



epiphany

**The insight behind inspiration.**



April 2021 Brand/Creative Research

In Partnership With  
  
the atkins group





# Table Of Contents

- Overview.....04-08
- Executive Summary.....09-19
- Impact of Littering on Tennessee.....20-22
- Influences on Littering Behavior.....23-25
- Meaning & Impact of Nobody Trashes Tennessee.....26-31
- Reaction To Creative.....32-51



# Overview



# Objectives

- Understand residents perceptions of the impact of littering in Tennessee
- Identify how familial attitudes (and cultural morés) about littering influence beliefs and behavior
- Explore the meaning and impact of “Nobody Trashes Tennessee”
- Gather reaction to the new proposed “Talking Trash” campaign and its ability to:
  - Bring attention to Tennessee’s litter problem
  - Engage residents and compel behavior change
  - Capture the essence of the “Nobody Trashes Tennessee” brand





# Methodology



- Conducted four online chat focus groups the evening of April 28-29 with residents throughout the state, to include a mix of urban (30%), suburban (42%) and rural (28%) markets
  - Two groups with 18-24 year olds
  - Two groups with 25-44 year olds
- Recruited most participants from the online quantitative survey; additional social media marketing and grass roots efforts were employed to secure participation among 18-24 year olds
- Mix of gender, educational attainment, race/ethnicity, household income, native Tennesseans and transplants from other states
  - 28% Black in rural/suburban groups
  - 30% Black in urban/suburban groups







# Things That Make Tennessee Unique

*To help relax participants and establish some common ground/connections, we started the group by discussing things that make Tennessee unique and brands that “belong” to the state.*

Participants across all age groups most often mentioned:

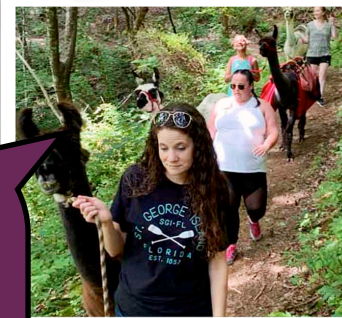
- The natural beauty of the state and plethora of outdoor activities
- Balanced by exciting cities
- Robust music scene in Nashville, birthplace of blues and country music
- Diverse, kind, friendly people with welcoming southern hospitality roots
- Famous for BBQ and Nashville Hot Chicken
- State attracts lots of tourists
- Did not mention the slogan, anything about cleanliness of the state or environmental stewardship

“The mountains were the first thing I fell in love with. I just felt at peace here.”



“I think Tennessee is very friendly. Great atmosphere, beautiful scenery, and awesome food.”

“I think what makes Tennessee special is the people and the sense of community that you feel in small towns and bigger cities like Nashville and Memphis.”





# Famous Tennessee Brands

- Jack Daniels was by far the most famous Tennessee brand across all age groups, followed closely by Sundrop and Moon Pies
- Other brands mentioned were: Dolly Parton/Dollywood, Elvis, Mountain Dew, Green Brier Whiskey, FedEx, Bluebird Cafe, Journey's, Dr. Enuff, AutoZone, Grand Ole Opry, Little Debbie, Titans, Krystal Hamburger and Sun Records
- Not surprisingly, younger groups were less aware overall of brands that belong to Tennessee
- These brands could be considered for future partnerships with TDOT





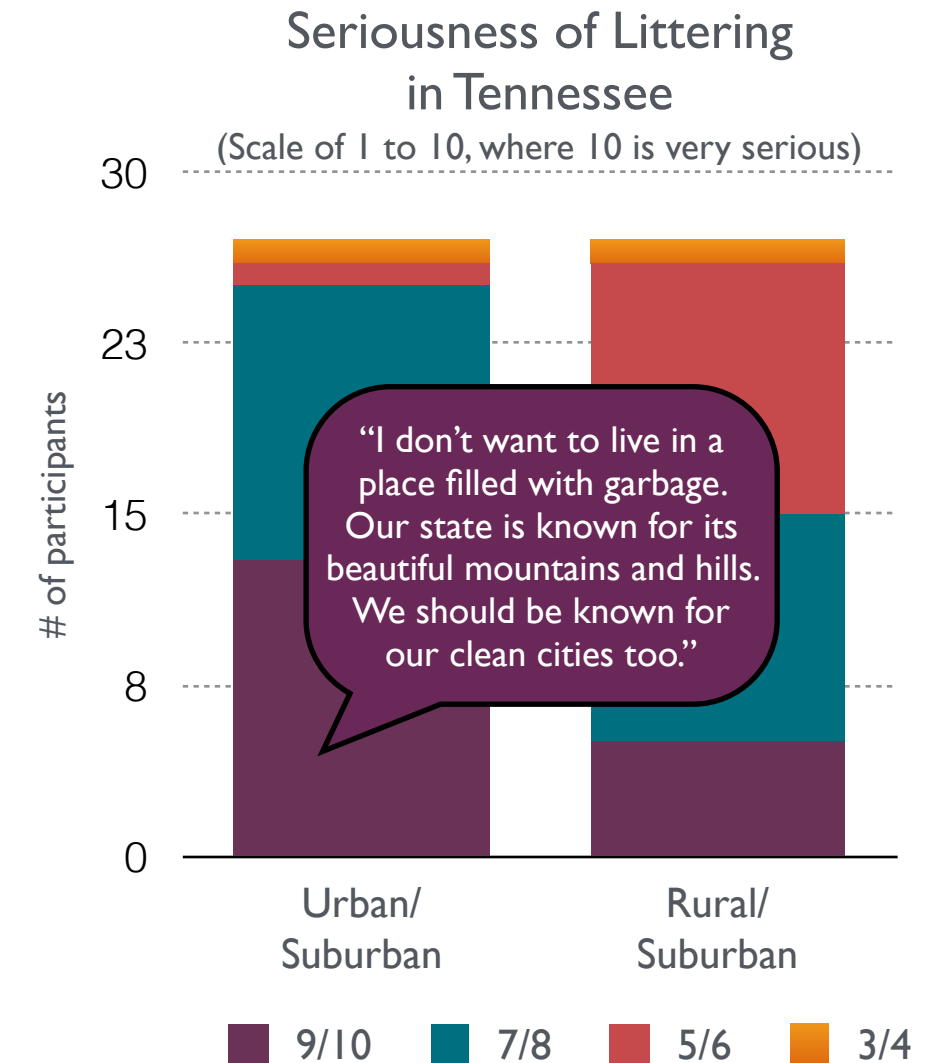
# Executive Summary





# Impact of Littering On Tennessee

- How people rated the seriousness of littering in Tennessee depended largely on where they live; those in rural markets where there is less visible litter did not think it was as serious an issue as those who lived in urban/suburban areas with more trash on the highways
- Regardless of how serious a problem they rated littering in their own community, most participants understood the impact of littering on the state and think it's important for the state to continue to try to curtail littering
  - Costly to clean up; tax dollars can't be used to address other important issues
  - Costly to advertise to motivate people to properly dispose of litter
  - Hurts the environment by contributing to pollution and contaminating the ground water; health risk for residents
  - Health hazard for wildlife, danger of getting sick, being killed
  - Safety/health hazard for communities (dirty needles, broken glass, etc.)
  - Unsightly, fewer tourists will want to come visit
  - Results in less revenue and fewer job opportunities
  - Decreases property values







# Influences on Littering



"I let my children know that littering is not okay. When we go on walks through the neighborhood they like to pick up trash they see."



