

Tobacco Prevention Evaluation Program  
UNC-CH Dept. of Family Medicine

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**2004 North Carolina  
Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered.  
Media Campaign  
Focus Group Report**

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A report prepared for the  
North Carolina Health and Wellness  
Trust Fund Commission

February 14, 2005



Tobacco Prevention Evaluation Program  
UNC-CH Dept. of Family Medicine

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# 1. Executive Summary

## Overview

This report presents results of a special study conducted on behalf of the Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) of North Carolina by the University of North Carolina Tobacco Prevention and Evaluation Program (UNC-TPEP). The purpose of this study is to provide a qualitative assessment of the “Tobacco.Reality.Unfiltered.” (“TRU”) television ads shown as part of the 2004 statewide media campaign. Specifically, the study utilized focus groups of youth to:

- 1) provide the HWTF and its media contractor with information on how NC youth were seeing and interpreting the TRU ads, and
- 2) gain insight into how the TRU ads might be improved.

The major intended use of this report is to give the youth’s feedback on the 2004 TRU ads to the HWTF and the media vendor, and to provide recommendations for use in the development of the 2005 TRU television campaign.

The planning and conducting of the focus groups and the analysis of the data gathered from these groups took place between September 2004 and February 2005. Fourteen groups of varying demographic characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity, and smoking status) were conducted across the state (see Table 1 for a description of the composition of the focus groups). Three general groups of ads were included in the testing: 2004 TRU ads; a TRU highlights reel; and some American Legacy Foundation Truth™ ads (see Table 2 for a description of all the ads for comparative purposes). Although all ads could not be shown and discussed in every group, each ad was shown in a variety of groups to get a diversity of opinion. All of the focus groups were audio taped, professionally transcribed, and then coded using Atlas.ti qualitative software. The final coded document from each focus group was then utilized to compile the summary views and recommendations presented in the current report.

To provide a context for the focus group recommendations, they are presented later in this report alongside the findings from the December 2003 UNC-TPEP report: *Recommendations for 2004 North Carolina Youth Tobacco Use Prevention Media Campaign*. The *Recommendations* report ([http://www.fammed.unc.edu/tpep/hwtfceval/reports/media\\_analysis03.pdf](http://www.fammed.unc.edu/tpep/hwtfceval/reports/media_analysis03.pdf)) describes best practices for youth-focused tobacco prevention media campaigns as gathered from a comprehensive literature review and interviews with state and national experts, as well as local experts and stakeholders. The *Recommendations* report also served in part as the basis for initial designs of the 2004 media campaign.

While opinions about ads varied, youth expressed a clear preference for their favorite ad: *Travelogue* (the final TRU ad of 2004). *Travelogue* was chosen as the favorite ad by the majority of youth in 13 of 14 groups. Many of the youth were emphatic about this choice. The reasons they gave for choosing *Travelogue* included three major elements emphasized by groups as effective or memorable.

*Travelogue* showed:

- graphic display of serious health consequences of smoking, which elicited strong reactions/emotions;
- the featured individuals telling stories about their own experiences, rather than those of a friend or family member; and
- a diversity (ethnic, gender, and age) of people.

Feedback on most other ads was mixed and is described in detail in the full report, along with youth suggestions for improving the advertising campaign.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations derive from analysis of the full focus group findings. Each ad is summarized individually elsewhere in this report along with supporting quotes from the focus groups. Recommendations below reflect summary data from the focus group evaluations of existing TRU ads, including their content, perceived emotional tone, format, “actors”, styles and branding.

### *Ad Content* \*

**RECOMMENDATION 1: Ads using a serious health consequences theme should graphically depict the harms resulting from smoking. Images should be shocking in some way and should appear early in a commercial to grab youth’s attention. Images should be tied to a personal story to give additional meaning and elicit higher emotional response from youth.**

### *Ad Emotional Tone*

**RECOMMENDATION 2: Ads should utilize a negative emotional tone such as sadness (e.g., during a moving emotional testimonial) or fear/shock (e.g., from the graphic depiction of the health consequences of smoking, such as in *Travelogue*.) Some combination of *people in ads showing emotion* and *the ad itself eliciting emotion in viewers* would likely be most effective.**

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\*Ads tested in the focus groups included the following themes: Serious Health Consequences, Addiction, and to some extent, Industry Manipulation. An additional theme recommended in the December 2003 report that did not appear in any of the tested ads was Secondhand Smoke. There were not enough consistent data on the Addiction or Industry Manipulation content to form recommendations on these themes.

### *Ad Format*

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** Ads should feature or incorporate smokers or former smokers telling their own stories, rather than people solely talking about family members or friends.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:** Use facts and statistics sparingly, and when used, ensure they are made personal or placed in a meaningful context (e.g., do not use a number like “200,000” but rather state “1 out of 5 North Carolina teens will. . .”).

### *Person(s) in Ad*

**RECOMMENDATION 5:** Ads featuring just one person can utilize people of either gender or any ethnicity equally effectively, but ads incorporating several people should show people of diverse ethnicities and gender. Showing people of different ages can also be effective (see Recommendation 6.)

**RECOMMENDATION 6:** People in ads should ideally be young people who are already suffering visible and serious health consequences from smoking. If “older” people are used, their story should be tied to a younger person’s story in order to connect youth behavior with future consequences, or should show pictures of the person when he/she was younger.

**RECOMMENDATION 7:** Spanish language should be incorporated into ads directed to Latino youth because they do relate to that language. However, they, like other ethnic groups, see themselves as part of a diverse, real world scene, which includes a mix of people, and mixed English/Spanish language scenes are more realistic for them. They appreciate seeing an ad that includes some Spanish but that, in and of itself, will not make an effective ad.

### *Style of Ad*

**RECOMMENDATION 8:** The tone of ads should not be “preachy” and messages should not be “heavy-handed” in telling youth not to smoke

**RECOMMENDATION 9:** The people, their message, and the setting they are placed in need to feel genuine to youth for them to pay attention to the ad.

**RECOMMENDATION 10: Branding slogans need to be given greater graphic and oral presence in the ads if youth are going to remember them. “Tag lines” or summary statements (such as *Travelogue’s* “Every time you smoke another cigarette, there goes another breath of your life”) may help youth to better understand and remember the message of an ad.**

**RECOMMENDATION 11: Camera work that appears “artsy” can be distracting in an ad. The filming and setting of an ad should appear as natural to the everyday life of youth as possible so as not to take away from the content of the ad.**

### **General**

**RECOMMENDATION 12: Test all future ads before they go on the air in order to increase the likelihood of reaching youth with an effective TRU campaign.**

## 2. Background

Mass media advertising is a major part of the current North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund's (HWTF) public health initiative to reduce tobacco use among youth in NC. In 2004 the HWTF's media contractor developed and aired a series of television ads with the brand "Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered." ("TRU") as part of this statewide initiative to reduce youth smoking. The UNC Tobacco Prevention and Evaluation Program (UNC-TPEP) is evaluating the TRU media campaign as part of its evaluation of the entire HWTF program. The first piece of this evaluation (not addressed in this report) is based on data from two rounds of telephone surveys with NC youth in 2004. The results from the surveys' analysis will serve to inform us about how well the youth are recalling the ads, a fundamental requirement of an effective ad.

In preparation for the 2005 media campaign, the HWTF also wanted a qualitative assessment of how these TRU ads were being interpreted and understood by youth across the state to determine if and how they might be modified to more effectively reach youth. (Are the ads being understood and interpreted as intended by the media vendor? Are there differences among rural or urban youth, or youth of various ethnicities? Are there elements of the ads that are registering more or less favorably among youth?) The media contractor also had other potential ad material that they wanted to be tested in this qualitative manner.

To provide this assessment of the 2004 ads and related material, UNC-TPEP designed a special focus group study with youth across the state. The objectives of this study were:

- to provide the HWTF and its media contractor with information on how NC youth were seeing and interpreting the TRU ads, and
- to gain insight into how the TRU ads might be improved.

## 3. Methodology

### Interview Guide

UNC-TPEP developed a focus group interview guide (see Appendix A) to ensure utilization of a common focus group format developed around the study's primary research question. The purpose of the Interview Guide was to provide focus and direction of questions for the facilitator to stimulate the youth in the focus groups to talk about and discuss their thoughts and feelings about the advertising materials. In the first part of the group, youth viewed ads and were asked to answer a series of questions regarding these ads. The survey prompted youth to think about aspects of the ads such as whether they found them convincing, whether they grabbed their attention, and whether they would speak to their friends about the ads. In this way, the youth could begin to formulate their own opinions before the group discussion. UNC-TPEP designed the study in this way to attempt to avoid the issue of "group think" that is a common limitation of focus groups. (See *Limitations* section for more information on this topic.)

The interview guide further prompted youth to consider their opinions of the ads by asking about aspects of the ad they particularly liked or disliked, how the ad made them feel, and what they thought about the people in the ads. In addition, the guide contained questions on comparison of the ads (ads seen as most/least effective), branding of the ads, and suggestions for future ads.

## **Sample**

To define the sample youth groups for interviews, we identified five characteristics that might differentially affect how youth were interpreting and understanding the TRU advertisements: age, gender, ethnicity, geographic region, and smoking status. After consultation with colleagues who have worked with youth, we created the groups listed in Table 1. Because the professional opinions varied on how to best create good group discussion, we created two kinds of groups: some with mixed gender and/or ethnicity and some segregated by gender and ethnicity. Since the goal of the campaign is prevention, the majority of the sample was 13-15 years old and non-smoking.

**Table 1. Description of Focus Groups**

<b>Group Number</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Demographics</b>			
		<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age*</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Other</i>
1	Raleigh	Mixed	13-15	Mixed	-
2	Raleigh	Mixed	13-15	Mixed	-
3	Raleigh	Mixed	16-17	Mixed	-
4	Charlotte	Boys	13-15	Latino	
5	Charlotte	Girls	13-15	Latino	-
6	Raleigh	Boys	13-15	American Indian	-
7	Raleigh	Girls	13-15	American Indian	-
8	Greensboro	Girls	13-15	African American	-
9	Wilmington	Mixed	13-17	Mixed	Smokers
10	Chapel Hill	Mixed	13-15	African American	-
11	Edenton	Mixed	13-15	Mixed	Tobacco Farming Country
12	Edenton	Mixed	13-15	Mixed	Tobacco Farming Country
13	Greensboro	Boys	13-15	African American	-
14	Madison County	Mixed	13-15	Caucasian	-

\* This age range is based upon the screening requirements given to recruiters. In some groups, there were youth a year older or younger than the specified range.

## **Recruitment**

Youth for these groups were recruited in several ways. First, we communicated with HWTF program coordinators in different regions of the state to inquire if they could recruit youth in their area for any of these focus groups. To obtain a more heterogeneous sample of youth we asked the coordinators to recruit youth from outside any known anti-tobacco group with which that they were currently working. Seven coordinators from different regions agreed to recruit youth for these focus groups and to make local arrangements for a meeting place. Some coordinators enlisted the assistance of teachers or community youth leaders to recruit youth. In one area, we contracted with a commercial focus group firm to recruit youth and provide a meeting place. Recruiters used a screener (see Appendix B) developed to select appropriate youth based on smoking behavior/openness to smoking, willingness to speak in a group of their peers, and the demographic characteristics of the specified group (age, ethnicity, gender.) Youth were offered an incentive for participation. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of North Carolina School of Medicine.

