



# FOCUSING ON STRENGTHS:

EVALUATING THE GAY MEN PLAY SAFE CAMPAIGN

Whatever you call it, thanks for keeping it safe.

[GayMenPlaySafe.com](http://GayMenPlaySafe.com)

© 2007 AIDS Vancouver

Evaluation Report: Terry Trussler and Rick Marchand  
Community Based Research Centre, Vancouver <cbrc.net>



Project Manager: Phillip Banks, AIDS Vancouver, Vancouver BC



Members of the National Advisory Team 2005 Campaign:

Robert Allan, AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia, Halifax

Robert Rousseau, Action Séro-Zéro, Montréal

Ken Monteith, AIDS Community Care Montreal (ACCM), Montréal

Stephen Alexander, Canadian AIDS Society, Ottawa

John Maxwell, AIDS Committee of Toronto, Toronto

Art Zoccole, 2 Spirited People of the 1st Nations, Toronto

Paul von Wichert, Nine Circles Community Health Centre, Winnipeg

Robert Smith, HIV Edmonton, Edmonton

Olivier Ferlatte, AIDS Vancouver, Vancouver

Campaign Development:

Rethink® Advertising, Vancouver, BC

GayMenPlaySafe.com/ nousjouonssafe.com Webmaster: Rachel Thompson, AIDS Vancouver

Translation: Jean Dussault, Nota Bene, Ottawa

Email : notabene@globetrotter.net

Program Consultant: Maxxine Rattner, HIV/AIDS Division, Public Health Agency of Canada

Thank you to all the businesses, community agencies and individuals in communities across Canada who have supported and contributed to the Gay Men Play Safe Campaign.

Thank you to all the gay men who participated in the national online evaluation survey. Your response has helped us in our efforts to prevent HIV and support gay men's health.

Production of this campaign has been possible through a financial contribution from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

# FOCUSING ON STRENGTHS:

## EVALUATING THE GAY MEN PLAY SAFE CAMPAIGN

### CONTENTS

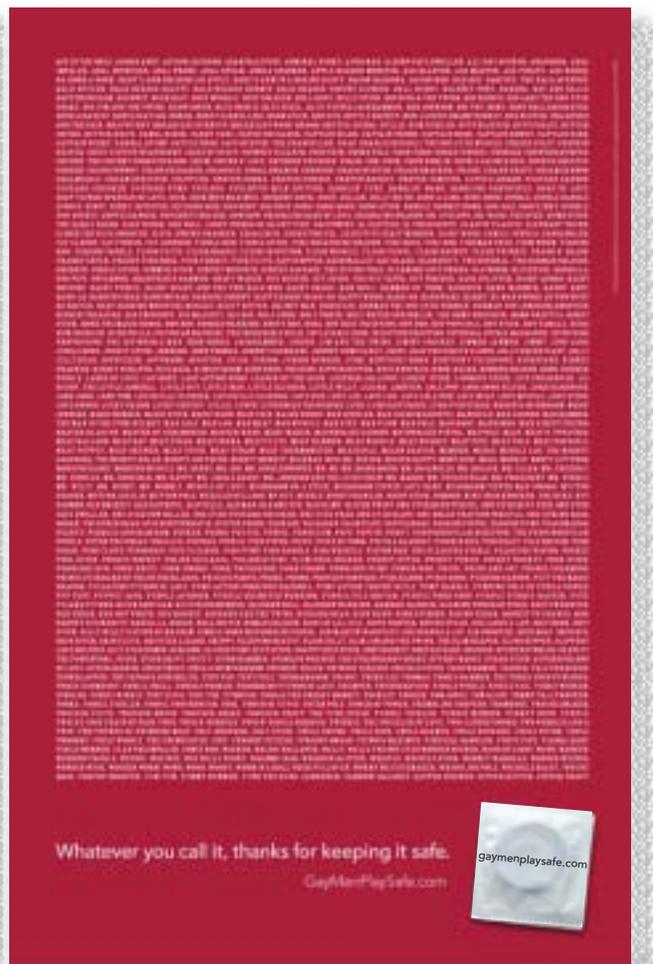
Campaign Materials	3
Introduction	10
Methodology	11
Formative Evaluation	13
Assessing the Environment	13
Community Leader Survey	14
Process Evaluation	17
Developing Theory	19
Campaign Outputs	20
Media Attention	23
NAT Perspectives	24
Outcome Evaluation	26
Method	26
Results	27
Interpretation	35
Conclusion	36
Recommendations	37
Bibliography	38
Appendix: Online Evaluation Survey	39





# CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

## POSTERS



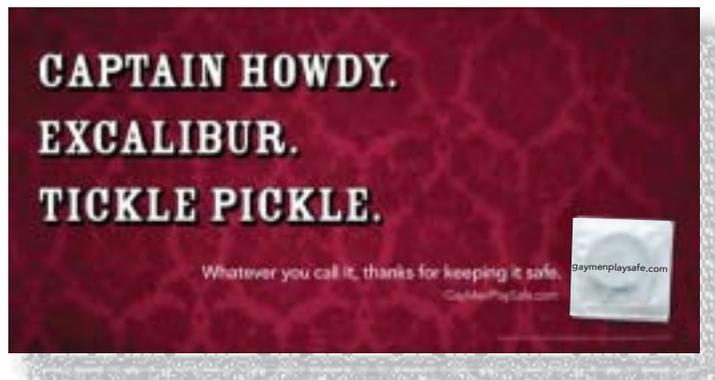
## CONDOM PACKS



# CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

---

## TRASH CAN POSTERS



# CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

## COASTERS



## TV COMMERCIAL

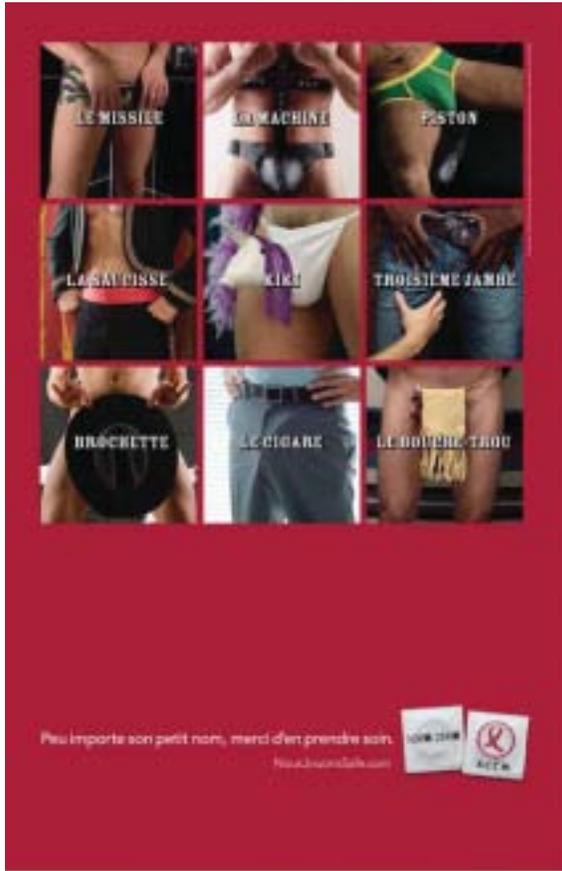


## T-SHIRT



# CAMPAIGN MATERIALS (french)

## POSTERS



## POSTCARDS





# CAMPAIGN MATERIALS (french)

## COASTERS



## CONDOM PACK



## TV COMMERCIAL



## INTRODUCTION

---

*"Studies show that gay men fall into three groups: those who take HIV risks 'frequently', 'very rarely', and 'not at all'. Three out of four gay men are in the latter two groups— they choose safety. Real potential rests with that second kind of guy, the one who takes HIV risks rarely." (Lampinen, 2005)*

This evaluation report describes the efforts of a national partnership of prevention leaders to develop a sexual health message campaign to support the best intentions of the majority of gay men. The national partnership produced the Gay Men Play Safe (GMPS) campaign to validate gay men's existing safer sex practices while reinforcing their commitment to sexual safety, including condom use.

Marketing experts believe that the most effective ad campaign reinforces something its audiences already believe, while working to deepen that belief. This evaluation will demonstrate the extent to which the GMPS campaign succeeded in producing such an effect in the context of gay men's sexual health.

