9. Boswell R. Senator The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport and Regional Services. 'Media Release', 'Speed It Kills and Sells' B23/2002, 09 April 2002.

10. Schonfeld C, Steinhardt D. and Sheehan A. 'A Content Analysis of Australian Motor Vehicle Advertising: Effects of the 2002 Voluntary Code on Restricting the Use of Unsafe Driving Themes', Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety – Queensland. Viewed 23 August 2011. http://eprints.qut.edu.au/3073/1/3073.pdf.

11. Jiggins S. 'The NRMA-A.C.T. Road Safety Trust Churchill Fellowship to study media guidelines for the reporting of road crashes by the news media - USA, Canada, U.K., France'. Viewed, 24 August 2011. http://www.churchilltrust.com.au/fellows/detail/3254/. 2008.

12. FIA. 'French President Jaques Chirac is awarded the first FIA World Prise for Road Safety'. Media Release. Viewed 23 August 2011. http://www.driveandstayalive.com/info%20section/news/individual%20news%20articles/x_041014_chirac_1st-fia-global-road-safety-award.htm.

13. Tingvall C. and Haworth N. 'Vision Zero - An ethical approach to safety and mobility'. Paper presented to the 6th ITE International Conference Road Safety and Traffic Enforcement: Beyond 2000. Melbourne, 6-7 September.

14. Arbib M. Senator The Hon. 'APC President's Sports Lunch Key note address - Keeping the Green and Gold on the Podium', 28 January 2011. Viewed 1 September 2011. http://www.ausport.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/414170/Senator_the_Hon_Mark_Arbib_Speech.pdf.

15. Connor and Wesolowski. 'Newspaper framing of fatal motor vehicle crashes in four Midwestern cities in the United States, 1999–2000', Inj Prev. 2004. 10:149-153.

16. Cuthbert S. 'Saving lives or a blatant exercise in revenue raising?' Analysis of speed camera reportage in two newspapers, 1996 – 2001. Viewed 28 August 2011. sydney.edu.au/medicine/public-health/current/stuessay_speed_cameras.doc.

17. Corbett C. 'Road traffic offending and the introduction of speed cameras in England: the first self-report survey'. Accident Analysis and Prevention. 1995. 27: 345–354.

18. Mindframe Media and Mental Health Project. Viewed 7 July 2011. http://www.mindframe-media.info/site/index.cfm?display=85542.

It sounds counterintuitive, but can mobile phones be used to reduce driver distraction?

by Paul Tierney, Manager – Marketing and Communications, VicRoads, Victoria

Abstract

Being on the phone while driving is highly distracting. Drivers are four times more likely to crash while talking on a phone, and over 20 times more likely if texting. VicRoads needed a new way to educate young drivers about the dangers of using a phone while driving. Accordingly, it developed the iPhone App, *CityGT*.

Gaming and social media sites were used to inform the public about *CityGT*'s release. Outdoor billposters and specially branded cars were also deployed around Melbourne to promote its launch. Thousands of people attended a major launch which was held on 6 September 2009 at Melbourne's Federation Square. Research showed that *CityGT* succeeded in bringing the safety issue to mind for young drivers. It was downloaded more than 30,000 times, was ranked in the top three hottest Apps on iTunes, and was one of 2009's most popular free Apps on the Australian iTunes store.

Introduction

In Victoria, more young people die from road crashes than any other cause. Each year around 120 people are killed and 2,300 are seriously injured in crashes involving 18-25 year olds. This is about one-third of Victoria's road toll [1]. Inexperience is a major cause of these crashes; however, when coupled with other factors such as distraction, the consequences can be lethal.

International and local research is clear: being on the phone while driving is highly distracting. Drivers are four times more likely to crash while talking on a mobile phone [2-6], and over 20 times more likely if texting [7].

Despite these risks, an increasingly large proportion of the Victorian population own mobile phones and carry them in their vehicles. Mobile phones remain an integral part of life for most adult Australians. In Victoria, the use of hand-held mobile phones while driving is illegal, and the dangers have been well publicised over recent years [8]. However, around three-quarters of 18 to 24 year olds still admit to regularly using their mobile phones while driving [9].