"I was always taught to put trash in its place. My parents usually went out of their way to make sure they did not litter."

"I was taught littering was rude and bad for the environment."

- Very few participants recalled seeing parents or family members litter, but those who did said it was typically something small thrown out a car window or a cigarette butt dropped on the ground
- Littering is not something that is talked about much in most households; it's understood that littering is not condoned
- Parents teach by example and take advantage of teachable moments during life's daily activities to impart their values onto their children about properly disposing of litter
- While many participants remembered learning about recycling in school, they were split as to whether they learned about littering in class or if it is discussed today; would be good to incorporate this into the curriculum as well as partner with schools for trash pick up events as part of their commitment to community service





## Awareness of Slogan



- Awareness of the slogan was very low, with just a few people in each group saying they had seen it previously
- Similarly, almost no one was aware of or could recall any past advertising that included the slogan





## Meaning of Slogan



- Almost all participants recognized Nobody Trashes Tennessee as a litter prevention campaign\*
- A few participants had a broader interpretation of the slogan, saying it was about having respect for the state
- In this same vein, many participants also said the slogan could have a double meaning—to not talk badly about (or trash) Tennessee

“It could mean literal trash on the roads and such but also trash talking or just general harm to the state or its reputation.”

“It could be a statement that reflects no tolerance or disrespect or negativity towards our state, whether it be with your words or your trash.”

“It’s a great play on words, which helps make it memorable. Like don’t litter or trash talk Tennessee.”

\*Most participants were recruited from the quantitative survey, which focused exclusively on littering in Tennessee, and could have learned its meaning from that



# Feelings Evoked By Slogan



- The slogan is perceived to be “strong,” “bold,” “aggressive” and “forceful”
- For most, this strength fits “the cause” and makes them feel proud and protective of Tennessee
- A few younger participants felt like it might come off as angry and intimidating or put people on the defensive
- Participants thought visitors may be more sensitive to the tone, but would at least think twice before littering and also have respect for Tennessee and its efforts to keep the state litter free

“It lets people know that we care about the state and want to protect it in a way that makes sure the state stays safe and beautiful.”

“It makes me feel like I’m part of a larger group that cares about Tennessee and wants to keep their state clean.”

“I like the slogan. It’s catchy and relatable and gives me a sense of home and pride for the place I grew up.”

“The intent is good but it comes on a little too strong for my personal taste.”

“Visitors would know we are not playing!”

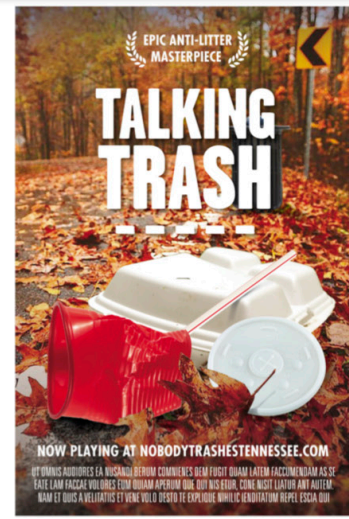






# Reaction To Talking Trash Campaign

Throughout the campaign, the "talking" roadside litter use humor to educate, unite and inspire Tennesseans to end littering and live up to the statewide mantra "Nobody Trashes Tennessee."



*Participants were initially introduced to the Talking Trash characters and the overall concept.*

- Initial reaction to the concept was very positive
- Most participants thought the use of humor to address a serious subject was an unique approach that would grab people's attention and be memorable
- For those who were concerned that the slogan might be too aggressive, the light-hearted approach acted as a nice counter-balance

*Participants were then shown the introductory video where the characters are introduced and discuss the possibility of starring in a new advertising campaign to get Tennesseans to stop littering.*

"I love the commercial. They make it fun to convince you to throw your trash away."



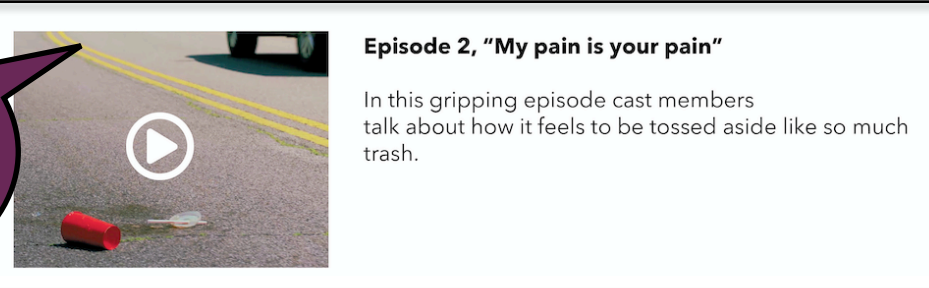
- The video was also well received by most; liked how facts were mixed with humor, approach was refreshing and innovative
- Most said they could relate to the characters and found the banter between them to be funny and witty
- Some 18-24 year olds thought the execution was a bit boring; wanted to see more personification, movement or animation and a few suggested celebrity voices for the characters would help bring more energy to the concept
- Most importantly, the key message participants took away is that they should do their part to take care of Tennessee and not litter



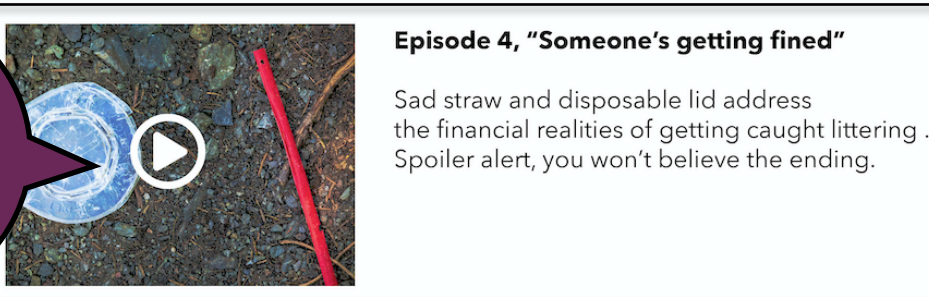
# Reaction To Talking Trash Campaign

*Participants were shown summaries of how the campaign could be extended into other episodes.*

“It gives trash humanity and makes people feel more guilty to litter.”



“If you threaten people with any type of high fine, most people will think twice about it.”



- Participants seemed to appreciate the satire and connected emotionally to the characters and their plight; many mentioned the cup's quest to be recycled
- Participants liked the practicality and straight forwardness of an episode on the consequences of littering; while many said fines could be the most effective deterrent, they also believe fines are currently an empty threat since they are not enforced

Other effective messages in order of the number of times they were mentioned were:

- The impact on the environment; water contamination, soil degradation, pollution, more severe storms
- The economic impact of littering on people's pocketbooks, communities and the state overall
- Appeal to people's love of animals; show impact on wildlife (like sad animal shelter commercials)
- Shame/guilt people into not littering; poor reflection on your character, socially unacceptable





# Reaction To Talking Trash Campaign

*Participants were told that the characters could also interact with the media, celebrities and other residents around the state. As an example, Cup's interview with Denise Baker was shown to the groups.*



- For all but one group, this execution was the most well received; good mix of information, facts and humor, liked interaction with human
  - 25-44 rural group thought this episode seemed too scripted and was not as funny as the other video
- Interviews with celebrities, star athletes, politicians and other famous Tennesseans would enhance this idea even further

"It's one thing to say you're gonna do something, but to start a movement and take action, that's a whole new ball game. Actions speak louder than words."

