



**evaluation report:**  
**RESIST METH SOCIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN**  
*November 21, 2007*



*report prepared by:*  
**BETTER WORLD ADVERTISING**

les pappas  
john leonard  
ralph sciutti  
maureen boland  
emily foran  
scott whipple  
sarah gordon  
philippe gorselin



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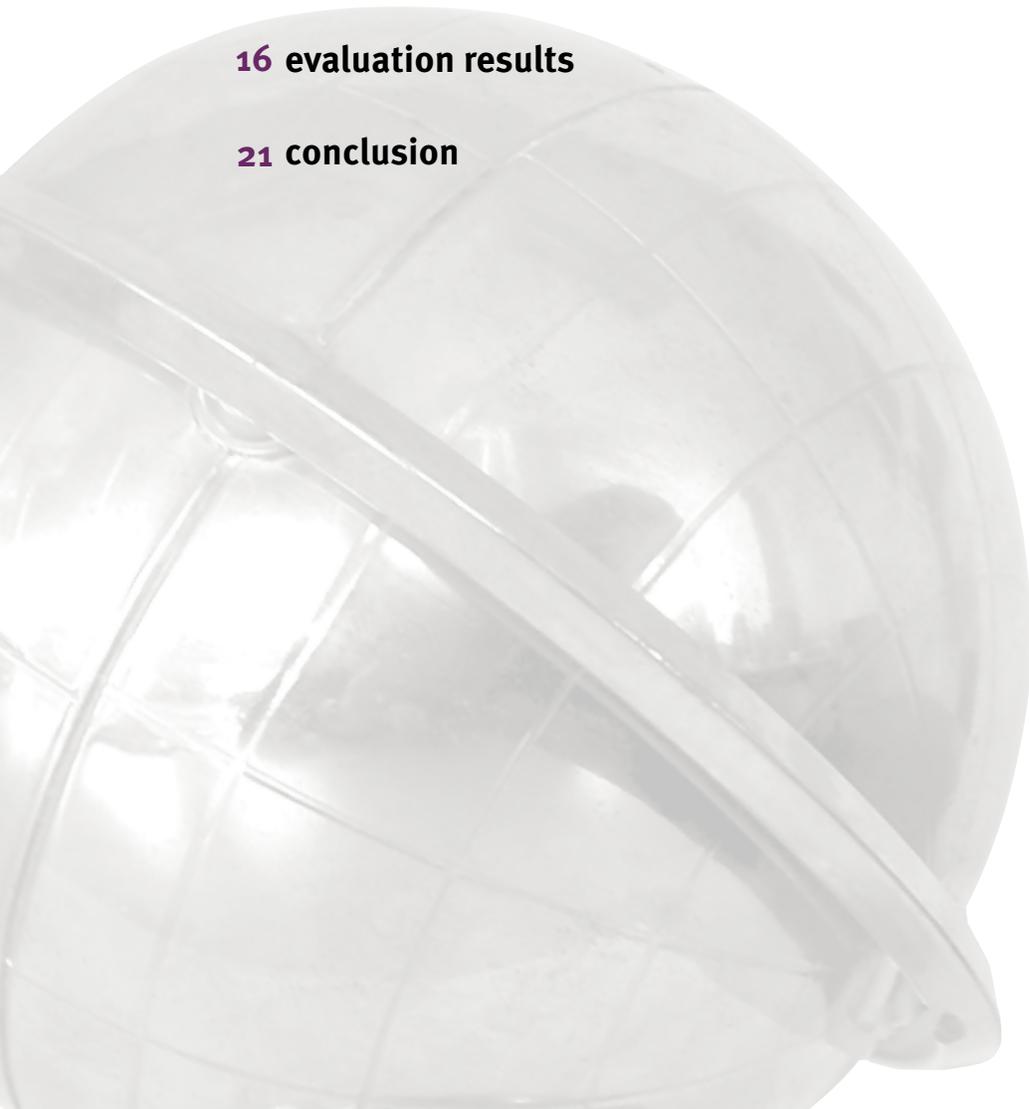
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## INTRODUCTION

The Resist Meth social marketing campaign was developed by Better World Advertising (BWA) for the San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) and launched in June 2007. The goal of the campaign was to reduce the spread of HIV among gay and bisexual men in San Francisco by addressing usage of crystal methamphetamine in the target population. Meth use has been shown to be highly correlated with increased unprotected sex in men who have sex with men, and corresponding increases in HIV transmission. The campaign sought to impact community norms around meth use and to promote greater awareness of the problem and community mobilization to address it.

## CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Public Health was sensitive to the social, cultural, and political environment in which any behavior change initiative targeting the gay community would be launched. Gay men in San Francisco are sophisticated media consumers, skeptical of preachy anti-drug messages, and sensitive to the stigma faced by community members, especially those who use illegal drugs. The community has also been the target of other anti-meth campaigns over the years which have had varying results in terms of impact and public reception. The DPH wanted a campaign that would speak not only to men who had never used meth, but also to casual and heavy users, as well as men in recovery at risk of relapse. Department officials wanted to be careful not to increase the stigma faced by users, while at the same time reaching out to the gay community at large to address the social norms that perpetuate crystal use.

To address the need for community support for a new anti-meth campaign, BWA proposed creating a community dialogue on the issue as part of the campaign development process. The most visible billboard in the Castro neighborhood was secured, and for five weeks in April/May 2007, the billboard featured an ad soliciting community advice, experiences, and



opinions at a special website [www.sfmeth.org]. Ads with clip-out response forms were placed in local gay newspapers seeking input via mail. The website also included an online survey. Community response to the invitation for input was substantial. Sixty-six people completed the online survey; 46 people sent in ideas and suggestions. Some suggested ad slogans; others sent drawings. One respondent even sent in an anti-meth song he had written. Opinions submitted ran the gamut from *“put a bounty on dealers”* to *“dispense it at Walgreen’s!”* Ninety-five percent of those who completed the survey said that crystal meth was a problem in San Francisco. Ninety-two percent said they knew someone who had used meth; 73% had used meth themselves. Ninety-one percent felt that preventing meth use should be a high priority.

There was no consensus in the community suggestions, but there was general support for approaches that were positive rather than punitive, with comments such as: *“Let’s stop the shame game, it never did work,”* and *“Why don’t we treat them with love, kindness, compassion, and understanding by offering them a hand up and not a slap in the face?”* Many respondents spoke of the important role of the gay community in confronting the meth problem: *“Would a tolerant, loving, cohesive community be the springboard for the spread of HIV and METH use that ours has become?”* asked one man.

With this public input in mind, and with the participation of an advisory committee made up of community members, agency representatives, and former users, Better World Advertising developed and tested a new ad campaign. Resist Meth was launched on June 11, 2007. The Resist Meth campaign featured a bold iconographic image and a simple call to action. Influenced by early 20th century poster art, the visuals were meant to portray both the individual struggle of gay men against the temptations of meth use and the community imperative to confront the meth epidemic.



## THE CAMPAIGN

### media strategy

Ads were created and distributed in a variety of media. These included traditional mass media channels such as radio and outdoor transit ads, as well as non-traditional “grassroots” methods like chalk stencils, stickers, and wheat-pasted posters on construction site barricades. The campaign ran from mid June through early August 2007 and included:

- 21 Muni Bus shelters in the Castro, Tenderloin, SOMA and Mission neighborhoods
- 5 Transit billboards in the Castro and Church Muni stations
- 29,000 “Methifesto” pamphlets inserted in the *Bay Area Reporter* Pride issue
- 11,000 “Methifesto” pamphlets distributed to community organizations, businesses citywide
- Fullpage ad in *Gloss* Pride issue
- 300,000 impressions on *Gay.com*
- Donated web banners on *Manhunt.net*
- 17 thirty-second radio commercials on *Energy 92.7 FM*
- Premium party signage placement at five *Energy 92.7* events
- 30 Resist Meth sidewalk chalk stencils
- 10,000 Resist Meth coasters distributed to gay bars
- 500 Resist Meth t-shirts
- 10,000 Resist Meth stickers
- 1,000 Resist Meth magnets
- 1,000 Resist Meth premium posters and 500 small posters
- 160 extra large Resist Meth wheat-pasted posters (“Wild Postings”) at locations throughout San Francisco
- Campaign website: [www.resistmeth.org](http://www.resistmeth.org)