Traditional methods of targeting young drivers about the dangers of mobile phone use while driving did not appear to be getting through to them. VicRoads was looking for a way to cut through and engage with young drivers about this safety problem.

To educate this age group about the dangers of using a phone while driving an iPhone application called *CityGT*, was developed. The primary goal of *CityGT* was to reach young drivers aged 18-25 years and communicate the dangers of using a mobile phone while driving in a way that was more likely to resonate with this group.

To achieve this goal, three specific objectives were set. These were for *CityGT* to:

1. make users think about the dangers of using their mobile phone while driving

2. achieve at least 20,000 downloads

3. be listed in the 'Top 25' free Apps list on the iTunes store.

Method

In 2006, the Victorian Parliamentary Road Safety Committee conducted an *Inquiry into driver distraction*. One of the recommendations from the Committee was for the relevant state government agencies to implement targeted publicity campaigns warning drivers of the dangers of mobile phone distraction [8].

The first step in developing a communications strategy to target the use of mobile phones was to conduct various forms of research to help:

- define the problem
- identify the target audience for the campaign
- test the communications concept with the target audience.

This was achieved by:

- reviewing existing literature outlining the problem and prevalence of mobile phone use by 18-25 year olds
- commissioning audience research
- conducting end user and acceptance testing of the communications concept.

Target audience

The target audience identified for this campaign was young drivers aged 18 to 25 years. Background research showed that not only are young drivers over-represented in road crashes, but they also have grown up with mobile phone technology and have become more reliant on it [10, 11]. Therefore, to break the habit of using a phone while driving would be difficult for this group.

There are many effective methods used to communicate road safety messages to road users. However, traditional channels were becoming less effective in communicating with younger audiences. These audiences are consuming less traditional media such as commercial television, radio and newspapers, and relying more on digital channels to filter and access information [12-14]. The research identified that to implement a successful campaign, VicRoads needed to take a new approach to communicate with its target audience, one that was new, alternative and relevant. It was considered highly relevant to explore ways to use a mobile phone itself to communicate the dangers of their use while driving.

The take up of iPhone technology, in particular, is growing rapidly. Approximately 50 per cent of all new SmartPhone handsets currently bought in Australia are iPhones [15]. Market research commissioned by VicRoads also confirmed that there is a level of excitement and buzz around iPhones generally. All iPhone owners in the research sample said they exchanged, recommended and showed Apps to their friends or family [16].

To maximise the delivery of the message, it was important that advantage was taken of this 'social nature' of iPhone use. In doing so, a communications initiative could be more successful, because more people could be exposed to a campaign message than just those who downloaded the App. VicRoads decided to use the mobile phone itself to deliver the safe driving message. It developed a new and interactive way to educate drivers about the dangers of using a mobile phone while driving - the iPhone App, *CityGT*.

CityGT

Critical for its success, *CityGT* was developed to look, play, and be promoted as if it were an actual driving game. Furthermore, the *CityGT* application needed to be void of any VicRoads or government branding (Figure 1).

To play *CityGT*, players used the iPhone's in-built motion sensor. Players moved the iPhone like a steering wheel. The car in the game responded accordingly, allowing it to be steered around the track.

From a user's perspective, *CityGT* was just another driving game, until the user was presented with a surprise twist - a hidden safe driving message. Under the guise of the iPhone's functionality as a phone, the game is interrupted by an unexpected phone call which is programmed as part of the game software. If the player answers the call while driving the virtual car, the player receives a voice message explaining the hazards of driving while using a phone. While the player is engaged in this phone call, the virtual car crashes. If the player refuses to answer the call, he or she is rewarded with a congratulatory message from VicRoads at the end of the game. The player can also enter his or her score into the leader board and challenge friends.

Figure 1. Image of the start screen on *CityGT* iPhone App

Communications strategy

Prior to the game's launch, gaming and social media websites were used to seed information about *CityGT's* release. Outdoor billposters (Figure 2) and SmartCars (Figure 3) were deployed around Melbourne to promote its launch, and *CityGT* branded key tags (Figure 4) were left in cafes and social hubs around the city. The key tags included the game's website address and carried the message 'If found please return to Federation Square on 6 September 2009'.

