

Potomac Watershed Regional Anti-Litter Campaign

Market Research & Message Development



Objectives of the Campaign

1. A trash free Potomac by 2013
2. Change individual behavior to stop the flow of trash at its source.
3. Use market research and sophisticated messaging to develop a campaign that will change attitudes and behavior.



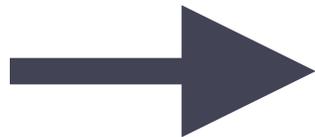
How We Conducted This Research

- **Watershed-wide Telephone Survey (2008)**
 - 1,004 interviews, randomly sampled.
 - First time ever.
- **In-Depth Message Testing (2008, 2010)**
 - Focus on Active Litterers.
 - 6 focus groups.
 - 17 one-on-one interviews.
 - Of those, 5 were psych probes.
 - Distributed across the region.



Littering is a Widespread Problem

	Watershed-wide Survey (2008)
Food	33%
Cigarette butt	12%
Wrapper	7%
Bottle/Can	6%
Box/Bag of trash	3%
<i>At least one on this list</i>	44%
<i>At least one, excluding food</i>	17%



“Probably everybody drops things on the ground or tosses them from a car window from time to time because they are not near a trash can. I’d like to ask you whether you have ever dropped, tossed, or dumped any of these things over the past couple of years or so....”



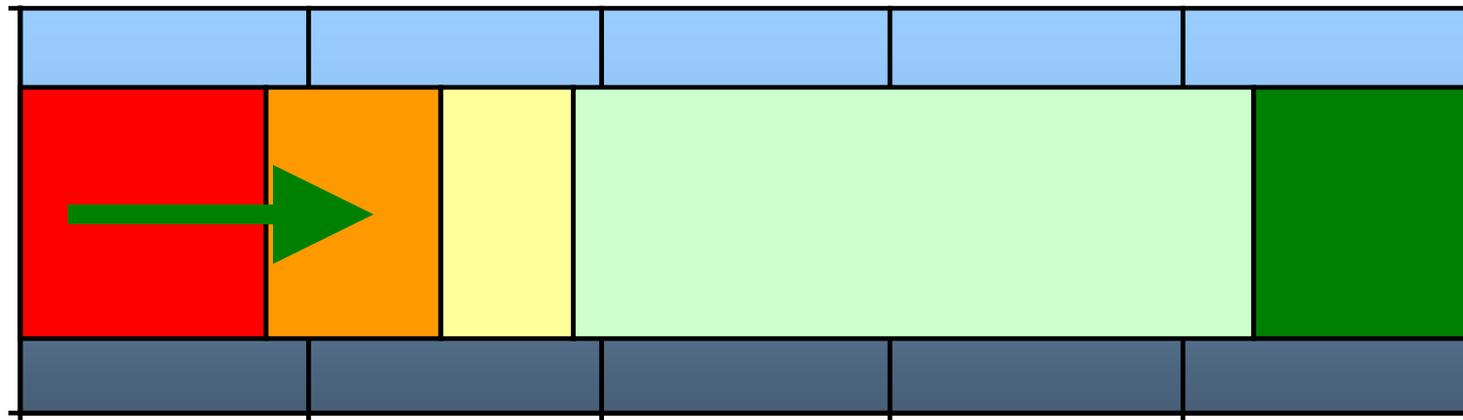
Littering is a Widespread Problem

- **39% often or sometimes see someone littering.**
- **This problem crosses demographic lines.**
- **66% would like to see state/local government commit more resources to this problem.**
- **84% believe “individual people need to help.”**



Littering Audiences

Focus on the Active Litterers



■ Active litterers
 ■ Former/Tolerant
 ■ Passive
 ■ Bothered
 ■ Militant

The goal is to move people up the scale from active litterers to something much less.

Developing the Message

- **Phase I: Develop Campaign tagline, logo and communications plan (Goal: Fall 2010)**
 - **Step 1: Engage stakeholders** at 2009 Trash Summit and through one-on-one telephone interviews last December.
 - **Step 2: Noral develops concept statements**, tested through focus groups in March and April in Montgomery, Fairfax, and D.C.
 - **Step 3: Psych interviews** among selected respondents to explore barriers/motivations.
 - **Step 4: Noral develops alternative taglines**, tested in one-on-one interviews (Aug).
 - **Step 5: Noral develops logo and preliminary creative**, to be further tested in focus groups and one-on-ones.



Notable Findings from 2010

- **People Litter to keep their personal space clean**
 - Their cars, yards.
“I’d still just toss it out the window (of my car) because of the smell.”
- **But personal space is a very narrow zone.**
 - Rarely extends to the neighborhood, and certainly not to the community.
 - In fact, community is a negative concept.
 - In many respondents, the personal stress is palpable.



Notable Findings from 2010

- They see their behavior having little impact.
 - They see their litter as benign.

“I just set it down. I wouldn’t throw it.”

“If I do toss anything it’s like a small wrapper. Something no one notices because it’s so small.”
 - Some are perplexed by the depth of our interview.

“I never think about it.”
 - 92% say there is little or no chance they will get caught.

Punitive or judgmental messages do not work with this audience.



From the Psychological Interviews

- Evidence that there is a more complicated picture of gratification for many litterers.
 - Underlying sense of loss, abandonment, disappointment.
 - Throwing trash becomes a means of coping.
 - Anxieties can be replaced in the moment with a sense of autonomy or control, even a rush.
 - Replace this negative with positive gratification from *not* littering: protecting one's own health and well-being, and loved ones'.



Notable Findings from 2010

- People strongly connect with the health implications of litter.
 - “Filth,” “bacteria,” “toxins” all resonate.
 - Trash floating in the water is worse than trash on the land.
 - Worries about contaminated aquatic life – ***because you might eat it.***
 - Powerful realization that the Potomac supplies drinking water.