AIDS Vancouver and the National Advisory Team (NAT) worked with Rethink® Advertising to create a new kind of HIV message that makes use of this social marketing theory, knowing it would challenge the widely held perception that gay men have fallen into a pattern of condom fatigue and HIV complacency. Addressing the 'committed majority', however, represented a complete shift of focus and a leap of faith for the National Advisory Team (NAT) from its earlier work on the Assumptions campaign targeting 'at-risk' men.

Much of the HIV prevention field continues to believe that 'high-risk' behaviour change is the only acceptable prevention investment, in spite of mounting evidence to the contrary (McKinlay, 1996; Rose, 2001). Thus, little experience with alternative approaches to HIV prevention messaging exists in scientific literature. Consequently, what may have seemed like a straightforward and desirable change of strategy for the NAT, turned out to be more complicated than anyone might have imagined.

While the message campaign resulting from these decisions played out better than expected on its target audiences, there were many lessons in the experience. Designing a stimulating message and creative concept for a 'low-risk' majority audience, for example, turned out to be particularly tricky. One creative concept was rejected before another was developed to the satisfaction of the NAT. Even then, misgivings about the efficacy of the 'creative' continued to resurface throughout the delivery of the campaign.

This report documents the effort of the NAT to prepare for, organize and launch the Gay Men Play Safe (GMPS) campaign. The report includes formative, process and outcome evaluations to describe what happened with this initiative and how the experience can guide future prevention work with Canada's gay men.

## METHODOLOGY

---

Our approach to evaluating the Gay Men Play Safe campaign followed a similar path to that of the Assumptions campaign which preceded it. We reinstated the same framework of evaluative research, considering all stages of the campaign's life history, from defining its theme to measuring its effects on intended audiences. We also continued working with the same theoretical assumptions about health communication, social change processes and outcome measurement. Nevertheless, evaluating the Assumptions campaign fostered a great deal of practical learning about conducting an evaluation of national scope and breadth, which helped to refine and improve procedures used in the GMPS evaluation.

The evaluation engaged what is considered 'state of the art' practice in evaluative research on media communications by investigating 'formative', 'process' and 'outcome' stages of the campaign, for a comprehensive assessment of the complete initiative. This approach recognizes that investigating the formation and development processes of a campaign helps to explain 'what happened' in the outcome: whatever it turns out to be. Without an understanding of the formation and process of designing a communication campaign, it would be difficult to explain why any particular outcome may have occurred. This report will demonstrate, for example, that what occurred in the formative stages of GMPS had a distinct impact on the delivery of the campaign in different ways in different cities.

The formative stage of the GMPS evaluation was designed primarily to assess community friendliness toward sexual health promotion in gay men's community environments—knowledge useful to its delivery strategy. While it was shown in the Assumptions evaluation that the great majority of gay men approve of the presence of prevention messages in their environments, lingering doubts persisted about the perspective of community leaders, who are often attitudinal gatekeepers. Surveys of community leaders and an environmental assessment were conducted in each of the six participating cities to provide empirical information about the acceptability of free condom distribution and sexual health information in various settings.

The process evaluation embraced all stages of the design and delivery of the GMPS campaign largely through 'participant observation'—documenting meetings, teleconferences and email exchanges. All campaign outputs and secondary media items were assessed in the process evaluation to provide an indication of the amount of material, community effort and media rebound that went into the delivery of the campaign, relative to its effect on its primary audiences.

The outcome evaluation was based on a nationwide, cross-sectional survey conducted immediately following the official close of the GMPS campaign. In contrast to the 'intercept' survey for Assumptions—conducted in the streets and venues of gay neighborhoods—the GMPS survey was conducted completely online at the campaign website. The Internet research strategy determined a different kind of involvement for local volunteers in each participating city—largely about attracting gay men to the website to complete the survey.

Internet surveys have some distinct advantages. Questionnaire responses go directly to an electronic data base without having to transfer them from paper forms, which saves both the time and the expense of coding. While there are also some disadvantages— not all gay men have computers, for example— we undertook the Internet approach in the belief that the advantages outweigh potential pitfalls. In the end, the Internet approach garnered a national sample of n=1,058 gay men, large enough to be predictive of Canada's gay male population, given random recruitment. Since Internet samples are still not well understood, the GMPS survey is more likely a strong indicator of the Internet using gay male population, which is nevertheless thought to be a large proportion.

We have applied similar theoretical assumptions for the evaluation of GMPS that were

useful in assessing the effects of the Assumptions campaign, particularly in guiding our approach to outcome evaluation. As we demonstrated by examining several guiding theories used to model communication campaigns, such as Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), Stages of Change (Prochaska and DiClemente, 1992) and Diffusion of Innovation (Rogers, 1983) it is not possible to observe behaviour change directly as a result of a message initiative. Thus outcome evaluation must investigate a number of other measures of a campaign's effects to assess its overall impact. Recall of the "location" and "frequency" of seeing a campaign, whether it was discussed with others, the perceived meaning of its message and how well it appealed to the individual become the critical indicators of its success.

Each of the formative, process and outcome segments of this report will describe further methodological procedures in detail.

## FORMATIVE EVALUATION

The primary goal of the formative evaluation was to assess the ‘friendliness’ of gay men’s community environments toward sexual health promotion. The NAT undertook two formative studies to assess the existing conditions in each of the six participating cities:

- a scan of gay men’s community venues to document the presence of condoms and other prevention resources, and
- a survey of community leaders to evaluate their supportiveness toward sexual health promotion and prevention activities.

### ASSESSING THE ENVIRONMENT

Prior to the campaign, the NAT enlisted local personnel to conduct a scan of the availability and accessibility of condoms in each participating city as one assessment of ‘community friendliness’ to sexual health promotion. Little baseline data exists concerning the extent of free condom and sexual health information availability in gay venues of Canadian cities. Since it is often assumed that free condoms are widely available, we thought it important to investigate what is actually there.

Local personnel in each city were asked to visit and document the “venue type”, “condom”, “lubricant” and “health information” availability and to rate the “sexual health friendliness” of the environment. The results described the pre-campaign conditions of 100 gay venues in six cities.

#### SEXUAL HEALTH FRIENDLINESS

Gay environment scan	Scanned	Free Condoms	Free Lubricant	Purchase Condoms	No condoms	Friendly* Rating
Gay Bar	36	64% (23)	58% (21)	0	36% (13)	3.5
Bathhouse	11	100% (11)	91% (10)	0	0	4.4
Community HIV Group	17	77% (13)	59% (10)	0	24% (4)	4.5
Clinic	6	83% (5)	33% (2)	0	17% (1)	4.2
Rest./Cafe	16	13% (2)	13% (2)	19% (3)	69% (11)	2.1
Gay Stores	7	14% (1)	14% (1)	42% (3)	43% (3)	3.0
Video Clubs	6	0	0	67% (4)	33% (2)	3.6
Gym	1	0	0	0	1	1
Total	100					

\*mean scores out of five

Sexual health information appeared to be available in all or most venues scanned. While a majority of gay bars (64%) surveyed had free condoms available, there were wide variations among cities. For example, all the bars surveyed in Montreal had free condoms and lube, while 5 out of 12 bars in Toronto carried free condoms and lube and only 1 bar in Vancouver carried free condoms.

All 11 bathhouses in the scan carried free condoms and lube. Vancouver and Winnipeg groups, however, did not report on bathhouses. Montreal reported on only one bathhouse.

A total of 17 HIV related community organizations in Halifax, Toronto, Edmonton and Vancouver were scanned. Though there were exceptions, most had free condoms available and all groups scanned in Vancouver and Edmonton had them available.

Sixteen restaurants and cafés were surveyed. Far fewer restaurants and cafés carried free condoms than gay bars. As might be expected, gay stores usually offered condoms for purchase rather than for free.

Of the 6 video clubs or “peeps” surveyed, 4 had condoms and lube for purchase and 2 had no condoms available.

The results showed that gay community environments are generally friendly toward sexual health promotion with some exceptions. Free condoms are usually available at the baths, where they are most needed. A majority of gay bars support access to free condoms.

#### WHO IS PAYING FOR ‘FREE’ CONDOMS?

- Vancouver bars do not provide condoms
- Toronto bars and baths have free condom dispensers paid for by ACT
- Montreal bar and bath owners buy the condoms from Séro Zéro at cost, however some payment issues arise
- Toronto Public Health provides bathhouses with free condoms

A question arises about whether these conditions can be improved upon. At least one hope for the GMPS campaign was that the quality of the message and materials delivering it might improve the ‘presence’ of condoms in gay men’s environments. Another question concerns how much gay men may be depending on the availability of free condoms. Both of these questions are considered in the evaluation of the campaign’s outcomes.