*In the interview with Cup, Denise Baker mentions starting a movement to end littering in Tennessee. We explored participants' perceptions about joining a movement vs. taking a pledge to stop littering—and to gauge their interest in participating in either.*

*While most said they would take a pledge, the vast majority were more interested in joining a movement; see it as joining others to take ACTION to clean up existing litter as well as stop littering. By comparison, a pledge is "just words."*







# Reaction To Talking Trash Campaign



- The Behind The Scenes execution was the least well received
- Many of the 25-44 year old participants did not see the point of getting to know the characters and found the script bland, boring or rambling
  - Was also thought to be slow moving and visually uninteresting; two characters never move in their chairs
- 18-24 year old participants were more receptive to getting to know the characters outside of the littering messaging
- Might be better to launch once the characters are established

"I don't really want to get to know the characters. I feel like the characters themselves are more of a vehicle to deliver the actual punch line rather than something I'm interested in on its own."

"It's relatable to content I consume every day, like the podcasts I love. It's got a modern feel to it that I like."

"It fleshes out the characters more and we see a lot of development of their personalities."

"I'd like to get to know the characters as long as it doesn't stray too far away from the focus of the series."

"A sitting cup has no personality."





# Reaction To Talking Trash Campaign

“I think on the whole it’s relatively accessible to everyone. Zeroing in on the numbers and focusing on the facts of the issue is fantastic and adding in a mild level of clever humor can pull more people in.”

“I think it’s a great direction to go. It gets close to the everyday person through presenting scary facts as part of a comical skit. It made me laugh but still got me thinking.”



Bus Bench Signage



Gas Pump Topper



Outdoor

“Put me in the can man is catchy. The \$19 million one should scare you into not littering because that’s money taken from sectors that need it more.”

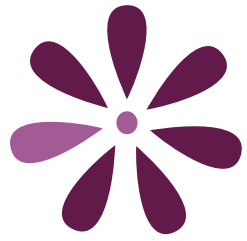
“I like that it is humor without desensitizing people about the message, while giving the trash a personality without overly humanizing them.”

“The cost is still staggering to me and hopefully to others too so they know it is not a harmless thing.”

- The print executions were well received for their simplicity, cleverness and use of facts; were perceived to add positive value to the campaign and help start the conversation about the issue of littering
- Most participants thought the overall campaign has broad appeal, with a variety of different executions that will resonate with different age groups
- Fits with the Nobody Trashes Tennessee brand personality, but also helps to soften any harsh edges that may exist with the slogan



# Impact of Littering On Tennessee



# Seriousness of Littering in Tennessee

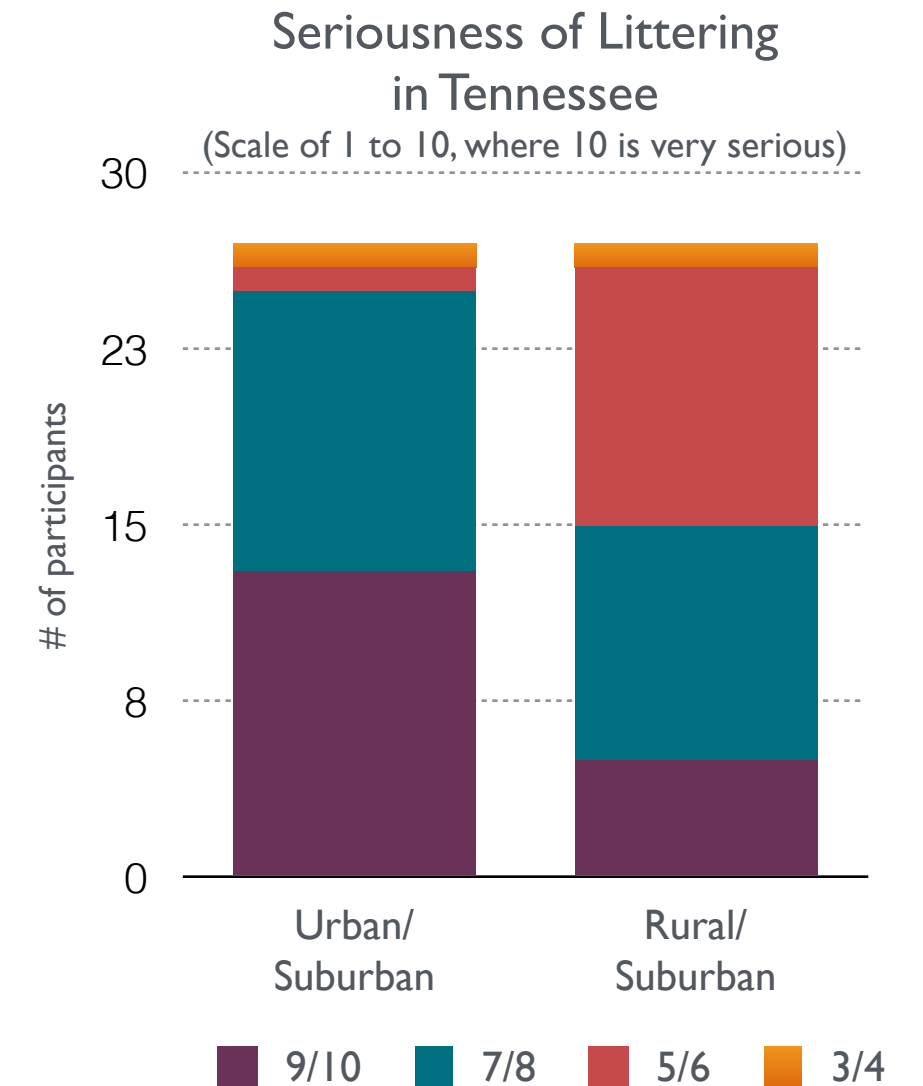
- Participants who live in or near major metropolitan areas rated the littering issue in Tennessee more serious than those who live in rural settings
- Seriousness rating is relative to the amount of litter participants see in their neighborhoods and along highways and byways that they frequently travel
  - Reported seeing a lot of trash/debris on highways (I-24 and I-386) and in cities (especially Nashville & Memphis)
- While some rural and suburban participants reported unsightly trash in their small towns, many perceive littering to be a bigger problem in major cities

"I've lived in Nashville my whole life and I can't walk a single block down the street without seeing trash."

"Every time I drive on 386 I make a comment about how much trash is on the sides of the road."

"Memphis has always been full of garbage whenever I visit but rural areas are not that bad."

"There was quite a bit of trash when we went to the old railway in Nashville. Here in Clarksville, it's not as bad, but people will litter."







