

Say It with Pictures

by Robin Kipke

Images can be powerful. Often, more powerful than words. Paired with data, they can convey your message with a visceral punch.



This is the problem.



Photo: Leon Brooks

During retailer visits for the Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community campaign, data collectors are encouraged to note any displays or signage that would make for good campaign photos. Once data collection is completed, local lead agencies can then go back into stores to snap those compelling scenes.

But just what type of photo opportunities should you be looking for and how might you use them?

Think about the kind of data that you'll end up with and the statements they can make. You might want to show the type of advertising kids see on windows as they walk past stores on their way to school; the kinds of products placed on counters or in checkout



Photo: Katrina Wyatt

aisles to entice impulse buying; the sheer array of tobacco products customers are visually bombarded with as they shop; or some of the marketing ploys used by tobacco companies to hawk their wares (both in terms of price promotions and product placement).



Photo: dsyzdek

You might focus on images that convey how tobacco companies target youth and other priority populations with flavored tobacco products by capturing how the brightly colored packaging or certain fonts appeal to the eye.



Or you could demonstrate how some tobacco or alcohol displays are placed near candy or soda favored by young people. Or you could show how alcohol companies use depictions of sexy women to try to make their products appeal to certain demographics.



Photos: Bacardi, Katrina Wyatt

Alternately, you might want to focus on healthy vs. unhealthy retailers and their effects on your community. Photos of convenience store exteriors that are covered with tobacco and alcohol ads and graffiti or litter could be contrasted with markets that offer healthy food choices and tidy environs. You could look for images that convey the variety and quality of fresh produce vs. a dearth of choice and appealing condition. In fact, photos that portray what is available in your local community can provide a powerful commentary.



Photo: scrf project

Images like these, along with your data, can help start discussions with and among the retailers, residents and decision makers in your community.

So smile! You're on candid camera....

By the way, once you've collected all those great photos, you might consider submitting a few of them to the statewide photo competition, "Tobacco and Its Impact in My Community." Check out [this link](#) on the California Department of Public Health website for more information.



Photo: ruffin_ready