### COMMUNITY LEADER SURVEY

To develop another impression of community friendliness to sexual health promotion, personnel from partner organizations interviewed a selection of gay community leaders such as business owners, venue managers, politicians, media spokespeople and non-profit organization personnel. The purpose was to have a preparatory discussion about the upcoming HIV prevention campaign followed by a short survey. The survey probed attitudes about sexual health issues, condom availability and perceptions about gay men’s health.

Fifty-two gay male community leaders were selected by National Advisory Team members in each participating city to complete the survey. The sample was not meant to represent or define “gay community leaders”, but to identify how a diverse panel of community leaders perceived sexual health promotion activities in their cities today. The sample was diverse in age. All were affiliated in some way with gay community and in daily contact with many gay men.

#### COMMUNITY AFFILIATION

Affiliation n=52	percent	number
Business	37%	19
Professional	25%	13
Social	11%	6
Media	6%	3
Other*	21%	11

\*“Other” often meant more than one affiliation.

#### SURVEYED LEADERS’ RESIDENCE

City n=52	percent	number
Montreal	29%	15
Vancouver	25%	13
Toronto	19%	10
Edmonton	17%	9
Halifax	8%	4
Winnipeg	2%	1

#### SURVEYED LEADERS’ AGE

Age n=52	percent	number
Under 30	19%	10
30 – 44	54%	28
45 plus	27%	14

#### DAILY CONTACT WITH GAY MEN

Gay contact daily n=52	percent	number
Under 8	28%	13
8 – 24	30%	14
25 plus	41%	19

In assessing the local availability of sexual health information for gay men, 56% thought it was “adequate” and 34% said it was “less than adequate”. By contrast, 46% of community leaders thought that the availability of condoms in local gay settings was “less than adequate” while 34% thought it was “adequate”.

**PERCEPTIONS ABOUT LOCAL SEXUAL HEALTH PROMOTION**

Community Leader Perceptions n=52	More than adequate	Adequate	Less than adequate
Sexual health knowledge of most gay men	16%	55%	29%
Availability of sexual health information	10%	56%	34%
Availability of free condoms	20%	34%	46%
Efforts of community HIV groups	16%	42%	42%

Community leaders were evenly split on their assessment of the ongoing health promotion efforts of their local community groups: 42% thought it was “adequate” and 42% thought it was “less than adequate”. Nevertheless, like most gay men surveyed in recent years, 98% of community leaders believed that sexual health initiatives for gay men are either “important” or “very important”.

**IMPORTANCE OF SEXUAL HEALTH PROMOTION FOR GAY MEN**

Perceived needs n=52	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Sexual health initiatives	77%	21%	2%
Government funding for campaigns	81%	19%	0%
Free condom access	69%	31%	0%

In contrast with persistent media reports that “gay men are tired of hearing about HIV prevention”, surveys conducted by the Community Based Research Centre have consistently shown that prevention efforts are highly valued by a great majority in gay communities. All (100%) of the community leaders we surveyed thought government funding was “important” or “very important” for gay men’s sexual health initiatives.

Concerning attitudes toward the availability of free condoms in local venues, community leaders were unanimous in their view that it was either “important” or “very important”. At the same time, however, 55% of the community leaders agreed with the statement, “gay men should be encouraged to purchase their own condoms.” Among the 45% who “disagreed”, 25% “strongly disagreed”.

**GAY MEN SHOULD PURCHASE THEIR OWN CONDOMS**

Purchase own n=52	percent	number	split
Strongly agree	16%	8	
Agree	39%	20	55%
Disagree	20%	10	45%
Strongly disagree	25%	13	

Research in the UK has shown little relationship between people’s capacity to pay for condoms and their desire for free condoms (Reid et al., 2004). There has been ongoing discussion amongst HIV prevention educators about whether providing free condoms in

some settings is a good harm reduction strategy. Anecdotal experience seems to indicate that if condoms are available, gay men will use them. However, some prevention educators worry about creating a dependence on free condoms, arguing that gay men should take responsibility for their own health.

Given preparations for a new social marketing campaign, the survey asked community leaders what they felt were appropriate and effective locations for displaying gay men’s sexual health information. The “gay press” and “washroom ads” received top approval ratings at 98% and 90% respectively. Seventy-five percent thought “mainstream media” was appropriate, 71% “billboards” and 53% “bus shelter” ads. Less appropriate locations were at the “cashier” 33%, and in a “shop window” 23%.

**WHERE SHOULD SEXUAL HEALTH INFORMATION BE SEEN?**

Placement n=52	Yes	Maybe	no
Gay press	98%	2%	0%
Washroom	90%	6%	4%
Mainstream press	75%	21%	4%
Billboard	71%	27%	2%
Bus Shelter	53%	35%	12%
Cashier	33%	41%	26%
Shop window	23%	24%	26%

A great majority of community leaders (81%) stated that they saw themselves having a “role in gay men’s health promotion” while only 6% did not. A large majority (86%) also said they would be inclined to “use their influence” to gain the support of other community leaders for gay men’s health promotion efforts, while only 2% said they would not.

Community leaders were asked to comment on how they thought gay men’s health promotion could be made more “appealing”. Several common themes emerged:

- maintain the work you are doing
- work with trained professional marketing people
- consult and involve gay community, include social and recreational circles
- invest money
- increase campaign visibility, use billboards, sensitize the mainstream press
- emphasize pleasure: romanticize, eroticize; use humour; keep fresh and up to date
- respond to the diversity of the population: ethnicities, elders, couples, youth
- address relevant issues: drug addiction, mental health issues, the realities of youth
- support more social science research into gay men’s health
- provide peer education and networking opportunities

Overall the survey served to further dispel the myth that gay communities have grown tired of HIV prevention or sexual health social marketing. In contrast with the unsubstantiated opinions of ‘expert’ observers who regularly comment on the state of the HIV epidemic in gay men in the press, community attitudes show a high level of concern.

The formative evaluation helped to show the NAT that gay community leaders welcome the improvement of sexual health promotion through social marketing activities and see themselves as part of the solution. The main theme of their commentary on such developments, however, rests with the quality of the effort and the material behind it.

## PROCESS EVALUATION

---

Process evaluation helps to show the relationship between the work of bringing an initiative into being and its outcome. The ultimate strength or weakness of a campaign's impact on its audiences can often be traced to events in its development process (McKinlay, 1996). To assess what transpired in the second campaign and how it may have affected the result, we followed the procedures of the NAT from concept through design, development and delivery of the complete initiative, largely by attending and documenting meetings, teleconferences and email exchanges.

Designing an entirely new campaign turned out to be considerably more difficult than adapting a pre-existing one. While the result eventually played-out reasonably well among most audiences, the NAT was challenged with some difficult passages in the process of developing the second campaign. One of the most difficult was having to deal with the failure of the first creative concept offered by the selected ad firm.

To assist in developing the direction of the second campaign, the campaign management team surveyed NAT members and suggestions posted on the Think Again website. The top suggested themes for the future initiative were:

- Gay sexuality: valuing sexuality in gay culture
- Harm reduction: reducing the risk of transmission
- Asset-based approach: emphasize successes of gay community
- Condom use: when is it okay not to use a condom?
- Depression, drugs and alcohol: link to unsafe sex
- Bareback prevalence and assumptions
- How to talk about sexual safety and HIV disclosure
- How to have safe sex without condoms

About the same time, the management team issued a request for Expression of Interest (EOI) to 12 advertising agencies in Toronto and Vancouver. Six agencies replied with a letter indicating support for the project but were unable to respond with a proposal. Three agencies submitted EOIs.

Rethink® Advertising of Vancouver was eventually selected to develop the campaign, based on a solid history of taking on controversial social issues in unconventional ways and experience working in both English and French. The project management team forwarded a discussion paper, outlining the above themes to Rethink® to assist them in developing a creative brief and proposal for the second campaign. Rethink® presented their response at a face to face meeting of the NAT held in Vancouver in April 2005.

Rethink®'s creative concept was organized around a tag-line: "Who says condoms aren't fun?" featuring 'gag' video clips such as a man blowing up a condom stretched over his head until it burst and people throwing water-filled condom bombs from a high-rise building. Several story boards were presented showing condoms being used in other unexpected ways, such as helium filled balloons or an air mattress in a pool.