examples of campaign components





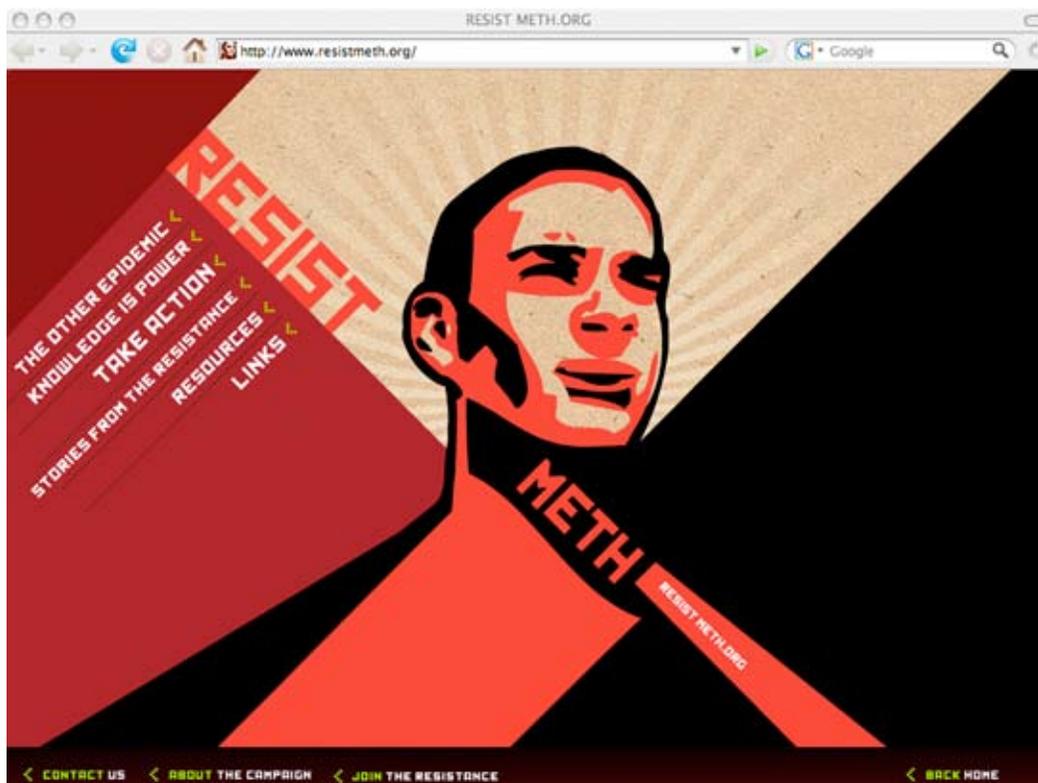




## THE WEBSITE

All of the campaign materials featured the website URL, [www.ResistMeth.org](http://www.ResistMeth.org). The site was launched on June 11, 2007 and during the initial two-month campaign period, it received an average of more than 300 visitors per week. Since the end of the paid media in early August, the site has averaged 70 visitors per week. The website features facts about meth, community resources, stories submitted by the public, and advice specific to crystal users, non-users, ex-users, and family/friends of users. A special page allows people to sign up to be part of the community response to meth.

The website also includes an interactive option for visitors to provide feedback to the campaign. This has generated more than 50 responses to date. Many people have written in to comment on the campaign. The largest volume of messages has come from those seeking



campaign materials. Some liked the design so much, they wanted to frame the poster for their home. Others wanted T-shirts. Several wanted magnets to give to friends struggling with meth as a daily reminder to resist the allure of the drug. Below is a sample of messages received on the website.

## **website feedback**

“This is the first time that I’ve looked for information regarding meth. I’ve decided to stop using and I was looking for a little support/advice. I have stopped before for long periods but this time it has to be for good. I will revisit your website from time to time. It’s nice to know you are out there.”

“It’s the best campaign I’ve seen to date about the issue & one of the best overall campaigns in years. In two words, it’s enviably brilliant. Nice work – it’s a huge contribution to the community.”

“I love the new campaign. I’m a former user and I’d love to help by volunteering.”

“Honestly, it was EVERYWHERE. Sure they took over the gay Castro by having it in the subway station and every bus stop... but they also had it in Chinatown, Japantown, Telegraph Hill, Mission Hill (predominantly Hispanic) and even the touristy Fisherman’s Wharf.”

“I was impressed at the ‘www.resistmeth.org’ profile and respect you have in the gay community. Is it possible to buy a T-Shirt with the poster logo on it? I want to promote the Resist Meth message visually as well as orally in the U.K. Many thanks.”