Figure 2. Image of outdoor billposters

Figure 3. Image of a branded SmartCar

Figure 4. Image of *CityGT* branded key tag

Figure 5. Image of *CityGT* game screens at Federation Square

Figure 6. Images of an iPhone being used as a wireless controller on the Federation Square screen

CityGT was released on the Apple iTunes store and launched on 6 September 2009 at Melbourne's Federation Square. At this high profile event, people could wirelessly download *CityGT* straight to their iPhones. They could then connect and 'drive' using their iPhone handsets as a wireless steering wheel on the many *CityGT* screens (Figure 5).

In a world first, players could also use their phones to connect wirelessly and play *CityGT* on the big screen at Federation Square as shown in Figure 6.

In regional areas of Victoria, specially equipped SmartCars could be found at local youth hotspots where players could experience the game on larger screens. Prior to the launch, a *CityGT* game website (www.cityGT.com) went live giving audiences a 'sneak-peek' of the game and promoting its launch. Following the launch, the *CityGT* game website published a video of the launch and provided visitors with information about where the SmartCars would be parked so they could go and play *CityGT* wirelessly on their mobile screens. This website did not carry any VicRoads branding.

A VicRoads branded *CityGT* website (www.cityGT.vicroads.vic.gov.au) went live post-launch. It included a case study of the campaign and information about the dangers of using a mobile phone while driving. (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Images of the homepages from the *CityGT* game and corporate websites

A public relations company which specialised in promoting consumer products was engaged to promote *CityGT* prior to and after the launch. This company was independent of VicRoads to ensure the real message behind *CityGT* was not revealed before the launch. The company was engaged to prepare an event and manage media liaison pre- and post-launch.

The communications challenges

With so many Apps on the market, the respondents to the research said they went to the 'Top 25' games section first when looking for new games. The task was, therefore, to promote *CityGT* to a level that drove sufficient traffic and downloads of *CityGT* to ensure that it appeared in the 'Top 25' free Apps list. To do this, social media was used to promote the launch of *CityGT*.

This presented a further challenge. VicRoads knew that online communities were very savvy, could easily detect spam, and would be suspicious of newcomers to their communities. For this reason all promotion was done by the external public relations company and this company along with the advertising agency, promoted *CityGT* only through online communities and forums of which their employees were already members. This would help to prevent arousing suspicion that *CityGT* was anything other than a normal driving game.

Another challenge with *CityGT* was that the message was being delivered to an unsuspecting audience. There was a risk that this may cause a negative response. The independent market research of the concept undertaken before the launch explored this possibility. Results showed that the intended audience was positive towards *CityGT* and while a small minority did express some annoyance, they agreed it was a worthy message, and it was acceptable to deliver the message in this way.

Results

To evaluate the *CityGT* campaign, independent qualitative consumer research, iPhone App usage and web statistics, and independent media analysis of television, print, web and blog items, were used.

Consumer research

Qualitative consumer research was undertaken to test the *CityGT* concept and prototype. A series of paired interviews was undertaken. The members of each pair of participants were friends and were licensed drivers. One member of each pair was an iPhone owner while the other was not. The purpose of the research was to obtain reactions to *CityGT* from its target audience to assist with developing messages for the campaign.

The primary objectives of this research were to identify and explore:

• reactions to the game, including positives and improvement suggestions
• unprompted message take-out and prompted reactions to the message
• reactions to VicRoads as the sponsor of the game
• reactions to using an iPhone App as a way of talking to a younger audience
• the extent to which the App would motivate users to share it with peers.

Reactions to playing *CityGT* were positive and the majority enjoyed the game. The research results showed that respondents (18-25 year olds) felt:

• The message was serious and important.
• The game was a good way of showing the consequences of talking on the phone while driving.
• It would be fun to use the game to 'trick' their friends, thus creating a campaign that was viral in nature. This was positive as users of the game would effectively be spreading our safety messages amongst their peers.
• Communicating in this way to young people was valid and a positive initiative for VicRoads.
• Most importantly, *CityGT* would bring the safety issue to mind while they were driving, and may make them think about safer ways of using a phone.