Laughter in the room served to demonstrate that the NAT found the humour in the presentation, however, the response overall was one of disappointment. Some of the immediate comments raised with Rethink® were as follows: "what's gay about it?"; "what is the call to action? "who is this campaign targeting?". It was a reaction the Rethink® partners were clearly not expecting.

In witnessing the response of the NAT, Rethink® came to realize that the concept had failed the test of its first audience – the group that would be responsible for delivering the campaign across Canada. While the NAT struggled with how to move forward, Rethink®

came to a decision of its own to withdraw the concept and start again. It was a setback for all concerned, especially considering the timing. Some ad space, for example, had already been purchased in anticipation of timely production.

The experience served to highlight the degree of difficulty with designing broad based social marketing to gay men dispersed in the general population. If a top ad firm failed to hit the mark, who could? Few ad firms in Canada have much experience marketing to gay men, let alone featuring their sexual health.

When asked about their reaction, National Team members generally felt confused and disappointed.

*"I actually left Vancouver a bit concerned that I didn't 'get' what the consultants were trying to get across to us."*

*"I certainly got wrapped up in the enthusiasm surrounding the exciting new marketing firm working with us, but didn't have confidence in the materials and ideas presented."*

*"I was concerned that the approach taken by the creative company, while fun, would fail to get at the underlying reasons behind HIV risk-taking."*

*"I went into the meeting expecting something that would be a positive reinforcement message, with humour, and gay-specific. What we got at the meeting was a "condoms are fun" message that didn't seem particularly gay."*

The critical problem for NAT became how to deal with a creative flop, pick up and move on. As it became clear that a new concept would not be ready in time for the planned summer launch, coinciding with gay Pride celebrations, the timing of the project needed to be readjusted. The NAT eventually settled on a fall launch, coinciding with the new term at colleges and universities.

Rethink® presented its second concept during a teleconference held in mid June. The presentation used electronic files sent in advance to deliver the images with narration by the campaign's creative director. This creative concept used simple text to spell out lists of colloquial euphemisms for the 'penis' followed by "Thanks for keeping it covered" written over an image of a condom package. The creative presentation went on to show how such a concept could appear on posters, billboards and t shirts.

The reaction of the NAT was muted. While it was clear that the presentation was not everything the team could have wished for, the overall feeling was that it was something that could be worked with. Finally, it was acknowledged there was a concept that held the possibility of being able to be displayed in public without drawing complaint. Once again, however, the NAT found little echo of gay culture in the presentation (including the selection of 'penis' euphemisms) but indicated their willingness to work with Rethink® to fix it.

At this time the NAT's effort shifted to provide input into the creative development of the campaign. The national partners researched and compiled an inventory of 'penis' euphemisms common among gay men and worked with various undeveloped elements such as the 'call to action'. Eventually the NAT came to a decision to modify the tag line to "Thanks for keeping it safe" (replacing covered). The 'call to action' became "gay men play safe" which also became the name of the campaign and the address of its website.

## **DEVELOPING THEORY**

Owing to the way in which the campaign developed, its theory of change and logic model evolved over several iterations. While the second campaign had always focused on supporting gay men's 'asset base' in the majority's 'best intentions' for sexual safety, the way of promoting it changed with changing creative concepts. The following represents the final iteration of the GMPS logic model prior to its public release.

### **THEORY OF CHANGE**

"Whatever you call it, thanks for keeping it safe": Using humor to make the point, the campaign aims to thank gay men for their continuing efforts to use condoms for sexual safety. The ad campaign will act as a mass context in which to reinforce the availability and acceptability of condoms in gay men's environments and to support the strategies used by gay men to minimize risk in sexual activities.

By the end of the campaign we will see increased support for the presence of condoms, lube and sexual health materials in gay men's cultural environment and increased support for community norms on sexual safety.

Those exposed to the campaign will be reminded that condoms continue to have a critical role in maintaining gay men's health and that the majority continue to play safe.

Through evaluative research we will increase our knowledge of the availability and acceptability of free condom distribution in our cities, the perceived role of community leaders in gay men's sexual health and, the impact of prevention messages on average gay men.

### **LOGIC MODEL**

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1 Challenge negative impressions about condoms.
- 2 Reinforce the value of condoms in gay men's health.
- 3 Stimulate increased visibility, access and acceptability of condoms and sexual health messages in key settings of gay men's cultural environment.
- 4 Support the strategies used by gay men to minimize risk in their sexual activities.

#### **OUTPUTS:**

The campaign aims for 'viral distribution' of the message "thanks for keeping it safe" over the internet while saturating gay men's cultural environment with humorous media materials. Local activities will emphasize the visibility of condoms, lube and info in key settings, gaining the cooperation of community leaders in sexual health promotion and influencing perceptions about condoms among average gay men.

#### **IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES:**

- 1 Increased focus on condoms in gay men's health promotion with increased visibility of condoms, lube and sexual health messages in gay men's cultural environment.
- 2 Re-establish the value of condoms and other sexual safety strategies in gay men's sexual health, challenging and reorienting common misperceptions.
- 3 Gay men will talk about the campaign with the effect of "lightening up" the cultural environment around condoms.
- 4 Increased appreciation for the strategies gay men use to minimize risk in their sexual activities.

## INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES:

- 1 General acceptance of majority norms and values around condoms and their visibility in gay men's cultural environment.
- 2 Gay men see free condom distribution and visible messages as support for their sexual health.
- 3 Gay men feel supported for the strategies they are using to minimize risk in their sexual activities.

## LONG TERM OUTCOMES:

Gay men will have greater access to condoms, fewer environmental barriers, and less vulnerability to misperceptions about sexual health risks.

## CAMPAIGN OUTPUTS

In several important ways, the NAT became directly involved in the creative development of the campaign. Nevertheless, there were persistent misgivings about the concept, particularly in Toronto, where early reaction among local prevention personnel was largely unfavourable. The local advisory committee in Toronto eventually rejected one of the campaign's posters (novelty 'crotch' shots) fearing that it would raise concerns among its ethno-cultural partners. In the end, however, the campaign's development proceeded through to the completion of all the desired elements.

VISUAL OUTPUTS						
Output	Halifax	Montreal	Toronto	Winnipeg	Edmonton	Vancouver
Poster #1 'Word List'	225	450 F, 75 E	450	220	200	450
Poster #2 'Crotch shots'	225	450 F, 75 E	450	200	275	450
Postcards - 2 executions	1500	4900 F, 1000 E	5000	1450	2200	5000
Coasters	8000	20000 F	15000	4600	7000	27500
T shirts	14	30 F, 10 E	30	10	14	30
Condom Packs	2500	2000 F, 1000 E	7500	1550	2800	7500
Bike Rack	0	12	0	0	0	0
Bus Shelter	0	0	16	0	0	2
Garbage Can	0	0	40	0	0	0
Washroom	8	21	20	10	8	16
Billboards	1	0	0	1	1	2
Banner-ads	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pins	1000	1500 F, 250 E	2275	1000	700	2275

## BILLBOARDS

Because Pattison Media had rejected the 2004 Assumptions campaign, one of the objectives of GMPS was to develop a campaign that could appear in public without drawing complaint. In contrast to Assumptions with four billboards in Toronto, where Viacom controlled the outdoor media, Gay Men Play Safe had five billboards, one each in Edmonton, Winnipeg and Halifax and two in Vancouver. Due to the delay in the campaign launch, Montreal and Toronto had no billboard space available at the time of the campaign.

## **GAY PRESS**

Previous research (Trussler et al., 2003) has shown that the gay press is widely read or seen by at least 85% of the gay population in Vancouver and other major centres. For this reason ad placements in the gay press represent a valuable way to reach intended audiences for prevention.

