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Drive Safe Nevada

Inside the Mind of Nevada's Risky Drivers

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Five 90-minute focus groups in Las Vegas and Reno:

- Group 1: Distracted Driving Focus
- Group 2: Seat Belt Focus
- Group 3: Pedestrian Safety Focus
- Group 4: Impaired Driving Focus
- Group 5: Motorcycle Safety Focus
- Intersection Safety was incorporated into the Impaired, Seat Belt and Distracted groups



Respondents:

Adults, ages 18-45, who admitted to using their phones or participating in any distracted driving behavior in the last 6 months.



Why drive distracted?

- Life is busy. Try to use all available time to make phone calls, check in with loved ones, eat, apply makeup etc. Pulling over is a waste of time.
- Addicted to social media and texting. Can't stop.
- Feel safe and in control.

Quotes:

*“The phone will just not leave you alone.
There is a compulsion to respond.”*

*“If I don’t answer the phone when my boyfriend
calls, he says that driving is no excuse not to
answer his calls.”*

*“I am more worried about the
grammar police than actual police.”*

What could motivate you to stop?

- Require violators to attend distracted driving classes
- Increase fines and penalties
- Increased insurance rates or revoked license if ticketed
- Make distracted driving part of the DMV driving test
- Loved ones involved in a tragic crash
- Loved ones who ask them to stop when in the car

Key Takeaways:

- When asked about unsafe and annoying driving behaviors they see on the road, only one respondent referenced cell phone use
- Almost all respondents were aware that using a smart phone or texting while driving is against the law. Few could state exactly what the fines and penalties were
- Most drive safer when parents or children are in the car
- The anxiety of not being connected is perceived as more distracting than cell phone use while driving
- Drivers know they shouldn't do it, so messaging needs to be attention-grabbing, realistic and impactful to motivate change
- Getting caught or losing a loved one would motivate respondents to focus on the road more

Respondents:

Men, ages 26-45, who admitted to only sometimes, occasionally or rarely wearing seat belts the last 6 months.



Why not wear a seat belt all of the time?

- Don't think about anything happening to them
- Feeling trapped or like they are choking
- Not needed for short distances or slow speeds
- Forget or don't think about it when in a hurry
- It's restrictive and uncomfortable, especially in heat
- Wrinkles clothing
- Feel safe enough with airbags alone
- Heard stories of people being trapped and dying because of seat belts

When do you wear a seat belt?

- Long trips
- In bad weather and road conditions
- When driving at high speeds
- If there is a cop nearby
- Driving with passengers, especially kids
- When my kids/wife ask me to

Quotes:

"I don't think that is ever going to happen to me, so my comfort level is more important than wearing a seat belt."

"My kids would have to be with me all of the time for me to wear a seat belt all of the time."

"A sign that says something like, 'Your kids don't have a father because you were too lazy to buckle up' [would be motivating]."

What media/messaging could motivate you to always wear a seat belt?

- A severely increased fine may be a motivator for wearing it more often, but a message that really hits home would motivate even more
- Want to see how their choices affect their loved ones
- Would be interested in seeing real life stories of people being projectiles and injuring passengers in their car from not buckling up

Key Takeaways:

- Respondents are more likely to buckle up if wives/girlfriends/children are in the car (want to set a good example)
- Kids are often vocal about asking parents to buckle up, and respondents usually listen
- Respondents care less about their personal safety and could be motivated by showing how their choice to not buckle up affects loved ones



Respondents:

Men, ages 26-35, who admitted to driving while impaired in the last 6 months.



Why do you drive impaired?

- Feel safe and in control when driving impaired
- Perceive themselves as better drivers when impaired
- Short distance to home
- Fail to arrange for a sober ride before going out
- Emergency or unanticipated needs after drinking

Why not designate a sober driver?

- Don't want to leave car unattended at a friend's house or in a parking lot
- Uber and taxis are expensive
- Think they can make it home without incident
- No designated driver is available because "all my friends drink"



Quotes:

*“I may know I am drunk, but not swerving.
I am driving well. I am driving safer.”*

*“I drive more cautiously because I don’t want to
get stopped from something else like speeding.”*

*“I only think about driving drunk
when
I see the flashing blue lights.”*

*“My mom came to get me [from jail] and she said that
she was disappointed in me. It was the worst
experience of my life. It really resonated. The
experience was brutal.”*

What could motivate you to never drive impaired?

- Knowing for a fact that they would go to jail if caught
- An affordable car service that would bring both the drivers and cars home at the same time
- Messaging when drinking at the bar (scrolling signs behind bar, signs in parking lot or bathroom)
- Messaging focused on the possibility of hurting or killing others (instead of focusing on personal safety)
- True life stories that are realistic and believable
- Impactful messages delivered by children or loved ones

Key Takeaways:

- They are aware of the laws, penalties and other consequences associated with impaired driving but do it anyway
- Respondents feel safe and confident in their driving abilities while impaired
- Convicted DUI offenders stated that the shame, embarrassment, and loss of respect among family and friends was in some ways worse than significant financial penalties and incarceration
- Messaging that shows consequences of their personal safety is not particularly motivating; respondents could be motivated by showing how their decisions affect others

Respondents:

Men, ages 46-55, who normally walk or take the bus for transportation needs.



