

DRIVING CHANGE: A MODEL FOR BICYCLE SAFETY EDUCATION

CHANGING MINDS. SAVING LIVES.

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BACKGROUND

Over the last 12 years, Grand Rapids, Michigan, a city of 200,000 people, has paved the way to create a robust bicycling infrastructure and a vibrant bike culture. Through significant investments in street reconstruction and modifications, the addition of new bikeways and bicycle parking facilities, and the advocacy of key partners, Grand Rapids has been transformed into a more bicycle-friendly community.

With more people taking to the streets, the likelihood of crashes also increases. **By 2013, Grand Rapids had a fatal bike crash ratio that was 50 percent higher than the state average.** Mitigating this high number of biking-related crashes is critical to becoming a true bicycle-friendly community. To this end, the City of Grand Rapids, with the support of the Michigan Department of Transportation, created this unique initiative that has now spanned three seasons.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF THIS INITIATIVE WAS SIMPLE: SAVE LIVES AND CHANGE MINDS.

Simple, but not easy. With the help of Güd Marketing, the City of Grand Rapids set out to:

- » Increase knowledge of the responsibilities of bicyclists and motorists
- » Build respect between bicyclists and motorists
- » Create a foundation for a long-term education program
- » Arm other communities with a framework for similar project execution

METHODS

» An extensive research-based model was employed to inform development of the program, culminating in evaluation to ensure the project met the desired goals and outcomes.

1. RESEARCH

- Problem identification
- Audience definition

2. DEVELOP

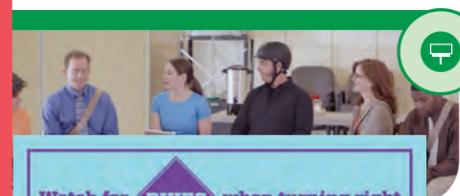
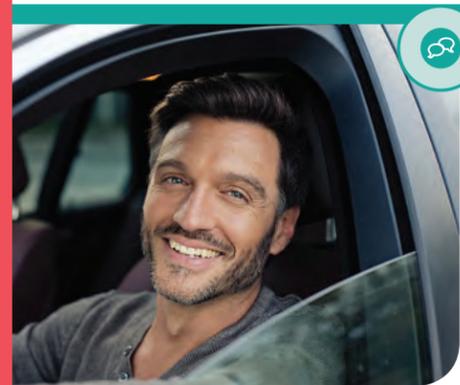
- Alignment of goals
- Strategic plan creation
- Campaign development

3. IMPLEMENT

- Media placement
- Community outreach

4. EVALUATE

- Pre- and post-campaign knowledge surveys
- Crash data analysis



COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH: 4 PHASES

1. RESEARCH

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM, AUDIENCES, OPPORTUNITIES

- » The extensive research phase included a review of crash data, review of bicycle ordinances, evaluation of existing bicycle safety campaigns, an online survey of the community and focus groups with bicyclists and motorists.

KEY FINDINGS

- » Bicycle-involved crashes disproportionately affected males 13-24 in Grand Rapids.
- » Existing bicycle ordinances were not adequate to address crash factors.
- » A majority of people were not familiar with rules of the road for encountering a bicyclist while driving or as a bicyclist on the road.
- » A "point the finger" mentality was prevalent - bicyclists blamed motorists (and vice versa) for not observing rules of the road.
- » Both audiences gravitated toward positive messages that did not assign blame, as well as messages that gave direction on clear, specific actions to take on the road.

