

Five Questions for Retail Campaign Superheroes

by Diana Cassady



This summer was a busy period for everyone involved in the Retail Campaign data collection activities. Points of Contact (POCs) at the local lead agencies were particularly busy: they were responsible for training data collectors; authenticating and troubleshooting devices; creating routes to get data collectors to the right stores; making sure that data was being uploaded from the devices; and, when circumstances demanded, calling the TCEC hotline.

Over the next few issues, we'll be featuring words of wisdom from a few POCs — and reveal their favorite superpower. Read on...

Jeremy Wilson, Shasta County Health and Human Services

Had you used smart phones or mobile devices in data collection before?

We had never used any mobile devices in data collection prior to the Retail Campaign. I thought it was much easier to handle responses using the devices rather than collecting and data entering the information. In general, it helped with data accuracy. However, now that I have the raw data back and I have actually started looking at it, it has become apparent there were still some issues with data collection that may have been identified and resolved earlier in the process if we had been able to compare field notes to real time data and watch for trends among data collectors, for example.

If you could share one tip about how to train data collectors, what would that be?

Connect data collection teams before the start of the training, so they can get to know each other prior to going out to survey. Also, try to connect people who have experience using mobile devices with those who are less experienced and also connect those individuals who are more familiar with identifying the products with those individuals with less experience.

Knowing your volunteers is key. We did not ask individuals to identify their level of experience with these prior to the training, but we did have some familiarity with the individuals.

I would suggest a brief survey of volunteers prior to the training to help determine teams. I will be suggesting that Shasta County do that the next time we train data collectors.



Photo by: Bykergrl

Now that you are finished collecting data from more than 200 stores (wow!), what did you learn from the process?

Shasta County collected data on every store in the county and completed all five modules. One issue we encountered was that data collectors were not completing the field notes with enough detail to be able to go back and track what store was done, when (time/date) it was done, and who did it. Working with TCEC to clean the data after the fact required additional investigation on my part. I also think checking in with each team after they have completed a survey or two would be helpful to make sure there are no questions doing a “real” store.



How do you plan to use the data you collected?

We will be using the data for program planning and not only for the Tobacco Education Program, but our Alcohol and Drug Prevention Program as well as our Network for a Healthy California Program. Additionally, we will also be using the data to do some custom reporting for educating both internal and external stakeholders about the current status of our communities as it relates to the four modules.

You really are a Retail Campaign superhero. What is your favorite superpower?

Being able to move at super speeds!