## **Focus Group Interviews**

The focus groups were carried out in November and December 2004. Two UNC-TPEP Research Associates set up and were in attendance at all of the focus groups. They each facilitated one of the focus groups, and in the others were observers. Five other experienced facilitators ran the other 12 groups, after receiving training from UNC-TPEP on the purpose of the study and some background on the TRU media campaign.

Based on our primary research questions and conversations with HWTF staff and the media contractor, we decided to include three general groups of ads in the focus group testing: 2004 TRU ads; a TRU highlights reel; and some American Legacy Foundation Truth™ ads. (See Table 2 for descriptions of each of the ads.) The TRU highlights reel was a three-minute video clip taken by the media vendor of youth from around North Carolina during the summer of 2004. The vendor was interested in gauging youth reaction to the different segments of the clip in order to explore whether youth found any of the pieces compelling enough to develop into full ads for 2005.

At least one Truth™ ad was shown in twelve of the focus groups in order to compare reactions to high cost, previously tested anti-tobacco ads with reactions to the TRU ads. The *Janet Sackman*, *Cowboy*, and *Laffin's Kids* ads were chosen to further explore NC youth's reactions to ads with anti-industry messages. Because it is unlikely that ads that specifically focus on industry attacks would ever air in North Carolina, these ads were chosen because they contained an anti-industry message embedded within personal stories about the serious health consequences of using tobacco. The two *Pam Laffin* ads were shown in later groups to test out comments made by youth in earlier groups about wanting to see a young person suffering serious health consequences as the result of smoking.

Because the group meetings were limited to two hours, not all of these ads could be shown and discussed in every group. As much as possible we sought to show the ads in a variety of groups to get a diversity of opinion on the ads (see Table 3). An average of five ads were shown in each group (with the notable exception of the Latino groups since the English ads had to be translated for those who did not speak English.)

**Table 2. Description of Ads Shown in Focus Groups**

Name of Ad	Campaign	Brief Description
<i>Anna</i>	TRU	A teenage girl talks about the health consequences (mouth cancer leading to removal of half her tongue) her grandmother suffered as a result of smoking since the age of 13.
<i>Brad</i>	TRU	A teenage boy gives facts about smoking and talks about his friend who smokes and cannot run across the street, yet is unable to quit smoking.
<i>Cowboy</i>	Truth™	The brother of a former cigarette company spokesperson (the Marlboro Man, though not named as such in the ad) talks about the health consequences his brother suffered as a result of smoking, and shows a picture of him in a hospital bed.
<i>Highlights Reel</i>	TRU	A 3-minute video clip of footage taken on the TRU Road Trip, Summer 2004. It includes stories from teens and young people about loved ones they have lost to smoking, as well as young people giving reasons why they do not smoke.
<i>Jacobi</i>	TRU	A young man gives facts about smoking and says that smoking is killing his 34-year-old uncle.
<i>Janet Sackman</i>	Truth™	A former model for the tobacco industry, who has now lost her vocal chords because of smoking, tells viewers that she hopes she can convince them not to smoke.
<i>Laffin's Kids</i>	Truth™	Part of a series of ads about Pam Laffin (see below.) The ad begins with a man talking about how the industry places its products in movies, and ends with two girls who lost their mother to smoking-related disease who say she started smoking because she saw a movie that made it look glamorous.
<i>Pam Laffin</i>	Truth™	A 26-year-old woman describes the serious health consequences (emphysema and removal of a lung) she has suffered as a result of smoking since the age of 10.
<i>Pam Laffin Transplant</i>	Truth™	Pam Laffin talks about the lung transplant she underwent at age 24 as the result of smoking.
<i>Spanish Language Ad</i>	TRU	Latino youth talk about why they do not smoke.
<i>Travelogue</i>	TRU	The ad introduces the TRU Road Trip in North Carolina, with stories from a woman who has undergone a tracheotomy as a result of smoking, and a young man who has been smoking since age 8 and is addicted.

**Table 3: Ads Discussed in Each Group (bolded ads are TRU ads)**

<b>GROUPS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<i>Anna</i>															<b>8</b>
<i>Brad</i>															<b>5</b>
<i>Cowboy</i>															<b>2</b>
<i>Highlights Reel</i>															<b>8</b>
<i>Jacobi</i>															<b>10</b>
<i>Janet Sackman</i>															<b>12</b>
<i>Laffin's Kids</i>															<b>3</b>
<i>Pam Laffin</i>															<b>3</b>
<i>Pam Laffin -Transplant</i>															<b>1</b>
<i>Spanish Language Ad</i>															<b>2</b>
<i>Travelogue</i>															<b>14</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	

## **Analysis**

All of the focus groups were audio taped, professionally transcribed, and then coded using Atlas.ti qualitative software. Six people worked on coding the 14 transcriptions. Two people independently coded each focus group transcription and then came together and reconciled their respective codings. This final reconciled document from each focus group was then utilized to compile the summary views presented in the current report. After reviewing all of the summaries and notes, we prepared a written report and a list of recommendations.

The report is organized utilizing a conceptual model first developed by UNC-TPEP to describe best practices in youth-focused tobacco prevention ads, and revised for this study based on youth feedback from the focus groups and additional research. (In 2003, UNC-TPEP prepared a report on recommendations for the 2004 media campaign based on best practices as found in a comprehensive literature review, interviews with state and national experts in the field of tobacco prevention media campaigns, and interviews with local experts and stakeholders as to how best to reach NC youth.)

The conceptual model included the following areas:

- Ad content – the underlying theme of an ad. Themes in the TRU and Truth ads in this study included Serious Health Consequences, Addiction, and Industry Manipulation.
- Ad format – the techniques used to convey the message. Formats used in the TRU and Truth ads in this study included Testimonials, Graphic Images, and Facts.
- Emotional tone of ad – the feelings elicited by the ad.
- Actors/People in ad – opinions about the actors or persons in an ad.
- Style – the setting, pace, music, color, and filming (camera angles) of an ad.
- Branding – the distinctive name/logo identifying the campaign

The report sections on the individual TRU ads are categorized by these areas. Only those areas specifically commented upon by youth are included in each section. Because the above categories sometimes overlap (e.g. graphic images [format] depicting the serious health consequences of smoking [content]), the information is presented in the category in which it best fits.

## 4. Specific Ads

### A. ANNA

*“I think it was more sad and . . . I kind of felt more sorry for the person than actually getting the point.” (Group 2)*

*“The message was good, but they could have made it more realistic if they had more pictures.” (Group 9)*

### Overall Impression

Although some youth expressed sympathy for Anna and her story, most felt it was not a convincing ad for several reasons:

- Anna did not appear sufficiently emotional when telling the story of her grandmother.
- The story was told by Anna rather than her grandmother.
- The ad did not feature any visual images of the health consequences suffered by Anna’s grandmother.
- Little in the ad grabbed youth’s attention.

*Anna* was shown in eight of the 14 focus groups. See Tables 1 and 3 for a description of the groups in which it was shown.

The above themes were common across six of the eight groups in which the ad was shown. Amongst the eight groups, there were divergent views on whether Anna was seen as a real and believable teen who was genuinely upset about her grandmother, or whether she was an actress objectively relating a fictional story. In the Latina girls group and American Indian boys groups, there was somewhat more thought that Anna seemed believable and that the ad was emotionally moving. Although a handful of youth expressed strong negative opinions about the ad, much of the feedback – both positive and negative – was conveyed without a great deal of feeling, perhaps reflecting the teens’ feelings of indifference about the ad itself.

## **Specific Highlights**

### Content – Serious Health Consequences

- The most memorable piece of the ad was the description of the removal of part of Anna’s grandmother’s tongue. Youth cited this piece most frequently when asked about parts of the ad they had liked or found convincing.

*“Yeah. If I remembered anything about it, it would be that their tongue got cut out. And, I mean, that’s kind of like a pretty disgusting image and . . . it made you think about smoking. That’s one thing that could happen and it sticks out more than anything.”*  
(Group 3)

- Some youth also mentioned Anna’s grandmother’s scar and traced a path from their lip to their chin (as Anna does in the ad) when talking about it.
- A less frequently mentioned, but notable, element was that the story did not have as much impact because Anna’s grandmother was seen as “old.”

*“The way we look at it we’re just like, Yeah, you know how far down the road it is? I don’t care, I’ll be dead by then anyway.”* (Group 9)

*“It seems like in all the ads. . . everyone that they focus on has been smoking for so long, and they probably smoked a lot. . . it’s not like someone’s going to think . . . ‘that’s going to happen to me’ if they’re just smoking one cigarette.”* (Group 1)

- There was also some mention of the impact of smoking’s consequences on loved ones as shown in the ad.

*“I think it kind of showed how it affects other people, how she was kind of crying and how like it hurt . . . the people around you and your family.”* (Group 3)

- A few youth referred to the Anna’s grandmother’s advice to her in the ad: “You never know which cigarette is going to give you the cancer, so it’s better just to not smoke at all.”

### Emotional Tone

- Some youth felt that Anna was an actress because she did not seem emotional enough when relating the story of her grandmother.

*“I know if that was my grandma, I wouldn’t be able to go through with the commercial because I’d be crying.”* (Group 8)

*“Well . . . I’ve had a, my cousin died from liver cancer. He drank himself to death and I can’t get up on television and talk about it. I would [be crying.] If you actually care about somebody and they die from that, you’d be crying. You wouldn’t be, your eyes wouldn’t just show water. She could have poked herself in the eye and put some of that little rubbing stuff under her eyes so her eyes water.” (Group 9)*

*“I didn’t like it because it seemed like she was acting on there like she wasn’t crying on there or nothing and it looked just like she was acting. . . I didn’t see no tears.” (Group 9)*

### Format

- Youth found it less convincing to hear Anna’s grandmother’s story secondhand.

*“ . . . you kind of got the whole tone, like it was really sad, and you could tell, you know, like I felt for her. But with Anna, like she’s trying to tell the sad story, but it’s not really that sad . . . because it’s not her story to tell.” (Group 2)*

- One of the most common themes was that the ad would have been more believable had it featured graphic images of Anna’s grandmother when she was sick.

*“They didn’t have no pictures of the lady or nothing like that. . . I’m saying like with her messed up and junk.” (Group 9)*

*“I feel like that was really sad and left you with a powerful message. It’s kind of like people are desensitized, that sort of thing, now because you’ve seen so many different advertisements, you know, about this person, about this person dying, and it is really sad, it is real touching, but at the same time, you know . . . people need to be shocked more. . .” (Group 3)*

### **Youth Suggestions**

Youth agreed that

- Anna should show more emotion.

*“ . . . because if she was crying, that would give you a reason . . . to not start smoking because you wouldn’t want your family to go through what she’d gone through.” (Group 8)*

- The grandmother should tell part of her own story.

*“I think when people are telling their own stories it’s a lot more convincing than when somebody’s just telling them about somebody else.” (Group 1)*

- The ad should feature graphic pictures of Anna's grandmother's tongue and scar.

*“Kind of goes through your mind, ‘Did that really happen?’ because it didn’t show anything about the grandma. It didn’t show any pictures. It didn’t show her.” (Group 2)*

*“When I heard the Anna one, I wanted to see a picture of her tongue and everything.” (Group 2)*

## B. BRAD

*“It was boring.” (Group 13)*

*“It’s like just showing him. And he don’t even smoke.” (Group 12)*

*“So he wasn’t really like backing his facts up real good. He wasn’t doing a good job at that.” (Group 9)*

### **Overall Impression**

Although some youth expressed that Brad seemed passionate about his message most felt that the ad was not effective for several reasons:

- The testimonial about Brad’s best friend was not believable or convincing.
- The ad did not feature someone who was suffering from the consequences of smoking.
- The style of the ad did not resonate well with the youth.

