

A SMOKIN' GOOD AD: HOW EFFICACY AND EMOTIONAL TONE INTERACT IN ANTI-SMOKING MESSAGES

Stephanie Miles

Dr. Paul Bolls, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

This study explores how efficacy-related copy points and emotional tone interact during anti-smoking messages. A psychophysiological experiment was conducted to determine the level of attention, arousal, positive affect, negative affect, and recognition efficacy-related copy and emotional tone elicited from current smokers. These were measured with heart rate, skin conductance response, corrugator and orbicularis oculi activity, and an audio recognition test.

The analysis found that negative messages that contained efficacy-related copy points had increased attention, less arousal, less negative affect and increased recognition than the other types of messages. Efficacy-related copy points were found to dampen negative emotional responding and lessen its intensity.

Anti-smoking PSA creators need to employ efficacy-related copy in their messages to ensure their messages resonate with their target. Efficacy was found to take the bite off of messages, most likely keeping people from responding defensively to the messages.