



Be Safe. Drive Smart.
Taking Driver Safety on the Road



**MARKETING
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Case Study

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PROBLEM:

The vast majority of traffic safety campaigns focus on high-risk drivers: people who use cellular phones while driving, drive while under the influence, or fail to properly restrain themselves or their children. These focused campaigns are vitally necessary, but they leave a gap in traffic safety messaging. What do you say to drivers who feel they're driving safely and everything and everyone else is the problem?

One example of this issue is the dramatic increase of crashes along the I-35 corridor. More than 10 million Texans live within 20 miles of I-35, one of the busiest interstate highways in the country. Because of the dramatic increase in traffic along this corridor, there are 24 active work zones throughout I-35, encompassing 123 miles. This, and all other work zones, present an unexpected challenge for drivers and dramatically increases the danger of deadly crashes. In 2015, 21,804 crashes occurred in roadway construction and maintenance zones in Texas resulting in 136 fatalities, an increase of over 10 percent in the number of crashes compared to the previous year.

Another example arose during the recent energy boom. Small towns suddenly became booming cities, with an especially significant increase in large truck traffic on the roads. This created a significant increase in motor vehicle crashes and a disproportionately high increase in fatalities in rural energy-development areas. During the height of the recent energy boom, the number of crashes was increasing by over seven percent yearly, an increase disproportionate to the increase in population or the increase in the rest of the state.

Both of these examples highlight how changing conditions can dramatically increase crash risk. This is why TxDOT created the *Be Safe. Drive Smart.* public information and education campaign, targeting the general driving public with a vital message: "You can only control your own driving. You have a responsibility to pay attention and actively prevent traffic crashes."

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RESEARCH-DRIVEN INSIGHT:

Our target audience for the campaign encompasses all drivers. However, the research clearly shows that the highest-risk drivers, who make up a disproportionate percentage of serious injuries and fatalities due to traffic collisions, are young males, 18-25. Our audience, those that are high-risk drivers and even those who are not, fundamentally knows driving is dangerous, but they also believe they're good drivers and blame other people or non-human factors for the crashes. However, when conditions change from what they are used to, these individuals are at far greater risk for crashes due to their complacency and failure to pay attention and actively drive to prevent them.

Basically, drivers are blind to their own driving behavior. When they are confronted with messages that tell them what to do — to slow down, put the cell phone down, don't follow trucks too closely — they believe those messages are meant for other high-risk drivers, and don't apply to them, even though they may be participating in unsafe driving behaviors themselves.

GDC Marketing & Ideation conducted qualitative research in the form of focus groups in March of 2015 to identify the source of this apparent contradiction. When prompted through both unaided and aided questions, the groups confirmed that drivers have a particular blind spot for their own dangerous driving behaviors. They tend to believe they are good drivers and don't engage in dangerous behaviors, even when specifically asked if they follow too closely, speed in an unsafe manner, or pass trucks in a dangerous manner. However, when asked if they've ridden in a car in the last month with someone who engaged in unsafe behaviors, all the participants stated they had.

So ultimately, everyone believes they are safe drivers, but when they are passengers, they all noticed unsafe behaviors from the drivers. In short, it's easier to spot unsafe driving behaviors in others, rather than in one's self.

“Basically, drivers are blind to their own driving behavior”

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SOLUTION:

In order to increase awareness of dangerous driving behaviors, GDC Marketing & Ideation built the Texas Road Watchers Experience, a mobile interactive experience that takes TxDOT's *Be Safe. Drive Smart.* campaign on the road and into the communities with the highest propensity for crashes and fatalities.

Fueled by the qualitative research insights, the Texas Road Watchers Experience literally puts our audience in the passenger's seat to identify unsafe driving behaviors. The goal is to tap into gamification to attract a young driving audience to actively identify the frighteningly common behaviors that lead to the most collisions, injuries and fatalities on Texas roads. Extensive research has been conducted on the impact of gamification and its ability to engage individuals to satisfy their desire for competition and achievement. This approach is so effective, that a recent Gartner report states that more than 70% of Global 2000 organizations will use gamification to attract younger audiences in the near future¹. Another recent study demonstrates that "78% of Millennials are more inclined to become part of a brand [or message] if they have face-to-face interaction with it²."

Armed with this data, GDC took the Texas Road Watchers Experience on the road to create face-to-face interactions fueled by gamification. Here's how the experience works:

THE PLAN

GDC Marketing & Ideation developed a year-long road tour with activations at key events in markets across the state, with a heavy focus on markets along I-35 and in areas where oil production is prominent.

THE TRUCK

A glass box truck was branded with the *Be Safe. Drive Smart.* visual identity. The glass walls of the truck display a window cling that looks like a car in the back of the truck. Inside the truck, the front half of a real car is positioned in front of four car seats to simulate an actual vehicle. The windshield is replaced by a high-definition, curved video screen. Two mannequins are buckled into the front seats, and the back seats are left empty for the participants of the quiz. The effect is that when passersby look through the glass, it appears that there is a car in the truck with four passengers.



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THE EXPERIENCE



Manned by a team of GDC representatives, TxDOT Public Information Officers and brand ambassadors, the experience is set up at events to achieve maximum exposure and draw participants in.