*Brad* was shown in five of the 14 focus groups. See Tables 1 and 3 for a description of the groups in which it was shown.

The above themes were consistent across most groups. *Brad* was repeatedly ranked as a least favorite ad when compared to the other ads presented in each group. The African American boys’ group found it especially difficult to relate to *Brad*.

### **Specific Highlights**

#### Format – Facts

- There was disagreement among the groups on whether the facts provided in the ad were effective.
  - Two of the groups liked the facts presented and thought they were convincing.

*“I did like a little bit about it because he told you what how many people get killed by cigarettes than other drugs .... That was truthful.” (Group 11)*

- Two of the groups disliked the facts because they felt like the facts were distorted.

*“They’re like talking like, making cigarettes sound worse than drugs. Because he’s all like, ‘More people die from cigarettes than drugs.’ ... it’s telling them like, it’s basically telling them, ‘Then do drugs because it’s better than cigarettes.’”(Group 9)*

### Format – Testimonial

- The most commonly criticized element of the ad was that the story Brad relayed about “a best friend” was unconvincing because a lot of youth had *non*-smoking friends who could not run across the street without getting out of breath. Some youth were quite emphatic about this point.

*“I thought it was stupid. Well, he tries to, like when he’s in the speech he tries to act like he knows something that we don’t know, and then he tries to talk about his friend that can’t even run across the street. That’s like, so what?” (Group 9)*

*“About his best friend? Yeah. I think that’s hilarious.” (Group 10)*

*“He didn’t, he didn’t sound convincing. I mean, the example he used.” (Group 13)*

- The youth also frequently mentioned that the story should come from someone who smokes who has experienced some negative health consequences.

*“... I’d tell them they need somebody else up there. I know what, get somebody that has smoked before and went through it.” (Group 11)*

*“It’s like just showing him. And he don’t even smoke. What about like showing- like-show the person who do smoke.” (Group 12)*

### Person in Ad

- There was some disagreement among the groups regarding the character of Brad.
  - Three groups felt that Brad was passionate about his message and thought that they could relate to him.

*“We can relate to him more. Because I think he’s our age and he was into the camera.” (Group 10)*

- Two groups, however, strongly disliked the character and found him hard to relate to.

*“He was like, I can’t relate, he looked like one of them skateboard dudes--one of them people wearing them tight shirts and stuff.” (Group 13)*

### Style of Ad

- The majority of youth disliked the overall ad style of *Brad*. The elements that the youth particularly disliked were the camera angles and the setting.

*“There is no proof in there. He was just sitting there talking and they’re like showing like different sides of him. It’s just like, ‘Ooh, it’s his right side!’ ‘Ooh, it’s his left side!’ ‘This is what the back of him looks like!’ It’s like there’s no proof.” (Group 9)*

### **Youth Suggestions**

Youth suggested that

- The ad might have been more effective if Brad, himself, had been a smoker.

*“You look at a young person up there who knows the effects of smoking, it’s just like, it’s like looking at [someone] over there and he’s telling me not to smoke, but he don’t smoke. So, you know, why am I going to listen to him?” (Group 11)*

*“... they should at least have somebody that it did happen to, like something that something bad happened to the person. And have them up there talking instead of somebody talking about their friend and something.” (Group 9)*

## C. JACOBI

*“You actually look at it and see how many people actually die from smoking. That’ll definitely convince you, convince you to stop.”(Group 13)*

*“It’s not memorable. It gets the point across at first but five minutes after, you don’t even remember what you were watching.”(Group 2)*

*“I’d describe it, I’d say it’s . . . it has a good, bad, negative side. Besides, it’s boring. It ain’t, it don’t grab your attention.” (Group 8)*

### **Overall Impression**

There was no clear consensus to how the youth reacted to the *Jacobi* ad.

- There were varying opinions on whether the ad was attention-grabbing.
- The groups had mixed feelings regarding the format and content of the ad.
- There was disagreement on whether *Jacobi* was a believable character.

The only agreement across all groups was that the testimonial offered by *Jacobi* was ineffective because it was a second-hand story. *Jacobi* was shown in 10 of the 14 focus groups. See Tables 1 and 3 for a description of the groups in which it was shown. *Jacobi* did not elicit a strong positive or strong negative reaction from any of the groups. In general, the ad had more favorable responses from the Caucasian groups and the African American boys group. The American Indian groups, the African American girls, and the mixed gender African American group had more negative views of *Jacobi*.

### **Specific Highlights**

#### Format – Facts

- In general, the youth liked the use of facts in the ad; however, there were discrepant views on the types of facts that should be used.
  - Three of the groups found the numbers given in the ad unmemorable and hard to relate to themselves.

*“Maybe like 200,000, when he said that, like I think people would think, ‘Oh, what, you know, that’s 200,000 people. That’s not me,’ you know.” (Group 1)*

- Four of the groups did not like the listing of diseases that could be caused by smoking. One reason given was that some youth may not know what some of the diseases are (e.g., emphysema.) A second reason was that a lot of youth already know this information.

*“... ineffective parts of the commercial was when they list the different diseases and things you can get because for people that don’t know what it is, they’re just like, ‘Whatever.’ And for the people that know what it is, they’ve already heard it so many times that it’s just normal and it doesn’t really do anything.” (Group 3)*

- A less frequently mentioned, but notable, element was that the statement relayed by Jacobi at the end of the ad that smoking can be as hard to quit as heroin seemed out of place.

*“At the end, it said heroin. I mean, you don’t talk about heroin that much, so how it just popped up, I don’t know. It didn’t have anything to do with anything it was talking about before.” (Group 2)*

#### Format – Testimonial

- Across the majority of groups the youth stated that the testimonial piece of the ad was not convincing because the story provided by Jacobi was not his own story. They emphasized that they want to see someone who has experienced the effects of smoking firsthand.

*“ ... His uncle went through it, [but] that don’t mean that like, he [Jacobi] could talk to a group of people . . .that don’t mean like they’re going to listen . . . they’re going to be like, ‘Yeah, your uncle went through it,’ but like if his uncle was there to talk to the people and to tell them how it is, then I think that they would listen more because it’s somebody that done been through it and done got consequences from it and they know how it is.” (Group 8)*

#### Person in Ad

- There was disagreement across the groups about whether the youth found Jacobi to be believable. Several of the youth felt that Jacobi was not serious enough and showed too little emotion in the ad.

*“It seemed like he was just put up there just to say what he had to say. He wasn’t like serious about it.” (Group 6)*

*“I think he was kind of, it was less convincing because he was kind of detached because he was just saying, kind of like he was reading it off of a paper, and he was saying, ‘My uncle’s going to die,’ and he was, he didn’t seem like emotional about it or anything, so it was just kind of like, you know, it wasn’t that moving, I don’t think.” (Group 3)*

However, several youth disagreed and found Jacobi's portrayal to be effective.

*"I liked him. He was good. He got the point across, and he seemed real serious about everything, so I believed him."* (Group 2)

- Some of the youth found Jacobi to have a strong personality that was able to grab and sustain their attention

*"I think he had a stronger personality, too, that like came out as soon as he started talking. And I think that was important."*(Group 2)

### Style of Ad

- Several youth mentioned how the style of the ad complemented the way Jacobi delivered the message.

*"...that's the strongest part of the commercial and mainly how it says, my uncle will die instead of that he could die or something. The fact that he says he will and then it stops and says 34, and that's not that old. I like the dramatic pause, as well. It grabs you. Makes it more real."* (Group 3)

- Several youth disliked the setting of the ad and felt that it made the ad less effective.

*"And the setting was random. I mean, he's like in a building that's not even done. It makes it worse."* (Group 10)

### **Youth Suggestions**

Youth suggested that

- The uncle should tell part of his own story.

*"...you should hear it from someone who's been through it instead of someone who's seen it happening to somebody else."* (Group 10)

*"... I like hearing stories, but I like hearing stories for the person that it's about. I don't like for somebody to tell a story about somebody else."* (Group 2)

- The ad might have been more effective if Jacobi, himself, had been a smoker.

*"They also could have put somebody that smoked. He didn't say anything about him smoking. They could have put somebody in there that did smoke."* (Group 14)

- The statistics need to be presented in a more effective manner.

*“Maybe like 200,000, when he said that, like I think people would think, ‘Oh, what, you know, that’s 200,000 people. That’s not me,’ you know. But if they had said something like, ‘One out of so many of your friends will die,’ like, you know, like make it effective, like, I don’t know just, like state the statistic in a more effective way.” (Group 1)*

## D. SPANISH LANGUAGE AD

*“I didn’t understand it. It was confusing. They said something about girls like me... They need to show something, like somebody dying or something that will make an effect.”(Group 5)*

*“It didn’t really catch nobody’s attention because it’s not really persuading you not to, like, stop smoking. It really didn’t have enough details to show you that stuff, the consequences of what you do.” (Group5)*

*“It is missing something, like the woman with the tube, I liked that.” (Group 5)*

### **Overall Impression**

The Latino youth generally responded apathetically to this ad. They seemed to appreciate the idea of the ad being in Spanish and featuring Latino youth, but those assets did not outweigh the boring nature of the ad. The ad had almost no redeeming value for them.

The Spanish language ad was designed specifically for Spanish-speaking youth and was shown only in the two Latino youth groups (see Tables 1 and 3.)

### **Specific Highlights**

#### Content – Serious Health Consequences

- Youth felt that the ad was not convincing because it did not show anyone suffering serious health consequences from smoking.

*“They need to show something, like somebody dying or something that will make an effect . . . It didn’t really catch nobody’s attention because it’s not really persuading you to like stop smoking. It really didn’t have enough details to show you that stuff.” (Group 5)*

#### Person in Ad

- The one element of the ad that a number of youth spoke about positively was its ethnic qualities: Latino youth and Spanish language.

*“[It was] good cuz they showed girls like us. The faces are Latino.” ( Group 5)*

*“Just the language could be in Spanish cuz maybe some people don’t speak English.”  
(Group 5)*

## **Youth Suggestions**

The youth had a variety of suggestions on how this ad might be improved. Many of their suggestions focused on some sort of visual display of the health consequences of smoking; they need to see something “bad”, something real, something that impacts them emotionally.

*“We need like somebody, someone who has gone through something like this, has something bad, it’s the kind of thing . . . Yes, [like] the scar.” (Group 5)*

*“Need something that attracts attention. [Like someone] telling her experiences... Show you a mark...something physical . . . consequences.” (Group 5)*

*“You need something like reality.” (Group 5)*

*“...put photos in the ads that show what will happen to your body [as a consequence of smoking], so that kids that are younger, smaller will learn that they don’t start to take on that bad habit.” (Group 4)*

*“...give an example of how it can give you mouth cancer or in your body, how it gives you cancer and how they have to cut out a tumor, and how the tongue turns black when one chews tobacco.” (Group 4)*

## E. TRAVELOGUE

*“I thought it was real convincing because they had somebody on there that had done been through it and is suffering the consequences, so I think it was real.” (Group 8)*

*“This one definitely, definitely had shock value, but it was like almost too much going on at the same time.”(Group 3)*

*“I think that this was the best one. It was nasty!” (Group 13)*

*“Oh man, that make you want to stop for real. It was like [she was talking through] a bunch of plastic. Oh man, it make you want to not smoke a cigarette.” (Group 9)*

### **Overall Impression**

With the exception of one group (Madison County), all the youth talked about this ad as being convincing and memorable, and providing good reasons to think about or stop smoking. All the groups found the woman with the voice box to be the most profound, attention-grabbing element of this ad. Other significant elements included the young man who started smoking when he was eight years old, and the composition of the ad, which included a diverse group of people. The impact of this ad was relatively uniform for all but one of the groups; it registered as very emotionally profound with the youth.