The following is an inventory of ad space purchased for the GMPS campaign:

### **Halifax**

5 ads in The Coast  
2 ads in Wayves

### **Montreal**

4 ads in Fugues (2 French, 2 English)  
1 ad in ZIP French only  
1 ad in RG

### **Toronto**

4 ads in Fab  
3 ads in Xtra

### **Winnipeg**

2 ads in Swerve  
5 ads in Uptown

### **Edmonton**

6 ads in Vue

### **Vancouver**

1 ad in Gayze  
1 ad in Living Positive  
4 ads in Xtra West  
2 ads in the Westender

The following ads were purchased to promote the evaluation survey:

1 - Wayves (Halifax)  
1 - Fugues (Montreal) French only  
1 - Xtra (Toronto)  
1 - Uptown (Winnipeg)  
1 - Vue (Edmonton)  
1 - Xtra West (Vancouver)  
Banner ad at Priape.com (French and English)

## **WASHROOM ADS**

Evaluative research from the Assumptions campaign (Trussler & Marchand, 2005) demonstrated that the most often recalled site for an ad was in the washroom of a café, restaurant or bar. The GMPS campaign used this knowledge to purchase ad space strategically.

The following lists purchased space at 83 locations across Canada.

### **Halifax total = 8**

Amadeus (2)  
Club Vortex (3)  
Reflection Cabaret (3)

### **Montreal total = 21**

Aigle Noir (2)	Bar le stud (2)
Café European (1)	Cabaret Mado (1)
Club Date Piano Bar (1)	Sky Pub (1)
Club Back Track Disco (2)	Sky pub 2nd floor (2)
Campus (2)	Sky pub 3rd floor (2)
Bar Parking (2)	Unity II (3)

**Toronto total = 20**

Babylon Bar (2)	Second cup/Church (1)
Byzantium (1)	The Artful Dodger (1)
Club Toronto (2)	The Black Eagle (1)
Fly Nightclub (2)	The Croissant Tree/Church (1)
Hair of Dog (1)	Velvet Underground (1)
Olympic 76 Pizza Cafe (1)	Village Rainbow (1)
Pegasus billboard lounge (1)	Woody's (1)
Sailor's (1)	Zipperz (1)

**Winnipeg total = 10**

Desire (2)	Wise Guys on Campus (2)
Gio's (2)	Club 200 (2)
Johnny G's Restaurant (2)	

**Edmonton total = 8**

Buddy's (2)	Roost (2)
Woody's (2)	The Sugar Bowl (2)

**Vancouver total = 16**

Fountain Head (1)	Sugar Daddy's (1)
Pumpjack (1)	Jupiter (1)
Odyssey (2)	Celebrities (4)
Oasis Pub (1)	Dufferin Hotel (2)
Numbers (1)	Hamburger Mary's (2)

**WEBSITE ACTIVITY**

One element of the GMPS communication strategy was to link audiences to the campaign dedicated websites [www.gaymenplaysafe.com](http://www.gaymenplaysafe.com) and [www.nousjouonssafe.com](http://www.nousjouonssafe.com) from either another website or from materials on public display. Banner ads were hosted on sites of the NAT network and other supporting organizations to facilitate linkages. Eventually, as the campaign was winding down, a web-based survey was conducted at the site to provide data for the outcome evaluation of the GMPS campaign.

The site had the following features:

- Home: campaign message
- News and Events: media coverage
- Campaign: backgrounder, material; link to Think-again.ca
- Feedback: from site visitors to campaign organizers
- Sex info: sexual health information for gay men
- Fun: interactive name your penis game
- Survey: online evaluation survey
- Media Area: press release, media contact

Between September 2005 and February 2006, the number of visits to [gaymenplaysafe.com](http://gaymenplaysafe.com) was 11,487, and to [nousjouonssafe.com](http://nousjouonssafe.com) was 8,868.

One of the key features of the site in terms of the campaign's communication strategy was a TV spot featuring men on downtown streets candidly disclosing their pet penis euphemism. It was hoped that the ad's humour would inspire website visitors to distribute the video to their own email lists where it would be redistributed by recipients, thereby creating a 'viral'

chain reaction. "Going viral" was seen to be a "gold standard" measure of a campaign's impact. The English video was viewed 354 times while the French video was viewed 54 times. Whether or not website visitors were inspired to redistribute the video thus became an item to probe in assessing the impact of the campaign and this will be taken up in the outcome evaluation.

Website visitors were encouraged to comment on the campaign. While most comments were supportive, views diverged widely, a point that will be taken up in the outcome evaluation.

*"I love your campaign!!!"*

*"The campaign is excellent - fun, but ... pointed. My question is where, or whether, ordinary folks such as myself might get posters. As an English prof, I'd love a copy of the one with the largest list of names for my office door ..."*

*"I do not know where the hell you people get your misinformation, but a heck of a lot of gay men do not play safe. Which is why, I would guess, the HIV infection rate is going up instead of down... I am sure you would like to think that gays are responsible when it comes to such a lethal contagion, but a lot of them do not seem to care."*

## **MEDIA ATTENTION**

As in the previous campaign, a press strategy was carefully prepared featuring a news release and background material. Remarkably, however, GMPS did not generate nearly the same degree of secondary media attention as Assumptions. The absence of coverage may well have been due to public acceptance of GMPS without the media captivating controversy of Assumptions.

Nevertheless, GMPS did generate some supportive media attention, particularly from observers who could appreciate the creative challenge involved in featuring a controversial subject for public display.

*"Who knew? Seems men like to name their penis. At least that's the consumer insight behind a bilingual multi-media campaign for AIDS Vancouver by agency Rethink®."*

— Marketing Magazine

*"Ding, Dong Johnson, even the Big Baguette, whatever you call it, thanks for keeping it safe," that's the message of a fly catching HIV-prevention campaign created in Vancouver and hitting the streets across Canada."*

— Metro Vancouver

*"Tomorrow a blunt, nation wide, government funded campaign will begin in Canada zeroing in on that all important male body part, the penis. It's likely going to offend some of the more prudish among us, but let's face it, how can you talk about preventing HIV/AIDS without talking about the role of Wee Willy Winky?"*

— The Montreal Gazette

Board Magazine, an advertising industry newsmagazine, featured GMPS as one of the top ads of the season.

*"Terms of endowment. No rocket science here: in a tepid month where ads have lacked for both inspiration and temerity, Lena Beug's low-key spot for AIDS Vancouver stands about six inches taller than the rest of the crowd. A simple, low-budget PSA, "Admiral Winky" is nothing more than a montage of dudes divulging personal nicknames for their male members. However, in the course of including punchlines like "Senor Fantastico," "Chief Justice Weatherbee" and "Slim Jim & The Twins", it easily eclipses 97.4% of this month's ads by being, you know, memorable! Here's hoping December's output picks up, else it's going to be a long, punchline-free holiday..."*

The GMPS media release was also covered in The Advocate a major gay-oriented newsmagazine and the following web sites:

[www.thebody.com](http://www.thebody.com)

[http://kaisernetwork.org/daily\\_reports/rep\\_index.cfm?DR\\_ID=32545](http://kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/rep_index.cfm?DR_ID=32545)

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=30720>

## **NAT PERSPECTIVES**

To probe how members of the National Advisory Team felt about the GMPS Campaign and their involvement in developing it, we used a confidential e-mail questionnaire soliciting their reflections.

Overall, NAT members felt that GMPS went reasonably well, although better in some locations than others. It seemed to have been more effective in smaller cities. As one member stated:

*"In my view and in the view of my colleagues and local partners, the Gay Men Play Safe campaign went extremely well. We had a good deal of positive feedback with little objection to the content."*

Nevertheless, NAT members expressed some reservations about the creative concept:

- Creative was limited, not bold compared to Assumptions
- Challenged with the translation into French
- Creative was "disappointing"
- Timing was bad: happened after Pride events
- With no controversy, there wasn't much to talk about

When asked to compare Gay Men Play Safe to Assumptions, NAT members generally saw Assumptions as having "more punch", being more provocative and generating more discussion. However, most were able to find merits in the second campaign:

*"It was more accessible because it was done in a humorous way."*

*"The gay men play safe campaign got the community excited. Guys wanted to get the T-shirts. The bars were excited about the coasters and really wanted to distribute them. They were amazed by the reaction of their clients."*

*"We reached a different segment of the gay men's communities this second time."*

Reflecting on the experience overall, many of the NAT members could see that, while the GMPS campaign was not as strong as desired, there were many favourable aspects.

- improved visibility: first ever billboard
- men were talking about gay health stimulated by the humour
- developed local partnerships
- humour and message did not shame gay men
- improved visibility on internet
- campaign development a model for pan-Canadian collaboration
- message reinforced for gay men traveling to partner cities
- campaign better suited to smaller community with limited resources
- raised awareness about need for expanded prevention programming for gay men
- involved gay community leaders
- developed stronger relationships with business owners and managers
- t-shirts were a hit especially with service staff at local gay bars

*"Guys found the images and names funny, seemed to basically understand the message, and talked about the campaign. I feel that, since those three things seemed to be what we wanted them to do, we have had a successful campaign."*

*"We had a good deal of positive feedback with little objection to the content."*

*"In the end we can say the reaction was better than what I anticipated."*

On the other hand, NAT members also found weak points in the campaign.