What's your advice for rookie pedestrians?



- Pretend you are invisible – that drivers can't see you
- Plan your route and schedule in advance
- Wear reflective clothing
- Know the laws
- Grow eyes in the back of your head

What would motivate you to be a safer pedestrian?

- Being with other pedestrians, especially family or children, makes them less likely to jaywalk
- Reminder messages in/on buses, at bus stops, on billboards, in work break rooms
- Messages that tug at the heart strings
- Messages that show real stories of people involved in auto-pedestrian crashes
- Messages with statistics that tie to actual people (“There is a big difference between hearing that 10 people died and that Bob died.”)

Key Takeaways:

- Pedestrians acknowledge that they are less likely to jaywalk if accompanied by family or children, similar to vehicle operators' attitudes
- Similar to other groups, these pedestrians wanted to hear real life stories of those involved in auto-pedestrian crashes
- The most effective reminders to be safe, predictable pedestrians would be seeing safety messages when they are actually commuting

Respondents:

Men, ages 18-55 who ride motorcycles and admit to speeding, doing stunts or riding impaired in the last 6 months.



Quotes:

“I have a picture from 1969 of me and my dad on his bike. I grew up with it.”

“Girls like bad boys.”

“I have a wife, but the bike is my mistress.”

What unsafe behaviors are you guilty of?

- Speeding
- Rolling stops
- Riding without a helmet
- Stunts such as wheelies and stoppies
- Riding after drinking
- Splitting lanes

Why do you participate in these behaviors?

- It's thrilling
- They feel safe and in control
- Specifically after drinking, they rode because they didn't want to leave their bikes unattended

What could motivate you to be a safer rider?

- Lower insurance rates for safe riding
- Hog-hauling services or a network of professional bikers that could get them home safe when they're impaired
- Affordable, advanced skills safety courses
- Messages in places where they are riding or thinking about riding, such as the DMV, in bars/parking lots, on billboards, at gas stations, movie theaters or social media

Key Takeaways:

- Some motorcyclists seem to have a fatalistic attitude: “When your time’s up, at least you died doing something you love”
- Most safety messages go over their heads because they feel like the bad situations will never happen to them
- Respondents expressed the importance of safety and making it to the next ride, but also admitted to a natural compulsion to disregard traffic laws – especially speeding
- The ride leader sets the tone regarding drinking and riding and other safety issues
- Advanced motorcycle skills safety courses, if presented and priced properly, gained the interest of most participants in this segment
- Messages need to be realistically graphic and show the true consequences of unsafe riding

Respondents:

Men, ages 26-45, from the following groups admitted to running a stop sign or stop light in the last 6 months:

- Group 1: Distracted Driving
- Group 2: Seat Belt Safety
- Group 4: Impaired Driving



When do you run red lights or stop signs?

- If in a hurry/late for something
- If no one/no other vehicles are around
- In familiar areas, good visibility, can see both ways
- If no cops are present
- More likely to 'run' a stop sign than a red or yellow traffic light
- More likely to violate short yellow lights, and very long red lights

What would motivate you to always stop at stop signs or lights?

- Flashing lighted stop signs would evoke more of a feeling of a traffic signal light, which is more likely to be obeyed, according to participants. *“It would put pressure on you to stop.”*
- Knowing that intersections were equipped with traffic cameras that tracked violations and issued tickets

What are your thoughts on roundabouts / traffic circles?

- Virtually all respondents reported not liking traffic circles
- Primary reason is that drivers do not know how to properly navigate circles
- Multiple lanes are more confusing than single lane circles
- No pedestrian cross walks
- Perceive four-way stops as safer and easier to navigate

Key Takeaways:

- Illuminated stop signs and wider use of traffic ticket cameras are seen as effective ways to increase intersection safety
- Roundabouts are disliked by most respondents as confusing and unsafe, especially if multiple lanes or pedestrians are involved – providing us an opportunity to educate



- Drivers, riders and pedestrians think that they can engage in unsafe behaviors with little or no consequences
- Most feel that they are operating in a safe manner even if not following the laws – the other “other guy” is the problem
- A few mentioned that being involved in a crash would not necessarily increase ongoing commitment of safety practices
- All agree that traffic safety is important, but they do not always think of safety issues when driving or walking

RECOMMENDATION: Conduct Your Own Study

- Ask these same questions of your friends and loved ones
- Don't be critical or argue – just listen
- Try to see things from their perspective
- Resolve to incorporate their ideas into your efforts

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