

TO STOP YOUTH SMOKING, THE TRUTH INITIATIVE USES HUMOR TO BE PROVOCATIVE

TO ENGAGE WITH A TEEN YOU NEED TO SOUND LIKE ONE

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Teenagers are infamously hard to communicate with. Eric Asche, chief marketing and strategy officer at the Truth Initiative, knows this all too well. In his work to curb teenage tobacco use, he's learned very quickly that the absolutely wrong way to engage with them is to sound like what he is—an adult.

"If my only mode to communicate with consumers is through a very serious tone, they are quickly going to tune me out. I'm going to sound like Hashtag Dad and they won't want to hear from me," says Asche in the above video.

To get its message across, the organization works with the humorous, satirical platforms it can. Adult Swim was one such partner, and together they've done everything from picturing a world without cat videos (because pets are affected by second-hand smoke) to leveraging the off-kilter Eric Andre. Explains Asche: "That was a lightbulb in terms of understanding it's not what I think is important and is going to work for the audience, it's what the audience needs to hear."

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