*Travelogue* was shown in all 14 groups (see Tables 1 and 3).

### **Specific Highlights**

#### Content: Addiction

- A frequently discussed feature of the ad was the young man who started smoking when he was eight years old and was now addicted. The youth were really struck by the fact that he started smoking so young and that at his current young age he was addicted.

*“They showed that young dude, they showed how quick you can get addicted to it [smoking.]” (Group 11)*

*“And it seemed like he was on our age level and it makes me think about smoking and not smoking.” (Group 1)*

*“[He said] every time you smoke you lose a breath of your life [and] that’s true.” (Group 4)*

- There were some mixed reviews of this young man because it was unclear to many youth that he was suffering any consequences from his smoking. The addiction was not “visible” to the audience. Nonetheless, youth seemed to find it a moderately compelling piece.

*“He said he’d been smoking since age 8, and ... there was nothing really wrong with him, you know.” (Group 14)*

*“He had a clear voice. I mean you couldn’t tell that [he was suffering any consequences from his addiction.]” (Group 14)*

*“This guy...I believe what he said, but he wasn’t completely convincing. ...He could have showed just how hard it was for him to stop.” (Group 10)*

### Content: Serious Health Consequences

- By far the most arresting element of this ad for the youth was the woman with the voice box. This component generated a significant amount of discussion. Youth were emotionally moved by this element because it was a very graphic portrayal of the serious health consequences of smoking.

*“[This was the best ad] because you could actually see like what you have to go through because she’s smoking and she has that little thing in her throat.” (Group 13)*

*“I think the real, the one that really caught your attention would be the lady. I mean it showed physical, like more of the physical effects [of smoking.]” (Group 6)*

*“It was convincing, shocking, sad. I felt her pain.” (Group 10)*

- Youth were convinced of the authenticity of the woman with the voice box and believed her story. They found her message to be hard-hitting because they were getting it directly from the person who suffered this terrible health consequence.

*“The message is better when it’s coming from someone who’s suffered.” (Group 1)*

*“Well for me, it looks a little ugly what can happen, at least what happened to that woman. But at the same time it gives you an ugly example so that for someone who is smoking, that person will say no, I will stop smoking because look at what will happen to me.” (Group 5)*

*“[This ad] is something to talk to your friends about.” (Group 2)*

*“You see that and you know that [teenage smokers] are going to stop.” (Group 12)*

### Person in Ad

- The third most common theme that emerged in discussions of this ad was that of the number and variety of people. Generally, the youth felt that it was good to hear from several people in the same ad; that ethnic, age, and gender diversity of the primary and secondary people was positive; and that the presence of a background group of people was supportive of the anti-smoking theme.

*“Showed a variety of people just like instead of just staying on one person all the time. I liked that it showed different people . . . different age groups.” (Group 13)*

*“And [they had] different races and that was good. You couldn’t just say they were helping White people or African Americans...” (Group 12)*

*“And you know it actually went to different people instead of sticking on one. They tell you different effects of it [smoking.]” (Group 12)*

*“They were normal people. Just like you and me. They looked real. I can feel their pain.” (Group 10)*

### **Youth Suggestions**

The youth had two major suggestions on how this ad might be improved.

- Some youth thought the ad should be simpler, with more depth for each of the primary characters.

*“It confused me in the beginning. I think if it was split up on both of them and more about what each person had to say and their experience, [that would be better].” (Group 3)*

- A number of youth thought that the “road trip” theme was not very interesting and did not add anything to the ad.

*“I honestly thought the very beginning was cheesy; like travel across North Carolina. Okay, well, obviously they didn’t go all across NC to make that commercial. That just made you think that.” (Group 2)*

*“But like the whole road trip thing across North Carolina was like [boring].” (Group 10)*

*“Just cut the whole stupid travel across NC thing because the lady, she caught your attention the most.” (Group 2)*

## F. TRUTH™

*“...She [Janet Sackman] kind of touched on the fact that cigarette companies lie about a lot of things, and I think if they went more into depth about that, about what’s not being said about that, then that would make me not want to smoke more.” (Group 14)*

*“I don’t think it [talking about cigarette companies] matters because little kids, they don’t know anything about tobacco companies...” (Group 13)*

### **Overall Impression\***

Reactions to the various Truth™ ads were mixed. (The current and recent “hard-hitting” Truth™ ads were not tested in these groups because it is unlikely that similar ads would run in North Carolina. See Table 2 for a description of the ads that were tested, and Tables 1 and 3 for the groups in which they were tested.) For the most part, the *Janet Sackman* ad was positively received; however, *Laffin’s Kids*, *Pam Laffin*, *Pam Laffin – Transplant*, and *Cowboy* were poorly received by the majority of focus groups.

. Some general reactions to the Truth™ ads included:

- The Truth™ media campaign is widely recognized and generally viewed as effective.
- Reaction to anti-tobacco industry messages was mixed across respondents; they were never cited as the most memorable aspect of the ad.
- Emotional testimony about the effects of smoking (on oneself or a loved one) was seen as a very effective ad technique.
- Clear and graphic portrayal of the effects of smoking was most likely to grab the attention of the viewer.

General awareness of the Truth™ campaign was high – many of the respondents were able to describe other Truth™ ads they have seen – and the most common stated impression was that the campaign is effective. Notably, there was mixed reaction to the Tobacco Industry-focused components of the Truth™ ads. When asked to describe what they liked most about the Truth™ ads, very few respondents indicated that the industry-specific messages were their favorite part. When asked how they felt about the industry-specific messages, some indicated that they found them interesting, impactful, and potentially effective, but several others felt like the industry message did not add anything to the ad, and that in some cases it detracted from the overall quality of the ad.

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\*Janet Sackman was shown in 12 of the 14 focus groups and therefore a majority of the responses reported here relate to that specific ad. Because the selected Truth™ ads are all similar to each other in style and format, and because they were included as comparisons (and are not the focus of this evaluation), this report will not evaluate in detail each Truth™ ad separately. Rather, this section will describe general reactions to the five ads and to the Truth™ campaign in general.

### Janet Sackman

The *Janet Sackman* ad (in which a former tobacco industry model describes how she has lost her vocal chords due to smoking) was well-received, with some respondents identifying it as their first or second favorite ad of the ones shown to them. Again, while this was a fairly consistent finding, there was some dissension, with a few respondents indicating that Janet Sackman's old age, coupled with a fairly dry delivery of the message and the black and white filming, made the ad boring or unconvincing.

### Laffin's Kids

The *Laffin's Kids* ad was poorly received in comparison to the other ads. The ad was seen as confusing, unconvincing, and disjointed by several respondents from across the three groups. While some respondents felt like the second part of the ad (where Pam Laffin's kids describe the loss of their mom due to smoking) was convincing, many felt that the connection between this emotional piece and the first segment describing how smoking is advertised in movies was unclear, and that the first part of the ad detracted from the ad's overall quality.

### Pam Laffin

The *Pam Laffin* ad received a mixed response from the three focus groups that viewed this ad. In the ad, 26-year-old Pam Laffin describes how she got emphysema and had to get a lung removed at age 24. She then had to take medication, which caused her to get a "fat face and a hump on [her] neck." The ad shows pictures of her as a teen in drastic contrast to her current condition. While some youth found the difference between her photos and appearance to be impactful, many youth did not understand the ad and therefore found it unbelievable. The youth who did not understand the ad thought that Pam Laffin was saying that smoking had caused her to gain weight (rather than having a "fat face" as a side effect of her medication) and this contradicted their belief that smoking aids weight loss. Youth also stated that they wanted to see the hump on her neck, which she describes in the ad as a result of her medications.

### Pam Laffin – Transplant

The *Pam Laffin – Transplant* ad is part of the *Pam Laffin* series of ads and specifically focuses on the details of her lung transplant. This ad received a strong negative response from the one focus group that viewed it. Several youth felt that the ad was just telling a story and was perceived as having no anti-smoking message in it. Several youth also commented that the transplant scar was an ineffective element because it could easily be hidden by clothing.

## Cowboy

The *Cowboy* ad (in which the brother of a former cigarette company spokesperson describes his brother's smoking-related illness) received a negative reaction from the two focus groups that viewed it. The youth thought that ad was unmemorable and unconvincing. It was also mentioned that the ad would have been better if the testimonial had been provided by the "cowboy" instead of his brother.

## **Specific Highlights**

### Content – Serious Health Consequences

- Each of the Truth™ ads shown in the focus groups included content on serious health consequences; however youth reaction to this content was mixed. Youth found Janet Sackman's voice (damaged by the loss of her vocal chords) to be compelling and memorable, yet some were unswayed by the serious health consequences detailed in the *Pam Laffin* ads. Part of youth reaction to the first *Pam Laffin* ad appeared to stem from the fact that they did not understand the ad (they believed she was saying she got a "fat face" from smoking, rather than from medications taken after her lung transplant), and they did not find the consequences convincing as they were unable to see them (e.g., the hump on her neck that she describes.) The *Pam Laffin – Transplant* ad, shown in only one group, did show images of serious health consequences (the scar from her lung transplant), but some youth in the group dismissed this as it could be covered up.

*"If you knew you were going to be sounding like that when you started smoking cigarettes you probably wouldn't have done it at all."* (Group 9)

*"Like if you're smoking, like you probably wouldn't like want to smoke no more because you won't want to lose your voice."* (Group 13)

*"No. The fat, like having a fat face is stupid. I can see if you didn't want to do the hump, the Hunchback of Notre Dame [Laughter] but, I mean, the fat face, you got chubby cheeks. I think she just ate too much, man."* (Group 9)

*"It does need to be something visible. Like when you look at a person in everyday life, something's wrong with them, because I think that's what scares most people is having like a defect or something wrong with them all the time. And if it's just like a scar on their back like that, nobody's ever going to see it."* (Group 14)

### Content - Tobacco Industry

- Each of the Truth™ ads shown in the focus groups included messages or themes dealing with the manipulative practices of the tobacco companies. This focus set the Truth™ ads

apart from the other ads shown. However, there was great disparity across groups in terms of how respondents reacted to these messages, making it difficult to draw any conclusions. For instance, some of the information about tobacco industry practices (particularly the traditional denials of tobacco's addictiveness) was new for some of the youth.

*"Well, obviously it's important because... I didn't know they [cigarette companies] denied it being addictive, so I guess it's new information." (Group 1)*

- Other youth indicated that including tobacco industry-related messages might be an effective approach to keeping youth from smoking.

*"...they [cigarette companies] really don't care about you....they don't care if you die as long as they get their money. And I think if you look at something like that, then it's going to be like, 'Well..., I'm not going to smoke so they can have their money.' It becomes more of a rebellion thing. (Group 3)*

*"... She [Janet Sackman] kind of touched on the fact that cigarette companies lie about a lot of things, and I think if they went more into depth about that, about what's not being said about that, then that would make me not want to smoke more." (Group 14)*

- But many respondents questioned whether talking about the tobacco industry would have any impact on a youth's decision to smoke or not, and a handful of respondents felt that attacking the industry was unfair.