- humour may have masked the sexual safety message
- insufficient funding for expected impact
- low outdoor visibility (missed billboard space in Montreal and Toronto)
- campaign not gay specific
- weak website
- hard to translate into French
- video was the most work and produced little return, no 'viral' circulation
- poor participation in some cities
- not of interest to the media
- missed best timing because of delays in the creative

*"The campaign was not nearly as provocative or impactful as the Assumptions campaign."*

*"I was disappointed with the creative agency's work."*

*"Its effectiveness was likely compromised by its timing (after everyone's gay pride festivities) and, oddly, its lack of controversy."*

## **OUTCOME EVALUATION**

---

To conduct the outcome evaluation we needed reliable feedback on how the target audience responded to the campaign. In reviewing the campaign's theory of change and logic model, the information we needed was:

- What message got to gay men, how it got to them and how it was perceived.
- Who the message strategy most and least appealed to.
- An assessment of perceptions and values about condoms.
- Indicators of the immediate impact of the campaign, anticipated outcomes and what it suggests for the future.

### **METHOD**

A key feature of the campaign's strategy was the "viral" distribution potential existing in personal and collective email networks and the Internet. The campaign's designers had hoped that a short video available on the campaign website would stimulate the audience to re-send it across multiple email networks, thus making the ad "go viral". Given the place of the Internet in the campaign's strategy and its intended effects in the audience, it seemed appropriate that the evaluation of the campaign should also be conducted over the Internet.

We proposed an online survey to the National Advisory Team to be conducted shortly following the campaign's closure. The survey would probe the campaign's effects in an Internet-based sample. Members of the NAT would stimulate survey participation in each of their own cities.

A survey questionnaire aimed at probing indicators of the campaign's impact on its audience developed over several iterations with the NAT. The questionnaire explored:

- How respondents got to the survey site
- Most effective locations of ads
- Frequency of ad sightings
- Perceived message
- Mentions to other people
- Ratings of the message and overall campaign
- Values related to condom use
- Basic demographics: age, sero-status, resident city, ethnicity.

Conducting the survey online introduced both simplifications and complications to technical aspects of the evaluative research. Online surveys simplify sampling and data entry but they also require expert technical services to set them up. Our reliance on volunteers to collect intercept samples in streets and venues was reduced. However, we needed to explore a new strategy to get local gay men to tell us what they thought of the campaign online.

In reviewing literature on surveys conducted over the Internet several methods of acquiring samples stood out—all forms of advertising in themselves. We made use of email networks among intended audience members to call attention to the evaluation. Promotional emails used hot-links to facilitate direct access to the questionnaire. We used devices associated with the campaign such as club cards, message pins and banner ads distributed in local gay venues. We also used a \$300 prize incentive, donated by Priape, a gay friendly business, to attract survey respondents.

Our web technician set up the survey link with the campaign website. The survey software was set to receive only one response per computer. The prize entry procedure was arranged separately from the questionnaire to maintain the anonymity of all respondents. While the

survey was in progress, we de-restricted some computers of participating organizations so that gay men, without their own computer, could participate in the evaluation.

We ran the survey from December 19, 2005 – January 31, 2006

## **RESULTS**

One thousand and fifty-eight men completed the online questionnaire. The sample was diverse in terms of age, ethnicity, relationship status and residence. Its composition, however, needs to be understood relative to other samples of gay men to validate survey results.

### **DEMOGRAPHICS**

The sample achieved by all the community and online recruiting activities mentioned was quite diverse, offering a wide range of gay men's experience. Because the character of the sample is an important feature of confidence with the findings, we will compare the GMPS Internet sample with the Sex Now survey's community-based sample (Trussler, Marchand & Gilbert, 2006).

#### **AGE**

The mean age of the sample was 36, similar to other community-based samples of gay men. However, a somewhat greater proportion of men under 30, 35% v 27%, participated in the online survey than is typically seen in the Sex Now survey.

#### **SERO-STATUS**

The distribution of sero-status in the Internet sample was also very similar to community-based samples. Internet respondents reported the result of their last HIV test as follows: 11% HIV positive, 72% HIV negative, 17% never tested. For comparison, Sex Now 2004 sampled 2,700 gay men in BC and also found that 11% were HIV positive but 12% had never tested. However, greater proportions of HIV positive men, 14-15%, consistently turn up in Vancouver samples of the Sex Now survey.

#### **RELATIONSHIP STATUS**

The proportions of single men versus those in relationships varied from Sex Now samples with 61% single online v 50% single community-based.

#### **CITY OF RESIDENCE**

The city representation in the sample was spread across all participating centres, however, proportions did not represent the relative size of gay populations very well. The response of each center may well have been due to the effectiveness of marketing the evaluation in each location or a range of other intervening factors such as local audience reaction to the campaign itself.

Halifax	Montreal	Toronto	Winnipeg	Edmonton	Vancouver	International
n=78	n=369	n=98	n=31	n=156	n=309	n=17
7.4%	34.9%	9.3%	2.9%	14.7%	29.2%	1.6%

#### **ETHNICITY**

Though the distribution of ethnicity was diverse in the online sample, a large majority of

respondents described themselves as Caucasian. The distribution compared favourably with the Sex Now survey although relatively more Asian men have been present, as might be expected, in BC based samples.

Ethnicity	Sex Now	Play Safe
	n=2197	n=1058
African	.6%	.5%
Asian	9.5%	4.3%
Caribbean	.8%	.6%
Caucasian	73.8%	81.2%
Latino/Hispanic	3.6%	2.1%
Middle Eastern	.8%	.7%
1st Nation/Aboriginal	2.4%	2.2%
Pacific Islander	.6%	.2%
South Asian	.9%	.8%
Other	7.0%	7.7%

### SEXUAL HISTORY

Community-based studies have recently demonstrated that risky sex involves a small minority relative to the whole population of gay men. In the Sex Now survey a 25% minority reported unprotected anal intercourse (UAI) with casual partners. The 75% majority report no history with risky sex.

We asked GMPS survey respondents about unprotected sex during the year.

UAI partners	
	n=1058
None	47.4%
One	29.0%
2-5	15.6%
6-9	3.5%
10+	4.5%

The question we asked in the survey did not distinguish between UAI with a casual partner of unknown sero-status or a primary relationship. However, the proportion of risk exposure is comparable to the Sex Now study assuming that one UAI partner was the primary relationship. Thus 76% of the men in the GMPS survey might be considered "low-risk majority" and the 24% having multiple UAI partners could be considered "risk exposed." These differences become important in interpreting attitudinal responses to the campaign.

In the Sex Now survey, the significant factors determining the difference between those with histories of risk and those without was volume of sex partners. Those with 10 or more partners per year were 2.7 times more likely to be exposed to risk than those with fewer than 10 partners. Beyond describing personal behaviour, such findings help to define differences of engagement in the casual gay sex culture. In the GMPS online survey 40% had 10 or more partners per year v 28% Sex Now.

While partner volume may not be definitive, it is certainly suggestive of different segments of gay sexual culture that the men who we wish to reach with messages may be involved

in. Those with 10 or more partners a year appear to be highly involved in the casual sex culture and those with fewer only moderately involved or not involved at all. Thus volume of partners is a useful way of interpreting attitudinal differences between gay men.

In summary, the online sample's characteristics were generally comparable to

Partner volume	percent
	n=1058
None	3.4%
One	16.7%
2-9	39.9%
10+	40.0%

community based samples acquired in face-to-face settings excepting that there were disproportionately more single men who have 10 or more partners per year. This information suggests that the online sample is as reliable an indicator of gay men's attitudes and values as community-based samples keeping in mind that there was a greater showing of men actively involved in gay casual sex culture in the Internet sample.

### **SURVEY PARTICIPATION**

We asked online respondents "what brought them to the site" to establish how well the evaluation's marketing had worked to stimulate participation. A 44% majority indicated their visit was directly related to "doing the survey", while 30% responded to a 'banner ad' on another site. The result indicates that local efforts to market the survey were an important stimulus for participation in the evaluation. The strong showing from banner ads indicates that they also have an important role to play in moving men, already on the Internet, to participate in surveys. The 19% showing from "recommendation from others" supports social marketing theory about the importance that person-to-person communication plays in stimulating action.