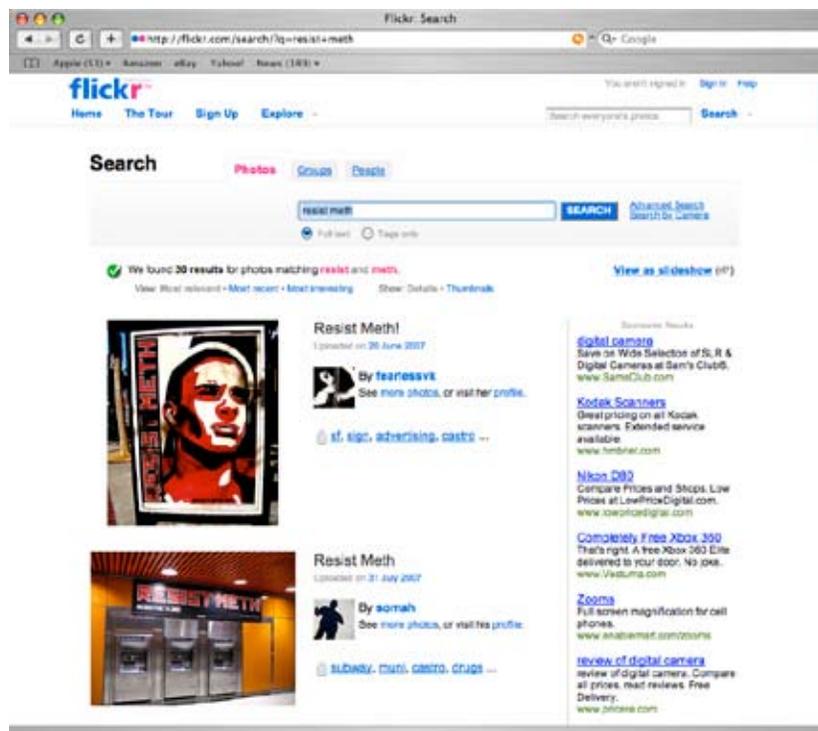
“I just paid for a one line ad: “resistmeth.org” for 10 weeks in the classified ad section [of the *Bay Area Reporter*].”

“A very important and well thought out campaign! The artwork really stands apart and gets the message out – so much so, I’d like to frame a poster for my home. Are the posters available for purchase?”

## EARNED MEDIA

The Resist Meth campaign garnered substantial attention in the press and online. *CBS5.com* covered the campaign launch and the *Bay Area Reporter* ran a front-page story on the campaign on August 9, 2007. KCBS radio aired a segment on the campaign. The National Association of Counties reported on the campaign in their July 2007 Methamphetamine Newsletter. Numerous websites around the world devoted to advertising and social issues campaigns featured Resist Meth. These sites included *adpunch.org*, *sensibilid-ad*, *houtlust.com* (Netherlands) and *Comunicazione Sociale* (Italy). The campaign materials very quickly found their way onto a number of social networking sites. At least 30 people posted photos of the campaign on the photo-sharing site Flickr.com, and Resist Meth showed up on the site *Yelp.com* in everything from restaurant reviews to blogs about life in San Francisco.

*Methifesto*, the Resist Meth pamphlet, won the 2007 Silver Davey Award in the brochure category. The Davey Awards are sponsored by the International Academy of Visual Arts to honor excellence in media, advertising and marketing by smaller agencies worldwide.



## EVALUATION PROCESS

### methodology

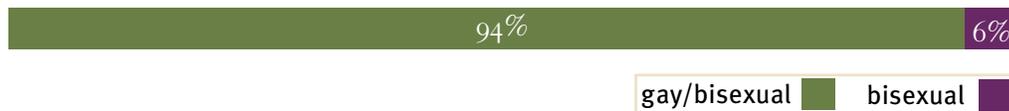
A campaign evaluation was conducted from September 29 through October 27, 2007. Trained interviewers surveyed 177 members of the target audience. Survey participants were recruited in neighborhoods where the campaign appeared: on the street, in parks, coffee shops, at gay bars and clubs, street fairs, and the LGBT community center. The surveys utilized open-ended questions, Likert, nominal and ordinal scales. Data was analyzed utilizing the statistical analysis program, SPSS.

## PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

The 177 survey participants represented a broad cross-section of the target population in San Francisco.

### sexual orientation

All survey participants were men; 94% identified as gay/queer, and 6% identified as bisexual.



## residency

Eighty-six percent of those men resided in San Francisco, while 14% lived in other parts of the Bay Area.



## ethnicity

Sixty-three percent of respondents were White/Caucasian, 15% identified as Latino/Hispanic, 14% Asian/Pacific Islander, 6% Black/African American, and 3% identified as other (primarily mixed race).



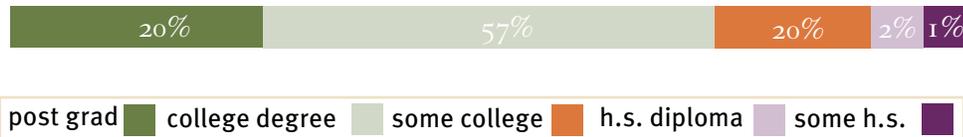
## ages

Thirty nine percent of survey participants were age 19-29, 35% were age 30-39, and 26% were age 40-66.



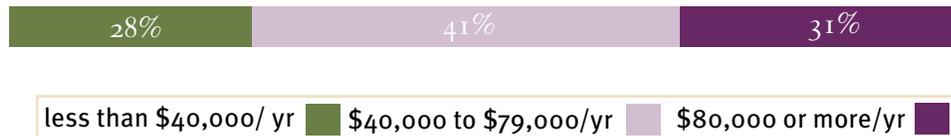
## education

Seventy-seven percent of participants had a college degree or post-grad degree, while only 23% had less than a college degree.



## income

Twenty-eight percent of the survey respondents earned less than \$40,000 per year, 41% earned \$40,000 to \$79,000 per year, and 31% earned an income of \$80,000 or more per year.



## crystal meth use awareness

The men surveyed were very aware of the crystal meth issue. Ninety-seven percent thought meth was a problem in San Francisco. Eighty-nine percent reported knowing someone who used meth and 50% had used meth themselves. Nineteen percent reported using meth in the previous 12 months. Twenty-seven percent of those who had used meth reported having had a problem with it.

## EVALUATION RESULTS

### recall

The survey contained questions that sought to assess the reach, repetition, recall, and understanding of the campaign messages among the target population. When asked if they had seen any crystal meth advertising in the previous six months, 85% said yes. When these men were asked to describe what they remembered, 94% described the message and/or images from Resist Meth. This kind of unprompted recall of a social marketing campaign is remarkable. When prompted with an image of the campaign, each of the remaining participants recalled the ad.

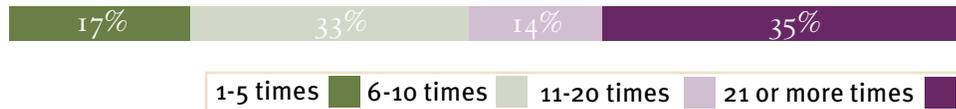


### reach

Survey participants reported seeing the campaign in a variety of forms and places. Sixty-six percent saw posters, 65% saw ads on bus shelters, 24% in magazines, 24% remembered seeing stickers, 20% saw the campaign at community organizations, 18% saw T-shirts, and 5% saw the chalk sidewalk stencils.

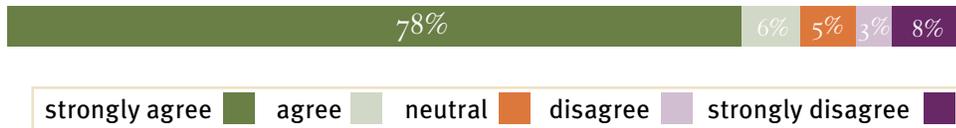


When asked how many times they had seen the campaign, more than one-third reported seeing the messages more than 20 times.

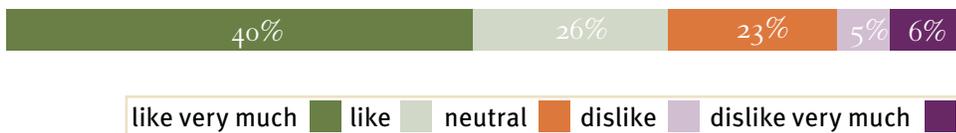


When asked to describe in their own words the message of the campaign, more than 98% of respondents expressed an accurate understanding of the message. Some responses included: *“Don’t give in to peer pressure to use meth, especially from other gay men”*, *“Crystal meth is a problem among the gay community and something needs to be done”*, and *“Don’t use meth, empower yourself”*.