*"...I just think somebody would be pretty stupid to believe a company that would say... 'This isn't going to addict, get you addicted,' and then other people are dying because they're addicted to it." (Group 1)*

*"I don't think it [talking about cigarette companies] matters because little kids, they don't know anything about tobacco companies..." (Group 13)*

*"... I just think it's kind of bad that they put in the cigarette companies because . . .they have to make money, too, I guess, but the ways they're doing it are really bad, but I just think they shouldn't mention it. . .like because you could look at it as . . . what they're doing is bad, but then they still have a company to run." (Group 3)*

- There was particularly strong skepticism related to the message in one of the Truth™ ads (*Laffin's Kids*) that covert tobacco marketing in movies and on TV influences kids to start smoking. Some youth also had difficulty understanding the message of this ad.

*"...it [Laffin's Kids ad] blames [smoking on] TV...like what you see on movies and things...and I don't really think that's true...Like this is someone in a movie smoking. I mean, it doesn't really affect you that much." (Group 3)*

*"I think...that in movies it [smoking] was often glamorized and all that, but I think more recently... it definitely isn't glamorous as much in movies anymore...so it is definitely now more friends influencing you than it is television." (Group 3)*

*“I didn’t like it because I didn’t understand the first part, what that had to do with it. . . You concentrate on one thing on him speaking . . . And then it goes to a whole different story, like I didn’t see how they related at all.” (Group 3)*

### Format

- As stated earlier, the Truth™ media campaign was widely recognized and viewed as effective by the respondents. This was clearly due in part to the high levels of exposure to the campaign. Respondents noted that the ads tend to capture attention either by providing surprising information or memorable visuals.

*“I usually like...the ‘Truth’ commercial and advertisements. I really like them like because... they use satirical wit... it’s very sarcastic.” (Group 3)*

*“...I usually like ‘Truth,’ too, because I think they’re the ones that stick in my mind the most...I really like ‘Truth’ ads a lot because they’re shocking...” (Group 3)*

### Person in Ad

- For the most part, respondents felt like the individuals in the ads were believable and convincing. The fact that the individuals had clearly experienced what they were talking about bolstered their credibility in the eyes of the youth.

*“She [Janet Sackman] sounded like she wanted to help people... because she feels bad about addicting or getting [people] hooked on to smoking.” (Group 1)*

*“I think that one [Pam Laffin ad] was convincing because it’s her telling...her story about how what she did and what she went through and what she got, how she’s going through it now...” (Group 8)*

*“Well, like I thought that the ‘Janet Sackman’ [ad] did a very good job...like she had been someone who was promoting smoking and then seeing how she went and changed her mind, how it personally affected her... That kind of, I felt, left you with a stronger message.” (Group 3)*

- The ability to relate to the characters in the ads appeared to partially determine the youth’s reaction to the ad. In particular, youth who related to the characters in the ads had stronger, more positive reactions to the ads. The converse was also true in that youth who did not relate to or believe the characters had negative reactions to the ads.

*“I don’t know. The old lady [Janet Sackman] just got me the most for some reason...I just thought of it happening to my grandparents, the thought of... how weird it would be for my grandparents to be like that.” (Group 9)*

*"I thought it was good that they showed her [Janet Sackman] like young still, like modeling...I guess it just made it easier to identify with like the teenage mentality...like you're immortal or whatever, like models, super, you know what I mean?" (Group 1)*

*"I don't believe she [Pam Laffin] got fat from smoking. I think she got fat from eating too much." (Group 10)*

- Youth who felt like the characters were nothing like them seemed resistant to the ads. The age of the characters seemed important (some youth stated that they could not relate to some of the characters who were "old"), and a couple of individuals mentioned gender. No one in any of the twelve groups mentioned race/ethnicity.

*"I think the last one [Janet Sackman ad] would appeal more to woman, because it is a woman figure and it shows kind of her like modeling when she was younger...So I don't really have a strong feeling for that one." (Group 1)*

### Style of Ad

- The style of the ads was a secondary concern for most of the youth. Several mentioned that they thought color ads are better at capturing attention, and the black-and-white filming of the Janet Sackman ad was identified by most respondents as something they did not like about the ad.

*"I think...if it would have been...in color, it might have grabbed your attention a bit more." (Group 6)*

### **Youth Suggestions**

- The most commonly cited suggestion related to the Truth™ ads (specifically Janet Sackman) was that the ads should be in color and should include characters closer to the target population's age.
- Common throughout and across the focus groups was the suggestion that ads should include an emotional story or tie-in in order to capture the viewer and increase the likelihood that the message is remembered. Aside from a couple of respondents in one focus group who felt that straight facts are more effective than personal stories, the vast majority of respondents reacted most strongly to the personal, emotional testimonies provided by the characters.

*"...the best way to advertise things, like the best way to memorize things is to put like emotion behind them or else like you won't usually remember it if there's no emotion behind it." (Group 3)*

## 5. Ad Comparison

### Favorites

*Travelogue* was chosen as the favorite ad by the majority of youth in 13 of the 14 groups. Many of the youth were emphatic about this choice. The reasons they gave for choosing *Travelogue* included

- The powerful impact of the woman with the voice box (visual “proof” of the consequences of smoking)

*“With the voice box, you look right at it. That’s the first thing you see, and it’s, you don’t want that to happen to you at all. . . it’s horrible, so that’s why it stuck out.” (Group 3)*

- The fact that the people featured were telling stories about their own experiences, rather than a friend or family member

*“Like we already know not to smoke but for young people they just learning, they’ll know not to smoke, though. If you’re taking it from somebody else that’s older and does smoke and they know what’s the problem, like he’s addicted to them. But I really like this one because they had an actual person that smokes and they . . . showed a little voice box on her neck and it was real.” (Group 9)*

- The diversity (ethnic, gender, and age) of people in the ad

*“[It] showed a variety of people, just like, instead of just staying on one person all the time.” (Group 13)*

The second ad most frequently mentioned as a favorite was *Janet Sackman* (a Truth™ ad.) This ad was chosen as a favorite by some youth in six of the 12 groups in which it was shown (though by fewer youth than chose *Travelogue*.) Those that chose *Janet* felt sympathy for her and found her credible because of the serious health consequences she had suffered as a smoker (her voice) and the fact that she had worked for the industry.

*“The old lady just got me the most for some reason, I don’t know. I just thought of it happening to my grandparents, the thought of how like, I don’t know, how weird it would be for my grandparents to be like that. It just bothered me.” (Group 9)*

*“She was showing like younger girls that want to be a model, that that’s what can happen to you . . . if they offer you a contract, the cigarette company offer you a contract, like not to take it. She showed pictures of her[self] when she was younger.” (Group 11)*

A handful of youth in the Latina girls group chose *Anna* as their favorite, and about half the youth in the Madison County group chose *Jacobi*. *Anna* was chosen by some of the Latina

girls “because she is crying and suffering”, and the youth who chose Jacobi said it was because “it gave hard facts.”

## **Least Favorites**

The ads most frequently mentioned as least favorites were *Brad*, *Anna*, and *Jacobi*. One of these three ads was mentioned as the “least favorite” in 10 of the 11 groups in which this question was asked. (In the 11<sup>th</sup> group, a truth ad, *Pam Laffin – Transplant*, was the majority choice.)

*Brad* was chosen as one of the least favorite ads in all five groups in which it was shown. Youth said they did not find his story convincing, and some could not relate to him because of his appearance.

*“I know people who smoke and can run for a long time. So just because you smoke that don’t mean you’re going to run out of air.” (Group 9)*

*“It was not convincing. He looked a little weird to me.” (Group 10)*

*“Brad was the corniest.” (Group 11)*

*“[He looked like] a skater boy.” (Group 13)*

*Anna* was chosen as one of the least favorite ads in four of the eight groups in which it was shown. Some youth felt that *Anna* was not convincing, and that her story was difficult to believe without visual “proof.”

*“It was just a girl talking about like what happened to her grandma. It wasn’t really like depictions of actual like pictures of what happened.” (Group 1)*

*“Anna seemed like she was, ‘Okay. Let me get my money,’ you know. And she had not a tear.” (Group 8)*

*Jacobi* was chosen as one of the least favorite ads in five of the ten groups in which it was shown. Youth who chose this ad as their least favorite thought that *Jacobi* seemed detached; did not like that the uncle was not featured in the ad; or were bored by the listing of smoking-related illnesses.

*“He didn’t really, he didn’t show any emotion. He was just speaking like it was somebody he just knew, or somebody he’d heard about, instead of somebody he was related to.” (Group 6)*

*“His uncle went through it . . . [and] he could talk to a group of people, but that don’t mean like they’re going to listen, but they’re going to be like, ‘Yeah, your uncle went through it,’ but like if his uncle was there to talk to the people and to tell them how it is, then I think that they would listen more, because it’s somebody that done been through it and done got consequences from it and they know how it is.” (Group 8)*

## 6. TRU Highlights Reel

***“I really liked when they were talking and then they flashed the voice box machine...just talking about how...she was smoking through the voice box...I thought that was really effective.” (Group 3)***

***“She was saying, ‘This is going to happen to you if you do this.’ I don’t think people are going to take her seriously. She’s kind of acting like your parents: ‘Don’t smoke. It’s going to kill you.’ Like even the people that just know people that suffer...I still don’t think that’s real convincing. I think it really takes somebody that’s been through it and suffered a lot.” (Group 1)***

***“...you could see the emotion building up in her and that, you know...this was like not rehearsed or anything like that. I think that’s good.” (Group 3)***

### Overall Impression

The *TRU Highlights Reel* is a three-minute video clip filmed in North Carolina. The clip was shot during the TRU Road Trip in the summer of 2004 through the State and includes interviews with several different people. The focus group respondents were asked to describe their overall impressions of the video clip, and to then focus on which particular parts of the ad they found least and most memorable or impactful. Although there were some interesting differences in what types of ad characteristics respondents found to be most effective, there was a fairly high level of consensus that the parts of the ad showing real people providing emotional testimony about personal loss due to smoking had the greatest impact. There were some notable exceptions, with some youth indicating that personal stories had no impact on them personally and that they prefer hearing straight, honest facts. In general, the youth liked that the clip seemed real, rather than rehearsed, but many felt that the ad quality, particularly the filming, was poor and therefore distracting. Some general reactions to the clip include:

- A scene where a young man emotionally describes the death of his mother due to a smoking-related illness was most commonly cited as the most moving part of the video clip. Similarly, a scene involving a teen girl tearfully describing the death of her grandmother from smoking was often mentioned as impactful, although less so than the scene with the young man. (Youth selections of young people telling stories about family members as the best elements of the *Highlights Reel* appears to contradict with their suggestions that people tell their own stories in ads. Possible explanations of this contradiction include (1) youth were asked to choose the best elements of the reel, and there were no testimonials from smokers/former smokers in the footage, and (2) youth may have found the high level of emotion in these two pieces of the ad (the young man and the teenage girl) particularly compelling and therefore more believable.

- Consistent with reactions to another ad shown, the respondents found the image of a woman with a tracheotomy, the result of laryngeal cancer caused by smoking, to be very memorable and powerful.
- A few respondents felt like the personal testimonies were not relevant to them. These individuals indicated that they preferred hearing the facts about smoking in a direct, non-emotional way.
- Most of the respondents indicated that they liked that the people interviewed appeared to be real (rather than actors.)
- A number of respondents indicated that they felt like the video itself was of poor quality and that it looked amateurish. This was seen as a negative to these respondents, who felt like it was distracting.