Usage statistics

Statistics about how many times *CityGT* was downloaded and other statistics which helped to measure the success of *CityGT* as an App, relative to other Apps on the iTunes Store, were available to VicRoads through Apple.

Usage and download statistics showed *CityGT* was:
- downloaded more than 30,000 times
- ranked in the top three hottest Apps on iTunes
- featured for six weeks on iTunes as one of the hottest Apps
- ranked as the second top free racing App
- rated by over 2,200 users.

CityGT was labelled as one of 2009's most popular free Apps on the Australian iTunes store.

Media analysis

Media monitoring was undertaken to keep track of how often and where *CityGT* was reported in the various forms of media. *CityGT* made headlines on major television networks, online newspapers (nationally and internationally) and thousands of social media sites.

The coverage had an estimated circulation of over 22.5 million people, far exceeding what would have been expected using traditional media with a similar budget. Further independent media analysis showed that *CityGT* did not receive any negative coverage. The initiative attracted wholly favourable comment. This independent analysis also showed that the VicRoads spokesperson had a very strong presence, promoting the benefits of the new technology, as well as emphasising the dangers of mobile phone use while driving.

Discussion

One of VicRoads strategic directions is to improve road safety. This is done by undertaking initiatives to improve the safety of roads, improve the safety of vehicles and to improve the safety of road users through a host of measures including communications campaigns.

Public education regarding the dangers of mobile phone use, in combination with other initiatives such as police enforcement and the development of technologies to minimise phone use, are expected to reduce the number of people injured and killed in certain types of crashes. However, road safety initiatives can take several years before their effect on road trauma can be measured. In the meantime social marketing and communications campaigns which support road safety policies and programs will maximise the effects of these initiatives.

Unless road users are aware of their obligations, obey road laws and moderate their behaviours, these other road safety initiatives may not be as effective as they could be. It is the role of effective communications and marketing campaigns to make sure road users are aware and are motivated to change their behaviours. For these reasons the success of social marketing and communications campaigns are not measured by their effect on road trauma. Instead metrics such as message take-out and recall, levels of engagement, self-reported effects on behaviour, and how widely the messages are communicated, are among many methods used to measure the success of these campaigns.

As outlined in the introduction, there were three objectives set for the *CityGT* campaign which were subsequently evaluated. The first objective was for *CityGT* to make users think about the dangers of using their mobile phone while driving. Through self-reported responses, the consumer research undertaken showed that this objective was achieved. The second objective was for *CityGT* to be downloaded more than 20,000 times. This objective was met, and exceeded, with download statistics showing more than 30,000 downloads were achieved.

The third objective was for *CityGT* to be listed in the 'Top 25' free Apps list on the iTunes store. The reason this was so critical to the campaign was that with so many Apps on the market, the respondents to our research said they went to the 'Top 25' games section first when looking for new games. Therefore, to maximise the success of this communications project *CityGT* needed to be ranked highly, to ensure more people would download it. This objective was achieved and exceeded. *CityGT* was ranked in the top three hottest Apps on iTunes and was ranked as the second top free racing App.

Conclusion

The primary goal of *CityGT* was to reach a young audience (18-25 year olds) and communicate the dangers of using a mobile phone while driving in a way that is more likely to resonate with this group. *CityGT* was successful in delivering this important safe driving message to the target audience in a new way and through a medium that research showed the audience understood and enjoyed. VicRoads capitalised on this and used the iPhone technology to deliver a message, in an unexpected way, to an audience which is increasingly resistant to road safety messages and one which is hard to reach through traditional communications channels.

In answer to the question posed in the title of this paper: yes, VicRoads was successful in using gaming and SmartPhone technology to target the driver distraction issue of mobile phone use while driving.

Acknowledgements

References

1. Victorian Government. Young driver safety and graduated licensing: Discussion paper. Victoria: VicRoads, 2005.

2. Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. If you drive while phoning you're far more likely to get into a crash in which you'll be injured. Status Report 2005; 40(6).