# Impact of Littering

- Most participants could clearly articulate the negative impact of litter on the economy, the environment and wildlife
  - Costly to clean up; tax dollars can't be used to address other important issues
  - Costly to advertise to motivate people to properly dispose of litter
  - Hurts the environment by contributing to pollution and contaminating the ground water; health risk for residents
  - Health hazard for wildlife, danger of getting sick, being killed
  - Safety hazard for communities (dirty needles, broken glass, etc.)
  - Unsightly, fewer tourists will want to come visit
  - Cause a decrease property values; no one wants to live in or frequent a business in a dirty neighborhood (some 18-24 year olds did not understand this property value terminology)
  - Will result in less revenue and fewer job opportunities

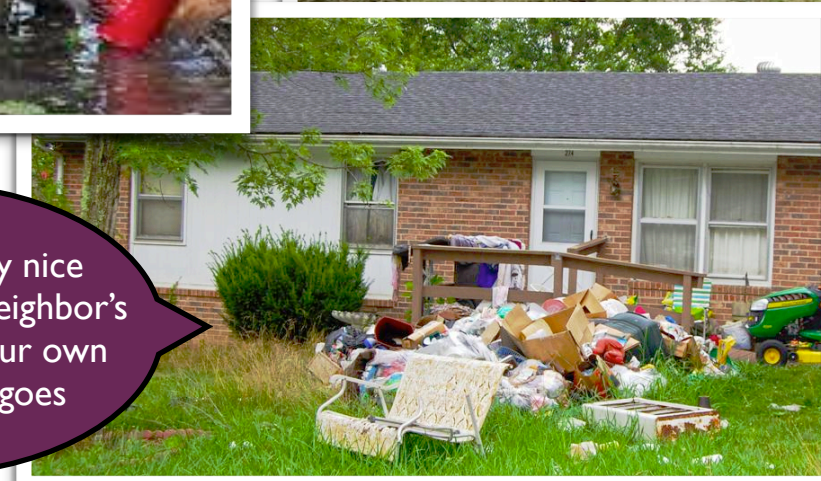
"Litter decreases the appeal of real estate, which hurts the local economy and reduces tourism."

"The animals might eat the trash and get sick. The trash might interfere with the growth of the plants they eat, also making them sick or die."

"As a mother who has taken her child to the park and had to load my kids back up due to dirty needles and used condoms on the ground, I have found a deep dislike/hatred for litter."



"You could have a very nice home, but if your neighbor's yard is trashed, your own property value goes down."





# Influences On Littering Behavior



# Influences On Anti-Littering Behavior

- Only a few in each group remembered seeing a parent or family member litter; those who did said they most often improperly discarded small items like cigarette butts, fast food wrappers or soft drink cans out of car windows
- Littering wasn't a formal topic of conversation in most participants' homes growing up; most learned not to litter by the example their parents set
- Those with children were the most likely to talk about littering in their homes today; the rest of the participants said they only talk about littering when they see someone doing it; otherwise, there is no need, mostly because they don't do it!

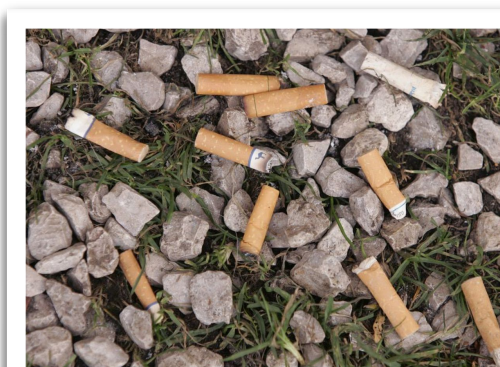
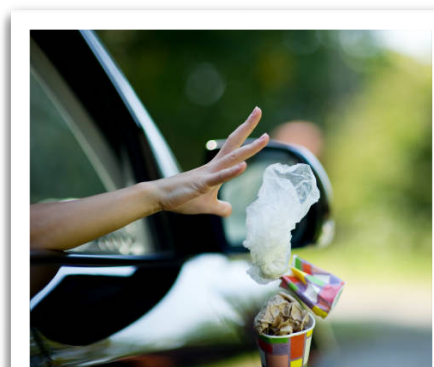
"I was always taught to put trash in its place. My parents usually went out of their way to make sure they did not litter."

"I was taught littering was rude and bad for the environment."

"I let my children know that littering is not okay. When we go on walks through the neighborhood they like to pick up trash they see."

"It's a topic that is understood that we don't do. We carry out what we carry in."

"We often discuss how awful all the litter on the roadways is."

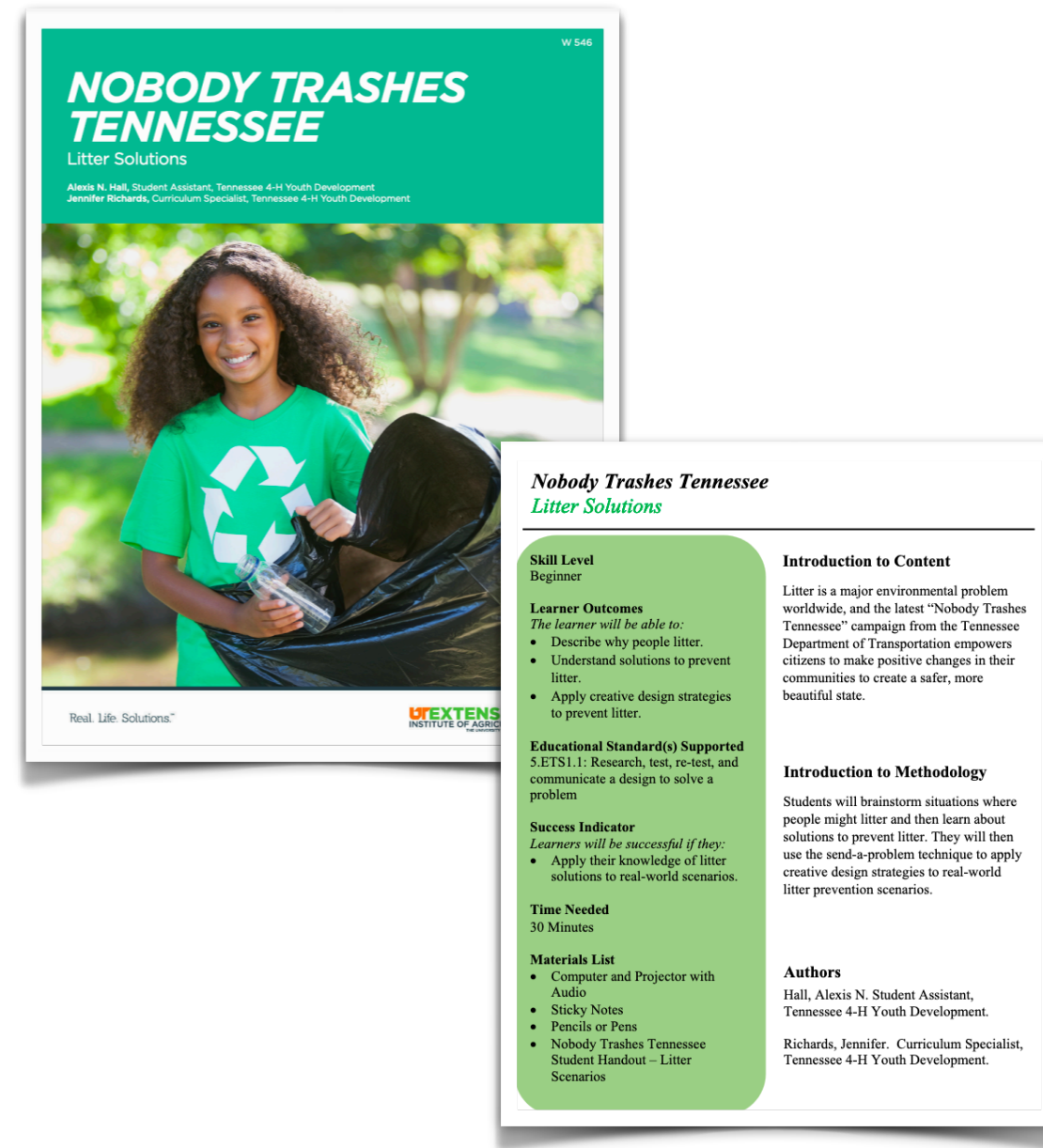






# Learning About Littering In School

- Participants often recalled learning about recycling in school but were split as to whether littering was something that is taught in classrooms today, with about 1/3 saying they don't think it is, 1/3 saying it is and 1/3 who do not know
- Several suggested schools would be a good place to teach kids about the impact of littering on the environment and to recruit volunteers for litter pick up events as part of the schools' community service initiatives





# Meaning & Impact of Nobody Trashes Tennessee





# Awareness of Slogan And Past Campaign



- Awareness of the slogan was very low with just a few people in each group saying they had seen it prior to participating in the research\*
- No one knew how long the slogan has been around; some speculated that maybe the slogan is relatively new since awareness was so low
- Similarly, almost no one was aware of or could recall any past advertising that included the slogan

\*In addition to being asked in the groups, awareness of the slogan was asked in the qualifying screener and was cross-referenced for this report



# Meaning of Slogan



Almost all participants said the slogan is about preventing littering or keeping the state clean\*

- Several in the 25-44 year old Urban group did not mention littering specifically; focused more on respect/disrespect of the State

"I think it's saying there will be a price to pay if we don't keep Tennessee clean."