The *TRU Highlights Reel* was shown in eight of the 14 focus groups (see Tables 1 and 3).

### **Specific Highlights – Favorite Parts**

- The most commonly cited “favorite” segments of the video clip involved two young people describing the deaths of their mother and grandmother. Although not universally chosen, it appears that in most of the groups these emotionally toned segments were the most memorable to the youth. The youth cited these pieces most frequently when asked about parts of the video they had liked or found convincing.

*“I liked the end with the girl whose grandmother didn’t remember her name when she died...” (Group 2)*

*“I know when the girl started... crying, the music came on, that caught my attention.” (Group 2)*

*“I’d put the guy talking about his mom and the girl talking about her grandmother.” (Group 14).*

- Youth appeared to like how “real” the testimonies in these segments were. Many indicated that it caught their attention to see people getting emotional, and that they were able to relate to the loss, either because they had experienced it themselves, or because they could imagine how hard it would be to lose a mother or grandmother.

*“...you could see the emotion building up in her and that, you know...this was like not rehearsed or anything like that. I think that’s good.” (Group 3)*

*“...the ‘This is my anti-drug’ [commercials]...I find those really staged, but...when they’re just straight up...,no rehearsing or anything, that’s really reality and that’s what really hits you.” (Group 3)*

- Notably, some respondents in one particular focus group had a very different take on the *Highlights Reel*. These youth indicated that they did not like the story and preferred a much more factual, to-the-point approach. This view was clearly not the norm across the focus groups, but was strongly held by a few respondents.

*“I don’t like stories. I really did not care about their life. I’m like tell me what’s going to happen to me if I start smoking, not about your grandma or your mom.” (Group 2)*

- These same respondents identified a particular segment within video clip that they felt was most effective. Specifically, this segment involved a girl describing the health effects of smoking.

*“That girl at the very beginning...when she was like, ‘Your lungs are going to be black,’ you’re like on hold and...She didn’t tell us a long story...she just got to the point and she was like, ‘This is what can happen, and it’s not going to be good.’” (Group 2)*

- Interestingly, this same segment was mentioned as one of the least effective by some of the other respondents.

*“That one girl [at the beginning]...it was just talking about, ‘Oh, you don’t want that to happen to you,’ or something that didn’t really help at all. I mean, they don’t know from experience or anything.” (Group 1)*

*“She was saying, ‘This is going to happen to you if you do this.’ I don’t think people are going to take her seriously. She’s kind of acting like your parents: ‘Don’t smoke. It’s going to kill you.’ Like even the people that just know people that suffer...I still don’t think that’s real convincing. I think it really takes somebody that’s been through it and suffered a lot. . . you don’t want to hear someone that’s...never done it or like younger than you are, preaching to you about...not doing it, you know?” (Group 1)*

- Respondents also felt like showing the woman with the tracheotomy (hole in her throat) was impactful and likely to grab the attention of people casually watching television.

*“I really liked when they were talking and then they flashed the voice box machine...just talking about how...she was smoking through the voice box...I thought that was really effective.” (Group 3)*

### **Specific Highlights – Least Favorite Parts**

- Although some respondents felt like it might be effective for much younger audiences, several indicated that a segment involving a young girl stating that she does not smoke because she is a dancer was not very effective and does not belong with some of the more serious information presented in the video.

*“[The] girl talking about the dance thing...that had nothing to do with cigarettes at all. That was like very unnecessary.” (Group 2)*

- The most consistent critique of the *Highlights Reel* video involved the video format and quality. In particular, the respondents found the shaky filming to be distracting.

*“The whole video in general is tacky. You had bad film, like the camera was shaking. That was really bad.” (Group 2)*

*“I thought the beginning, how it was, like the camera was really shaky and it just kind of like flashed in your face and everything, that wasn’t really effective at all to me.” (Group 3)*

*“Well, I was going to say, in the beginning when they jumped around and they showed like parts of their face and they would jump to their eyes or something, that kind of made it seem like unprofessional almost and like it was like a home video and they didn’t spend that much money into the ad or something like that...And...I didn’t really like that.” (Group 3)*

## 7. Branding

*“I don’t know if the slogan really even matters. It’s just the content...in the ad... I don’t think people pay any attention [to the slogan.]” (Group 1)*

*“...you just need to put it [the slogan] up there where you can see it. Its got to be unordinary, its got to be different, you know, it can’t just be straight, plain letters.” (Group 12)*

### Overall Impression

For the most part, the youth either failed to notice any branding or slogans associated with the ads, or they indicated that they saw something at the end but that it was not on screen long enough to read. There was relatively broad general brand recognition associated with the American Legacy “Truth” ad campaign, and in a few instances it appeared that there might have been some confusion between the Truth brand and NC’s TRU brand.

Many of the youth suggested that they generally do not pay attention to branding, or that branding does not influence what they think of an ad. Conversely, some felt like it might be beneficial to clearly state the “brand” or slogan at the beginning of the ad and then throughout, effectively tying the brand or slogan more directly to the ad itself, but that simply placing a tag line at the end of an ad is unlikely to attract any attention.

Although many of the youth indicated that they did not remember seeing a slogan or brand while watching the ad, later discussion of these slogans suggested that the “What’s it gonna take?” slogan might resonate with youth. The youth generally understood this slogan to mean primarily: “What’s it gonna take?” to get people to not smoke (either not start or quit), and several thought that it might be an effective message to include in the ads. A few respondents felt like the slogan was most applicable to current smokers.

It should be noted that because of time constraints inherent in the focus groups, branding was not discussed extensively in all of groups, and not at all in the Latino groups because of the language issue. In general, the discussion that did occur was less lively or informative than discussion centered on the specific ads. This may be because the issue of branding is more complex and/or less intuitive.

### Brand/Slogan Preferences

Easily the most common reaction to the questions about branding was that in general it does not matter or make any difference in how effective or memorable an ad is. Relatively few respondents were able to recall the slogan after viewing the ads, although some remembered the

slogan or brand from previous ads (Truth and TRU). However, when asked to decide which slogan they felt would be most effective, a majority indicated that they would choose the “What’s it gonna take?” slogan, although this was not a consensus. Some respondents indicated that they preferred the TRU slogan because it highlights the ad’s focus on the facts and is shorter and therefore likely easier to remember.

In general, the respondents felt that “What’s it gonna take?” was referring to quitting smoking, although several indicated that the message could relate either to quitting or not starting in the first place.

*“What’s it going to take? I thought that was a very effective message...they’re trying to convince you to quit smoking and they’re asking you what’s going to convince you not to smoke, all these horrible things are out there, all these horrible things are possible. Which one is really going to make you stop?” (Group 3)*

*“I think the one really good thing about ‘What’s it going to take?’ is it can be taken on a lot of different levels, so you can... take it one way one time and then another way another time. It just sort of makes you think deeper about it.” (Group 3)*

## **Branding Suggestions**

In general the youth suggested that:

- Little conscious attention is paid to the slogans or brand names in the ads.

*“I don’t know if the slogan really even matters. It’s just the content...in the ad... I don’t think people pay any attention [to the slogan.]” (Group 1)*

- The text of the brand name or slogan needs to be larger and on screen longer.

*“I think it [the brand] should have been bigger because it’s kind of hard to recognize.” (Group 1)*

*“It [the font] is too small. You can’t read it.”(Group 2)*

*“...at the end...if they just like flash it up there or something, you don’t got time to think about it.” (Group 13)*

- Having someone state the brand or slogan during the ad would be more effective than simple text at the end of the ad. [Note: Youth did not notice that Jacobi and Brad do, in fact, state the slogan during their ads.]

*“...That would be cool if they had someone saying, ‘What’s it going to take?’ ... if it’s said...instead of written out, that’d be better.” (Group 2)*

- Too much information on the screen at the same time makes it difficult to recall the specific brand or slogan.

*“If they’d left it [the slogan] out there for a little bit longer, then you’d probably notice it. But there’s probably too many little things up there to really realize [it].” (Group 3)*

## 8. Youth Suggestions

During the focus groups, youth were given an opportunity to provide suggestions for improvement of the ads they were shown, as well as for an “ideal” youth tobacco prevention ad. Their suggestions are summarized and categorized below.

### Content

- One theme that was suggested several times was to create an ad focusing on the harmful ingredients and **additives** in cigarettes.

*“How many different chemicals or stuff that’s in cigarettes, put all that in there, what the chemicals can do to you and all.” (Group 14)*

*“It’s effective because you see. . . some things you don’t even think about. . . I mean, you wouldn’t go near. . . like poison or cyanide and stuff like that, the stuff that’s in [cigarettes.]” (Group 6)*

### Emotional Tone

- Youth felt that people in ads that are intended to be sad should convey a great deal of **emotion** when telling their stories.

*“But the best way to advertise things, like the best way to memorize things, is to put, like, emotion behind them or else, like, you won’t usually remember it if there’s no emotion behind it. And I don’t know. What kind of emotion can you really get from someone who’s like, ‘Oh, yeah, I just quit smoking. Yeah, Yeah, Yeah.’” (Group 3)*

### Format

- A unanimous suggestion made across all groups was to show **graphic visual images** or pictures in ads. Youth want “proof” of the potential health consequences of using cigarettes. Images should be “gruesome” or “shocking,” and consequences should be visible to other people (not something that can be hidden.)

*“It does need to be something visible. Like when you look at a person in everyday life, something’s wrong with them, because I think that’s what scares most people is having like a defect or something wrong with them all the time. And if it’s just like a scar on their back like that, nobody’s ever going to see it.” (Group 14)*

*“I need to see it to believe it.” (Group 10)*

*“I guess they need it to be more shocking, because the other one’s like, we saw the person with the thing in her neck, and . . . I just wanted to look away, like I didn’t want to see it. And I think that’s a good thing so you can put yourself in that person’s place and be like, ‘What if that was me, like if I was smoking?’” (Group 3)*

*“. . . in a way, like the more gruesome, the more you’re going to remember them.” (Group 2)*

- Youth would rather hear from the **actual person** who suffered health consequences as a result of smoking than a family member or friend.

*“I agree with what they’re saying that you should hear it from someone who’s been through it instead of someone who’s seen it happening to somebody else.” (Group 10)*

*“I think when people are telling their own stories, it’s a lot more convincing than when somebody’s just telling them about somebody else.” (Group 1)*

*“[I like ads that have] people in there that’s been through it, because you’re just not preaching to the kids. You’re telling them from your own experience.” (Group 9)*

- Some youth suggested using **facts** that are concrete, easily understood, and placed in context.

*“When he said [200,000], like I think people would think, ‘Oh. . . that’s 200,000 people. That’s not me,’ you know. But if they had said something like, ‘One out of some many of your friends will die,’ [that would] make it effective.” (Group 1)*

*“The only thing that would have helped me was when he said 200,000 people, like show us a clip of 200,000 or something, because it didn’t really like get us.” (Group 2)*

- Youth in a few of the groups stated that they did not like or listen to **“preachy” ads**.

*“I don’t really like the smoking ads because, because if we already know the facts about smoking, we already know you can die from it, you can get cancer, the lung, throat stuff, why, like I can’t stand when somebody tell you, ‘You don’t need to smoke,’ but when they try to give you a lecture about it and you already know the symptoms. I mean, like the stuff that can happen. Like you don’t know what could happen to you.” (Group 9)*

*“I liked [Travelogue] because it didn’t tell you not to smoke.” (Group 14)*

## **Person in Ad**

- Use **diverse people** in ads. The diversity of the people in the Travelogue ad (age, gender, and ethnicity) was often cited as a reason youth liked this commercial. Ethnicity and gender of a person do not matter if youth find the person’s story to be compelling.