3. ROSPA. The risk of using a mobile phone while driving . Birmingham, 2001.

4. The George Institute for International Health. Drivers Ignore The Risk Of Mobile Phone Use. ScienceDaily, 2006. Viewed 10 July 2011. http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2006/12/061211124129.htm

5. McEvoy SP, Stevenson MR, McCartt AT, Woodward M, Haworth C, Palamara P, Cercarelli R.Role of mobile phones in motor vehicle crashes resulting in hospital attendance: a case-crossover study. BMJ 2005; 331(7514)

6. Thulin H, Gustafsson S. Mobile phone use while driving: Conclusions from four investigations. Swedish National Road and Transport Research Institute, 2004.

7. Virginia Tech Transportation Institute. New data from Virginia Tech Transportation Institute provides insight into cell phone use and driving distraction. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2009. Viewed 10 July 2011. http://www.vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2009/07/2009-571.html

8. Road Safety Committee. Inquiry into driver distraction. Parliament of Victoria, 2006.

9. AAMI. Young drivers: Annual road safety index. Australia: AAMI, 2008.

10. Monaghan R. Mobile Safety, a technology guide for parents, 2008. Viewed 12 September 2011. http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/schoolsweb/news/technology/mobiles.pdf

11. Reilly T. Are kids becoming phone addicts? The Age, 2009. Viewed 12 September 2011. http://www.theage.com.au/news/technology/are-kids-becoming-phone-addicts/2009/04/25/1240684317712.html

12. Microsoft. Young Adults Revealed: The lives and motivations of 21st century youth, 2008. Viewed 12 September 2011. http://advertising.microsoft.com/wwdocs/user/en-us/researchlibrary/researchreport/Young-Adults-Revealed.pdf

13. Microsoft Advertising. Reach Your Target Audience - Young Adults. Viewed 12 September 2011. http://advertising.microsoft.com/ad-network/audience/young-adults

14. Australian Communications and Media Authority. Trends in media use by children and young people. Australian Government, 2010.

15. Tehan, P. Personal communication, 22 August 2009.

16. SWAT Marketing. CityGT: iPhone Game Research. 2009.

The importance of fear reduction in fear-based road safety advertising appeals

by Jennifer Algie, Senior Lecturer, School of Management and Marketing, Centre for Socially Responsible Marketing, Faculty of Commerce, University of Wollongong

Abstract

Road safety advertisers need to include fear reduction in fear-based advertisements to improve road safety behavioural outcomes. When designing advertisements containing relief components to reinforce safe driving attitudes and practices, there should be greater emphasis on formative research, such as pre-testing advertising concepts to ensure the correct advertising execution is achieved. Defining and selecting target audiences on current attitudes and behaviours, such as offenders (brand loyals), conformers (other brand loyals) and vacillators (switchers), is recommended. Finally, moving beyond the simplistic categorization of fear-based advertising according to 'levels' of fear to a new focus on 'patterns' of fear, which requires the inclusion of a 'fear reduction' mechanism, should increase the effectiveness of road safety advertising.

Keywords

Fear-based appeals, Fear pattern, Fear reduction, Road safety advertising, Road safety campaigns

Introduction

This article moves away from the traditional notion of 'levels' of fear and instead advocates a focus on 'patterns' of fear within fear-based advertising appeals. A pattern of fear is the sequence of fear arousal and 'fear reduction', if any, that is felt by the viewing audience when exposed to a fear-based advertisement. This new focus allows the importance of fear reduction[1] when designing fear-based road safety advertising appeals to be emphasised.

There is contention in both academic and practitioner fields on the appropriate way to design fear-based appeals to dissuade drivers from dangerous driving behaviours such as speeding, drink-driving and driving while fatigued. Academic literature, which is not limited to the area of road safety but includes other social or health behaviours, has mainly discussed research on levels of fear or threat [3-5].There has also been a tendency to simplistically categorise fear-based advertising appeals into either fear (shock) or non-fear based appeals. These could be major reasons for the lack of advancement in theories in this field.

A comprehensive review of previous research in this domain has been undertaken by Lewis, Watson, Tay and White and the main conclusion drawn from this evaluation was that 'further research is required to determine the optimum way to utilise fear in road safety advertising' [6]. This observation is used as the starting point of the discussion presented in this article. A new way of thinking when designing an effective fear-based road safety advertising appeal is now put forward.