Reason for site visit	percent
	n=1058
To do the survey	44.4%
Banner ad from another site	30.1%
Recommendations from others	19.4%
Address on campaign materials	5.1%
Google or other search engine	1.0%

**FREQUENCY OF AD SIGHTINGS**

While a 58% majority of evaluation participants had seen the campaign on multiple previous occasions, about 42% said they were seeing it for the first time. Thus the marketing effort for the evaluation may have brought attention to the campaign itself for a large proportion of survey respondents.

Sighting frequency	percent
	n=1058
1st time	41.7%
2-5 times	27.9%
6-9 times	8.9%
10 or more times	21.6%

**LOCATION EFFECTIVENESS**

Given that the evaluation was conducted on the Internet and about 30% of survey respondents were directed to the questionnaire by a banner ad it was not surprising to find that a large proportion of the sample reported seeing the campaign on a banner ad. Nevertheless, the data also indicate that large proportions saw the ads in gay venues and restrooms. These results may provide some indication of the relative value of ad locations for future campaigns. Irrespective of how the survey was conducted, the Internet might well be used to greater effect in future campaigns.

Location	
	n=1058
Internet banner	33.7%
Clubs/bar	27.5%
Restroom	21.6%
Post card	14.8%
Bus shelter	12.6%
Press/media	12.3%
Condom pack	11.2%
Billboard	10.9%
Street	7.3%
Television	1.4%

**CAMPAIGN MENTIONS**

One indicator of a campaign’s impact may be judged by how extensively the message was repeated by word of mouth. Word of mouth is also thought to be more effective at producing social change than media alone.

A 62% majority of survey respondents had not spoken to anyone else about the campaign, however, many of them reported seeing the campaign for the first time. By contrast about 38% of the Assumption campaign evaluation participants reported that they had spoken to no-one else about the campaign and 56% had spoken about it with other gay men.

Despite the effect of sampling so many “first-time” respondents, the data provide some indication that the GMPS campaign may have been less effective than Assumptions in stimulating word of mouth transmission.

Mentioned campaign	
	n=1058
No-one	62.1%
Gay guys	29.7%
Coworkers	9.5%
Partner	9.2%
Health provider	3.5%
Other	2.5%
Family	1.8%

### MESSAGE RECEIVED

The gay men play safe campaign used images and text to convey an appreciative message of “thanks” for “keeping it safe”. Curiously, the message received by the largest majority of survey respondents was “protect yourself and your partner” (43%). Smaller proportions received “use condoms” (31%), and “your sexual safety effort is appreciated” (13%).

In this respect, the GMPS campaign was not as effective as Assumptions in conveying its main message. In the Assumptions evaluation, the largest majority perceived the main message to be, as intended, “rethink your risks” (47%). Smaller majorities also felt that “use condoms” (37%) or “protect yourself and your partner” (35%) were the main messages of the Assumptions campaign.

Message Received	
	n=1058
Protect yourself and partner	42.8%
Use condoms	30.8%
Your sexual safety effort is appreciated	13.3%
Guys have funny penis names	7.4%
The majority of gay men play safe	5.7%

### MESSAGE RATING

The survey questionnaire offered a multi-dimensional rating scale, prompting respondents to rate the “message” from 1-4 (low-high) based on several descriptors. While large majorities rated all dimensions high, none was as highly rated as the “importance” of the message.

Message rating	Low range 1-2	High range 3-4
n=1058		
Captivating	27.6%	72.4%
Pleasing	30.5%	69.5%
Effective	34.1%	65.9%
Motivating	36.6%	63.4%
Important	12.1%	87.9%

Because significant minorities (28-36%) rated the message “low” on other descriptors, we probed the data to determine if there were differences in the characteristics of those rating the campaign high or low. For this analysis we conducted a logistic regression comparing those who rated the campaign effective to those who rated it ineffective.

Message Ineffective	OR*	yes/n=360	no/n=695
Risky sex exposure	2.243	33.5%	18.4%
HIV+	1.809	15.3%	9.1%
10+ partners/year	1.600	47.5%	36.1%
Age 30-44	1.329	44.7%	37.8%

*\*These Odds Ratios (OR) describe how many more times likely the factor was of influence among those who rated the message low v those who did not. All p values < .05.*

Message Effective	OR*	yes/n=695	no/n=360
Safe sex only	2.243	81.5%	66.4%
Not HIV+	1.809	90.9%	84.7%
<10 partners/year	1.600	63.9%	52.5%
Age 16-29	1.549	38.0%	28.3%

*\*These Odds Ratios (OR) describe how many more times likely the factor was of influence among those who rated the message high v those who did not. All p values < .05.*

The results of this analysis uncovered an important finding about the appeal of the campaign in different segments of the population. Those who found the campaign “effective” were significantly more likely to be already maintaining sexual safety, reporting no risky sex exposure, and fewer than 10 partners in the last year (OR=2.101, 95% CI: 1.483–2.975).

On the other hand, those who found the campaign “ineffective” were significantly more likely to have reported risky sex exposure and 10 or more partners in the last year.

Interestingly, the results point out attitudinal differences between participants of different sexual cultures of gay men. These differences likely have a bearing on receptivity to prevention messages. The Assumptions campaign, for example, had greater appeal to men having 10 or more partners per year than those with fewer (OR=2.838, 95% CI: 1.524–5.285).

### **CAMPAIGN IMPORTANCE**

The survey questionnaire offered a second multi-dimensional rating scale, prompting respondents to rate the “overall campaign” from 1-4 (low-high) based on several descriptors.

Overall rating	Low range 1-2	High range 3-4
n=1058		
Captivating	34.7%	65.3%
Humorous	32.4%	67.6%
Effective	34.0%	66.0%
Motivating	35.6%	64.4%
Important	14.2%	85.8%

The results were very similar to “message” ratings, including previously noted differences between those who rated the overall campaign “high” or “low”.

About 86% of respondents rated the overall campaign “important”. However, further analysis disclosed that men with fewer than 10 partners per year (OR=2.101, 95% CI: 1.483–2.975, p=.000) and no risk exposure (OR=1.881, 95% CI: 1.298–2.725, p=.001) were significantly more likely to have found the campaign “important” than those with more partners and prior risk exposure.

### **VIDEO REDISTRIBUTION**

Because “going viral” was one of the goals of the video component of the campaign the questionnaire asked respondents whether they had forwarded the video to friends. Only 3.7% of respondents confirmed that they sent the video onward. Several factors beyond the appeal of the video itself may have affected this feature of the campaign including the placement of the video on the website.

### **FELT SUPPORT**

Supported by campaign	
	n=1058
Not at all	11.2%
Somewhat	50.5%
Very much	38.3%

One of the main aims of the GMPS campaign’s message strategy was to acknowledge, appreciate and support the sexual safety efforts of gay men. While the message did not attempt to stimulate any change, it seemed important to measure the level of support survey respondents felt by the presence of such a campaign.

There was a very strong association between feeling “supported” by the campaign and finding the message “effective” or the campaign “important”. Respondents who found the message “effective” for example were highly likely to have felt supported by the presence of the campaign.

## CONDOM VALUES

Because GMPS featured condoms, playful penis names and a message about “keeping ‘it’ safe” the survey questionnaire probed the status of gay men’s values concerning condoms at the close of the campaign.

### PRESSURE FOR UNPROTECTED SEX

The questionnaire asked how often respondents had felt pressure for sex without condoms in the previous year. The results showed that 58% of the sample had felt such pressure. As expected, the likelihood of experiencing “pressure” increased with numbers of sexual partners.

Pressured	
	n=1058
None	42.4%
Once	13.4%
2-5 times	28.0%
6-9 times	6.7%
10-19 times	4.1%
20+ times	5.4%

Logistic regression analysis of unprotected anal sex (UAI) reported in the survey revealed that those with multiple UAI partners were 3.9 times more likely to have felt pressured into it (OR=3.902, 95% CI: 2.780–5.578, p=.000) than those reporting only safe sex. As many as 80% of those reporting multiple UAI partners reported feeling pressured into sex without condoms.