*“[One of the things that I liked about Travelogue was that] they interviewed different people.” (Group 6)*

*“[Boys, girls]. . . doesn’t matter. . . as long as you get the message across.” (Group 13)*

*“It’s like different races . . . they showed it instead of just having one type of person.” (Group 10)*

*“It really don’t matter what color you are because as long as you get a good message through . . . that should be your goal.” (Group 8)*

- Youth would prefer to see **younger people** who have suffered serious health consequences in an ad.

*“Like if they got a big brother, say they like 16 or 17, somewhere around that age. If they see them like around that age, they’d be like, ‘I can’t wait to get older so I can be like this person . . .’, and they see that person messed up and they’re going to . . . think twice about what they’re doing.” (Group 9)*

*“I think they should show somebody who’s young that has the diseases.” (Group 13)*

- There was some suggestion that youth-focused ads could use **celebrities** or athletes to get out the anti-smoking message.

*“If you had a celebrity on there, it’d probably make it even bigger, because people listen to them more.” (Group 3)*

## **Style of Ad**

Although youth did not make many specific suggestions related to the style (color, pace, music, setting, writing, camera angles) of the ad, they frequently commented upon these aspects of the ads. From their comments, it can be gleaned that:

- **Music** is one important component of an ad, noticed and commented upon by some youth.

*“It kind of caught my attention because I like soap opera things and I hear the music.” (Group 2)*

- The **setting** of the ad is important. Youth found some of the settings inappropriate or distracting.

*“Then they had him in a broke-down building.” (Group 8)*

*“And the setting was random. I mean, he’s like in a building that’s not even done.” (Group 10)*

*“[For it to be a convincing ad, it would need to have] the correct settings. Like if they’re really hurt, like in a hospital or like at their house.” (Group 10)*

- Some youth commented on the **camera work** utilized in some ads and felt it was distracting.

*“In the beginning when they jumped around and they showed like parts of their face and they would jump to their eyes or something, that kind of made it seem like unprofessional almost and like it was like a home video and they didn’t spend that much money into the ad or something like that.” (Group 3)*

*“The camera kind of jumped a lot around, so it was really hard to, you know, see her facial expressions. You know, if it probably stayed on her a little longer in a few scenes, you could actually see what she was feeling through her facial expressions.” (Group 3)*

*“He was just sitting there talking and they’re like showing like different sides of him. It’s just like, ‘Ooh, it’s his right side! Ooh, it’s his left side! This is what the back of him looks like!’” (Group 9)*

## 9. Recommendations

### Ad Content

**RECOMMENDATION 1: Ads using a serious health consequences theme should graphically depict the harms resulting from smoking. Images should be shocking in some way and should appear early in a commercial to grab youth’s attention. Images should be tied to a personal story to give additional meaning and elicit higher emotional response from youth.**

Findings – Best Practices Report	Findings – Focus Groups
* Good evidence for effectiveness of ads depicting serious health consequences of tobacco use (when used in way that elicits strong emotion). Graphic display of serious health consequences that is too gory or gruesome or too disassociated from a personal testimonial is probably less effective.	*Youth responded well to ads depicting serious health consequences when used in a way that elicits strong emotion, and when used in conjunction with graphic images of the consequences.

### Ad Emotional Tone

**RECOMMENDATION 2: Ads should utilize a negative emotional tone such as sadness (e.g., during a moving emotional testimonial) or fear/shock (e.g., from the graphic depiction of the health consequences of smoking, such as in *Travelogue*.) Some combination of *people in ads showing emotion* and *the ad itself eliciting emotion in viewers* would likely be most effective.**

Findings – Best Practices Report	Findings – Focus Groups
* Strong evidence for effectiveness of ads utilizing negative emotional tone, meaning that the ad elicits feelings such as sadness, anger, fear, or shock.	* The emotional aspect of an ad is very important to teens. They are sensitive to both the emotion displayed by the actors in the ads (like <i>Anna</i> ) and the their own emotion caused by the content of the ad (e.g. <i>Janet Sackman</i> and <i>Travelogue</i> .)

### Ad Format

**RECOMMENDATION 3: Ads should feature or incorporate smokers or former smokers telling their own stories, rather than people solely talking about family members or friends.**

Findings – Best Practices Report	Findings – Focus Groups
<p>* Strong evidence to indicate effectiveness of ads using personal testimonials in which people tell moving stories about the effects tobacco has had on their health or on their loved ones.</p>	<p>* Youth stated repeatedly that stories told by friends/family members about loved ones who have become ill because of smoking are <u>not</u> as effective as stories told by the actual person who suffered the health consequences.</p>

**RECOMMENDATION 4: Use facts and statistics sparingly, and when used, ensure they are made personal or placed in a meaningful context (e.g., do not use a number like “200,000” but rather state “1 out of 5 North Carolina teens will. . .”)**

Findings – Best Practices Report	Findings – Focus Groups
<p>* Limited evidence that use of facts can be effective if used in conjunction with effective themes and emotional tone.</p>	<p>* Youth opinion on the facts used in some TRU ads was split. Some found the facts thought-provoking, while others felt the facts were boring, implausible, or something they already knew. Youth comments suggest that facts are more meaningful if used at the individual level and placed in context.</p>

**Person(s) in Ad**

**RECOMMENDATION 5: Ads featuring just one person can utilize people of either gender or any ethnicity equally effectively, but ads incorporating several people should show people of diverse ethnicities and gender. Showing people of different ages can also be effective (see Recommendation 6).**

Findings – Best Practices Report	Findings – Focus Groups
<p>* Multicultural ads that depict actors from diverse ethnic groups may be particularly effective within a single ad or in the context of several ads; however the depiction of ethnicity should not be “forced.”</p>	<p>* Youth consistently stated that one of their favorite aspects of <i>Travelogue</i> was the diversity of people featured. Although they said a person’s gender or ethnicity were not important to the effectiveness of an ad’s message, they did like seeing a variety of people in an ad showing that tobacco affects many different kinds of people.</p>

**RECOMMENDATION 6: People in ads should ideally be young people who are already suffering visible and serious health consequences from smoking. If “older” people are used, their story should be tied to a younger person’s story in order to connect youth behavior with future consequences, or should show pictures of the person when he/she was younger.**

Findings – Best Practices Report	Findings – Focus Groups
* Ads should not depict “older” adults (older than 55) so that the serious health consequences of tobacco use do not appear irrelevant to a young audience.	* Youth suggested that a young person who is already suffering serious, visible health consequences from smoking would be ideal to use in an ad, as it would make the consequences seem more imminent. They did relate to some “older” people used in ads when the person’s picture was shown as a young person ( <i>Janet Sackman</i> ), or when their story was tied to a younger person’s story in order to connect youth behavior with future consequences ( <i>Travelogue</i> ).

**RECOMMENDATION 7: Spanish language should be incorporated into ads directed to Latino youth because they do relate to that language. However, they, like other ethnic groups, see themselves as part of a diverse, real world scene, which includes a mix of people, and mixed English/ Spanish language scenes are more realistic for them. They appreciate seeing an ad that includes some Spanish but that, in and of itself, will not make an effective ad.**

Findings – Best Practices Report	Findings – Focus Groups
* Multicultural ads that depict actors from diverse ethnic groups may be particularly effective within a single ad or in the context of several ads; however the depiction of ethnicity should not be “forced.” There was nothing found specifically on language.	* Latino youth appreciated the inclusion of Latino people and Spanish in the <i>Spanish Language</i> ad but they generally found the ad lacking an anti-smoking message. They, like other youth, also appreciated the diversity of people in the <i>Travelogue</i> ad.

**Style of Ad**

**RECOMMENDATION 8: The tone of ads should not be “preachy” and messages should not be “heavy-handed” in telling youth not to smoke.**

Findings – Best Practices Report	Findings – Focus Groups
* This issue not discussed in Best Practices Report.	* Youth stated that they did not like it when ads were “preachy” or told them outright not to smoke.

**RECOMMENDATION 9: The people, their message, and the setting they are placed in need to feel genuine to youth for them to pay attention to the ad.**

Findings – Best Practices Report	Findings – Focus Groups
* Ads should use real people rather than actors, particularly for ads using testimonials.	* The idea of “real” is important to youth. People in ads that did not appear “real” (e.g. no visible health consequences, no “real” emotion) were dismissed by youth.

**RECOMMENDATION 10: Branding slogans need to be given greater graphic and oral presence in the ads if youth are going to remember them. “Tag lines” or summary statements (such as *Travelogue’s* “Every time you smoke another cigarette, there goes another breath of your life”) may help youth to better understand and remember the message of an ad.**

Findings – Best Practices Report	Findings – Focus Groups
* This issue not discussed in Best Practices Report.	* Youth generally did not see or remember the slogans from the ads shown in the focus groups. They suggested that the slogans needed to be more prominent in the ads. The tag lines for the <i>Anna</i> (“ <i>You never know which cigarette gives you the cancer. .</i> ”) and <i>Travelogue</i> (“ <i>. . . there goes another breath of your life</i> ”) ads were sometimes cited by youth, indicating that they were memorable components of the ads.

**RECOMMENDATION 11: Camera work that appears “artsy” can be distracting in an ad. The filming and setting of an ad should appear as natural to the everyday life of youth as possible so as not to take away from the content of the ad.**

Findings – Best Practices Report	Findings – Focus Groups
* This issue not discussed in Best Practices Report, though there is a reference to the fact that production quality may influence ad effectiveness.	* Youth were distracted by the camera work and the settings in some of the ads, and attention to these aspects took their focus away from the ads’ messages.

**General**

**RECOMMENDATION 12: Test all future ads before they go on the air in order to increase the likelihood of reaching youth with an effective TRU campaign.**

<b>Findings – Best Practices Report</b>	<b>Findings – Focus Groups</b>
* Final ads for a campaign should be pre-tested to ensure that they are on target with primary campaign goals, resonate with youth, and are consistent with best practices.	* Youth opinion was varied on certain aspects of the ads, such as the music, setting, and reaction to the person in the ad. Although there were some aspects of the ads upon which most youth agreed, it is difficult to predict youth reaction to all components of an ad.

## 10. Limitations

There were a number of limitations to this study that should be kept in mind when interpreting our results and recommendations.

1. focus group methodology
2. restriction of recommendations to content of tested ads
3. order of ads not randomized
4. limitations specific to individual groups

### Use of Focus Groups as an Evaluation Tool

One of the limitations of focus groups is that people have different comfort levels speaking out in a group setting, and participants who feel their own view is in the minority may be especially less likely to speak out. It is also possible that particularly vocal youth may have swayed group opinion in some groups. To combat this issue of “group think”, we showed youth the ads and administered a short written questionnaire prior to the group discussion to help youth form their own opinions before hearing those of others. Because the results of the survey and discussion were the same or similar for most groups, we think it is unlikely that this limitation had a large impact on our major findings.