"Have enough respect for your state not to trash it."

"It means to treat the state of Tennessee with the respect that it deserves—both tourists and residents."

"Slogan means that we Tennesseans won't tolerate anyone disrespecting our state."



Without prompting, a few offered that the slogan could also mean to not talk badly about the state; when prompted about other interpretations, most participants had the same thoughts about the dual meaning

"It's a great play on words, which helps make it memorable. Like don't litter or trash talk Tennessee."

"It could mean literal trash on the roads and such but also trash talking or just general harm to the state or its reputation."

"I think it is telling people not to trash our state in the literal sense of no littering but also no bad mouthing."

"It could be a statement that reflects no tolerance or disrespect or negativity towards our state, whether it be with your words or your trash."

\*Most participants were recruited from the quantitative survey, which focused exclusively on littering in Tennessee, and could have learned its meaning from that



# Feelings Associated With Slogan



- Participants of all ages often described the slogan as strong, using words like: “bold,” “forceful,” “aggressive,” “firm,” “powerful,” “impactful,” “confident,” “in your face,” “blunt,” “direct,” “we mean business” and “take a stance”
- Most viewed this strength in a positive light; makes people feel proud and protective, inspires them to be part of the solution, to accept responsibility and come together to take better care of the state they love
  - A few in both 18-24 year old groups said it might be a little too strong, could come off as angry and intimidating or put people on the defensive; others countered that it’s ok to be angry if someone is mistreating Tennessee
- Among other words used to describe the slogan were: “smart,” “catchy,” “slick,” “sassy,” “cute,” “memorable,” and “safe”
- Participants were a bit more divided over how visitors would perceive the slogan, with some saying it would make them feel good about visiting a state that takes so much pride in its appearance and others thinking it could be overbearing or off-putting; would make them think twice about littering

“It lets people know that we care about the state and want to protect it in a way that makes sure the state stays safe and beautiful.”

“It makes me feel like I’m part of a larger group that cares about Tennessee and wants to keep their state clean.”

“The message is smart and while it is to the point and aggressive, it is in a good way to get people’s attention.”

“I do see how outsiders/visitors may think it is bossy or demanding more than locals.”

“It would make visitors think twice about littering. It’s not too aggressive, it’s more of “Don’t you do it.”







# Feelings Associated With Slogan

"It makes me feel protective of it, like it's my responsibility to help keep Tennessee clean."

"It makes my fight or flight reflex kick in."

"It lets visitors know that people who live here care about what happens."

"Even if it technically is about littering, it is also appealing to Tennesseans' desire to protect/defend our state."

"I like the slogan. It's catchy and relatable and gives me a sense of home and pride for the place I grew up."

"It makes me really want to help take care of Tennessee."

"I think it's good aggressive because it imparts what a serious issue littering is and how wrong it is."

"The intent is good but it comes on a little too strong for my personal taste."

"Not to make waves, but it's the only Tennessee we'll ever have. I'd think being a little angry is good if it's mistreated."

"It makes me want to get involved more."

"It might make visitors feel reassured about how we take care of our state."

"It makes me feel like part of the solution/problem. The solution is the collective effort on everyone's part to 1) decide not to litter and 2) when we see it, not to ignore it but pick it up."

"Visitors would know we are not playing!"





# Importance/Impact of Slogan

“I don’t want to live in a place filled with garbage. Our state is known for its beautiful mountains and hills. We should be known for our clean cities too.”



“I’d say it’s important but there also needs to be reinforced discipline for those caught littering, and more cops making it a priority as well as more community clean ups. Not just words, we need action.”

- Most participants said the slogan and the state’s efforts to stop littering are “very important” or “important”
  - Want to live in a city/town that is well taken care of and that will continue to grow and prosper
- In part because they were unaware of the slogan, most participants were not sure about what impact the slogan has had; there is also still a lot of visible litter, making them question its effectiveness
  - Slogan is not enough by itself; litter laws/fines need to be enforced to help deter littering and events organized to help clean up





# Reaction To Creative Concepts

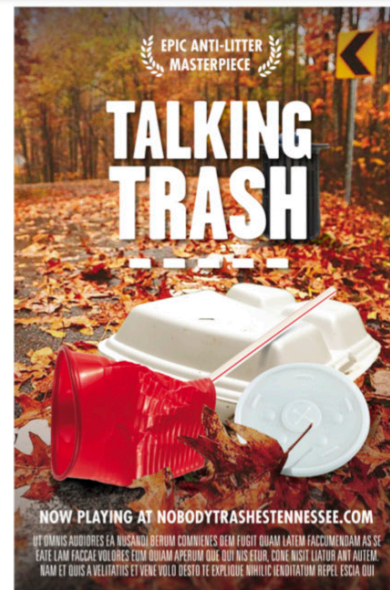


# Introduction To Campaign

We've all heard the phrase, "talking trash," and this idea builds on that—literally! The proposed campaign includes a cast of discarded **talking** roadside litter.



Throughout the campaign, the "talking" roadside litter use humor to educate, unite and inspire Tennesseans to end littering and live up to the statewide mantra "Nobody Trashes Tennessee."



*Participants were given a “behind-the-scenes” look at the potential new advertising campaign. They were initially shown two slides that introduced them to the Talking Trash characters and the concept overall.*

- The idea was generally well received by all groups
  - Participants said the “unique approach” was “memorable” and would “grab people’s attention,” called it: “cute,” “clever,” “relatable,” “funny” and “catchy,” with “a bit of sass!”
  - Most participants liked the use of humor to address a serious subject, although a few questioned whether it was appropriate
  - A few 18-24 year olds thought the humor was “cheesy” or “corny”; most liked it anyway and thought it was in a good or memorable way, with only a few saying the style of humor did not appeal to them
  - Light-hearted approach seemed to help to soften the slogan and put it in a “more positive light” among some of those who initially felt it might be too strong

“I think it’s cute and can help people relate more to the issue of littering.”

“Humor is always a powerful tool. I like the idea of the campaign.”

“I feel like too much humor takes away the seriousness of the situation.”

“Cheesy isn’t always bad as long as it can stay in the heads of people you advertise to.”





# Introductory Video

*Participants were then shown the introductory video where the characters are introduced and discuss the possibility of starring in a new advertising campaign to get Tennesseans to stop littering.*



"I think the double entendre of the talking trash is pretty appealing and is catchy."

