

SMANA Social Marketing Awards Submission for Fresh Empire, Nano Influencer Tactic
Category: Most Effective Use of Social Norms

Description of intervention

Fresh Empire is the first large scale public education social marketing campaign designed to prevent and reduce tobacco use among at-risk multicultural youth ages 12-17 who identify with Hip Hop culture. When the campaign launched, research showed that nearly five million African American, Hispanic, and Asian American and Pacific Islander youth were open to smoking or were already experimenting with cigarettes, highlighting youth that could benefit from tobacco prevention efforts designed for them. A part of the campaign's strategy focused on changing the social norms around tobacco use in Hip Hop culture and working with influencers was a key part of this strategy. The campaign partnered with big name mega influencers to show that tobacco is not considered desirable by pillars of the Hip Hop community; macro influencers to host tobacco-free events, so teens could experience appealing tobacco-free environments first-hand; and micro and nano influencers to create social media content about why they choose to be tobacco-free. In particular, the campaign created a sprawling network of popular local teens who hold influence among their peers. These nano influencers posted tobacco-free messages, promoted the campaign's tobacco-free events, and modeled a tobacco-free lifestyle to affirm and reinforce the social norm cues received from the mega and macro influencers. This submission focuses on *Fresh Empire's* work with these nano influencers.

Social Marketing Principles used

Nano influencers were encouraged to weave facts highlighting negative health consequences that result from using tobacco and were featured in other in market campaign creative that resonated with them into their social media messages. This use of *positioning* allowed authentic delivery of tobacco facts and made it clear that being tobacco-free is far preferable to using tobacco. Relatedly, the campaign asked the influencers to share the reasons they are tobacco-free to fit with the aspirational tone of the campaign and reinforce its message that being tobacco-free can help one achieve their goals. This use of *value proposition* and *price* (non-monetary incentive) went beyond demonstrating the negative consequences of using tobacco by adding a clear benefit to abstaining. The local nano influencer program also emphasized *place* as these influencers interact daily with their peers and model tobacco-free behavior outside of isolated digital images and captions, thus normalizing it in their own communities. Additionally, *promotion* and attendance of local campaign events by nano influencers reinforced local opportunities to be surrounded by exciting cultural—and tobacco-free—moments.

Summary of research conducted and/or results

Highly engaged social media content on the influencers' posts and the campaign's reposts, including positive comments and users' adoption of green hearts to show their approval (green to match the campaign's green branding) and high event attendance indicate positive receptivity to the influencer messages promoting a tobacco-free Hip Hop lifestyle. A formal evaluation of the campaign was also conducted. While it did not evaluate individual influencer activities, it did show the campaign moved 5 beliefs, including two related to social norms: "people who are tobacco-free are in control" and "people who are tobacco-free are attractive" (Guillory et al., 2022). Evaluating influencer programs for behavior change is still challenging but high message receptivity and event attendance and promising evaluation results indicate this nano influencer tactic successfully promoted tobacco-free social forms to the intended audience.

Example of nano influencer post that was reposted to the campaign's Instagram page.



References

Guillory, J., Curry, L., Farrelly, M., Henes, A., Homsy, G., Saunders, M., ... & Ganz, O. (2022). Reach, receptivity, and beliefs associated with the Fresh Empire campaign to prevent and reduce cigarette use among youth in the United States. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 36(5), 789-800.