learn about the social brand as they picked up free gifts.

Social media and direct mail also promoted brand recognition and encouraged attendance. Event registration lists were used for event promotion and anti-tobacco message delivery. Platforms, like Facebook and Instagram, were used to disseminate event photos and videos:

> They always had photographers taking pictures. So there was always like people taking pictures of like the night, and then you'd get tagged on Facebook or something, and it would have a little COMMUNE watermark in the corner. So I think people were like stoked on that like, "Oh, yeah, I was at this thing." (C11, COMMUNE, band member)

COMMUNE's free online RSVP also encouraged attendance and facilitated event promotion via email. HAVOC events, however, were not free, as Partiers associated cover charges with a more valuable experience. HAVOC also used social media to generate excitement for monthly events:

> Oh I'm excited for that party, I can't wait for it to get here … When you, like, get to wait for something a little bit you're like, "Oh I can't wait." (H3, HAVOC, brand ambassador)

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The basic principles of social marketing were reflected in these interviews, including branding connected to core values, opinion leaders, integrated promotional activities, and peer crowd psychographics. Participants noted the importance of a sense of belonging and connection, which is also consistent with the social identity theories underlying peer crowd targeting noted above. In addition, subtle and nonjudgmental messaging minimized exclusion or stigmatization of smokers and may have increased receptivity to the anti-tobacco message. In contrast to recommendations for "hard-hitting" messaging in mass media campaigns (Fairchild et al., 2018), we found subtle messaging generated interest and curiosity in a high-risk audience on a topic associated with rejection and stigma.

Locating interventions within bars or nightclubs may help break down the association between alcohol and tobacco (Wakefield et al., 2009) fostered by tobacco marketing (Ling & Glantz, 2002a, 2002b). HAVOC and COMMUNE provided participants with an opportunity to "try on" nonsmoking behaviors in a fun setting accompanied by the social reinforcement and support of peers. Others have found a positive association between community belonging and health behavior change (Hystad & Carpiano, 2012).

We also identified some key intervention principles that have been effective in changing health behaviors (Snyder & Hamilton, 2002). Integrated promotions using social media, direct mail, and interpersonal channels were effective. Integrated marketing strategies have been used by tobacco companies to sell cigarettes (Dewhirst & Davis, 2005). This study adds that such messaging can be tailored to each peer crowd. Anti-tobacco industry messaging has been effective in the Truth Campaign in Florida (Sly et al., 2002) and nationally (Farrelly et al., 2009; Richardson et al., 2010; Vallone et al., 2017), and it made sense for COMMUNE. Commissioning local artists to enhance anti-industry messaging is a promising strategy to update and maintain the relevance of anti-tobacco industry messaging for young adults who grew up with the Truth campaign. In contrast, anti-industry messaging was infrequently used in HAVOC, as Partiers were more motivated by fun and social success.

The use of opinion leaders to deliver health interventions has been recognized in HIV prevention campaigns (Kelly, 2004), school physical activities and fruit and vegetable consumption promotion (Dzewaltowski et al., 2009). We found that opinion leader engagement increased the social rewards of the interventions. For COMMUNE, it was important that young community members were actively engaged in producing art for events or utilizing their personal social networks and friends to support the message. This suggests that, particularly for smaller, tightly knit communities, active participation in message generation and dissemination may enhance effectiveness. In contrast, for Partiers, where high production value or expensive aesthetics are important, high-quality professional production may have greater impact.

In addition, we found that brand recognition and differentiation were important factors, consistent with studies finding that developing brands on the basis of health behavior and lifestyle may be effective (Evans, 2006). Others found brand equity may be a protective factor, especially among peer crowds, for encouraging the adoption of alternative behaviors (Evans et al., 2007) . This study demonstrates how promotional items and social media facilitate brand recognition and social value. We found that, particularly for sophisticated young adult audiences, promotional items should be high quality, distinctive, and consistent with the brand image.

### Limitations

Key informant recall may be limited as most were interviewed after the interventions took place, some with a substantial time gap. Data were collected during a limited time and at a limited number of locations, so may have missed the perspectives of some participants. Most participants attended COMMUNE events, limiting our understanding of HAVOC attendees' perspectives. Most key informants (19 of 27) were organizers who had actively contributed to the interventions and may have viewed interventions more positively than attendees.

## Conclusion

Successful social branding interventions create a sense of belonging and connection, resonance with peer crowd values, authentic engagement, and more "subtle" anti-tobacco messaging, which provides social rewards without stigmatizing smokers. Interventions in bars may help break associations between tobacco, alcohol, and social success. As social branding focuses primarily on core values rather than a particular behavior, this strategy might be relevant to other substances, including alcohol, marijuana, and electronic cigarettes.