- The overall response to the video was positive; participants thought the spot was funny, witty, engaging, refreshing, memorable, informative, compelling and innovative
  - Liked how facts were mixed in with the humor, banter is funny, characters are relatable
  - A few again voiced concern that the campaign was too light-hearted for such a serious issue
- Most participants liked the characters' personalities and some even became emotionally involved, saying they "feel sorry" for the abandoned trash or that they "owed the trash something because the trash has feelings"
  - Especially liked the cup screaming as it was thrown out the window
  - Some participants from urban markets, especially 18-24 year olds, thought the execution was a bit flat or boring; wanted to see more personification/animation of the characters
  - A few thought the voices could be more "exaggerated"; suggested that celebrities could be the voice of the characters







# Reaction To Video/Characters

"From beginning to end, it addresses the issue with humor, facts, and a seriousness that doesn't weigh you down. The solution is sooo simple!"

"Ironically funny (in a good way) because it's a very serious issue being talked about in a light and funny way."

"I was surprised and intrigued by the characters, particularly the gnarly veteran (McNuggets box)."

"In my mind, you need something completely serious to change someone's mind about littering, more a sad/emotional type than a humorous/cute kind of commercial."

"There was a good variety in the voice actors for me and I think it kind of reminded me of a Pixar movie or something similar that's kind of relatable."

"I like them. The box was my favorite cuz he was relatable to me, always doubting everything and very sarcastic."

"I thought the trash would be a bit more personified, not just a voice over."

"It was better than expected, but I don't know if it will make people take littering more seriously."

"I feel frustrated for the characters because they will be there for awhile. Had a little bit of anxiety on their behalf."

"The cup really grabbed my attention from the minute the woman threw him out until the end."

"It helps play on people's emotions."

"Maybe if the trash moved around I would like it more."

"I want more personality from them."

"They sold the idea of not littering while driving."

"I love the commercial. They make it fun to convince you to throw your trash away."

"I do think adding animations/faces to the trash would make it easier to pay attention to the voices."





# Expanding Cast Of Characters

- Participants had no trouble naming a whole cast of other characters that could be introduced:
  - Cigarette butt/e-cigarette
  - Plastic trash bag
  - Pizza box/cardboard box
  - Beer can/bottle
  - Plastic soda/water bottle
  - Milk carton
  - Gum
  - Garbage can
  - Shredded tire
  - Plastic ring from 6-pack
  - Fast food wrapper
  - Candy wrapper (baby bottle pop, gummy worms)
- No one mentioned mask or gloves, but when prompted some thought this was a good idea while others thought they might become outdated once the pandemic is over
- A few suggested it might be good to develop a character unique to a Tennessee brand (i.e. Sundrop or Jack Daniels bottle); also thought character should have a southern voice/Tennessee accent
- A few suggested having animals interact with the trash characters





## Story Being Told



- The story that participants took away is that they should not litter; encourages viewers to take care of Tennessee
  - Littering is a serious problem; accurate portrayal of what the sides of the highways look like
  - Do your part to help keep Tennessee beautiful
  - Huge volume of trash not only being improperly discarded, but also not recycled
  - Littering negatively impacts the environment

*What would you tell a friend or family member about anything you saw or remembered from the video?*

*What story did it tell?*

"The commercial will make you laugh but it's a strong message about littering."

"Trash isn't just something you leave on the ground. We have to pick it up and not let people around us suffer from the consequences that trash causes."

"Obviously, littering is a serious problem and this was a cute idea of how to showcase that."

"The story is of littering and how easily avoidable their tragic predicament was."

"I would tell them about how much trash is on the roadways. A number like that is attention grabbing."

"I'd probably comment on the super deep voiced box. Maybe mention how crazy it is to have that much liter."

"Don't be ignorant, take care of our state by doing your part."


"Litter wants to be put to good use too, so recycle!"

"I would tell my kids about the sad trash that were upset because they weren't recycled."



# Reaction To Other Episodes


*Participants were shown summaries of how the campaign could be extended into other episodes.*



**Episode 2, "My pain is your pain"**

In this gripping episode cast members talk about how it feels to be tossed aside like so much trash.

- Participants seemed to appreciate the satire and have fun suggesting what the trash might be feeling in Episode 2; many mentioned the cup's quest to be recycled
  - Indicates at least some emotional connection to the characters and their plight
  - Giving trash feelings helps teach kids that actions matter
  - Only one participant said they weren't sure people would care how the trash is feeling



**Episode 4, "Someone's getting fined"**

Sad straw and disposable lid address the financial realities of getting caught littering . Spoiler alert, you won't believe the ending.

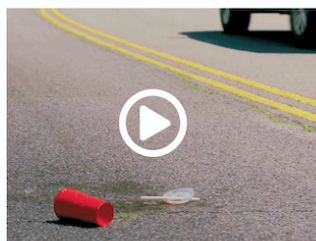
- Participants liked the practicality and straight forwardness of an episode on the consequences of littering; while many said fines could be the most effective deterrent, many believe they are currently an empty threat since they are not enforced







# Reaction To Other Episodes



## Episode 2, "My pain is your pain"

In this gripping episode cast members talk about how it feels to be tossed aside like so much trash.

"It gives trash humanity and makes people feel more guilty to litter."

"They'd probably talk about how hard it is to be on the road so far away from home...and how it feels to be thrown away so carelessly."

"Episode 2 could relate to how people don't feel good being tossed away and that the trash feels the same way."

"It's being abandoned so it might cry and say, 'Why don't they love me enough to recycle me?'"

"I don't think people will care about how the trash is feeling unless it's talking more about the pain the earth is feeling."

"The cup is now forced to turn to a life of crime after being abandoned."



## Episode 4, "Someone's getting fined"

Sad straw and disposable lid address the financial realities of getting caught littering. Spoiler alert, you won't believe the ending.

"Fines aren't a deterrent. I've never seen a littering fine get written in my whole life. No one cares about them."

"I think the littering fines are up to \$100, right? They can be pretty bad if you keep getting caught, especially on the highway."

"If you threaten people with any type of high fine, most people will think twice about it."

"We do not have the tax dollars to be spending on enforcing littering fines and such. Let's be real. It's going to have to be a choice on the people's part, not the cops."

"Fines are a massive deterrent, if you get caught. But in Memphis, the police rarely have time to worry about littering with all the shootings."



# Messages To Change Behavior



*Before reviewing the creative concepts, participants were asked what types of messages should be used to change people's behavior.*

- Levying fines/enforcing fines was clearly thought to be the most persuasive message (40 mentions, or over 40% of all responses)
- It should be noted that while most participants think there is a fine for littering in Tennessee, very few know exactly what the fine is; estimates ranged from \$100 to \$1,000
- Enforcing fines is seen as critical to changing behavior, signs posted about fines are not enough to stop littering; however, many acknowledged that it will be difficult to enforce fines
  - Hard to catch someone in the act of littering, especially on a highway
  - Police are stretched thin attending to violent crimes, don't have time, resources or inclination to enforce
- Suggested another deterrent could be to assign community service/trash pickup duty or a mandatory class on the environmental impact of littering





# Messages To Change Behavior

*After reviewing the summaries of the two episodes, participants were asked again what effective messages (beyond fines) might the Talking Trash deliver to inspire people to properly dispose of trash.*

**The most effective messages, by volume of mentions from both questions, were as follows (after fines):**

- The impact on the environment; water contamination, soil degradation, pollution, more severe storms (39 mentions)
  - Results in health hazards for people, especially children
  - Some pointed out that not everyone cares about the environment or believes in climate change; issue has been politicized, will not work to deter everyone
- The economic impact of littering on people's pocketbooks, communities and the state overall (33 mentions)
  - Hard facts about the cost of clean up, increase in taxes, diminished property values, unsightly/ugly to look, attract fewer tourists
  - Need to show the litter, help people understand the scope and magnitude of the problem; first step is acknowledging there is a problem
- Appeal to people's love of animals; show impact on wildlife (like sad animal shelter commercials) (17 mentions)
- Shame/guilt people into not littering (13 mentions)
  - Poor reflection on your character/values, send message that littering is socially unacceptable
  - Don't let the effects of littering be the legacy you leave behind for your children
- Invest in more recycling centers and public trash cans, especially in high traffic areas and tourist sites (3 mentions)
  - If people are recycling, they're not littering; consider incentive for recycling







# Messages To Change Behavior

"Show how ugly it looks and discuss how it will all eventually end up in the ocean."