Participants are assisted into the truck, two at a time, and are seated in the backseats. They have a full view of the video windshield as if they are in the backseat of a moving vehicle, looking over the mannequin driver's shoulder.



The participants each have a touchscreen tablet in front of them. They are prompted to enter their names and email addresses into the tablet. This information is stored and used for social sharing purposes of the campaign.



A brand ambassador is in the truck to explain the rules of the game. Each participant is told to watch the driving scenario and pay attention for any unsafe driving behavior that they notice.

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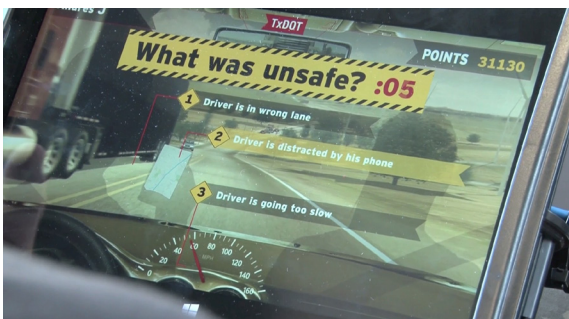
THE EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)



The simulation begins. The participants can view the simulation through the video windshield, or on the tablet in front of them. Two silhouetted figures are visible on the tablets to represent the driver and front seat passenger. Currently, two simulations have been developed, one that takes place on I-35 and features work zone safety, and a second that takes place in a rural area with heavy energy production. Additional scenarios are in development.



At certain points throughout the simulation, the game pauses and prompts the question, “What was unsafe?”



A timer starts, and the passengers view a series of three options on their tablets. They are asked to touch the option that represents the unsafe driving behavior they noticed. The faster they are able to answer correctly, the higher the score they receive. If they fail to answer or answer incorrectly, they receive zero points for this portion of the quiz.



After all the quiz topics are complete, the simulation ends and the participant with the most points is declared the winner.

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THE EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)



The participants are then asked to pose for a picture that is taken of them. A branded filter is added to the picture and is instantly sent to the email addresses that the participants provided. The participants are encouraged to share the picture socially under the hashtag #BeSafeDriveSmart.



When the participants exit the truck, they are given educational info cards with campaign messaging on dangerous driving behaviors to avoid, and they are able to spin a prize wheel to receive gift cards from campaign partners.

THE TAKEAWAY

By allowing participants to become passengers and actively look for unsafe driving behaviors, a light is shined upon just how common certain behaviors are, such as speeding, texting while driving, and following trucks too closely. And by reinforcing the educational messaging around the *Be Safe. Drive Smart.* campaign, the participants become more self aware of their own driving behaviors.

While paid media messaging continues to be an important part of any overall marketing strategy gauged at changing behavior, the research clearly indicates that younger audiences gravitate toward experiences over traditional advertising. By creating a one-on-one experience that this younger audience actively opt into and by tapping into their desire for competition and accomplishment, The Texas Road Watchers Experience builds connections between the message and the individual in a powerful way. The result is a young driver who has actively participated in learning about dangerous driving behaviors, and will therefore be more likely to avoid them.

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EXPANDING & INTEGRATING THE CAMPAIGN

The road tour and the quiz simulation have already gained a great deal of attention throughout the state. So much so, that GDC is already developing a plan to expand the road tour into a Friday Night Lights Tour in fiscal year 2017, and has \$215,000 budgeted toward the effort. This tour will continue to center around the Texas Road Watchers Truck and Experience, but it will take advantage of the popularity of football in Texas to rally people around the campaign in an even greater way.

Here's how it will work:

ON-FIELD ACTIVATION

GDC will identify heavily attended high school football games in markets throughout Texas, including Midland/Odessa, San Antonio, Dallas/Fort Worth (Tarrant or Denton Counties), Houston, Austin, Waco/Temple/Killeen, Amarillo, Corpus Christi, Laredo, and San Angelo. In addition to having the Road Watchers Truck at the entrance to the stadium on game night, an on-field activation will take place during the game.

A TxDOT representative or local media emcee is standing with one student from each school on the 50-yard line. The students will be asked five questions around driver safety (entire segment will be five minutes). Additionally, the crowd in the stands will be directed to a site where they can play along on their smartphones. The winning student and at least one participating audience member will win a prize.

DURING THE GAME

To continue to spread awareness of the campaign during the football games, cheerleaders will throw *Be Safe. Drive Smart.*-branded footballs into the stands.

BEYOND THE GAME (EARNED MEDIA)

GDC will pitch stories for Thursday news to announce that TxDOT will be at the game. On Friday, we will pitch the morning news and noon news promoting the appearance. We will then pitch for live stand-ups for the 5PM, 6PM, and 10PM news, and for inclusion in the 10:30 sports extra segment as a human interest story. Additionally, the truck will be made available after the games for media interviews.

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CAMPAIGN RESULTS:

Although the tour is ramping up in the fall, we have already begun a summer activation to prepare for the fall push. For the major fall campaign, here are the key measures of success for the campaign:

- Earned media valuation
- Social media valuation
- Paid media reach / frequencies plus added value
- Number of people at all stadiums who participate in outreach activation
- TTI yearly study on traffic safety attitudes that tests public recall of traffic safety messages, including Be Safe. Drive Smart.