2. DEVELOPMENT

DEFINING GOALS, OBJECTIVES, EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES AND CREATION

- » Included analysis of education, training, partner efforts to determine priority of activities.
- » Project team agreed to primary goal of: Educate all users on the rules of the road and promote harmonious road relationships.
- » Comprehensive strategic communications plan was crafted to build awareness of the importance of bicycle safety, to promote targeted education and to mobilize advocates.
- » The "Driving Change" campaign theme was created to speak equally to bicyclists and motorists about the road behaviors they are responsible for and can improve to "drive change" in their community.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

NEGOTIATION AND OUTREACH

- » A comprehensive, integrated campaign was launched with billboards, bus advertising, TV ads, radio ads, mobile billboards during events, gas station TV, HULU and banner ads.
- » The campaign maximized media efficiency through two-week flights - one in May to coincide with National Bike Month and another in July to reinforce the messaging from May.
- » A significant public relations and grassroots effort supported the campaign over the first summer and included:
 - » A press conference with the mayor of Grand Rapids to kick off the campaign. A press conference to wrap up the campaign with the Grand Rapids police chief highlighting campaign's success.
 - » Distribution of an advocacy toolkit to partners to extend the reach of the campaign included brochures, posters, spoke cards, bicycle lights and other promotional items for the community organizations.

4. EVALUATION

EVIDENCE-BASED MEASUREMENT

- » Tracking of real-time metrics such as inquiries, website hits, media views and social media engagement.
- » A pre- and post-campaign survey of understanding of rules, self-reported behaviors and awareness of the Driving Change campaign.
- » Crash, injury and fatality data before, during and after campaign program execution.

YEAR 2

- » A second year of the campaign allowed for additional, expanded messages providing supplemental information on complex rules. Based on crash data, messages featuring the 5-foot passing rule and information about bicycles on sidewalks were highlighted most frequently.
- » The second year of the campaign also saw a reduction in fatal/serious crashes when compared with pre-campaign data from 2015.



RESULTS: CHANGE MINDS. SAVE LIVES.

The Driving Change campaign made a significant impact on beliefs, actions and behavior in a short time. Between a pre-campaign survey in April 2016 and a post-campaign survey in August 2016, the following increases were reported:

STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN FOLLOWING BELIEFS:

- » Bicyclists typically follow the rules of the road.
- » Drivers typically treat bicyclists with respect on the road.
- » Grand Rapids is a bicycle-friendly community.
- » Drivers passing too closely to bicyclists can cause crashes.
- » In Greater Grand Rapids, bicyclists and drivers are respectful of each other's rights on the road.
- » Drivers should receive a ticket for breaking rules meant to protect bicyclists' safety.

62
MILLION+

views of the Driving Change campaign in two summers.

37%
INCREASE

in drivers reporting that bicyclists typically follow the rules of the road.

40%
INCREASE

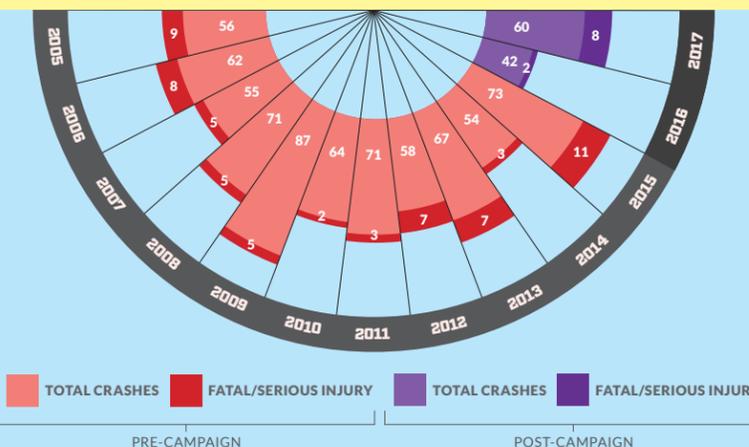
in awareness of new 5-ft. passing rule.

35%

of the Greater Grand Rapids community remembered the Driving Change campaign after one summer in market.

STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT INCREASES:

- » Overall familiarity with the rules of the road for bicyclists.
- » Drivers reporting they always give bicyclists 5 feet when passing them.
- » Drivers feeling confident they are following all the rules related to sharing the road with a bicyclist.



27%
DECREASE

in fatal serious-injury crashes in summer 2017 compared with summer 2015.

81%
DECREASE

in fatal/serious-injury crashes in Grand Rapids from summer 2015 to summer 2016.

24%
REDUCTION

in bicycle-involved crashes from the previous lowest record year of 2007.