"I'd let them know the negative effects and that it's also a crime that carries a hefty fine."

"The most powerful message you can deliver in my eyes is that littering puts all of our wildlife at risk, plus it puts humans and kids at danger too."

"I think investing money in trash receptacles in key areas like national parks or other accessible areas and encouraging people not to litter. It's mostly about accessibility. I'd wager that most people litter being lazy."

"My first thought would be to take the environmental approach but unfortunately a lot of Tennesseans do not realize or aren't educated on the environmental changes that are happening. They do not want to shift their attitude on it. You'll have to take a different approach to stopping littering for those folks."

"If more people recycled, there would be less litter to ruin the environment."

"It's important for individuals to acknowledge and see that it is an issue in the first place...to understand the volume of litter"

"We are killing our earth every day with cars and everything else. We can do our part and not litter."

"I think the trash talking about the hard facts and gravity of littering is important, be it environmentally, money (like the tax dollars spent for clean up)...without actual numbers or any sense of scale, it's out of sight, out of mind sometimes."

"I think one of the most effective points to bring up would be the insane amount of tax dollars spent on clean up, the impact to our wildlife/land, and the fines."

"Littering makes the world an ugly place."

"Make litterers take a certain amount of hours in an environmental course so they understand what they're doing."

"Show them how it hurts our state. Water contamination, unsightly, degraded soil quality, etc."







# Interview Format

*Participants were told that the characters could also interact with the media, celebrities and other residents around the state. As an example, Cup's interview with Denise Baker was shown to the groups.*



- Three of the four groups really liked the interview format
  - Good mix of informative and funny, although for some, Cup was not as funny as the first video
  - Denise Baker was well-received by most; liked to see Cup interacting with a real person as well as hear from a leader
  - Many felt it would be even better if cup interviewed famous Tennesseans, like Dolly, Blake Shelton, Kid Rock, Titans and Predators stars, political leaders, etc.
- Most of the rural 25-44 participants thought it was too scripted and not as funny as the previous video; ties back to wanting the characters to be more animated





# Interview Format



"I really like this! Very informative! It contains a lot of information and it's funny at the same time. It also tells you where to go to find out how to help."

"The stats kept me interested."

"I like the concept and I enjoyed getting some more information about the cost of cleaning litter in Tennessee."

"I thought it was pretty slick honestly."

"I liked it a lot! Denise delivered all the info, super informative, with light humor tossed in to keep me interested."

"I like having professional person interviews, but I don't think the cup has the personality to support it."

"People in Tennessee idolize football players from UT mainly, but also some of the Titans' players. If you got one of them on for an interview, it would catch a lot of eyes."

"The cup was dull this time."

"It has to be more attention grabbing and feature celebs that people recognize and who have ties to Tennessee."

"Definitely human interaction gave it a plus..."I'd remember this one!"

"It gets more information across in a shorter amount of time without it seeming preachy."

"I think Denise made this video better. She was interacting with the viewer...it's a bigger message coming from an actual leader."

"It felt cringey. The cup made unfunny jokes and the overall atmosphere was just uncomfortable."

"It wasn't necessarily bad, but putting trash in the garbage instead of throwing it out a window kind of seemed like common

"I didn't like it as much as the casual conversation of the commercial."

"Lets the viewer know more about the impact trash is having on the environment."





# Movement vs. Pledge

*In the interview with Cup, Denise Baker mentions starting a movement to end littering in Tennessee. During the second evening of focus groups, several questions were added to the discussion guide to explore participants' perceptions about joining a movement vs. taking a pledge to stop littering—and to gauge their interest in participating in either.*

*While most said they would take a pledge, the vast majority were more interested in joining a movement; want to join others to take ACTION to clean up existing litter as well as stop littering. By comparison, they see a pledge as “just words.”*



- Pledge seems most appropriate for school age children
- Adults most likely to sign pledge are those who already don't litter
- Requires little commitment; something people sign and soon forget
- A few mentioned the D.A.R.E. pledge; although many signed it, it was not ultimately effective in stopping drug use

“Joining a movement speaks more to me because I would feel like I am part of something and we are working for something that is good. Pledges are fine, but I feel movements have more of an impact.”

“Joining to me would require some sort of action, whether it's helping pick up litter or recycling, distributing flyers or helping put up signs.”

“It's one thing to say you're gonna do something, but to start a movement and take action, that's a whole new ball game. Actions speak louder than words.”



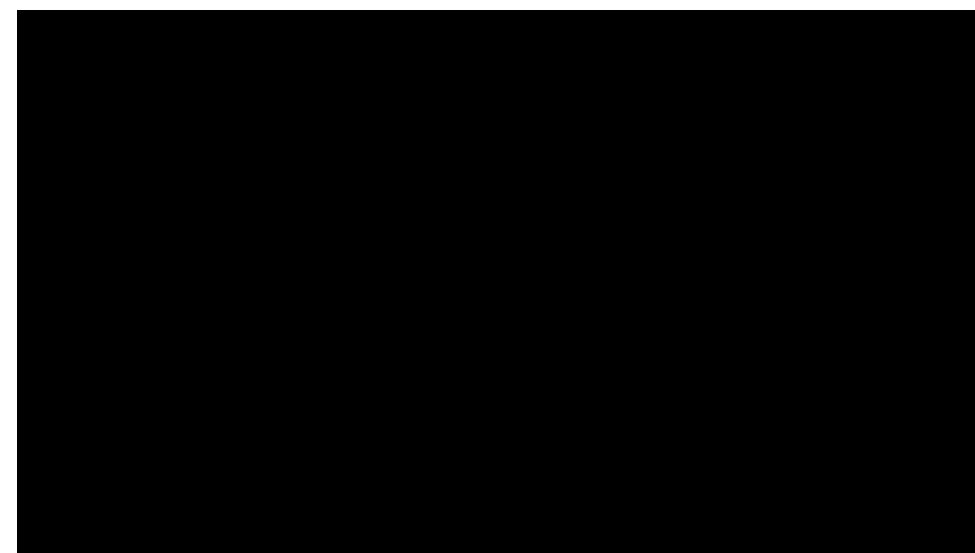
- Participants envisioned that the “Movement” would include state-wide litter clean up events for members (with volunteer hours awarded for participation), posts on social media and contests, among other things
- Could issue a free T-shirt when someone joins the Movement as an incentive and to help generate awareness & interest