## Acknowledgments

This research was supported by the National Cancer Institute Grants R25 CA078583, T32 CA113710, and U01 CA154240, California Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program Grant T29FT0436, and by National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities Grant P60MD006902. The funders had no role in study design, analysis, or publication process. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.

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**TABLE 1**

Core Components of COMMUNE and HAVOC Intervention Design

| Social Branding Intervention Components | COMMUNE | HAVOC |
|---|---|---|
| *Social brand*—the social brand acts as a platform for the campaign. It is designed to appeal to a specific peer crowd (i.e., COMMUNE is designed for Hipsters and HAVOC is designed for Partiers). All promotional materials bear the social brand and are aligned with current trends. The brand embodies the values and characteristics of each peer crowd. | COMMUNE social brand was described as 'a movement of artists, designers, musicians, and people that take a stand against tobacco corporations, their practices, and their presence in the scene.' The core elements of the brand identity were as follows:<br>• Creativity<br>• Support for local artists<br>• Messages by and for Hipsters<br>• Anti-tobacco industry due to its impacts on social justice and environment<br>• Ironic humor<br>• Alternative style | HAVOC social brand was described as "an exclusive,unpredictable, 'HAVOC-filled' night.' The core elements of the brand personality were as follows:<br>• Social acceptability<br>• Confidence<br>• Fashion<br>• Social success<br>• Physical attractiveness and confidence<br>• Limited anti-tobacco industry messaging<br>• Messages tailored for Partiers |
| *Branded events*—social gatherings sponsored by the campaign. Branded events reflect the target peer crowd's characteristics and are delivered to generate in-group social capital. Once the social brand is accepted (meaning those who identify with the peer crowd become willing to attend or seek out the branded events), messaging associates the targeted behavior (e.g., not smoking) with the brand's desirable social image. | COMMUNE social events focused on bars and included live bands, DJs, fashion "trunk shows," and art exhibits. Each event was designed for participants to experience the community of local cultural leaders rallying around COMMUNE and tobacco-free lifestyles. After several months of branded events, COMMUNE's message was increasingly linked to taking a stand against the tobacco industry and its practices.<br>In addition to monthly events, weekly small facilitated smoking cessation groups were held in local bars. | HAVOC social events focused on bars and nightclubs andincluded influential DJs, promoters, and socialites. Each event was designed for participants to have an exclusive experience, during which "social games" were used to build an association between social rewards and living a tobacco free lifestyle. Social capital was leveraged with the "HAVOC Girls" brand ambassadors who were perceived as fun, attractive, and smoke-free.<br>In addition to regular events, small facilitated smoking cessation groups were held in restaurants or VIP rooms of nightclubs. |
| *Brand ambassadors*—opinion leaders (young adults that are considered influential by the peer crowd) deliver anti-tobacco messages at events and in the course of their daily lives. Program staff recruit opinion leaders who are socially respected to disseminate the brand's message through casual conversation, spread the message at their own social gatherings, represent the brand by wearing brand's clothing, and interact with the brand on social media. | COMMUNE recruited Hipster opinion leaders (e.g., musicians, artists, fashion designers); educated them about COMMUNE's mission and goals; and invited them to assist in the planning and execution of future events. This ensured authenticity and meant the messages were coming from well-known peers rather than from marketers outside the community. | HAVOC recruited brand ambassadors (young adult influencers, socialites, DJs and party promoters) and trained them to be HAVOC girls or spokespeople; the training included learning a set of tobacco prevention facts and becoming familiar with anti-tobacco values and how they relate to the Partier lifestyle. HAVOC's brand image was supported by brand ambassadors known as "HAVOC Girls" who played a prominent role in social games and the delivery of anti-tobacco messages at events. |
| *Messaging*—messages encouraging behavior change (e.g., not smoking) demonstrate reasons that can be used to justify why this behavior compliments the peer crowd's image. The reasons for not smoking are aligned with the social values of each peer crowd. Messages are presented in a culturally appropriate language and style. | COMMUNE recruited artists to create anti-tobacco messaging inspired by facts about tobacco use or the tobacco industry. Artists most frequently created messages highlighting practices at odds with Hipster values such as environmentalism, standing against animal testing, or how tobacco production contributes to world hunger, or child labor. Some messages focused on lesser known health effects, as participants were receptive to sharing new information. Messages highlighted the participation of local community members and had an authentic, more eclectic, home-grown aesthetic. Messaging was delivered during events by art displays, in casual conversation by brand ambassadors, on social media, and via direct mail. | HAVOC anti-tobacco messaging frequently included facts about smoking behavior that decrease social status or fun that was at odds with Partier values. Messages focused on Partiers' strong concern for fashion, value for physical attractiveness, confidence, and social success. Rather than being created by community members, flyers, posters, social media promotions, clothing, and other items were created by the marketing agency with high quality production value and high fashion aesthetics, featuring attractive models, "hot" clubs, and very popular music or DJs. Messaging was delivered during events by brand ambassadors, on social media, and via direct mail. |
| *Social rewards*—people who embrace the campaign's targeted behavior are rewarded with free promotional items including fashionable gear, event giveaways, and special VIP access privileges. Social rewards help accelerate behavior change and are included in both promotions and branded events. For example, social | COMMUNE limited edition t-shirts and posters were produced by local artists and were given for free to members of the community who supported its message and embodied the brand's image. Shirts were also sold at the events to increase the perceived value of the item. Promotional items were given to all participants regardless of | HAVOC limited edition clothing, prizes, and opportunities to gain VIP status were used to reinforce and promote a smoke-free lifestyle. Event photographers posted photos of participants after each HAVOC event on social media websites (i.e., Facebook) to increase the excitement, social rewards, and perceived value of HAVOC events. |