Risky sex	OR	Yes/n=250	No/n=808
10+ partners/year	6.816	74.0%	29.5%
Pressured into it	3.902	80.0%	50.6%
HIV+	3.617	22.8%	7.5%
Single	1.503	68.8%	59.0%

These results indicate that there may be significant normative pressures against the use of condoms experienced by gay men actively involved in the casual sex culture. It seems that while the GMPS campaign supported the efforts of the moderate majority as intended, it did little for this high-risk minority. While it was not a goal of the GMPS campaign to address high-risk men specifically, the theme of pressure for sex without condoms and how to deal with it might well be taken up in future prevention efforts.

### ACCESS TO CONDOMS

The survey asked respondents where they usually get condoms. A 53% majority reported buying them but a large portion reported getting them free. Even so, free condoms were felt to be important to 69% of respondents. Further analysis showed that highly active men ( $\geq 10$  partners/year) were more likely to want free condoms than moderate men ( $< 10$  partners per year) who were more likely to buy them.

Access to condoms	
	n=1058
I buy them	52.6%
I get them free	35.9%
I don't use them	6.7%
My partners have them	4.8%

Importance of free condoms	
	n=1058
Very important	42.9%
Important	26.4%
Unimportant	17.6%
Not at all important	13.1%

## INTERPRETATION

According to survey results, the GMPS campaign achieved its goal to support the sexual safety efforts of gay men, at least among the “moderate” majority. In developing the theme of the campaign there was some hope that there was a universal appeal in such messages. On the contrary, outcome evaluation has served to demonstrate that there are attitudinal differences among gay men that mitigate against universal appeals. While GMPS seems to have been embraced by the “moderate” majority it did much less for the “risk-exposed” minority.

Such findings are to be expected and they help instruct strategy for future campaigns. No one campaign will appeal to all but what has been learned from conducting two of them is that different kinds of messages appeal to men of different segments of gay men’s sexual culture and thus its prevention marketplace. Interestingly, while GMPS appealed to the “moderate majority”, it generated little community resistance and while Assumptions appealed to the “risk exposed” minority, it was banned from billboards in five of the six campaign cities.

These contrasting results are truly the most significant lessons to be learned from the entire gay men’s social marketing project embracing both the Assumptions and Gay Men Play Safe campaigns.

## **CONCLUSION**

---

Formal evaluation of the Gay Men Play Safe campaign has made a significant contribution to future social marketing efforts by tracing the development of a message through to its impact on its audiences. Important lessons were learned along the way and evaluation has helped to document the circumstances and results in a way that may guide the further work of the national partnership of gay men's prevention leaders or any other group contemplating health-related social marketing.

The following summary of findings may prove useful for further discussion and guidance in the development of future campaigns.

### **OUTCOME FINDINGS:**

- A message campaign's appeal to those delivering it will have a direct impact on how well it succeeds with its target audiences.
- Differences in culture between larger and smaller cities may affect the appeal and consequently the effectiveness of a campaign.
- Differences of participation in gay men's casual sex culture may define differences of receptivity and consequently the effectiveness of message campaigns.
- Gay men continue to affirm HIV prevention efforts even when critical of a particular campaign concept.

### **PROCESS FINDINGS:**

- Working with ad agencies in the development of sexual health promotion for gay men has some inborn hazards which need to be considered and anticipated.
- There are pros and cons to 'pro-bono' creative deals which should be taken into account when working with ad agencies.
- The communication capacities of gay men's prevention leaders need further development to achieve the effectiveness desired of future sexual health promotion campaigns.
- Evaluation becomes more effective with experience: better assessment of outcomes, more information about future strategy.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

---

### **INVEST IN FUTURE CAMPAIGNS**

Gay men continue to be a significant HIV affected population that needs the impetus of future social marketing efforts to maintain ground and reduce new infections. The capacity building experience of the national social marketing project will only serve to enhance the effectiveness of future efforts.

### **EVALUATE FUTURE CAMPAIGNS**

Formal evaluation makes an important contribution to social marketing projects not only by revealing audience outcomes but also by guiding the development process. Future social marketing campaigns should continue to be accompanied by evaluative research procedures.

### **CONTINUE TO DEVELOP A NATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP TO OVERSEE FUTURE CAMPAIGNS**

Collaboration has served to develop the capacities of all participants not only for future national work but within local constituencies. Future social marketing projects will benefit from this experience.

### **INVEST IN COMMUNICATION CAPACITY BUILDING FOR GAY MEN'S PREVENTION PERSONNEL**

Experience with two national campaigns has shown that gay men represent a sophisticated but challenging audience for social marketing efforts. HIV prevention personnel could benefit from efforts to build mass communication capacities through on the job training and advanced education.

### **CONSIDER THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GAY MEN'S PREVENTION CREATIVE GROUP**

Experience in working with ad firms has shown that few have the capacity to grasp gay men's sexual culture for the production of prevention messages. The development of a dedicated gay men's prevention creative group armed with the talent and resources to produce top rated message campaigns would be a welcome contribution to the HIV health promotion field.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

Ajzen, I. & Fishbein, M. (1980) *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behaviour*. Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

Lampinen, T., (2005) "Sexual behaviours, risk and HIV prevention in gay men". Presentation by BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS to National Advisory Team, Gay Men Play Safe Campaign. Vancouver, BC.

McKinlay, J. (1996) More appropriate evaluation methods for community level health interventions: Introduction to the special issue. *Evaluation Review*. 20 (3), 237-243.

Prochaska, J.O., & DiClemente, C.C. (1992). Stages of change in the modification of problem behaviors. In M. Hersen, R.M. Eisler, & P.M. Miller (Eds.), *Progress on behavior modification*. Sycamore, IL: Sycamore Press.

Reid, D., Weatherburn, P., Hickson, F., Stephens, M. & Hammond, G. (2004) *On the move: Findings from the United Kingdom Gay Men's Sex Survey 2003*. London: Sigma Research.

Rogers, E. (1983) *Diffusion of Innovations*. New York: Free Press.

Rose, G. (2001) Sick individuals and sick populations. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 30, 427-432.

Trussler T. & Marchand, R. (2005) *Prevention Revived: Evaluating the Assumptions Campaign*. Vancouver: AIDS Vancouver.

Trussler T., Marchand, R., Gilbert, M. (2006) *Sex Now, Numbers Rising: Challenges for Gay Men's Health*. Vancouver: Community Based Research Centre.



7. How would you rate the overall campaign?  
(impact, images, placement, promotional items)

Low		High	
1	2	3	4
			Captivating
			Humorous
			Effective
			Motivating
			Important

8. What was the main message for you?

- Use condoms
- Your sexual safety effort is appreciated
- The majority of gay men play safe
- Guys have a lot of funny penis names
- Protect yourself and your partner

9. Do you feel supported in your efforts to play safe by the presence of this campaign?

- Not at all
- Somewhat
- Very much

10. How often have you felt pressure to have anal sex without a condom in the last year?

- None
- 1
- 2-5
- 6-9
- 10-19
- 20+

11. How many partners have you had anal sex with, without a condom in the last year?

- None
- 1
- 2-5
- 6-9
- 10-19
- 20+

12. How do you usually get your condoms?

- I buy them
- My partners have them
- I get them free
- I don't use condoms

13. How important are free condoms to you?

- Very important
- Unimportant
- Important
- Not at all important

14. "I think guys should buy their own condoms."

- Strongly agree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly disagree

15. How old are you? Age \_\_\_\_\_

16. How many guys have you had sex with in the last year? \_\_\_\_\_

17. What was the result of your last HIV test?

HIV positive      HIV negative      Untested

18. Are you... ?

single      partnered      same-sex married      other

19. What city do you live nearest?

Halifax      Montreal      Toronto  
Winnipeg      Edmonton      Vancouver  
Outside Canada

20. How do you describe yourself?

African      Middle Eastern  
Asian      1st Nation/Aboriginal  
Caribbean      Pacific Islander  
Caucasian      South Asian  
Latino/Hispanic      Other:\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you. You are contributing to an important milestone in our understanding of gay men's health and how to achieve it.

Community Based Research Centre 

BUTT PIRATE

ASS MASTER

CHICKEN BASTER

CEPITO

MARY MAKER

JACK HAMMER

LONG DONG SILVER

THE BIG BAGUETTE

OLD ONE-EYE

Whatever you call it, thanks for keeping it safe.

[CityMenPlaySafe.com](http://CityMenPlaySafe.com)