# Behind The Scenes Video



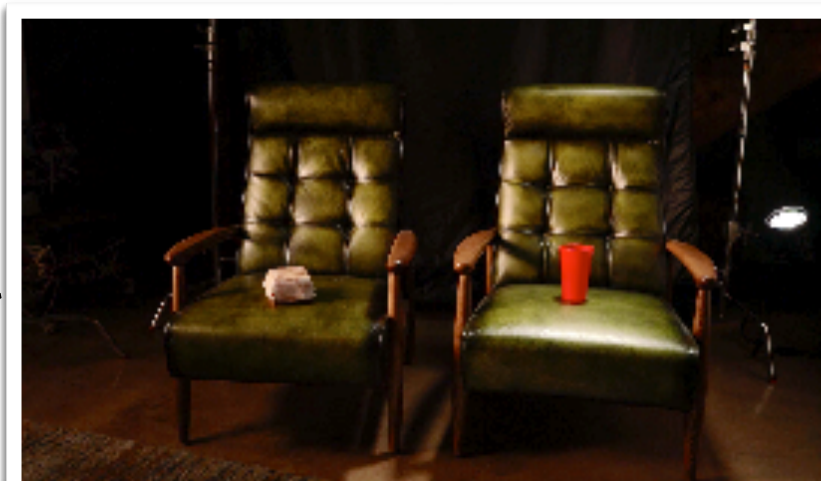
- This execution was the least well received of any of the creative
  - About three-quarters of the 25-44 year old participants did not see the point of getting to know the characters and found the script bland, boring or rambling
    - Seemed more like a scripted comedy skit (that wasn't that funny); not at all informative about littering
    - Visually uninteresting and not captivating, moves very slow, no action, hard to follow; two characters never move in their chairs
    - Those who liked it appreciated getting to see the characters' personalities come to life
- 
- While 18-24 year old participants also wanted more interaction/movement, they were more receptive to getting to know the characters outside of the littering messaging, especially the Urban group
    - Content was relatable, the voices were effective, appreciated the humor, seemed more like a conversation
    - Helped build the world around the campaign and fleshed out the characters
    - Text over the video kept them engaged while listening
    - Most negative reactions had more to do with execution
    - Timing might work better to release something like this after characters have gained traction and a following







# Behind The Scenes Video



"I thought it was great! It was silly! The script was good. I love that it was more influential in a funny way."

"Personally, I do not need to know the characters. They are fun, but just a means of communicating a more important message."

"I'd like to get to know the characters as long as it doesn't stray too far away from the focus of the series."

"It's relatable to content I consume every day, like the podcasts I love. It's got a modern feel to it that I like."

"I think it's the idea of Behind The Scenes. Maybe it can come way later down the line after the characters blow up and become big, but only then should you have a Behind The Scenes."

"It seemed too forced and the script wasn't near as witty."

"I don't really want to get to know the characters. I feel like the characters themselves are more of a vehicle to deliver the actual punch line rather than something I'm interested in on its own."

"It fleshes out the characters more and we see a lot of development of their personalities."

"Behind the scenes could be an effective strategy if the message were more streamlined."

"This one wasn't vibing with me. I want it to be more about the litter and the hard facts rather than the characters."

"It's just not interesting enough to gather people to actually want to pay attention to it and watch it... it needs more energy and liveliness."

"A sitting cup has no personality."

"The cup felt more natural. I connected with it more when it was talking about it's dream of recycling."

"The exaggerated story distracted from the message."





# Print Executions

"It makes it feel like a stupid decision not to throw things away."

"I feel like starting the conversation about littering is key. I never hear anyone talking about it."

"The cost is still staggering to me and hopefully to others too so they know it is not a harmless thing."

"I've mentioned before that really hitting the numbers and driving it home with the gravity of them is so important. I think those examples are exceptional."

"I like that it is humor without desensitizing people about the message, while giving the trash a personality without overly humanizing them."

"Put me in the can man is catchy. The \$19 million one should scare you into not littering because that's money taken from sectors that need it more."



Bus Bench Signage



Gas Pump Topper



Outdoor

- Overall, the print executions were well received for their simplicity, cleverness and use of facts; will bring awareness to littering
  - \$19 million stood out, especially among 18-24 year olds; makes people think about what else Tennessee could be doing with that money if they didn't have to spend it on litter clean up
  - "Put Me In The Can Man" is amusing
  - Outdoor board with the message about fines is a strong reminder and deterrent
  - Like that the quotes are from the garbage, only one participant questioned whether the executions would make sense if someone had not seen the Talking Trash commercials
- The only critical feedback came from about half of the participants in the rural 25-44 group; thought the executions were "cheesy," "not memorable" or "attention grabbing" and "a waste of tax money"; the rest of the group liked them





# Targeted Age/Impact of Campaign



“I feel like it’s geared toward everyone. I think the slight humor is going to grab even a kid’s attention, but it talking about how much it costs will grab the adult’s attention.”



“I think on the whole it’s relatively accessible to everyone. Zeroing in on the numbers and focusing on the facts of the issue is fantastic and adding in a mild level of clever humor can pull more people in.”



“I think it’s a great direction to go. It gets close to the everyday person through presenting scary facts as part of a comical skit. It made me laugh but still got me thinking.”



“I have to say the 100 million pieces of trash and the cost to clean up impacted me.”

**VIDEO ELEMENTS**

**PRINT EXECUTIONS**

- Most participants said the campaign would resonate with a wide audience, with the video elements appealing to younger residents and the print executions speaking to older adults; thought Millennials would especially appreciate the humor
- Participants thought the campaign would help start a conversation about the issue and motivate residents to stop littering—providing it has enough visibility; some reiterated that if litter fines would be enforced at the same time this would be a powerful punch
- Participants who live in urban areas said the campaign fit with the personality of the Nobody Trashes Tennessee brand; participants from rural areas were more likely to say that the campaign is a less aggressive, more light-hearted approach compared to the slogan (in a good way)



# How To Make Campaign More Impactful

- Several times during the discussion participants suggested animating the characters or making them more lively/active to bring out their personalities and inject some visual interest and energy into the videos
- Other suggestions included:
  - Involve celebrities in the campaign, either as voices for the characters or as active participants
  - Add more stats and facts
  - Show the impact of littering on communities and wildlife
  - Help residents understand how bad a problem littering is in different cities and towns across Tennessee, and especially at famous landmarks (let people see the trash, maybe before and after photos of an area that was cleaned up)
  - Partner with local businesses; put the slogan/messaging on packaging that is often littered (bottles/cans, fast food, cigarettes, etc.)
  - Extend the campaign to social media
  - Engage with the outdoor enthusiast community or parks service to join in the fight
  - Partner with schools/universities to create reward system for volunteers to earn community service for picking up litter/helping “the Movement”; requirement to graduate for some, helps with college applications







# Best Way To Reach Residents

- Social media was collectively mentioned most often, especially among 18-24 year olds
  - For younger participants, content on social media seen as more effective than ads; could create profiles for each of the characters and have them post about littering from their perspective
  - Include live streaming of litter pick up events, photos of littered areas, banter between characters, interviews with celebrities
  - Contests/challenges that can go viral (litter clean up, talking trash sightings, dance that people do when picking up trash, etc.)
- Outdoor and commercials (TV and streaming), online advertising and ads on streaming apps were also mentioned frequently across all age groups
- Other suggestions included:
  - Ads on radio and streaming music apps
  - Ads on park benches/bus stops/gas pumps
  - Messaging on products that people litter
  - Partnerships with schools to include signage and educational courses
  - Ads where crowds gather or traffic volume is high (stadiums, fast food restaurants, parks, etc.)
  - More trash cans with slogan/ads on them





epiphany

**The insight behind inspiration.**