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| rewards occur when opinion leaders give their peers verbal and nonverbal approval for engaging with the targeted behavior. | smoking status, although smokers were asked to not wear the COMMUNE brand while smoking. | |

**TABLE 2**

Key Informant Characteristics ($n$ = 27)

| Characteristic | Count |
|---|---|
| Intervention | |
| COMMUNE | 21 |
| HAVOC | 6 |
| Intervention city[a] | |
| San Diego, CA | 8 |
| San Francisco, CA | 5 |
| Oklahoma City, OK | 4 |
| Tulsa, OK | 2 |
| Albuquerque, NM | 3 |
| Minneapolis, MN | 6 |
| Duluth, MN | 2 |
| St. Paul, MN | 5 |
| Sex | |
| Female | 16 |
| Male | 11 |
| Intervention role | |
| Brand management and design | 8 |
| Event organization | 3 |
| Artists and brand ambassadors | 8 |
| Attendees | 8 |

[a]Some participants were involved with COMMUNE/HAVOC in multiple cities.

**TABLE 3**

Intervention Features That Participants Reported Were Valuable and Should Be Replicated

| Feature | Description | Exemplary Quote |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Create fun, interactive, social environments | The environment and venue should have fun, comfortable, interactive atmospheres; be conveniently located (e.g., close to public transit); and be culturally relevant, familiar, social, and sought out as a "trendy venue" by the peer crowd. | (C3) "I think [a bar] is an opportunity [that gives] people a place to learn more on their own while still being able to educate them but have it to be in fun environment that they're used to." |
| 2. Encourage a sense of belonging and connection | A feeling of connection to other event attendees and/or the social brand movement should be cultivated. The presence of friends and familiar social contexts encourages openness to learning about anti-tobacco messages. | (C1) "[It was] a close-knit community feel . . I think that that worked well with COMMUNE because it's supporting [the] local [community] and then taking a stand against something bigger [Big Tobacco]. So it made people feel like they were a part of something bigger than themselves." |
| 3. Use subtle, nonjudgmental messaging | The delivery and content of anti-tobacco messaging should not be perceived as judgmental of smokers or "preachy." The primary experience of the intervention should fun and social, while still exposing attendees to relevant but subtle anti-tobacco messaging. Smokers should be made to feel welcome. | (C5) "Lastly is making sure it's fun and enjoyable and feels inviting … [A] part of that is also not ostracizing the smoker, making sure that [smokers know they are] allowed to come. You are exactly who we want to come." |
| 4. Resonate with the target peer crowd | The music genre, entertainment venues, and content and style of the anti-tobacco messaging should resonate with the particular interests, values, and aesthetics of the peer crowd. The aesthetics of the brand should be consistent across all events. | (H6) "[The HAVOC girls] had fishnet long socks, [boots and crop top shirts] that said HAVOC on the front, and their hats said 'Smoke-free and Sexy' on the front of them." |
| 5. Deliver the intervention through opinion leaders | Influential peer crowd members should be recruited to have a visible role in the intervention. These opinion leaders encourage event attendance and help create an exclusive experience for event attendees because of their willingness to engage positively with other peer crowd members. | (H2) "[The opinion leaders who] are basically models for HAVOC, they don't smoke. These people are dancers, and they don't smoke. This person is the DJ who's playing all these shows all over the place, and they don't smoke. Like, you can be cool, and you can be famous and you can do all of these things without smoking." |
| 6. Promote brand exclusivity andrecognition | Regular events, promotional materials, and social media activity can help start conversations about the social brand, promote brand recognition, and promote event attendance within the peer crowd. | (C3) "It wasn't like you go to a trade center or event and it's a bunch of boring, ugly free stuff. It was actually stuff that people were really excited about or like … gave them a little bit of nostalgia. And I think that kind of was a great way to connect with people too, and you know, have people advertising the message for us."<br>(H3) "I think it was [good for the events to be monthly], for people to be like, oh I'm excited for that party, I can't wait for it to get here … When you, like, get to wait for something a little bit you're like, oh I can't wait." |