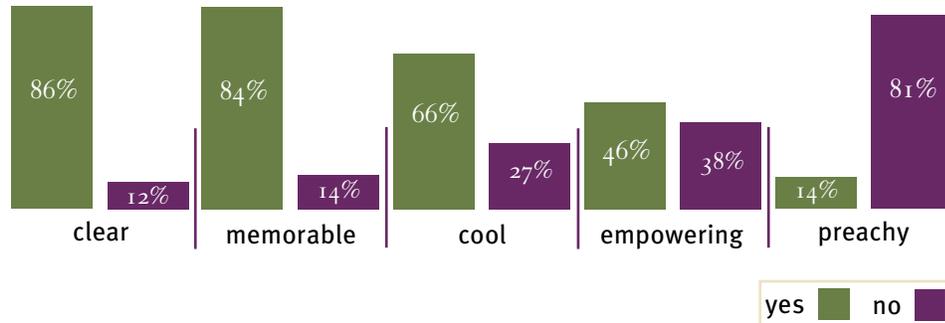
Eighty-four percent either agreed or strongly agreed with the campaign’s message.



Sixty-six percent of participants said they liked the campaign or liked it very much.



Eighty-six percent said the message was clear and 84% said it was “memorable”. Two-thirds felt the campaign was “cool”, 46% said it was “empowering”, and only 14% felt the campaign was “preachy”.



Thirteen percent of the participants said they had seen or visited the website.



Nearly one-third of respondents said they had discussed the campaign with someone else—a substantial rate of diffusion of the message throughout the community.



Among those who had not discussed the campaign with anyone, more than one-third said they planned to.



## attitudes and behaviors

Participants were asked to assess the impact of the Resist Meth campaign on their attitudes and behaviors related to crystal meth. In addition to reducing meth use, goals of the campaign included community awareness, mobilization, and normative change.

Seventy-nine percent of respondents agreed that after seeing the campaign, they felt that crystal meth was “a problem among gay/bi men in San Francisco.” Fifty-eight percent felt that “meth use was less socially acceptable in the community.” Seventy-one percent agreed that “the community is coming together to confront the meth problem.”

“Crystal meth is a problem among gay/bi men in SF”



“Meth use is less socially acceptable in the community”



“The community is coming together to confront the meth problem”



When asked if, after seeing the campaign, they were more likely to talk to a friend about meth, 60% of participants agreed, and 32% said they were more likely “to get involved in community efforts to deal with the meth problem.” Forty-seven percent said they were more likely to seek out more information about crystal meth, and 58% of survey participants said they were less likely to use meth after seeing the campaign.

“I am more likely to talk to a friend about meth”



“I am more likely to get involved in community efforts to deal with the meth problem”



“I am more likely to seek out more information about crystal meth”



“I am less likely to use meth”



## CONCLUSION

By utilizing a combination of traditional and non-traditional media channels, the Resist Meth campaign was able to reach a remarkably high percentage of the target population surveyed. Ninety-four percent unprompted recall of a social marketing campaign is rare. The bold, appealing graphics, and simple, empowering message appeared to strike a chord with target audience members across lines of age, race, and income, with meth users, ex-users, and those who had never tried the drug.

It is notable that two-thirds of survey respondents said they “liked” the campaign and a similar proportion felt the campaign was “cool.” The high volume of requests to the website for campaign materials (most offering to pay to buy the posters, t-shirts, etc.) is also worth noting. For an anti-drug campaign targeting San Francisco gay men to elicit such a favorable response is unusual.

In addition to reaching a great number of men and engendering a favorable response, the campaign also spurred conversation about the issue with a substantial portion of the target population. One-third of those surveyed reported talking about the campaign with someone else and another third said they planned to.

The campaign appeared to be successful in impacting community norms about meth use and promoting community mobilization. After seeing the campaign, three-fifths of respondents felt that meth use was less socially acceptable in the community, and more than 70% felt that the community was coming together to confront the meth problem. Resist Meth also had a very favorable impact on gay men’s behavioral intentions. Well over half (58%) of survey participants reported being less likely to use crystal meth after seeing the campaign.