### Ads Tested

Our recommendations are based upon the ads we tested. In UNC-TPEP’s report: *Recommendations for 2004 North Carolina Youth Tobacco Use Prevention Media Campaign*. ([http://www.fammed.unc.edu/tpep/hwtfceval/reports/media\\_analysis03.pdf](http://www.fammed.unc.edu/tpep/hwtfceval/reports/media_analysis03.pdf)), we describe best practices for youth-focused tobacco prevention media campaigns as gathered from a comprehensive literature review and interviews with state and national experts, as well as local experts and stakeholders. In our focus group study, we were able to test out some of the recommendations we made in our best practices report with some exceptions.

- Although our *Recommendations* report states that there is good evidence to indicate the effectiveness of ads depicting personal or family effects of secondhand smoke (if used in a way that provokes a strong emotional response), none of the ads tested featured this theme so we are unable to make any further recommendations on the use of the secondhand smoke theme in this report. There were not enough consistent data in the focus groups on addiction or industry manipulation content to form recommendations on these themes.

### Order of Ads

As discussed above, one of the limitations of focus groups is that people have different comfort levels when speaking in groups. Early on, some youth may have been reluctant to

contribute to the discussion until they felt more comfortable with the group dynamic. Therefore, the discussion of ads shown in the beginning of the groups may have been limited to youth who felt comfortable sharing their opinions. Additionally, as the length of time in the focus group increases youth may become bored and distracted and feel less compelled to share their opinions about ads shown later in the groups. To counterbalance these effects, we should have made more of a systematic effort to randomize the order of the ads.

### **Group-Specific Limitations**

Some limitations were specific to individual groups:

#### Observers

- Each group had a moderator and at least two observers. It is possible that the presence of several adults inhibited youth from speaking openly (although the observers noted that youth were speaking freely and did not appear to pay much attention to them).
- In the American Indian girls' group and the two Latino groups, youth leaders also moderated or observed the groups. Again, this did not appear to inhibit youth's openness, but cannot be discounted as a possible barrier.
- Eight of the 14 groups were composed of youth who were all of the same ethnic background (see Table 1). Although we attempted to match the ethnicity of the moderator to that of the youth in these groups, three of the eight single-ethnicity groups had moderators of a different ethnicity, and all of them had observers of different ethnicities. It is possible that this had an effect on youth responses, particularly to questions about how important the ethnicity of the person(s) in the ad was to them.

#### Language

- Two of the ads shown to the Latino groups were in English and had to be translated for some members of the group. Bilingual youth in the group translated for their peers. The positive outcome of this was that hearing youth's translation enabled us to get more information on how these youth were interpreting the ads, but the corollary is that the other youth (hearing the translation) did not get to form their own impressions from the ad itself.

#### Group Dynamics

- At least some youth in 11 of the 14 groups already knew each other. The relationships between these youth contributed to group dynamics that in some cases aided, and in some cases inhibited, the flow of the group. Four of these groups were particularly problematic. Some youth in these groups were already friends and carried on distracting side conversations. Moderators in these groups spent much of their time trying to involve or "discipline" these youth rather than being able to continue with the flow of discussion with those who were contributing to the group. Despite difficulty with a number of the youth, these groups still provided useful findings.

### Interview Questions

- Although there was an interview guide to steer the group discussion, moderators sometimes asked questions in different ways. This may have led to differing interpretations of some questions between groups, and possibly somewhat different answers. The best example of this is that in some groups youth were asked about their “favorite ad” while in others they were asked which ad would be “most effective in keeping youth from smoking.” In some groups, youth were asked both questions and gave similar responses, so this limitation is unlikely to have had a large impact on major results.

## 11. Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Sample TRU Media Campaign Focus Group Interview Guide

##### I. Welcome & introduction (10 minutes)

***Welcome the participants and thank them for coming to the discussion. Confirm with each participant that parental consent forms have been collected. Hand out the Focus Group Fact Sheet.***

Today we are here to get your opinions on some anti-smoking ads. I'd like to take a minute or so now to go over the Focus Group Fact Sheet with you. ***[Read over each bulleted item and make sure the participants don't have any questions]*** Please remember that your participation in this session is completely voluntary. You do not have to respond to any questions that you do feel comfortable answering.

I did not create the ads that you'll be looking at today, so you won't hurt my feelings, no matter you say about them. So please feel free to say anything and everything you think.

The first ads that we are going to show you have been aired throughout North Carolina so some of you may have already seen them. Whether or not you've seen them before doesn't matter. What we'd like you to do today is that when you are watching the ads we want you to think about how the ads make you feel. We want to know whether you find each ad convincing and whether or not it grabbed your attention. We're also interested in knowing whether or not you feel the ad gave you good reasons not to smoke. We also want to know what you think the main messages of the ads are. If that seems like a lot to remember, don't worry because these questions are written down on the papers in front of you. Why don't we take a minute now to fill out the top part of the surveys and then I'd like you to read over the questions one more time. ***[Pause for a minute or so]***

After we watch the ads, I'm going to ask you to write down your answers to these questions on the papers we've given you ***[See attached TRU Media Campaign questionnaire.]*** Once we've done that we're going to discuss some of your answers in more detail. Please ask me any questions you have, or if you find any of the questions confusing, please tell me.

I'd also like to go over some ground rules with everybody before we get started. The first rule is to respect other people's opinions. Remember that everyone is entitled to their own opinions and that no opinion is right or wrong. The second rule is to talk one at a time. Because everything that you say here is important to us, we want to make sure that we get it all down. Try not to interrupt anyone while they are talking. You don't have to raise your hand to speak, but I would like for you to wait until the person has finished what they wanted to say.

We also wanted to let you know that although we'll be using your first names during our discussions today, we won't put your names in any reports we write. You may also notice

that there are a couple tape recorders in the room. This will help us to be sure we don't miss what anyone says. This is only for us, and we will not share the tapes with anyone outside the research team.

Is everybody ready to get started? Great.

I'd like to start by going around the room and ask each of you to introduce yourselves by telling us your first name and describing something that you enjoy doing.

## **II. Viewing of Ads and Individual Surveys (15 minutes)**

I'm first going to show you a series of five 30-second ads. I'll show the ads one by one, and then give you a couple minutes to answer the questions about the ads on the sheets we've given you. I'll tell you the name of the ad so you can make sure you are answering the right set of questions on your sheet. Again, there are no right or wrong answers, and you don't even need to put your names on the papers. We just want to get your opinions on the ads. Does anyone have any questions before we start?

- A. The first ad is called Anna. (Show ad. Give kids about 2 minutes to answer questions, or until it looks like most people are done.)
- B. The second ad is called Brad. (Show ad. Give kids about 2 minutes to answer questions, or until it looks like most people are done.)
- C. The third ad is called Travelogue. (Show ad. Give kids about 2 minutes to answer questions, or until it looks like most people are done.)
- D. The fourth ad is called Janet Sackman. (Show ad. Give kids about 2 minutes to answer questions, or until it looks like most people are done.)
- E. The fifth ad is called Pam Laffin. (Show ad. Give kids about 2 minutes to answer questions, or until it looks like most people are done.)

## **III. Discussion of TV Ads/Sampler (55 minutes)**

### **A. TRU ad #1: Anna**

Show ad again

**How many of you have seen this ad before?**

**Main Question: What did you think of this ad?**

Probe 1: Tell me some of the things that you liked about the ad.

Probe 2: Tell me some of the things that you did not like about the ad.

Probe 3: How would you describe this ad if you were telling a friend about it?

Probe 3A: What do you think the message of this ad was?

Probe 4: What do you think of Anna?

Probe 5: Tell me how the ad made you feel.

**B. TRU ad #2: Brad**

Show ad again

**How many of you have seen this ad before?**

**Main Question: What did you think of this ad?**

Probe 1: Tell me some of the things that you liked about the ad.

Probe 2: Tell me some of the things that you did not like about the ad.

Probe 3: How would you describe this ad if you were telling a friend about it?

Probe 3A: What do you think the message of this ad was?

Probe 4: What do you think of Brad?

Probe 5: Tell me how the ad made you feel

**C. TRU ad #3: Travelogue**

Show ad again

**How many of you have seen this ad before?**

**Main Question: What did you think of this ad?**

Probe 1: Tell me some of the things that you like about the ad.

Probe 2: Tell me some of the things that you did not like about the ad.

Probe 3: How would you describe this ad if you were telling a friend about it?

Probe 3A: What do you think the message of this ad was?

Probe 4: What do you think of the people in this ad?

Probe 5: Tell me how the ad made you feel

**D. Janet Sackman ad**

Show ad again

**Main Question: What did you think of this ad?**

Probe 1: Tell me some of the things that you like about the ad.

Probe 2: Tell me some of the things that you did not like about the ad.

Probe 3: How would you describe this ad if you were telling a friend about it?

Probe 3A: What do you think the message of this ad was?

Probe 4: What do you think of the woman in this ad?

Probe 5: Tell me what you heard about cigarette companies in that ad.

Probe 6: Tell me how the ad made you feel

**E. Pam Laffin ad**

Show ad again

**Main Question: What did you think of this ad?**

Probe 1: Tell me some of the things that you like about the ad.

Probe 2: Tell me some of the things that you did not like about the ad.

Probe 3: How would you describe this ad if you were telling a friend about it?

Probe 3A: What do you think the message of this ad was?

Probe 4: What do you think of the woman in this ad?

Probe 5: Tell me how the ad made you feel

**F. Comparison of the five ads**

**Question 1: Out of the five ads we just watched, think about the one that you liked the best or that stood out most to you. Tell me some of the reasons that you like that ad more than the other ones.**

Probe 1: How important to you is the race or gender of the person in the ad?

**Question 2: Think about the ad that you liked the least. What made you not like this ad?**

**Question 3: Think about which ad gave you the best reasons not to smoke. What about that ad do you think would help youth not to smoke?**

**Question 4: After viewing the Anna, Jacobi, and Travelogue ads, which were made specifically for North Carolina, can you tell me what the logo for the campaign is? What about the slogan? What does that mean to you? Tell me which of the three campaign brands Tobacco.Reality.Unfiltered, TRU, or What's it gonna take? you think will work best for the campaign with North Carolina youth. . (Most memorable, likable, understandable)**

**G. Now I am going to show you the video that was made last summer with youth from around the state. (Show video.) If you had to pick just one part of this video to be an anti-smoking ad, which part would it be?**

Probe 1: What is it about that piece that you think would make a good ad?

Probe 2: Do you think that there are any parts of the video that definitely should not be used as an ad? Can you tell me what it is about that part that you don't like?

**IV. Closing (10 minutes)**

**A. Is there anything else that you think would be important to add to our discussion?**

## Appendix B

ID Number:

### Screener for Teen Discussions on Anti-Smoking Ads

We are looking for teens to participate in a discussion about some anti-smoking ads that are playing in North Carolina. In order to make sure that all different kinds of people get to be a part of this, we would like for you to answer a few questions. Although we will need to get your parents' permission for you to participate in the discussions, we won't share with them the answers you provide on this form.

**1. Are you a**

Boy

Girl

**2. Which one of these groups best describes you?**

African American/Black

American Indian/Native American

Hispanic/Latino

Caucasian/White

Other  (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

**3. How old are you?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**4. Would you feel comfortable talking in a group of kids your own age about anti-smoking ads?**

Yes

No

5. **Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even 1 or 2 puffs?**

Yes  Go to →  
Question 6

**6. About how many cigarettes have you smoked in your entire life?**

A few puffs, but never a whole cigarette

1 to 99 cigarettes (Less than 5 packs)

100 cigarettes or more (More than 5 packs)

**END**

No

↓ Go to Question 7

7. **Do you think you would ever smoke a cigarette anytime during the future?**

Yes

No